

# The Soulful, Goalful, Woeful Goal Story

By Chris Lembeck

**I**n the 21st century of athletics, simply because we know what we know, it's somewhere between ridiculous and reckless to attempt an honorable challenge without the use of goals. Goals, at least in the mind of Guru, due their irrefutable effectiveness are pretty much a necessity in today's sports world, and not using them akin to playing football without a helmet - I suppose you could try, but why would you?

Quite simply, goals work. Moreover, they're universal, powerful and beneficial tools with simply too much supporting evidence to refute. No matter the endeavor, there's probably going to be time and work involved, and goals activate and enable us to maximize the benefit from each second and every ounce. Moreover, goals maintain and help keep a positive attitude which in today's sports world is one of the shiniest tools in the success shed.

Some set goals within the physical realm like wanting to increase the number of pull-ups by ten by next month; or amid the technical realm by adding a nice, new takedown series by next February, but goals in the way of a Guru clearly and categorically fall under the mental realm, because they're created and achieved in-mind and on paper long before unveiled to the public. Seems thought often precedes action.

When you actually get down to the nitty-gritty, goals provide us with much needed focus.

In today's world, there are oodles of distractions and infinite options on how to spend one's time - some productive, some not-so. Therefore, the two key and operative words become focus and control.

Moreover if wanting to benefit optimally from their considerable power, there are just three main keys to know.

- 1. Goals should be written in proper, precise and present tense.**
- 2. Goals should be accompanied by an effective image that accurately represents.**
- 3. Goals are best posted generously throughout life to satisfy the need of repetition.**

Below is a personal and emotionally charged story that perhaps demonstrates not only the true power of goals, but also the huge temperament of goals. I hope it sheds some light.

My freshman year in high school I unfortunately failed to qualify for the state tournament but certainly went to watch and cheer on my teammates. I loved every minute of that individual Minnesota State Tournament and felt totally inspired as I watched all the action from the stands with keen attention and focus.

Vividly, I remember watching one of Minnesota's best two-time state champions. He was amazing and finished the year undefeated and was seriously like a god to me. I could definitely imagine being like him, but figured imagining was as close as I'd get.

When I returned home from the tournament, I told my awesome and beloved Coach Dave Arens I wanted to be just like this god: a *2X Undefeated State Champion*.

He told me it was possible, but said I'd need to do one thing and he said it with extra 'coach' in his voice. "Yes Chris, I believe you can do that but you will need to make a commitment." I heard, understood and with a short, but sincere thought-moment, eagerly and excitedly told him I was "in". On that day, I believe my past, present and future all changed for the better.

As it goes, I immediately and sincerely made the big decision to com-

mit and set my mind to it. I did all the proper things I'd heard one should do if wanting to be a state champion, beginning with writing a goal! Thoughtfully, I sat down, pondered a bit and then with paper and pen carefully crafted my masterpiece. Here's exactly what I wrote:

"I want to be a *2X UNDEFEATED High School State Champion*." Shakespeare would be envious. It was perfect.

After I wrote it, I heard we should as often as possible, think about it, dreamed about it and even prayed about it. In class, at times I would miss parts of lectures because I was imagining how it would look and feel to achieve.

Often, even though hard to detect, I'd be having a conversation with a friend or whomever, and my mind would routinely wander. They might say something like "I went to the dance". I'd hear the word 'to', which became 'two', and then '2'. From there, all I heard and saw in my mind was a pleasurable picture of me on top of the podium as a *2X Undefeated State Champion*.

In geography class, we'd be talking about the states in the United States of America. I'd miss all the details regarding Georgia; that it produces peaches, its economic situation, population or elevation above sea level. All I heard and subsequently envisioned after the word "State" was me standing on top of the podium as a *2X Undefeated State Champion*. Minnesota, not Georgia.

All day, every day was like that. It was pretty amazing actually. I was obviously totally fixated and in tune with my goal.

Properly, I committed my summer moving forward and toward achieving my lofty goal. With the help and support of my awesome parents, I took some serious action. I practiced religiously with Coach Arens and

teammates three times a week and wrestled many weekends at the University of Minnesota and many other places around the state and country.

The next year I was still quite poised, prepared and focused. The season went like a dream. After three days of competition and all the smoke cleared, I stood on top of the podium with a puffy left knee, a black right eye, but an unblemished 33-0 record. I was now Minnesota's 98 pound state champion, and as you might imagine, I was totally thrilled! It was my first state title and to this day probably one of my most cherished wrestling accomplishments. Surprisingly, the whole deal was actually much easier than I thought possible, and rarely did I truly need to actually apply my whole self (although I did) and many times didn't even break a sweat. I learned via action if you do things the right way, set a goal and follow the lead of an amazing coach, parents and teammates seemingly difficult challenges can become way easier than we ever imagined.

