

NORTHERN IRELAND
FENCING



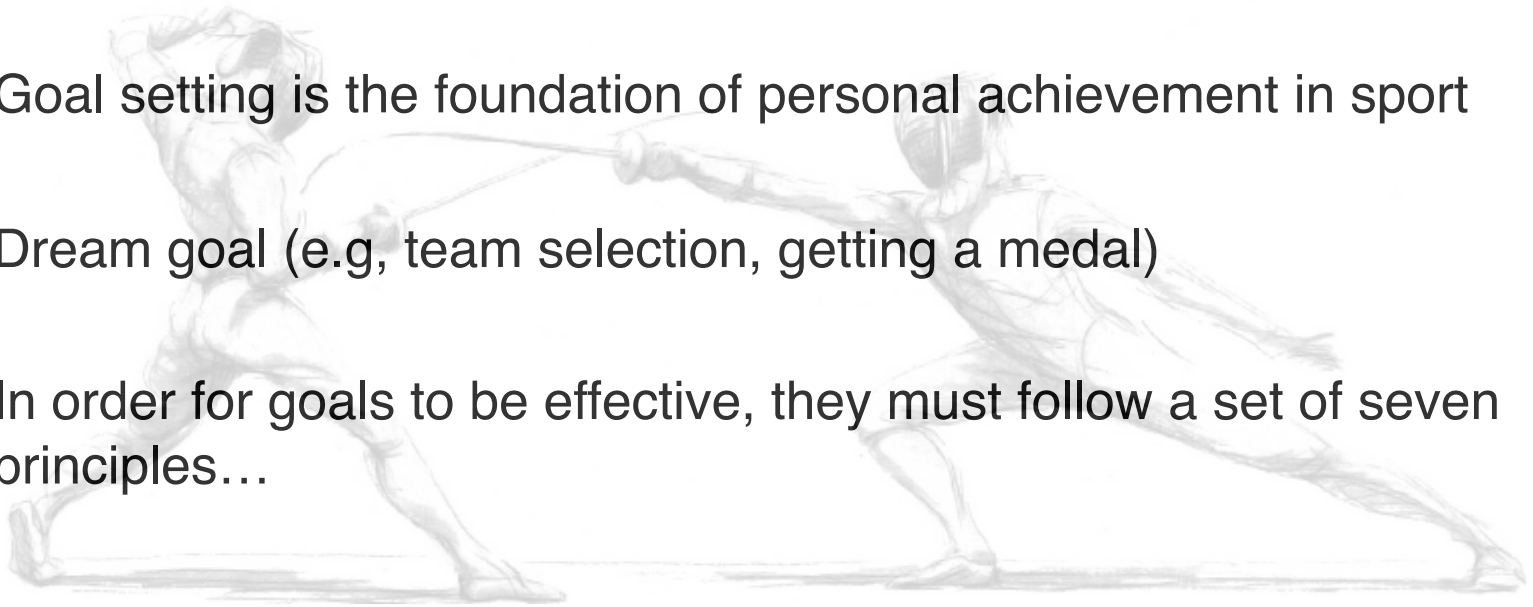
Goal Setting



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Goal Setting in Fencing

- Goal setting is the foundation of personal achievement in sport
- Dream goal (e.g, team selection, getting a medal)
- In order for goals to be effective, they must follow a set of seven principles...



Link Performance Goals to Outcome Goals

- Outcome goals focus on results
(e.g., pool match score, final placing in competition)
- What does your outcome depend on?
 - Your own skill & effort, but what about the skill and effort of your opponent?
- You may fence the best bout of your life, but you will still lose if your opponent is better on the day
- Wanting to win is not enough, because you cannot control all aspects of your outcome – you must know what to do to succeed
- This is the role of Performance Goals

