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Role of Goal-Setting: Sport's Performance Enhancer

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Abstract

Sport and exercise psychology, research on goal-setting has been influenced by two distinct theoretical traditions: cognitive psychology and organisational psychology. Goal setting is one way for groups or individuals to attempt to improve their success. Goal setting can be a way of improving motivation and helping athletes to enhance performance. Reaching an appropriately set goal can represent a small victory and show athletes that they are on their way to continued success. The effectiveness of goal setting is evident, why, then, would a coach or athlete go without their performance enhancing activity? Some coaches and athletes lack knowledge of goal setting, especially of how to set goals systematically. Another barrier to effective goal setting can be the failure to appropriately review progress toward goals and revise goals, if necessary, based upon that progress. Finally it can be concluded that Goal setting is a very psychological element of sport and games. Specially those athletes involved in high level of competition.

Introduction

A goal is a target or objective which people strive to attain. For example, it might be winning a match, losing weight or being selected for a club team or national squad (Weinberg, 2002). So, goal-setting is the process by which people establish desirable objectives for their actions. Setting goals is an important aspect to your success as athletes in the sport performance. It's well recognized that you stay committed to evaluating and changing your goals when it will be needed. You should create and monitor goals for practice and competitions or games. The coach has a very important role in goal setting, both for teams and individuals. Thus coaches must first educate themselves about goal setting, obtaining the most current information. Coaches will be called on to help athletes set their short- and long-term goals. They need to ensure that all goals are both realistic and relevant to the athlete. Once goals are in place, coaches will need to take time to measure and evaluate progress toward goals, making sure athletes are on track to meet them. If the goal setting process is to work successfully, coaches must assume an important role in both education and implementation. Goal-setting is not only one of the most widely used performance-enhancement techniques in sport and exercise psychology but also one of the most extensively researched. Hall and Kerr (2001) asserted that "not only is the efficacy of goal setting assumed; it is also claimed that the technique is a fundamental psychological skill that all athletes must develop if they are to maximize athletic potential"

Types of goal setting

Three main types of goals have been identified in sport and exercise psychology research

1. Outcome" or Result goals

Objective targets such as winning a competition, defeating an opponent or achieving a desired finishing position (e.g., making the cut in a golf tournament). What is not often appreciated about such goals, however, is the extent to which their achievement depends on the ability and performance of one's opponents. For example, a tennis player could play the best game of his or her life but still lose a match because the opposing player has played better on the day.

2. Performance Goal.

This goal designates the attainment of a personal standard of competence with regard to technique (e.g., learning to hit a top-spin backhand in tennis), effort (e.g., “giving 100 per cent effort at all times in a match”), time (running a marathon in less than four hours) distance and/or height (in certain athletic events). Unlike its predecessor, the characteristic feature of performance goals is that they are largely under the control of the performer. For example, a golfer could set as her performance goal the task of putting to within 30 cm of the hole every time she is on the green. Nobody can stop the player from achieving this level of accuracy because putting is a self-paced skill

3. Process” goal

Behavioural strategy by which an athlete executes a particular skill. For example, in golf, a process goal in putting might be to keep one’s head steady while taking a slow backswing. Performance and process goals are usually regarded as being more motivational for athletes than are result goals. Weinberg (2002) exhorted people “to set goals that are based on their own levels of performance rather than on the outcome of winning and losing. Likewise, Orlick (1986) proclaimed that “day-to-day goals for training and for competition should focus on the means by which you can draw out your own potential. Daily goals should be aimed at the improvement of personal control over your performance, yourself, and the obstacles you face” (p. 10). In a similar vein, Gould (1998) proposed that athletes should “set process and performance goals as opposed to outcome goals” and Hodge and McKenzie (1999) advised athletes to “set performance goals rather than outcome goals”.

Factors Affecting Goal setting

The goals must be more than just a wish or dream ,they must be realistic. Specific factors must be considered in setting goals.

Performance :

Performance goals are the individual’s long term goal, the individual’s current level, and the number of seasons available to achieve the long term goal. These are used to set a reasonable seasons or short-term goal as the intermediary step to achieving a long term goal.

Commitment of the individual:

A less obvious but crucial factor in planning goal is the Commitment of the individual. This relates to the amount of time and the degree of effort that the individual is willing to dedicate to achieving his goals.

Opportunity.

It is also important to consider the effective opportunity that the individual has to achieve his goals. The types of opportunities that should be consider are (a)practice time and facilities available,(b)the limits of coaches,(c)competition available,(d)funds and climatic conditions.

Potential:

The last factor the individual Potential is the most difficult to assess. coaches sometimes think that they know their athletes potential however the certainty of this subjective evaluation is at best suspect. One clue to an athlete’s potential may come from a review of the individuals rate of improvement, allowing for opportunity and effort. This necessitates that progress, opportunity, and effort be regularly recorded and evaluated.

Conclusion-

Goal-attribute research suggests that certain properties of goals should energise the behaviour of athletes. Sport psychology is replete with claims about the value of goal-setting as a performance enhancement strategy in sport. Goal setting can be a way of improving motivation and helping athletes to

enhance performance. Reaching an appropriately set goal can represent a small victory and show athletes that they are on their way to continued success

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