As it went, the summer following my sophomore season was much like the one before.

I worked habitually, ran similar number of days and distances, often more, lifted heavier weights and wrestled an equal or greater number of tournaments with great workout partners. And as usual, I did quite well. During that summer, I was blessed and honored to win the state freestyle and Greco-Roman titles, AAU Nationals, AAU Grand Nationals, Jr. Olympics again in both freestyle and Greco-Roman and earned a prestigious spot on the United States World Team. Later that July, after training at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, I earned the spot and proudly represented the U.S. and competed at the World Championships in Stockholm, Sweden and earned the world

**"If you knew how to get what you want, you'd already have it."  
~J Robinson**

silver medal.

Without a doubt, I was reasonably if not more prepared and poised for my junior season in high school.

Although it went relatively well, I must say something was amiss. From the onset, the whole thing seemed a bit off. I could feel it, I believe my Coach, parents and teammates sensed it, but never could we put a finger on it. As it went, I still won many matches, my hand was raised often, and complimentary articles were written about some of the wrestling achievements. Yes, again I was blessed with fine success, but once again, it simply wasn't the same.

Something was definitely wrong. Seemed instead of winning by a quick fall or 14-2, I was winning 6-1 or 5-2. How could this be? I was a year older, a year stronger, a year better and the competition was virtually the exact same.

Leap quickly forward to the 1983 Minnesota State Tournament and walk through the doors at the Minneapolis Downtown Civic Center. There I am down on the mats in the Bloomington Kennedy blue and gold looking like a champion I was expected to be. Cool, black international style shoes acquired in a trade with a Russian from last summer, strings all laced up even and tight, hair feathered and neat, muscles toned and popping. Probably more than a few wrestling fans in the stands thought I looked like a lock for my second title.

To make a long story short, I won my first two bouts, but in the third, came up short losing to a strong wrestler from Rosemount High School. I lost by a point I think, 4-3 perhaps. Although it broke my heart, I did exactly as trained and finished respectfully placing 3rd in the state. My record at the end of the day was 35-1.

As you might imagine, for some time thereafter, and even into adulthood I often analyzed this unfortunate event because it forever rubbed me a bit wrong. The reason I believe I lost that match might shock you,

and at the same time hopefully teach us something about goals.

You see the reason I lost, and for some this might be somewhat hard to see for a bit, but the reason was ground in that fateful, but somewhat unfortunate goal I set way back following my freshman season.

Can you see it yet? In a strange way, it comes down to math of all things!

As you might recall, I was a freshman entering my sophomore year of high school. And my goal and major purpose in life was to be a **2X Undefeated State Champion**.

Ahhhh. And there it is. Did you see the glaring error? I felt so dumb.

For certain, I was somewhat on the right path via writing a goal to help achieve, but as it turns out, I mistakingly prepared all my heart, mind and soul on becoming a **TWO Time State Champion** - but hey!!!!...there were **THREE** years left to wrestle!!! I was off by **ONE!!!**

This seemingly small, subtle but truly colossal error left this **HUGE** gap, problem, snag, snafu, blunder and huge imbalance in my over-all plan, mind and wrestling psyche. The irrefutably and highly problematic mixed-message caused confounding confusion in my young and inexperienced brain. My mind simply wasn't clear on what I wanted it to do, ergo the feeling of being "off". This, believe it or not, in my mind, literally, was the reason I went through the entire season feeling a tad off, the reason the eagle wasn't soaring and the reason I lost that dreadful match and unfortunately settled for two titles, instead of the much preferred three.

The Painful Lesson

*Chris Lembeck is a coach, writer, motivational speaker and creator of Optimized Wrestling Systems which teaches wrestling in both the physical and mental realm. The above except comes from his new book, **90% Mental...The Way of a Wrestling Guru**.*



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# Coach Scott Goodale on Rutgers Wrestling and the New World of College Athletics

This Coaches Corner article is sponsored by Defense Soap

By Eddie Goldman

**F**or Scott Goodale, now in his eighth season as the Rutgers head wrestling coach, only the former is an option.

This season, after competing in the EIWA, Rutgers, whose main campus is in New Brunswick, New Jersey, has entered the Big Ten Conference. While his university administration's motivations for changing athletic conferences had more to do with the money and politics of football than anything else, this move has raised the bar for Rutgers wrestling. And Coach Goodale is more than ready for it.

