

Goal setting ---- What are your objectives for your children?

What do you want for your child's sport experience? Have you as a parent thought about it? More importantly have you and your child talked about it? Are your actions and words consistent with what you have talked about?

The truth is many of us as parents likely sign our kids up for soccer and show up to practices without giving much thought to the process...and whatever happens, happens. But think about it, do we handle school this way? Not likely – we talk about college in the long term and homework/assignments in the short term. Each of these are in essence goal-setting pieces for our son or daughter.

Ok, so lets talk a bit about setting goals with you our son or daughter in soccer. The idea here will be to a) set forth effective goal setting “guidelines to develop potential” and b) (in a week or so) provide effective ways to implement these with your son or daughter over time.

Goal setting guidelines

At the end of the day goals are simply statements or ideas that guide a persons' behavior. These goals are used by athletes everyday, whether they know it or not, to get to where they want to get to. As we will uncover in the next few paragraphs using these goals with children at different times will make it more likely they will understand, adopt and reach a goal.

Outcome goals – this is simply where we want to be at the end of our quest. These will be things they are looking to obtain as a result of all of their hard work. Examples of these goals are to play at a Division I college, earn an athletic college scholarship at a Division I institution, be a consistent starter on a u-18 MLS academy, ECNL or traveling team, or earn a professional contract by the age of ____.

Outcome goals function as dreams and are important to use as the proverbial carrot at the end of the fishing line. As young people establishing direction these goals provide a picture or a vision that will set an endpoint for the child to see, and at which to strive.

Performance goals – performance goals are detailed improvement areas relative to ones own performance. Meaning, what areas does the child need to improve on in order to progress toward their outcome goals. These are actually the most important goal setting areas because they deal with a lot of different areas relative to the child.

That is to say there are playing examples that might include working on first touch to get out of space quickly, trying to take players on at least 5 more times in games in order to get behind, spending 30 additional minutes 4 days a week working on receiving balls out of the air. There are also nutritional examples, such as eating a certain type of balanced diet or pregame/post game

food. There are also mental examples such as how one will deal with disappointment or losses, or how to build ones focus on perhaps set pieces.

Of course these goals do not only need to be set with and for the athlete but for the parent as well. For instance, and as we will see in the following section, we can set a parent performance goal to provide at least 5 comments in game that focus on what the player did well as opposed to what the child did poorly.

Overall, performance goals function as detailed improvement areas that will help the child see 1, what they need to improve on and 2, that they are moving closer and closer to their outcome goal. These goals should be entry points for discussions and set, and reset, often. They can serve as checklists as they progress forward.

Process goals – are daily checklists and reminders about what needs to get done. These basically function as to do lists. As we all know to do lists are critical and come in many forms for us – yellow stickies, notes on our phones etc... but the gist is that they remind you to get something done.

For athletes' process goals or “to dos” are things that remind us to improve in certain areas and focus on the process. They are things like keep your toe up, head up before you turn, get to practice early, don't forget to compliment Joey, etc. These things are critical to hitting performance goals as well as outcome goals...as they keep our attention focused on the target.

We hope these help out. Keep checking back as we will put up some ways to introduce an implement these goals with your kids.

"As promised - [Please check out these ideas](#) to implement some goal setting pieces with your son or daughter over time. This is actually a chapter in the book “potentialing your child in soccer” , the book on which the Rush M.A.P. parents pieces are based. Check it out an enjoy."