



NICA

Goal Setting for NICA Student Athletes and NICA Teams

Goal setting is important to improving sport performance and character development. Goal setting promotes the development of life skills that will benefit student-athletes off the bike. Coaches can reinforce and steadily improve these mountain bike and character skills by setting SMART goals at the beginning of each season.

Goal-setting helps athletes to understand their current level of skill, achievements, and ability to progress. Establishing goals may seem simple, but to do so effectively requires an understanding of the different types and how to set, monitor, and accomplish them.

Here's how to conduct goal setting sessions with your athletes:

Goal-Setting Meetings

Prior to setting personal goals, have your riders list their personal strengths and weaknesses.

Next, have one-on-one meetings to discuss this list and propose goals to help convert weaknesses into strengths. For new riders, having these meetings after the initial few weeks of practice or the season will allow time to get used to the team environment. For returning riders, this can happen before practices start.

A good set of goals contain several short-term ones that support larger long-term ones. An example for a mountain biker could look like:

- Long-term goal: Improve my stamina and energy in practices and in races and feel strong and powerful when I ride my bike
- Short-term goal: Eat prior to and bring healthy snacks to practice/races
- Short-term goal: Hydrate and eat breakfast and lunch every day before practice and/or races.
- Short-term goal: Drink and eat during all my rides.

Before or during these individual meetings, ask athletes to write their goals and share them. Discuss the goals, and once agreed upon, make copies for both of you to have. Encourage the athlete to display these goals where they can be seen regularly, as goals that are visible are more likely to be attained.

Checking In With Your Athletes' Goals

It's important at various points in the season to remind players to review their goals. These meetings not only allow athletes an opportunity to revise their goals as needed, but also to re-examine their strengths and weaknesses or address any issues.

The end-of-season meetings are probably the most important, but can also be the most challenging to fit in. Even so, all the work spent on goals throughout the season is pointless if there is no follow up at the end of the season. If time is limited, still try to have at least a quick conversation with each rider to ask if they believe they met their goals for the year. This is also a great time to discuss areas of improvement and things they could work on in the off-season.

Setting Team Goals

Team goals can be set using a similar process as with personal goals, but should be established by the team with everyone present.

Before setting team goals, have a discussion that covers the results from the previous season, roster changes, this season's schedule, and the team's strengths and weaknesses. Then, work together to establish team goals that are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely).

Just like with individual goals, it's important to regularly check on the team's progress toward their goals and make adjustments where necessary. Be sure to remind the team that goals are not etched in stone and should be designed knowing that changing them is sometimes necessary and not considered 'failure'.

Remember to focus team goal setting on NICA's key core values of strong body, mind and character and inclusivity and equality!

*Adapted from True Sport's "How to set goals with young athletes" Complete resources on Goal Setting can be found here: <https://learn.truesport.org/topics/goal-setting/>

NICA Student-Athlete Goal Setting Worksheet

Please fill out the following worksheet and return to your coach. Remember, to make your goals SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely

Name 3 of your strengths:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Name 2 of your weaknesses:

1. _____
2. _____

What are 3 goals you have for this season:

1. **Goal #1:** _____
 - a. **Steps you will take to reach this goal:**

2. **Goal #2:** _____
 - a. **Steps you will take to reach this goal:**

2. **Goal #3 :** _____
 - b. **Steps you will take to reach this goal:**
