

# GO FOR GOALS

**BORED OR RESTLESS? SET YOURSELF SOME GOALS, SAYS DUNCAN BUSBY, AND GET YOUR SHOOTING BACK ON TRACK**

**H**ave you ever found yourself aimlessly shooting arrows with very little focus and no idea as to where your shooting is going? Or found that after a particularly good competition result you lack the drive to continue training or competing? It could be that you aren't setting proper goals for yourself and, as a result, your shooting is starting to lack direction.

We have all felt like this at some point and finding the proper motivation to carry on pushing ourselves can be difficult, so how do you stay positive and continue to make progress in your shooting throughout the highs and lows?

Most of us have life goals, whether that's in our careers, personal lives or hobbies; these dreams keep us moving forward and push us to succeed. Archery is no exception, as in life, we also need goals in our shooting; things we would like to achieve and accomplish. It's these dreams that keep us practicing and striving to improve, but it's all too easy to lose sight of them.

In the months leading up to the Commonwealth Games I was singularly focused on what I wanted to achieve in both the run-up to the event and at the games themselves. My drive to train harder and longer was stronger than it ever had been before, but once I got myself onto the podium and the hype and excitement of winning had died down, I lost all direction.

The indoor season following that was incredibly frustrating. Although I had just achieved a career high in a sport I love, I couldn't focus or motivate myself to perform as I had no new goals to attain. Then, conversely, the disappointment of that season hindered my desire to shoot even further; I needed to reassess the direction I wanted my shooting to go in.

Competition success can be as equally stifling as a negative result if you aren't setting proper goals for yourself, so in this article I want to look at the goals you should set to ensure that you maintain your focus and drive throughout each shooting season and into the next.

Firstly you need to understand the different types of goals you can set and how each one can affect you...

## OUTCOME GOALS

These goals are based purely on the outcome of a particular event or result, such as winning a tournament or qualifying for a team. They can be based around your current season, or be more long-term and something you want to achieve many years down the line.

Outcome goals are the most common type of goal archers aspire to because they offer a very immediate result, however, they rely heavily on not just your own abilities to perform in that instance, but on the abilities of your competition too. Because this type of goal directly relates to performances outside of your control it can set you up for failure, even if you shoot the best you've ever done you could still 'fail' because someone else out-shot you.

You should only use outcome goals for motivation as they're useful for maintaining



**AFTER THE EXCITEMENT OF A BIG WIN HAS DIED DOWN, DUNCAN SAYS IT'S EASY TO LOSE FOCUS**

**OUTCOME GOALS ARE GREAT MOTIVATION, BUT ACHIEVING THEM CAN OFTEN BE DEPENDENT ON YOUR OPPOSITION**



drive and focus during training. Allow yourself to dream, but don't base your future happiness and attitude towards the sport on their outcome. Remember that they should inspire you to achieve, not discourage you when you are unable to fulfil them.

### PROCESS GOALS

These goals are based on improving your own skill set, whether mental or physical. They encourage you to identify the areas of your shooting that you feel are holding you back and then make the necessary changes. So if you want to develop your release execution, or learn to better control your nerves during a tournament, a process goal will allow you to focus on that specific area and, as you have ultimate control over its outcome, it's an empowering and positive type of goal to have.

For most of us it's fairly easy to come up with a long list of things we'd like to work on to improve our game, but it's best to focus on only one mental or physical goal at a time as it's easy to become overwhelmed and lose motivation.

You should also push yourself to work through your process goals in a practical space of time, don't set long-term and leisurely timeframes. Once you have made one improvement move on to the next. That way, you'll always feel like you are making progress and your drive to succeed will remain high.

Remember when choosing a process goal to have a plan of how you are going to achieve

it, and find the technical or psychological information you need to fulfil your goal before you get started on working on it because there's nothing worse than feeling powerless to make the improvements you're entirely capable of making.

### PERFORMANCE GOALS

Finally, these goals focus on improving your own performance and are based on your past results. Whether you want to improve your PB or shoot a six gold end at a longer distance, a performance goal tracks your progress and motivates you to improve.