"The university decided to go Big Ten, so therefore we didn't have much say. It is what it is," he said.

Noting that the Big Ten is "the best wrestling conference in the country," he stated: "We're excited about that. Nothing's really changed except for the fact our schedule's changed quite a bit. The approach remains the same. We feel really, really good about our preseason. We feel really good about what we did over the summer. We're excited about where we're at."

He stressed, "We feel this is the best team we've fielded since I've been here for eight years. So we're putting a pretty good product out on the mat, and that's exciting."

That team includes returning All-American Anthony Perrotti, a red-shirt junior who wrestles at 157 pounds, and who was the team's first All-American since 2002. Also returning are two NCAA qualifiers from last season, red-shirt junior heavyweight Billy Smith and junior Ken Theobald, who wrestles at 149. Two notable newcomers to the lineup are redshirt freshman Anthony Ashnault at 141 pounds, and redshirt junior Andrew Campolattano, a transfer from Ohio State, at 197 pounds. Both Ashnault and Campolattano had been four-time high school state champions in New Jersey.

He expects even more success this season.

"Wrestling is really predicated on your confidence, and your belief that you can win close matches and win big matches," he said. "And Perrotti has gotten a whole lot better since the national tournament. And it's strictly because he's confident, becoming an All-American, being the first guy to bust down that door. We've had some really accomplished wrestlers come here and not achieve that success. So it was good for Anthony to be able to do that. It's a weight lifted off this program's back, this coaching staff's back."

For his other two NCAA qualifiers, he said, "Theobald and Smith are two guys that look at Anthony and say, 'Well, if this guy did it, there's no reason why I can't do it.'" Smith is "a big man who can really, really wrestle." And, "All three of those guys, we feel, will be there at the end. We also feel really good about Anthony Ashnault, who made our University World Team this past spring."

With their entry into the Big Ten comes a new schedule.

"Obviously that schedule gets a lot more challenging come January 2nd when we start the Big Ten and we open with the University of Iowa, but we look forward to the opportunity and we love the fact we're in this conference. It makes things exciting around here, for sure," Coach Goodale said. It also doesn't get easier for them, as they host Minnesota on January 11, four-time defending NCAA Div. I champion Penn State on January 16, and Ohio State on February 1.

The Rutgers wrestling fan base agrees with Coach Goodale's assessment that this is "a great home schedule."

He said, "It's no coincidence our season ticket sales are through the roof right now," with at least the major dual meets selling out. "It's a great opportunity. It will boost our program as far as being more visible."

With so many New Jersey-born and bred wrestlers on the team, the local fans have responded.

"The New Jersey fan is very fanatical," he said. "They love this sport. They're also very excited about who they're going to have an opportunity to watch wrestle."

But with that support comes high expectations from the fans.

"The fans are great, but with that comes a lot of expectations," he said. "A lot of the fans think because they were successful in high school, they're automatically going to

be successful in college. It doesn't always work out that way." The reason these high school standouts may lose in Division I is, "There's nothing wrong. It's just the competition level is so high."

Yet another area demanding change is how to adapt to the O'Bannon decision, which mandates that top colleges compensate at least some of the athletes in some sports. Many people fear that because of this, the existence of programs in so-called "non-revenue" sports like wrestling may be in jeopardy.

Although Coach Goodale said that wrestling "is a blue collar sport" and does not think college wrestlers should be paid, he is fully aware that wrestling needs to adapt to this new situation.

"There needs to be a sense of urgency, and it needs to start now," he emphasized. "There should be some active measures taken right now to make sure programs are being saved and programs are being funded and programs can stand on their own."

While he feels his program is safe, the effects of this conference reshuffling and the O'Bannon decision are converging. To adapt, college wrestling must bring in more revenue.

"That's our goal," he said. "We want to be a revenue-making sport."

Things are getting very, very interesting this season for Rutgers wrestling.

