

## GOAL SETTING, FROM THOUGHTS TO ACTIONS

As preseason workouts are winding down and practices and workouts are starting to come together with that feeling of being “game ready,” as part of our roadmap to success, have we given any thought to our mental readiness?

A great way to begin is to set realistic and positive goals. Here are six goal setting strategies to get started.

- 1) **GOALS:** Good goals are specific, measurable, and realistic. Set goals for daily workouts, finding at least one thing to improve. Purposeful practice matter!
- 2) **RELAXATION:** Remaining calm and focused in the face of pre-competition anxiety. Relaxation sets the tone for success. Maintaining a relaxed mind is the key to keeping a relaxed body. For example, practice deep breathing — imagine inflating a balloon in your belly as you breathe in; this triggers a relaxation response.
- 3) **CONTROL:** Too often we dwell on what went wrong and what catastrophe might occur next. Many things are beyond our control (weather, crowd, officiating). But, you have the ability to control your reaction to a non-ideal situation. Let go of the things you can't control.
- 4) **VISUALIZATION:** This can be used to perfect form, to motivate, and also to inspire. Most of us have been told that practice makes perfect, which isn't quite true. What is true is that perfect practice leads to the reach for perfection. Visualizing yourself performing a task accurately is better than actually doing it poorly.
- 5) **INSTANT AMNESIA:** Once it's over, it's best to forget how you did and focus on what you will do next. Dwelling on how you did does nothing to change your performance, and in addition keeps you distracted and less focused on what's next.
- 6) **POSITIVE SELF TALK:** It's easy to let self doubt and negative thoughts creep in and sabotage your performance. This is especially relevant when things get physically painful. Having something positive to say to yourself is crucial. A positive self talk statement can be any short phrase that is personal, in the present tense, and positive. It's important to remember that every physical movement, however slight, begins with a thought.

***As we begin our athletic seasons physically prepared, let's take a few moments to become mentally prepared as well!***

