

## CHAPTER

# 4

## Plan to Achieve Your Goals

*My career goal is to be the best tennis player that I can. I don't want to look back with any regrets. I never want to say what if I'd done this or that.*

Jim Courier\*

Once you have set some realistic goals you are more likely to achieve them if you plan an **action programme**. This is quite easy to do and no more difficult than planning to go on a journey for your holidays. Some plans may, however, be more complex than others, depending on the starting point for the journey and how far away your goals are at the destination.

If, for example, you want to plan to become the Olympic Champion your action programme could be very detailed and complex with a time-scale of four to five years, if not longer. Alternatively, if all you want to do is to learn a backhand clear for use in competition, your programme could be quite simple with a short time-scale of three months.

If you plan a long-term programme to achieve some distant goals, you will find that there will be a number of short-term goals which you will need to achieve in order to reach your final long-term goal. To become an Olympic Champion you may, for example, aim to get into the national side or to increase your position in the world rankings by beating higher-ranked opponents. To achieve this you may in the first year decide to improve your fitness and technical skill and to enter specific tournaments in order to improve your results against certain opponents. Your short-term goals will therefore be to improve your fitness, technical skill and competition performance.

If you are a club player you may decide that your long-term goal will be to get into the club team next season. You decide that your short-term goals will be to improve your serve and return of serve, and your defence and positional play in level and mixed doubles. To do this you decide to

set a time-scale of one year.

There are as many goals as there are things to learn and to achieve. Only you will be able to decide what you want to achieve. Your plan will provide you with a positive means to attain them. Although other players' plans may differ from yours with regard to their action programme, the particular journey they will travel to reach their short- and long-term goals will usually follow the same procedure described below. Use it to plan your own journey.

Remember, however, that when you plan something you are actually trying to predict what will happen in the future. You will know from your own experience that sometimes things do not always work out as you had planned no matter how carefully you mapped them out. My advice, therefore, is to be prepared to adapt and change your plans as you go along and to remain flexible. To be flexible you will need to make periodic checks to see how things are progressing. If you decide that things are going well then carry on. If not, make the necessary changes. What is exciting about planning to become a better player is that you are entering into unknown territory which should make your journey quite an adventure. I know you will enjoy your travels.

### PROCEDURE IN PLANNING AN ACTION PROGRAMME

#### 1 ESTABLISH YOUR STARTING POINTS

You should already have some idea of how good you are, what you can do and what your weaknesses are. If you do not know this then now is the time to find out. You have two options in establishing your starting point. You can give yourself a

\* *Guardian*, May 26th, 1992.

*complete badminton check-up* – a thorough examination of *all* parts of your play – or a *partial check-up* – a thorough examination of *some* part of your play.

If your ambitions are high you will need a complete badminton check-up – you cannot afford to have any weaknesses so you must ensure that everything is checked over and improved as necessary. If you want to make the club team and you have decided that your defence needs putting right then you will need a partial check-up only and improvements will be made as required.

## 2 ORGANISE YOUR BADMINTON CHECK-UP

You will need to examine your performance in every aspect of your game (see chapter 2 and the diagram on page 22). You should examine your play in practice and in competition and decide how good or not you are. Please refer to the following for specific areas of your game.

- your technical skill – refer to chapters 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12,
- your tactical skill – refer to chapters 9, 19, 20
- your fitness – refer to chapter 13
- your mental attitude – refer to chapter 15

Ultimately it is your performance when playing in competition that is all-important. In order to check your performance in the game you should have a good understanding of how to play good standard badminton even if you cannot do so yet. Refer to chapters 19 and 20 for a detailed explanation of how to play singles, doubles and mixed doubles.

## 3 ANALYSE YOUR PERFORMANCE

You will need to obtain information about your performance then analyse it to decide what and how you need to improve. Read chapter 18 for advice on how to do this.

## 4 RECONSIDER YOUR GOALS!

You know what goals you want to achieve and you have now worked out what you need to do to achieve them. Before you go ahead and plan your action programme just think whether your goals are realistic. Read through pages 24–7 again to make sure. If they are not then alter them; if they are then go ahead and plan your programme.

## 5 PLAN YOUR ACTION PROGRAMME

It will be relatively easy to plan a short-term programme with a single goal, e.g. to make the club team. It will be more difficult to plan a long-term programme including a number of short-term programmes. This will need some careful planning.

## 6 DECIDE ON THE CONTENT OF THE PROGRAMME

Decide what the programme will include and then write down what you will do in each area of your performance. A long-term comprehensive programme should include the following parts:

- technical skill practices
- tactical skill practices
- individual specific practices
- studies
- fitness training
- mental training
- informal competition
- formal competition
- competition results
- self-analysis forms
- opponent analysis forms
- programme evaluation.

## 7 WORK OUT HOW YOU WILL ORGANISE THE PROGRAMME

You cannot do everything at once so work out in what order you will achieve your goals. You may decide for example that you will concentrate mainly on improving your fitness first. When your fitness levels improve you could then switch the emphasis to your skill improvement.

## 8 DECIDE ON THE TIME-SCALE

How long will you allow to achieve the shorter-term goals? Make a calculated guess and be prepared to adapt the programme slightly if your guess is wrong. Your journey should be an adventure so be flexible in your planning.

## 9 WRITE OUT THE PROGRAMME

Keep a logbook to record the programme.

## 10 EVALUATE YOUR ACTION PROGRAMME

Check your action programme periodically and decide whether it is effective in achieving your goals. If it is not then alter it as necessary.