

Making Dreams Come True

Dan Freigang Ph.D

Josh Wolff spun out of pressure to set up a goal to beat Mexico in the bitter cold qualifier for an American victory. I have never buried a winning goal against Mexico but I can beat Josh in a shootout. Now you are probably saying to yourself, “Dano, are you loopy or what?” All I have to do is blindfold Josh and he’s done. How can you score if you don’t know what to shoot at? In other words, how can you be successful if you don’t know what you want? Without clear goals we waste time, procrastinate, and never achieve our potential. On the positive side, you can achieve what you believe. You must have visions and dreams!

The Meaning of Dreams – all of us have dreams. They are not often spoken aloud because these dreams can start out in our minds as outrageous. Yes, we dream of becoming a pilot, a doctor, or a musician. We have fun imagining ourselves playing in the MLS or burying the game winner in a World Cup shootout. At first, these visions are far away but call to our hearts and minds. All of us start with normal fears and doubts about our dreams. But we may also have enough confidence to make small daily progressions toward our dream. Over time, little things come true. We find ways to practice skills at home, find high quality games to play in and when the time comes to take a World Cup PK we have practiced this scenario a hundred times before. Like Josh, we have made our dreams our daily reality. Dreams can lead us into action.

Making a Map for Success – by clarifying goals, we can focus our training. When we do this we create a map for success. Identifying the dream comes first. Use imagination and let a dream goal come to your mind. At first it may seem far away and impossible to reach. Let the dream sit in your mind for a week to see if it is something you want. If the attraction is strong then begin the journey with a first small step. Break it apart into smaller pieces. Try to look at dreams first in yearly, then monthly, then in weekly chunks. These smaller pieces are easier to start and control. Setting goals in the preseason and then forgetting about them is where goal-setting falls apart. A map can help keep you focused.

Map-Making Skills – daily training should be enjoyable, not a grind.

Great players know this. By using their dreams as a map they are in control. Feeling in control motivates us to improve and try harder. It’s important to realize we all need to spend a lot of time creating, testing, and revisiting our dreams. Writing out your dreams, posting them at home, keeping your finger on the pulse will help motivation and enjoyment.

The Dream Never Dies – what happens if the dream changes? It is normal to change the focus of your life. You may find a goal you set for yourself two years ago is not really what you want. Change is a desirable part of our life and it’s OK to rewrite your map. We will all make mistakes so allow yourself some flexibility in achieving goals. That

puts you in control and improves motivation. Finally, improvement takes time. Be patient when you encounter setbacks. Use them as stepping stones for your map.

Maximizing Motivation – targets set too high or too low will hurt motivation. This is where coaches can help set up smaller, achievable targets to provide success every day. There is a simple technique called SMART that will help you achieve your dreams.

S - Use specific small progressions and goals

M - Try to measure your feel, play and performance to gauge improvements

A - Adjust your daily routine to fit the demand and your needs

R - Realistic goals starting from today that are your personal standards are best

T - Use some form of a time line to help push yourself and test but never let your dreams die

Dan Freigang Ph.D Caldan@earthlink.net