

Goals are Important!

The following are some guidelines and ideas on setting goals in your running and why they are important to have them. Many of these ideas come from practical experience and also from lectures. Remember that these are guidelines and are not to be taken as stone facts, but used in a way that you and your coach see best.

1. Be honest in evaluating your talent level as a runner. You have to establish **REALISTIC** goals to avoid setting yourself up for failure and disappointment. But at the same time do not sell yourself short. Sit down and write out exactly what it is you want to achieve during the upcoming season. For example, include your times, placings, and team goals. You should also include personal habits and training, etc. After you have done this, sit down with your coach, friends, and/or family and discuss your ideas and get their feedback on it. After this you may want to make some adjustment.
2. After you have set down the goals and they are challenging and **FIRE YOU UP!** Many athletes complain of a lack of motivation - it is important to have a love and desire for what you have set out in front of you. You must be honest to yourself and the people around you to know what this means and that is **COMMITMENT!**
3. After you get started you must evaluate your progress towards the goals you have set. This can be done with specific objectives like workouts, races and other facets. One of the best ways to keep on top of all this is by keeping a running log and making daily reports on your training and any other things that maybe going on in your life. It is also very good to make comments on how you feel each day, what your weight and resting heart rate are. Another great thing about logs are they can be resources for the future.
4. The next step is **PATIENCE** and **BELIEF**. This is the hardest part, but without a doubt one of the most important. Delayed gratification is hard to deal with, but it is a big key to success. If it was easy, then everyone would be out there trying to reach such goals as you have set. Don't become impatient!
5. Evaluate setbacks. They are there to be learned from. "I went out to hard", "I have overtrained", "I doubted myself as I went to the line", "I played around too much this week". These are just some of the thoughts that can be evaluated after a meet or even a practice. It is very important to sit back and take an honest look at what you did in certain situation, be they good or bad. Too many times athletes do not take the time to do this and instead just look at the result and get so involved in that and never take the time to say, "Hey lets be honest and see if it could be something else besides just me." Injuries and sicknesses are a part of the game and they have to be evaluated also. Sometimes the light at the end of the tunnel looks really small, but always believe that it is **VITAL** to realize no matter what happens negatively you have got to find something positive out of it and just move on. That is not easy but it could make the whole difference in someone's career!