It's good to have both short- and long-term performance goals so that you always have something to aim for. The goals you set must be a challenge, but ultimately attainable. It would be highly de-motivating if you set yourself an immediate target of scoring 1400 on a WA1440 round when your current PB is 1250, but achieving a score of 1300 is not out of the question, so your shorter term goals should lead up to your longer term aspirations.

However, as with outcome goals, performance goals are often not purely dependent on your own shooting, other factors play a part and can have a huge impact on your results. Focusing on performance goals too much, particularly during practice, can distract you from training with the correct form and mental game, so pay attention to how helpful it is to your shooting and adapt

your goal until it positively motivates you to improve.

Remember that, when deciding on your goals, you should make sure you set one from each of the three categories, as each one is essential to the other. For instance, if you set yourself an outcome goal of winning a specific tournament, you will also need to set some process goals in order to improve your shooting enough to win and then some performance goals that will allow you to track your progress up to the tournament.

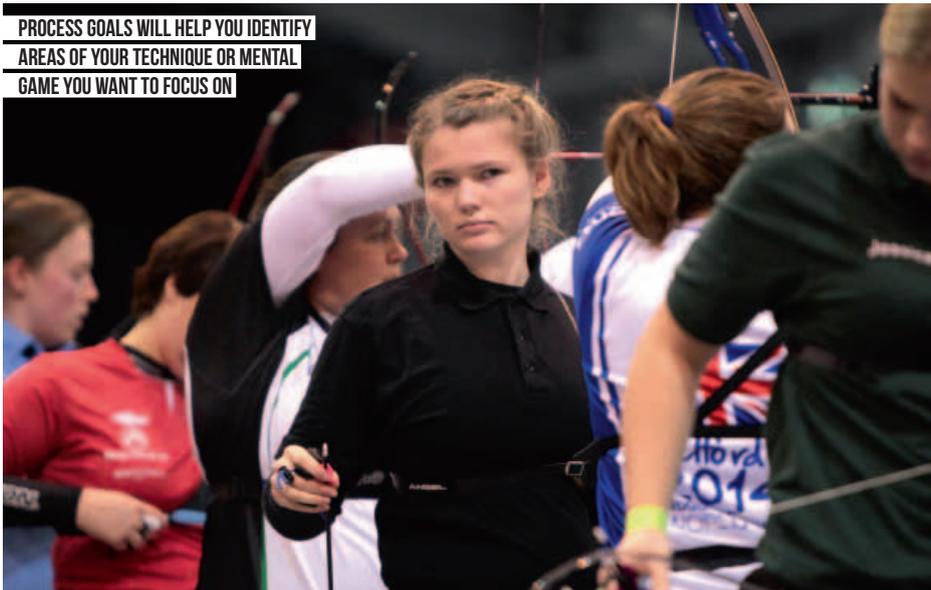
It's important to occasionally re-assess your goals; you cannot predict every outcome and events outside of your control can have a huge impact on your results. Whether you have suffered an injury or you just haven't had the time to train, if you are not achieving what you set out to do don't punish yourself.

You shouldn't use this option as an alternative to hard work and persistence though; adjusting your goals to easier ones when you've had one or two bad results will not help you to improve and you'll ultimately feel disappointed with yourself.

Set yourself new goals as and when you need to or you may find that once again your shooting will lack progress and direction. With the right goals you can make a positive path through the highs and lows of archery. So start the New Year with a new resolution and realise your archery dreams. ☺

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PROCESS GOALS WILL HELP YOU IDENTIFY  
AREAS OF YOUR TECHNIQUE OR MENTAL  
GAME YOU WANT TO FOCUS ON



PERFORMANCE GOALS ARE BASED ON  
YOUR RESULTS, BUT CAN DISTRACT  
YOU FROM PRACTICING WELL IF YOU  
FOCUS ON THEM TOO MUCH



YOUR GOALS WILL CHANGE TO REFLECT NEW  
ACHIEVEMENTS OR LIFE CHANGES AS YOU GO

