



SHOW ME YOU MEAN IT
GRACIE BARRA BONDI

START HERE - GOALS AND PLANNING

THE LONG GAME

Set one long-term goal, build the plan with your support team, and stick to it long enough for the results to show.

SAME FOR EVERYONE

10 MIN READ

01

WHY IT MATTERS

Getting to the top of this sport takes a long time. It's built over a long stretch, not week to week.

Diet, strength, skills and recovery all need time before the results show. A plan that changes every few days never gets that time, so nothing ever gets built. Going in knowing it's a long haul is half the battle: one bad comp stops feeling like the end of the world, and you stop rebuilding everything after every loss.

The longevity and development of my athletes matter more to me than any one result.



FROM THE COACH

A friend of mine, French athlete Freddy Lele Talla, IBJJF World, Pan, Brasileiro and European champion, still took two years to win Worlds. It's a long road for the very best too, so plan for the long road.

RICKY

02

THE STANDARD

NON-NEGOTIABLE

- **One long-term goal**, and your coach knows what it is.
- **A plan for every area** (Jiu-Jitsu, strength, diet, recovery, mindset), built with the person who owns that area.
- **Follow the plan consistently.** It's set ahead of time on purpose, and it doesn't change week to week.
- **Give it time.** How long each part runs is set by your plan, not by how you feel this week.
- **Changes go through the professional first.** Never on emotion, never after one result.
- **Taper for the majors you've planned for**, set with your coaches, not for every comp.
- **Talk to your coach before you enter a comp**, not after.
- **No weight cutting under 18.**

I'll help you build the plan and I'll back it. Following it is your part. These are your goals, and I won't fight you if you don't take them seriously.

03

HOW TO DO IT

STEP 01

SET ONE LONG-TERM GOAL, HONESTLY

Everything in your plan hangs off one big goal that we keep in mind the whole time. Everything else is training.

Be honest about what that goal is. If it's to go to a comp and have a good experience, you don't need all of this. If you want the goal to be as close to a guarantee as possible, especially against athletes who've trained years longer than you, you have to go all in: properly lock in, properly focus, essentially go pro. Both are fine. Tell me which one it is so we can plan for it.

For teenagers, the long game is also why you don't cut weight. Your job is to grow. Fight at the weight you are and grow into the next division (the full rule is in [Diet](#)).

STEP 02

BUILD THE PLAN WITH YOUR SUPPORT TEAM

You don't have to build this plan on your own, and you shouldn't. Each area has an expert. Together they build one long-term plan around your goal, and each one guides you in their own area.

AREA	WHO OWNS IT	WHAT THEY PLAN WITH YOU
Jiu-Jitsu	Your Jiu-Jitsu coach	Your technical focuses, your volume, and which comps you enter and taper for
Strength	A strength and conditioning coach	Strength blocks, conditioning and load, built around your training and comps
Diet	A sports dietitian	Whether you're building, maintaining or leaning out, and your weight class
Recovery	A physio	Niggles, injuries and what your body can handle right now
Mindset	A sports psychologist, if it's in the budget	Pressure, confidence and your routines around comps

On Show Me You Mean It, your coach and one dietitian consult cover most of this. The full team comes with Pro (see [Going Pro](#)).

Connect them. Your strength coach should know your comp dates, and your physio and strength coach should talk to each other so the program updates together.

STEP 03

FOLLOW IT CONSISTENTLY

The plan is proactive. It's built calmly, ahead of time, with the people who know each area, and it's meant to be hard to change. Your job is to follow it, day in, day out, including the weeks when it feels slow.

NOT THIS

"I lost on a takedown at Pans, so now I want to work takedowns. Actually, now I want to work on..."

A new direction every few weeks. Nothing ever gets built.

THIS

"Guard retention is my focus in this plan. That takedown loss goes on the list for my next review with my coach."

One direction, held long enough to actually change.

STEP 04

GIVE THE RESULTS TIME TO SHOW

Imagine changing your diet from bulking to cutting every week. Your body would never get anywhere. Every other part of the plan works the same way: a strength block, a technical focus and a new habit all need time before you can judge them.

How long is up to you and your plan. One athlete might spend a few weeks on guard passing, another a few months. Your coaches set the length, and you give it the whole of that time before deciding it isn't working.

Set an intensity you can hold for the whole plan while still pushing yourself. Going as hard as you possibly can usually ends in tendinopathy and overtraining injuries, because the body doesn't get enough time to recover. A lower intensity, held for longer, gets you further. More in [Recovery](#).

STEP 05

BUILD BETWEEN COMPS

Most sports have an off season. Strength work is usually blocked into it, so the heavy building doesn't strain you while you're in season and competing. Jiu-Jitsu doesn't really have an off season: there's always another event. So we learn to push and balance strength work in the breaks between comps, and that takes a longer window to see results.

- **Taper for the majors, not every comp.** Agree with your coaches which events you'll taper for: your one big goal and the majors you've planned around. If you taper for everything, you never keep your strength gains.
- **Small comps are training.** Go in a bit tired. Losing a small comp mid-block is fine if it protects the work for the big one.
- **Protect the strength work.** Your strength coach needs to know your comp dates so they can build the blocks between them.
- **Limit travel and rule-set changes.** Every trip costs training days and sleep, and switching between Gi and NoGi mid-plan makes it hard to build anything.

