



# SET GOALS FOR SUCCESS

## Physically Speaking

September, 2011

One of the best parts of human experience is that great feeling that comes with achieving something important to you. Professional tennis players can get this buzz from:

- Closing out a tough tie-break.
- Improving on-court movement and speed after months of footwork drills.
- Fully returning to peak performance after an injury and after working hard at the prescribed exercise program to improve core stability.
- Helping the tournament by greeting happy fans at an autograph signing session.
- Using the knowledge gained after completing the Rookie Hours to improve their professional opportunities.
- Giving some time and energy to a deserving charity.



Tennis and Sport  
Photos: Getty Images

These things do not happen by chance or accident. They are the result of careful planning, strategy and execution to reach a clearly defined target.

***Success is measured when you Hit Your Target or Reach Your Goal.***

### WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH?



Many players will set goals or make resolutions at the end of the season for the New Year. For a lot of players, the process stops there. The next December, they will be puzzled why they have got to the end of yet another year without reaching their goals.

Sound familiar? ***Don't leave your destiny to chance...***

Smart, successful players reflect on their tennis performance throughout the season; they realize it is not something that only happens once a year when the season is over. They:

- Evaluate where they are at, what is going well and what could improve.
- Plan and act on strategies and make needed changes to help them reach their targets.
- Set goals and act on them. It helps them flourish in tennis and in life.

### ***So... What do you want to achieve?***

It is wise to plan for those things you wish to achieve in tennis and in life. Sometimes this requires changing unhelpful things and/or people, and accessing resources and qualified professional guidance to help you strategize what you want. The WTA Sport Sciences and Medicine, Player Development and Athlete Assistance Departments are all available to help you to find appropriate resources and professionals who can help you reach your potential.

***"Destiny is not a matter of chance. It is a matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for. It is a thing to be achieved."***  
***(William Jennings Bryan, 1860-1925. Lawyer & Politician)***

### SET SAIL FOR SUCCESS

When you begin any journey, be it your tennis career, your education or your life, you need to set a direction for where you want to end up. It is a bit like the rudder or the controls on a boat. The rudder helps keep your boat on course, heading where you want to go. You may go off course from time to time, but you will keep returning to the course. By setting the rudder, you can change direction and aim for a new destination. When going on a long journey, you will make stops along the way. You will plan your journey and use a map as you go to keep you travelling in your desired direction. ***Goals are the destinations:***

- They are the things you want to achieve and reach on your journey.
- Without goals, you don't know where you are headed.
- Without goals, you don't know if you are moving forward.
- Without goals, you don't know when you have arrived.

***Would you travel on a boat if you didn't know where it was going?***

To be the player who knows where she wants to go, using a map and clear directions of how to get there, set your Goals for Success.





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### REACH FOR THE TOP!

Follow these guidelines to reach your goals. Make your goals:

#### YOURS

- Strive for what **YOU** want, not what others (parents, coach, manager, boyfriend/girlfriend...) want.
- Think carefully about what you really want and set goals in accordance with your values, those things that are really important in your life. Learn more in the topic, "Victorious Values".
- You can set goals for ALL areas of your life: tennis, finances, health, education, relationships, personal development, spirituality, rest and relaxation.



#### POSITIVE, SIMPLE AND SPECIFIC

- Work towards what you want, NOT what you want to leave behind.
- "To hit 75% of high backhand volleys in the court" is a positive goal. "To avoid hitting high backhand volleys out" is negative and will not allow you to play aggressive and winning shots.
- "To move around faster on the court." is not clear enough. A better goal is really specific: "To complete each footwork drill in 90 seconds and to achieve that time for each of five consecutive sets."

#### ACHIEVABLE

- With some work and effort. Goals should be challenging and stretch you just past where you can reach.
- They should be not so easy that they are of no real value, nor so difficult that they result in frustration or despair.
- Divide ambitious or longer-term goals up into smaller, achievable or shorter-term goals.

#### MEASURABLE



- A specific measurable target helps you monitor your progress and know when you achieve it.
- "To hit with 70% accuracy on my backhand down the line" is measurable. "To improve my backhand down the line" is unclear.
- Set realistic target dates for when you want to reach your goal to help you stay on track.

#### PROCESS NOT OUTCOME GOALS

- Often, tennis players focus on the **outcome** (win or lose) rather than the **performance** or the **process**.
- Outcome goals are not entirely within your control. For example, your opponent may outplay your best tennis on match day; your ranking is a number determined by your and **by other players'** performances.
- When you focus on the process, on what you do and how you do it, the outcome you want is more likely.

#### IN WRITING

- Commit your goals to paper. It makes the goals real. It motivates you. It is used by successful people in all occupations.
- A Harvard Business School study discovered that, only 3% of graduates had written goals; 13% of graduates had unwritten goals; and 84% had **no** specific goals. Ten years later, the same graduates were interviewed again. The results are clear. Written goals work:
  - ➔ The 13% with goals had average pay of **TWO times** as much as the graduates without goals.
  - ➔ **The 3% with clear, written goals earned, on average, TEN times as much as the other 97 percent put together!!**

*"I was focusing on the tactics me and my coach talked about, and it worked. I'm also just trying to enjoy playing tennis and trying not to think about winning or losing, my ranking, or anything else. I just want to play my best on the court and because of that I have been doing very well recently."*  
*Anabel Medina Garrigues, five-time Palermo Singles Champion.*

### ACTION PLANS

- Action plans are strategies used to reach the goals.
- Example: "To improve my first serve percentage to 60%" is the goal. The action plans could be:
  - ➔ Do the prescribed shoulder exercises to improve power and coordination of the shoulder.
  - ➔ Work with the coach to improve service technique in the out-of-competition phase of training.
- Action plans can be changed if they are not working according to plan.
- Without action plans, goals are just a list of "wishes". You may as well ask your fairy godmother for help!

### STICK WITH IT!

- To achieve goals requires work and commitment.
- Regularly evaluate your progress. If you are not as far along as you would like, maybe you set the goal too high; maybe you need to modify your goal, or to change your action plan to achieve it.
- "Giving up" is not an option! You don't quit at 15-40 down in a game do you?
- Expect many "learning moments" along the way. Sometimes people wrongly call these "failures"...
- A supportive team focused on the process, not the outcome, will help you achieve your goals.