*Eddie Goldman is host and producer of the No Holds Barred podcast, at [eddiegoldman.com](http://eddiegoldman.com).*

**"Adapt or perish, now as ever, is Nature's inexorable imperative."**

**- H. G. Wells, *The Mind at the End of its Tether* (1945), p. 19**

# COACH TOM BRANDS AND THE IOWA WRESTLING ENSEMBLE

*This Coaches Corner article is sponsored by Defense Soap*

By Eddie Goldman

**T**hey are always contenders, and they are always exciting to watch. But there is no telling, until the NCAA championships are over in March, of course, just how long the Iowa Hawkeyes will remain atop the Division I wrestling rankings. Despite having won 23 NCAA Division I wrestling championships, this storied team has not finished first since the 2009-10 season. And the stated and restated goal of their fiery head coach, Tom Brands, now in his ninth season at the helm of his alma mater's wrestling team, is to end the four-year reign of Penn State and to win team title number 24.

To accomplish just that, however, he will have to do so with a team which, at least early in the season, has no individual wrestler ranked number one in his weight class. Nor does this team include any returning national champions.

So while the team does have several returning All-Americans, Coach Brands is not exactly viewing Iowa's ascension to the top in March as a foregone conclusion.

As for these early season rankings, he said in a phone interview, "I think that you keep it in context like anything, and we have to do a lot of work before we get there in the end."

He continued, "There's a lot of parity out there, at least that's what people are excited about, fans and pundits are excited about. And I've never been a fan of parity. And what we do is the same whether we're ranked number one or number three. What we have to do is, we have to continue to get better every day in such a way that we widen the gap. There's no automatic, but there's also no reason why this team can't be the champion at the end."

He does believe that this team has a number of wrestlers who could win national titles, including: heavyweight senior and two-time All-American Bobby Telford, 133-pound sophomore and returning All-American Cody Clark, 174-pound senior and two-time All-American Mike Evans, 125-pound sophomore and bronze medalist in freestyle wrestling at the 2014 Junior World Championships Thomas Gilman, and several others.

But even with the expectations of top-level performances by his ensemble of a team, he said, "What we have to do is continue to get better."

While the main attention during the college wrestling season is on winning team and individual championships, wrestling is a year-round activity for Iowa's top wrestlers. And Coach Brands, himself an Olympic gold medalist, world champion, and three-time NCAA Division I national champion, wouldn't have it any other way.

"It goes without saying in our program, and of course other programs as well, that these guys are geared to win national, world, and Olympic championships, and that means collegiate and international wrestling," he said. "In the off-season, these guys are a little more fanatical. They really crave that competition all year, and they know that they need to move forward in

the international style and continue to get better so that when they graduate they've positioned themselves, or even before they graduate, they've positioned themselves to be the man, to be the world and Olympic champ."

Trying to accomplish any of this takes place while numerous changes are under way in college wrestling, including in the conference structures.

"First of all, the Big Ten is no longer regional," he said, now with 14 teams. "Now you're west of the Missouri River and you're going east all the way to Rutgers and Maryland and Penn State."

While many consider the Big Ten to be the strongest wrestling conference, this expansion poses problems for wrestling. This season, Iowa went from having eight to nine Big Ten dual meets, in a season whose length has not changed.

"We can't squeeze out these other rivalries that have been around for 70 years or longer," he said, such as those with Oklahoma State and Iowa State of the Big 12. "Is that the best thing for this conference? I'm not so sure."

While the growth of digital cable means that more American homes than ever can watch wrestling on the Big Ten Network, wrestling must compete for that coverage not only with the two most popular college sports, football and men's basketball, but also ice hockey and women's basketball.

"I think if we can get some more pizzazz in there, where things aren't so tight and coaches are coaching a more entertaining style, I think we can get it to where our ratings start to separate ourselves from ice hockey and women's basketball. But it's going to take some work," he said.

"It's a lot more fun when you're scoring 12, 13, 14, 15 points than it is when you're scoring two or three points. It's a lot more fun for everybody," he added.

As an example, he cited one of the greatest college wrestling matches of all time: the 1982 NCAA 177-pound finals between future Olympic champions Mark Schultz of Oklahoma and Ed Banach of Iowa, which Schultz won 16-8.

"Would you rather watch Schultz and Banach, put that in your VCR, or would you rather put Duke and Howe, 2-0 in 15 minutes?" he asked. "I've seen that match 20 times. I'd put it in again."

And there is a key not only to protecting wrestling, but also to expanding its appeal: "Entertainment will bring in fans," he said, in a seemingly obvious statement, but one which is not well understood by those in charge of the world's oldest sport.

Whether or not Iowa wins another team title this season or crowns more individual champions, this program remains one of the crown jewels of college wrestling. Love them or hate them, it certainly will be fun to watch them just go for it.

*Eddie Goldman is host and producer of the No Holds Barred podcast, at [eddiegoldman.com](http://eddiegoldman.com).*