Plan your year around your one big goal with your coaches. These are the big international events most athletes plan around:

ROUGHLY WHEN	EVENT	NOTES
January	IBJJF European Championship (Lisbon)	First Gi major of the season
March	IBJJF Pan Championship (USA)	Big, deep brackets
Late May to early June	IBJJF World Championship (Gi)	The big one for most Gi athletes
October	IBJJF Pan Pacific (Melbourne)	An international major in our part of the world
November	AJP Abu Dhabi World Pro	AJP's world championship, held in Abu Dhabi
December	IBJJF NoGi World Championship	The big NoGi major
All year	AJP tour events, Opens, nationals, state titles	Good experience. Usually training comps.

Months are approximate and shift a little each year. Check [ibjjf.com](#) and the AJP calendar before you plan around a date.

DO THIS

BEFORE YOU ENTER A COMP, ASK

- Is this my big goal, a planned major, or a training comp?
- Does it break a strength block, or change the rule set I'm preparing for?
- Have I talked to my coach before entering, not after?

STEP 06

WHEN SOMETHING NEEDS TO CHANGE, ASK FIRST

Plans do need to change sometimes. When they do, the change goes through the person who owns that area: your coach for Jiu-Jitsu, your strength coach for the weights gym, your dietitian for food, your physio for your body. They'll guide you in their area and keep the rest of the plan intact.

REACTING

- Changing focus after one loss.
- Switching to a cut because a comp is coming up.
- Dropping the strength plan because you feel flat this week.
- Copying a program you saw online.

A REAL REASON TO TALK TO A PROFESSIONAL

- An injury, illness or a niggle that isn't settling.
- Your bloods, DEXA or weigh-ins say something's off.
- You've grown, or your life has changed (new school, new job).
- The plan has had its full time and isn't working.

Feeling flat, sore and frustrated is part of a hard block. It isn't a reason to rebuild the plan. Write it down, sleep on it, and bring it to your next review.

STEP 07

WRITE IT DOWN AND REVIEW IT WITH YOUR COACH

Fill this in with your support team, then sit down with your coach and go through it. Print it, or copy it into your notes. Your coach can't plan around goals you haven't shared.

WORKSHEET

MY LONG GAME

MY LONG-TERM GOAL

MY LONG-TERM GOAL

DIVISION (BELT, AGE, WEIGHT, GI OR NOGI)

WHY I ACTUALLY WANT IT

GOOD EXPERIENCE, OR ALL IN?

MY PLAN BY AREA, AND WHO OWNS IT

JIU-JITSU (FOCUSES, COMPS)

STRENGTH

DIET

RECOVERY

MINDSET

MAJORS I'LL TAPER FOR

STAYING ON IT

HOW I'LL KNOW IT'S WORKING

WHO I TALK TO BEFORE I CHANGE ANYTHING

HABITS I'LL HOLD EVERY DAY

WHAT I'LL STOP DOING

REVIEWED WITH COACH ON

Three technical focuses, max, held for as long as your plan says: for example single legs, guard retention and upper body guards. See [Focused Training](#).

COMMON MISTAKES

-
- ✗ **Flip-flopping between bulking and cutting.** Set the direction with your dietitian and give it time to work.
-
- ✗ **Redesigning the plan after every comp or loss.** Put the lesson on the list for your next review and keep going.
-
- ✗ **Tapering for every small comp.** You never keep your strength gains. Taper for the majors you've planned with your coaches.
-
- ✗ **Chasing every event.** Every new event, trip or rule set breaks a block. Pick your big goal and the majors that lead to it.
-
- ✗ **Changing an area without asking the person who owns it.** Ask your coach, strength coach, dietitian or physio first.
-
- ✗ **Going all out until something breaks.** Pick an intensity you can hold for the whole plan.
-
- ✗ **Treating one bad comp as the end.** It's one result on a long road. Log what you learned and keep building.
-
- ✗ **Keeping your goals to yourself.** Your coach can't plan around goals they don't know. Fill in the worksheet and review it together.
-

CHECKLIST

DO THIS

BEFORE YOU START A PLAN

- ☐ One long-term goal named, and I know whether it's "good experience" or "all in".
- ☐ A plan for each area, and I know who owns each one.
- ☐ The majors I'll taper for are agreed with my coaches. Everything else is a training comp.
- ☐ Three technical focuses, max, set with my coach.
- ☐ Strength work planned around my comps with my strength coach.
- ☐ Worksheet filled in and reviewed with my coach.

BEFORE YOU CHANGE ANYTHING

- ☐ I've talked to the professional who owns that area.
- ☐ It's for a real reason, not one result or one bad week.
- ☐ I talk to my coach before entering any comp.

NOT PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

This is planning guidance from a coach. Your plan for diet, strength, recovery and mindset should come from qualified professionals who've assessed you. Who I'd start with is on each pillar page: [Diet](#), [Strength & Conditioning](#), [Recovery](#) and [Mindset](#).