ITF Coaches Education Programme Level 2 Coaching Course

Goal-setting for tournament players
By the end of this session you should be able to:

- Explain the definition and importance of goal-setting for tennis
- Understand the different types and principles of goals in tennis
- Know the steps and problems of goal-setting
- Understand what research tell us about goal-setting
- Devise effective and appropriate goal-setting for tournament tennis players
Goal-setting: Definition

- Goal-setting is the aim or purpose of an action
- It involves deciding where you want to go and the steps necessary to take to get you there
Goal-setting: Importance

• Setting ‘targets’
• Provide sense of direction and purpose
• Stimulate players to overcome challenges
• Specific goals increase players performance
• Help to determine what’s important

• Maintain and reinforce motivation
• Increase persistence and effort
• Direct attention to task-relevant aspects
• Ensure more productive use of time
• Reinforce self-confidence
## Types of goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF GOALS</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS</th>
<th>EXAMPLES</th>
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</table>
| Objective / subjective           | • O: Deal with external aspects of the player, and are easy to observe and to evaluate.  
• S: Deal with inner aspects of the player, and are difficult to observe and to evaluate. | • O: ‘To improve slice backhand approach’.  
• S: ‘To improve body chain co-ordination’ |
| General / specific               | • G: Ambiguous, goals involving immeasurable aspects.  
• S: Refer to measurable aspects. | • G: ‘To improve level of play’  
• S: ‘To improve depth and height of second serve topspin to the ad side by 20th April’ |
| Outcome / performance            | • O: Focus on the end result. Dangerous if they put pressure on the player.  
• P: Focus on improvements relative to one’s own performance. Help to achieve outcome goals. | • O: ‘To be National champion under 18’.  
• P: ‘Hit over my backhand on returns’ |
| Short-term/intermediate/long-term| • S: Session, day, week or month. They help to achieve the intermediate and long-term goals.  
• I: Several months.  
• L: 1-2 years or more. | • S: ‘Today we are going to work in the down the line passing-shot’.  
• I: ‘To improve endurance during the preparation period’.  
• L: ‘To be ranked top 10 in the country by the end of this year’ |
Types of goals
Candidate’s task

Give other examples of:

• Objective/Subjective
• General/Specific
• Outcome/Performance
• Short-term/Intermediate/Long-term
Principles of goal-setting

• Specific
• Measurable
• Agreed
• Realistic

• Time phased
• Evaluated
• Recorded
## Principles of goal-setting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRINCIPLE</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific</td>
<td>• Set as specific goals as possible and avoid vague statements. Specific, quantifiable goals help players to focus their attention and plan their route to achieve the goal.</td>
<td>• ‘I want to run 1 ½ mile in 8 minutes’ rather than ‘I want to have a better aerobic base’.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Measurable</td>
<td>• Set measurable and controllable goals. Measurable goals help players to assess whether or not they have achieved them.</td>
<td>• ‘I want to hit 8 out of 10 topspin second serves in the service box’ rather than ‘I want to improve my topspin second serve’.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td>• Involve the player. Goals should be set with an agreement by both player and coach. Agreed or shared goals help players to be more committed and motivated.</td>
<td>• ‘I agree that I will hit over my backhand on all 2nd serves’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Realistic</td>
<td>• Set challenging, exciting, difficult but realistic goals. Easy goals offer little satisfaction nor motivation. Very difficult goals create frustration and make the players lose self-confidence and create frustration. Realistic goals help players to be more motivated and to gain self-confidence.</td>
<td>• ‘I’m 14 years old and I want to be under 14 national champion this year’ rather than ‘I’m 14 years old and I want to be Wimbledon champion this year’.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time phased</td>
<td>• Set target dates for the achievement of the goals. They should have a deadline. Plan the progress into small steps (intermediate and short-term goals). Time phased goals help players to assess accurately their achievement.</td>
<td>• ‘I want to improve my drop-shot from mid court by the end of this week’ rather than ‘I want to improve my drop-shot’.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluated</td>
<td>• Schedule goal evaluation meetings periodically. Re-evaluate, restate goals if already achieved or if unlikely to be achieved in the time frame allowed.</td>
<td>• ‘Evaluation or assessment of this goal will be done March 22nd, April 20th and June 21st’.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recorded</td>
<td>• Write down the goals. Make a kind of contract. Written goals help players to increase commitment.</td>
<td>• ‘I’m writing down my goals’ rather than ‘bla..bla..bla..’.</td>
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Principles of goal-setting
Candidate’s task
Give examples of:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Agreed
- Realistic
- Time phased
- Evaluated
- Recorded
How to set goals

- Use questions
- In areas over which the player has control
- Change and adapt them if necessary
- Beware of mental aspects
- Monitor progress and reset goals
- Evaluate each training session at the end
Combination of goals

