

Goal Setting

June is a 'crossroads' month for many runners. The spring season is winding down and after a rest period (highly recommended to allow your mental and physical batteries to re-charge), it's time to start thinking about training and race goals for the autumn racing season, and the PEI Marathon weekend. Goals are an important component of a fitness program. In the simplest terms, goals are positive stepping stones to your success as a runner. They can also serve as the basis for your training and racing plans.

When it comes to goal setting, I find that all too often, we limit ourselves to a single outcome goal: To beat a particular time. If we beat that time, great, but if we don't, that particular race (or even the entire training cycle) can be erroneously deemed a failure, when in fact, many favorable improvements have taken place for the runner.

Running can be even more rewarding if we allow ourselves to be creative with goal-setting and select multiple goals that are well defined, realistic, and achievable. In so doing, we can keep tabs on our improvements and become better, and happier runners for it.

Some factors to consider with goal setting:

- Goals can be a measure of either outcome (race finish time, or finishing place) or performance (run even pace, finish strong, hydrate properly, etc.). Performance goals focus on improving the particular skills and techniques of running/training, and outcome goals focus on the finished product. Try to establish both types of goals for your training and racing.
- Goals should be short-term (per run, per week), intermediate (weekly/monthly), and long term (training cycle/year). Try to set goals for each time frame.
- Goals should be clearly defined (write them out), measurable, tailored to your abilities, and range from easy to challenging.
- Goals should be re-visited and updated routinely.
- And most importantly, goals achieved should be rewarded (I'm a big fan of any reward that involves ice cream!), and goals missed should be appreciated as learning experiences and inspire you for the next round of goal setting.

Good luck. And as always, send in any training questions you have.

Happy Trails!

Coach Jack