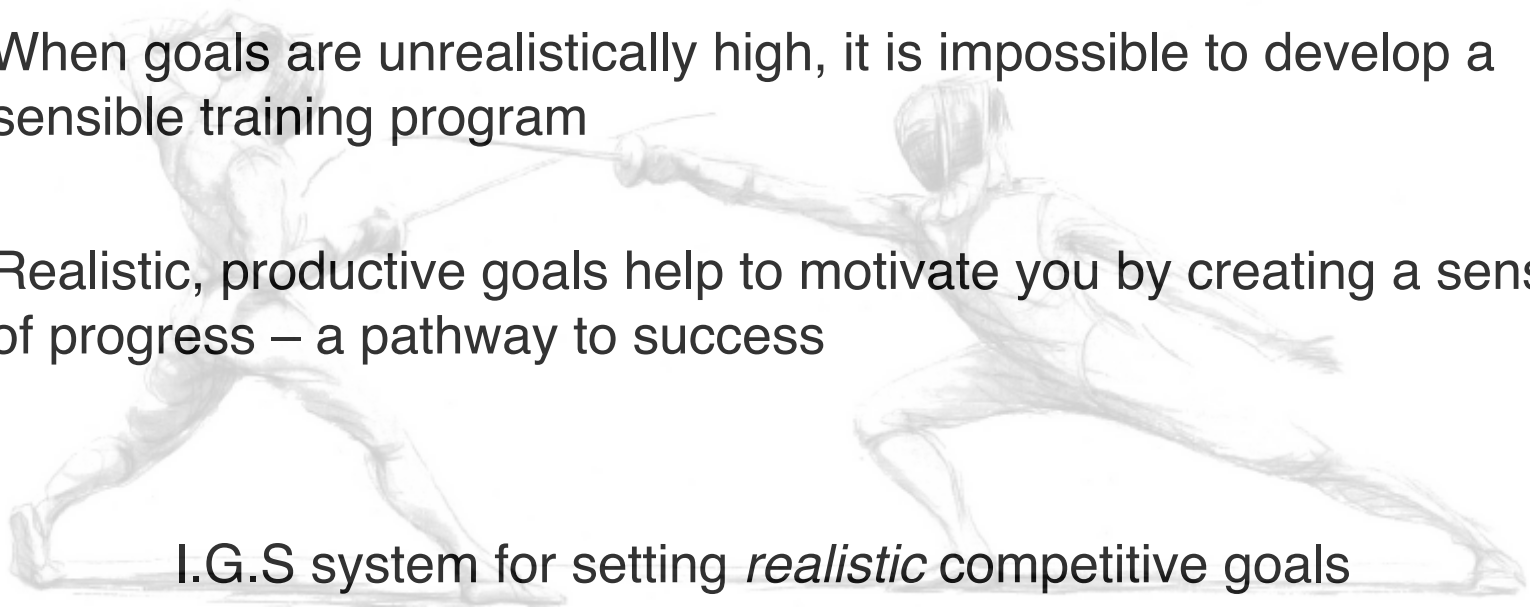
Physical – Mental – Technical – Tactical

These things **ARE** within your control



Set challenging but realistic goals

- The most common error is setting goals that are beyond your ability (e.g., aiming to win when your best result is a L64)
- When goals are unrealistically high, it is impossible to develop a sensible training program
- Realistic, productive goals help to motivate you by creating a sense of progress – a pathway to success



I.G.S system for setting *realistic* competitive goals

Describe goals in language that is positive and specific

- The language of goal setting is crucial
- Using the right words helps to make your goals clear and precise
- General rule – objectives should be phrased in a positive way
- Negative goals will backfire (e.g., **Don't** choke, **Don't** stand still)
- It is no help to give general advice that doesn't tell the athlete what action might be best
- Specific advice helps you focus

Examples:

“Stop attacking into a closed line” – **negative AND specific**

“Stay focused” – **positive, not-specific**

“Don't be stupid!” – **negative, non-specific**

“Wait for a counterattack” – **positive AND specific**

- It is very easy to use this mental training during practice



Progress through Collaboration and Personalisation

- Fencers rely a huge amount on their coach (lessons, motivation, advice)
- Your coach will understand you as a fencer more than anyone else
- Setting goals should be a collaborative effort between you and your coach
- However, you must accept ownership and responsibility for the goals that you agree on.
- You can have the most sensible set of goals in the world, but if you do not accept them as your own, they will be forgotten



Integrate Long-Term, Medium-Term & Short-Term goals

- In order to stay focused, LT, MT and ST goals must work together so that the pathway to your final goal is clear
- Today's goals must connect to the distant goal
- Most athletes progress in stages (e.g., one competitive season)
- This provides you with sensible times to readjust your goals if needed (e.g., make your training more challenging)
- You can use the natural breaks in competitions to reevaluate

Regular Feedback to Adjust Goals

- How do you know if you are meeting your goals?
- Monitor your progress (e.g., training log). This will help you to:
 1. Keep focused
 2. Make adjustments as necessary
 3. Increase your confidence as you succeed
- Work with your coach: You will know what feels right for you, and your coach will bring insight from their experience
- Successful goal-setting is a balance between commitment & flexibility
- Regular communication between you and your coach about the goals you have set and the goals you have reached is key to maintaining this balance



Practice Self-Acceptance

- Ups and downs in sport is inevitable
- You must learn to win **and** learn to lose
- Turn losing in learning. This will help you to keep focused on larger goals
- Self-Acceptance is about honestly acknowledging your strengths and weaknesses
- Knowing these characteristics is linked to setting realistic and personal goals

