

Post Season Evaluation

By Susan Ellis

Perhaps this article should be titled Preparing for Next Season, because that's really what a post season evaluation is all about.

Hopefully, for most of you, you had a great season and everything went as you wanted it to. For some of you, the season may have had some ups and downs, and perhaps you didn't achieve all your goals.

Your post season evaluation is your chance to reflect on what went right, what went wrong, and to come up with a plan for an even better performance in the following season. Writing all this information down helps to make things clearer for you so you know which direction to head in. That's why we have street signs and maps – to help us get where we want to go.

What should you evaluate?

Hopefully you kept a set of clearly defined goals through the season. These may have included times goals, technical goals, training goals, physical training, mental training, strategy and tactics like learning to pass inside, having more patience in racing to stick to strategies, making certain teams or standards, social goals like keeping in touch with friends met at competitions. If you didn't write them down at the beginning of the season write out your best recollections of what you wanted to do.

How should you evaluate?

For now, just work through the goals like a check list – simply writing yes, for goal met, or no, for goal not met, or putting a percentage on how much of the goal you think you accomplished.

Once you have finished that, go back to each goal and write out in as much detail as possible, what you did towards accomplishing the goal. For instance, if you had set a goal of learning to effectively pass inside, write out what steps you took during the season to help you learn this. Did you practice this a number of times in practice, in racing, in imagery? If you really did not do anything to improve this, write that down as well. The only way to set an effective plan in motion for next year is to be totally honest with yourself right now.

Next you need to determine if the components you tried worked for you, or if you need to change, and how much of it you need to change. Maybe there were some things you did that really did work well, so you may want to keep those in your plan for next season. Don't throw it all away. Keep the good stuff for next year, and modify or toss the stuff that didn't work. Again, you need to be really honest with yourself. Simply doing one inside passing session right before nationals and tossing it because it didn't work may not be the right thing to do. Maybe you need to make sure that component is part of your practice plan at least 3 sessions per month next year to be really effective.

Which brings us to the next step – Next year's plan.

Start by writing out a short summary of your goals. Your goals should include both short term, interim, and long term goals. Put time lines on your goals.

Then determine how you will know when you meet your goals. When will you know when you can effectively pass inside on a consistent basis?

Now expand on your goals to say specifically what you will do to achieve it.

Example:

Improve squatting strength to 120 lbs

- Assess in August, November, February
- 100 lbs X 6 reps, 110 lbs X 6 reps, 120 lbs X 6 reps
- Get strength program from coach
- Strength training beginning June
- June-August – 3 X week – Monday, Wednesday, Friday
- September-February – 2 X week – Monday, Thursday

Now put your assessment and plan for the upcoming season in a place where you can see it every day! Out of sight is out of mind. You may want to put a big yearly calendar on your wall with all your goals written on it. I know this all sounds like a lot of work but what better way to keep your motivation high and the your eye on your goals!