

## GLOBAL SOCCER MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL – “Setting Player Goals!”

As coaches, we tend to focus on training the physical aspects of our players while ignoring many of their mental and emotional developmental needs. This bias probably results from having very limited one-on-one time with your players, or you’ve simply never had goal setting plans part of your winning ways, but it deserves more of your attention than ever before in today’s modern game.

Although you may not have time to engage in extensive "mental coaching" with each of your players, you can engage them in the process of reflection, self-evaluation, and transformation by working with them to set goals.

### Try Some of the Following Suggestions:

Goals and the steps or objectives should be individually designed for each player on the team. These then become standards for which they can move their match performance and life forward. Goals are usually set regarding their primary position they play but may include a secondary playing position. Goals are also set

regarding how they relate to others on the team. If you ask players, "How do you see yourself on this team and the future of your game, their answer should be should not be, I want to be a better soccer player" isn't very accurate." It maybe "I want to be able to cross the ball equally well with both feet" provides a much more precise image regarding how the player will improve.

As your players prepare their goals and you help with those forward steps, look for any vague phrases like the first example above, and ask them to replace them with more accurate statements that explain how they will reach a new level of ability. You may find it helpful to ask the six central questions of "Who?", "What?", "When?", "Where?", "Why?", and "How?" as you craft and review goal statements; the more of these questions answered with each statement, the more accurate it will be.

### Measuring Player Performances

Goals are to be measurable and you'll need measuring tools. The practice sessions and then the match usually tell it all. Often, players will suggest goals like "I will run as hard as I can in every practice." Although coaches indeed desire this type of conduct,

they can't measure a player's effort to assess whether or not the goal has been achieved. You can't manage what can't be measured! As a result, "do your best" goals tend to be ineffective, and should be re-worded in a way that allows measurement on an objective scale.

### Player's Goals Must Reach Higher Standards of Match Performance

Goals must be ambitious for the player to develop. The primary purpose of goal-setting is to push individuals and teams to achieve something beyond reach today. If you only want to make something you can already do, there wouldn't be much point in putting pen to paper to say that. So, your team's goals should reflect a desire to make significant and notable progress about the current status. A useful goal represents a target to be attained in the future given dedication and focused effort, not a statement of what can be accomplished tomorrow with minimal investment!

### Goals Must Be Reached

Goals should be realistic. Often players or even some coaches demand unrealistic goals that can't be achieved right away. Players will be discouraged if they fail. Provide step by step development of a player. In the end they'll be great and understand that they have to go forward at a pace that's not overwhelming. If some players believe they can achieve a goal, then it is probably realistic; if they don't, then it is not going to happen. Although we want our players to push themselves to improve, they will become discouraged (and thus abandon their efforts) if they never enjoy the thrill of achieving their goals.

Goals must be timely. This requirement is necessary for two reasons. First, without a looming deadline, you may lack the urgency required to push aggressively to achieve your goals. Secondly, as your circumstances and abilities change over time, you need to periodically re-assess your goals to ensure that you are still working toward the most important priorities. So, be sure to include a target date for completion as part of each goal statement.