• Short-term (daily) with long-term (season)
• Individual (player) and group (team)
• Prioritise goals:
  – Which comes first?
  – Important goals vs. urgent goals
• Practice and matches goals
How to reach the goals

• Daily practice
• Matches
• Season plans
• Sub-goals
• Tests
## Best types of goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Only long-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective, meaningful</td>
<td>General, theoretical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-oriented</td>
<td>Oriented against others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Quantity</td>
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Goal-setting quiz
Candidate’s task
Link each phrase with the area

PLAYER
• I need more power on my forehand
• I lose all tie-breakers
• I’ve lost my touch on the volley
• I have problems when playing pushers

AREA TO WORK IN
• Technique
• Tactics
• Physical conditioning
• Psychology
• Other
Areas to work in goal-setting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Specific aspects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical skills</td>
<td>Grips, strokes, stroke production, footwork, technical corrections, biomechanical analysis, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tactical components</td>
<td>Phases of play, game styles, tactical patterns, design of matchplans, tactical analysis and evaluation in game situations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical abilities</td>
<td>Endurance, speed, power, strength, co-ordination, dexterity, agility, flexibility, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental qualities</td>
<td>Motivation, concentration, emotional control, relaxation match preparation routines, discipline, communication, fighting attitude, etc.</td>
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# Goal-setting system for coaches

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Steps to success</th>
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</table>
| Planning phase      | * Think about the season ahead  
* Identify player’s needs and possibilities in all areas  
* Turn the needs into specific goals  
* Determine priority goals  
* Identify possible strategies to facilitate the achievement of these goals  
* Invest commitment and effort |
| Meeting phase       | *First meeting: Introduction to goal-setting to all players  
*Ask players to set their goals (give them a couple of days to do it)  
*Explain the theory to the player  
*Second meeting: Discuss players’ goals  
*Other meetings: One-on-one to discuss player’s personal goals  
*Sign-up a contract between player and coach regarding specific goals. |
| Follow-up/Evaluation phase | * Schedule goal evaluation meeting periodically  
* Constantly remind the player of the goals  
* Provide feedback in written form  
* Show the player match statistics or coaches evaluation form of goals |
## Players and goal-setting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of player</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Goals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance-oriented</td>
<td>• They want to learn, to improve, to be better players.</td>
<td>• They are their own point of reference</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• They like playing tennis because they enjoy it, they accept the challenge of</td>
<td>• They prefer challenging, measurable, individual and long-term goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the battle.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success-oriented</td>
<td>• They want to win, to beat others and to be champions.</td>
<td>• Other players are their point of reference</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• They like playing tennis only when they win.</td>
<td>• They prefer rather difficult, general, individual and short-term goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loser-oriented</td>
<td>• They are afraid of losing, they don’t want to be compared with others</td>
<td>• Other players are their point of reference</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• They don’t like to play tennis because they don’t have self-confidence</td>
<td>• They prefer easy or very difficult, vague, team and short-term goals</td>
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Goal-setting system for players

- Set the long term goal:
  - Where do I want to be?
  - Where am I right now?
  - What do I need to get there?
- Write a time frame: How long it will realistically take?
- Determine which areas to work on
- Assess present and future ability levels
- Devise the action steps needed: set some landmarks to help the player log the progress towards the goal.
- Monitor and evaluate progress
Problems and obstacles

- Too many goals
- No re-evaluation
- Immeasurable or too general goals
- No goals or ‘do your best’ goals
- No strategies of achievement
- No adaptation

- Lack of faith in goals
- Academic problems
- Lack of confidence
- Excuses
- Wrong inter-relationships between goals
- Only outcome or result goals
Coaches who do not accept goals think...

- Goals limit the players’ performance
- Performance goals make the players less competitive
- Outcome goals put too much pressure on players
- Goals are innate to the players, if a player doesn’t have goals already it is a waste of time working in goal-setting
What research tell us about goal-setting

• Players with specific and challenging goals had better performance than players with easy goals, ‘do your best goals’ or players with no goals

• Players that use an appropriate goal-setting technique enhanced their intrinsic motivation and improved performance
What research tell us about goal-setting (II)

- Goals preferred by university coaches/players:
  - performance improvement (36%),
  - winning (24%),
  - enjoying (20%).

- Degree of goal difficulty preferred by university coaches/players is:
  - moderately difficult (60%),
  - very difficult (20%),
  - average (20%).
What research tell us about goal-setting (III)

- Effective in 70% to 90% of the situations
- Goal-setting is not the ultimate solution
- Only increase performance by 5%
- Results of goal-setting are influenced by the overall motivation and attitude of the player
- They can’t overcome a negative behaviour of the player towards tennis