Coaches' Clipboard
A Newsletter for OVR Juniors Coaches
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Be SMART About Setting Goals for Teams

We all have goals that we set for ourselves, players, teams and programs. "I want to lose weight," or "I want to go faster," or "I want a better job," are all good things. However, most people who set goals and are unable to reach them can rarely articulate why they did not succeed. Many start the new year by making resolutions to change or do something that year. Though worthwhile, many New Year's resolutions so fade and are forgotten. Why? Chances are, just like any goals we set for ourselves and for others, the problem is not that the goals aren't good, they're probably not S.M.A.R.T.

For several decades business and industry have used the SMART goal format for helping them achieve success or at least better understand how get back on track to reaching their goals. These ideas are only recently reaching the educational/coaching community and provide us with a framework for improved goal setting.

S.M.A.R.T. is an acronym for 5 characteristics of goals that are specific, measurable, attainable/achievable, relevant/realistic and time-bound. Let's take a look at each of these characteristics and how they can improve our goal-setting endeavors.

Specific—Goals that are specific give us a much clearer picture of the point at which we will know when the goal has been achieved. Wanting to lose weight or run faster are both good worthy goals, yet they are not specific. Wanting to lose 10lbs. or improve a mile run time by 20 seconds are much more specific.

Measurable—Closely related to the specificity of a goal, one that is measurable can be timed, weighed, quantified or evaluated against prior benchmarks or criteria. In education, these characteristics are most easily seen through improved test scores. In sport, measurable goals can be quantified easily through stats and performance indicators.

Attainable/Achievable—SMART goals are ones that can be achieved given available resources. Attainable goals inspire positive attitude, skill development, opportunities for developing self-esteem and break down barriers to learning.

Relevant/Realistic—We've all heard about or seen the illustration of a carrot hanging from a stick out in front of a donkey to get him to move. Interestingly, this word picture provides some insight into the SMART goal characteristic of goals being attainable and achievable. First, the goal (carrot) is completely just out of reach of the player. If we set goals that are already within our reach, we learn nothing, we don't grow, we gain no improvement. It makes no sense to set a goal for myself to run a mile in under 8 minutes if I can already do it. Second, the goal is something that is within our vision and is something that is greatly desired by the player. Too often we set goals for our players that are unrealistic such as a team of beginners winning a national championship in a few weeks. The best way I can think of for coaches and teams to set unrealistic goals is to focus on results which cannot be controlled. Make sure that your communication to players is always about things they can control, such as execution of technique, rather than things they can't control, such as results of a contact or even winning a game.

Time-bound—SMART goals have very specific deadlines, a point in time by which we want the goal to be reached or achieved. By setting exact points in time, we put ourselves in action to accomplish the goal; without a solid deadline, procrastination sneaks in and holds us back.

SMART goals can be set for individuals, groups and even organizations. For an individual, a SMART goal might be: I will improve my kill efficiency percentage by 10% before the start of Regionals. A group goal for a team might be to reduce set turnovers by 20% by the end of the month. Clubs might consider setting a goal of improving overall public perception of positive parent/spectator behavior at tournaments by the end of the club season as evidenced by referee, tournament director and other spectator comments and observations.

Lastly, by setting SMART goals, you will have data as to why your goals were not achieved. We must understand that missing the mark may happen, the failure is not understanding why.

Positive Coaching

I recently received an email from a club director relaying her dismay with spectator behavior at a recent tournament. She lamented that the behavior was so poor it prompted her response to the club. Coaches need to understand a simple yet powerful concept that may help alleviate these situations; attitudes are contagious—make yours worth catching.

This, for some, may be easier said than done. We

intentionally or inadvertently allow ourselves to be blinded by things that are out of our control such as scoreboards, officials and even spectators. The only real 'controllable' within our purview is ourselves.

Here's a checklist of things you can do to be a positive coach:
- ☐ Praise kids for being there
- ☐ Look for things to praise
- ☐ Praise in public loudly; criticize in private quietly
- ☐ Stay calm when kids make learning mistakes
- ☐ Create an environment where kids aren't afraid of making mistakes
- ☐ Teach players how to stay positive rather than getting down on themselves
- ☐ Emphasize teamwork: more "we" and less "me"
- ☐ Role model good sportsmanship: win without gloating, lose without complaining, treat everyone with respect
- ☐ Focus on things you can control
- ☐ Commit to being an educator rather than a bully
- ☐ Help every player in the program—even those who are not the best players on the team
- ☐ Be consistent
- ☐ Be non-verbally positive; actions speak louder than words
- ☐ Coach pro-actively (next ball) rather than re-actively (last ball)
- ☐ Avoid sarcasm
- ☐ Be there for the kids

Volleyball Stats 101

Earlier in this issue we discovered the importance of SMART goals and how they are based on data. Training and match statistics can provide you with data to make better decisions. Keep stats on your team's match performance so you know what to train. Keep stats on individual players so you know in what areas to help each one.

I'm not a real fan of watching warm-ups, but there are some useful things to look for, such as opponent setters, hitters and tendencies. During the match, there are all kinds of things you can record on paper or a computer; what you do with the analysis of this data compilation is far more important. Use it to help player learning and performance!

Here's some things that you can extrapolate from stats:
- Most consistent passer/digger per rotation, per opponent, per attacker (passer means serve receive contact)
- Best servers and ace percentage
- Rotational information
  - Best/worst siding out
  - Best/worst defense
  - Best/worst offense
- Best offensive player

Basic Stats
- Serves (2.5 average)
  - 4 = Ace
  - 3 = Freeball
  - 2 = Out of system
  - 1 = In system
  - 0 = error
- Kill percentage = (Kills - Attack Errors) / Attempts
  - OH_1 at 25% or higher
- Receives
  - 0 = ace
  - 1 = out of system, help-set
  - 2 = out of system
  - 3 = in system
- Kill Assists = (Attack Kills - Set Errors) / Set Attempts
- Digs
- Blocks
  - Solo Kill
  - Assist Kill
  - BIP (ball in play, or block touches)

Game Stats
- Points scored per rotation
- Side-out
  - FBSO (usually received)
  - Freeball/Transition
  - In-system/Out-of-system
  - Combinations
    - Freeball pass
    - BIP transition
- Freeball per rotation - who? why?
- 3-point runs per rotation

Serve/Hit Charts
- Attack Chart - on a court per rotation, draw a line for
  - Who hit where
  - Attack type
  - Result
- Serve Chart - on a court per rotation, draw a line for
  - Who served where
  - Serve type
  - Result of pass

Scouting Stats
- Serve/Hit Charts
- Defensive positioning for OH, MH, RH
- Point production of In-system and Out-of-system offense
- Serving tactics/tendencies

Finally, can you define the following terms related to volleyball stats? How do your definitions compare to those in the USAV rule book?

Assist	Dig	Pass
Block	Ace	Kill
Violation	Error	Attack