

Building Your Game Plan – Starting Sheet

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The Purpose:

(While you can start building your style early please remember that if you are a novice/beginner or white belt you should also make sure you have strong fundamentals. As you work into the intermediate and upper blue belt and above stages, that is where it really starts to become important to find YOUR OWN style and then build from there. This also helps in shortening and even preventing some training plateaus.) So Build Your Fundamentals First Then Build Your Style!

The purpose of the “Building Your Game Plan – Starting Sheet” is to help you start building your own style. As you train and you get better it starts to become important to build your own style and do things that work for YOU and not just everyone else. That is what makes grappling a true martial “art”. Once you build your own style and get good at the things that work for you then you’ll truly start to excel. **A very common thing that happens is the grappling student gets focused on just learning and adding everything their coach teaches them in class. You want to avoid this because then you start becoming a “Jack of All Trades, Maser of None”. Find what you like in that your coach teaches in class and what you feel comfortable with and then go from there. DON’T BE A COLLECTER OF TECHNIQUES**

How To Use “Building Your Game Plan – Starting Sheet”

1. **Start with Standing** – When you start this sheet you should start from the “Standing” section in the middle and then work your way around the game plan sheet from there. The reason for this is because all matches start from the feet. You should have a standing game plan REGARDLESS if you are good at takedowns or not. You can put a takedown you like or are starting to like, different ways to pull guard, etc...
2. **Build from Standing** – Next once you have your list of things you like to do from the “All Matches Start from Standing” section then build off of each listed item in that section. For example one thing you have in the standing section might be to “jump closed guard” then start filling in the “I Have Closed Guard” section because that’s where you’ll end up if you jump to the closed guard. Then the second item you have in the standing section might be “double leg takedown” then go to the “In Opponent’s Closed Guard” section and list your items there, as you might end up in their closed guard. You can also possibly go to the “I Have Half Guard On Top” section or even the “I’m On Top” as those are possible areas you might end up in off of a double leg takedown. Next might be “pull open guard” then you would go and fill in the “I have Open Guard” section, and so on. THE PURPOSE OF YOU DOING IT THIS WAY IS TO HELP YOU ACTUALLY THINK ABOUT HOW YOUR GAMEPLAN WILL PAN OUT IN YOUR MIND WHILE YOU ARE WRITING IT DOWN INSTEAD OF JUST FILLING IN AREAS RANDOMLY.

3. **Build Off The Other Position** – Once you have filled in the sections that stemmed off of the “All Matches Start From Standing” section then go to one of the other filled in sections, look at it and see what section may stem off of an item on the list. For example if you have the “I Have Closed Guard” section filled in and one of the items is in that section is “scissor sweep” then the section you may want to fill in next would be the “I Have Mount” section because with that sweep you’ll probably end up there. THE PURPOSE OF YOU DOING IT THIS WAY IS TO HELP YOU ACTUALLY THINK ABOUT HOW YOUR GAMEPLAN WILL PAN OUT IN YOUR MIND WHILE YOU ARE WRITING IT DOWN INSTEAD OF JUST FILLING IN AREAS RANDOMLY.
4. **Only add things you like to do, things you are getting good at, or things that you feel may not be perfect but have potential for your game (you are starting to come close with them)** – The purpose for doing it this way is so you prevent from writing a huge list in each section of pretty much nonsense. You don’t want things you don’t even try or that look cool but you’ve never even tested in practice to see if they would really work or not. Don’t worry if you can only think of 1 thing to put in a section or if you can’t even think of anything. If that is the case then you know you are weak in that area and you need to focus on that area in practice to find what works for you and then build that area up only with options you are starting to feel is RIGHT FOR YOU. DON’T JUST ADD SOMETHING TO FILL THE SPACE. Another reason you don’t want to do that is because even if you have just 1 thing listed in a section you want to find something that may complement that one thing so then you can build off of it and then build a system.
5. **You Can Add Systems** – This list doesn’t need to be written in complete detail because you should be able to know what it is you wrote down being that it’s something you feel good with or see potential in practice with. Now lets say for example there is a few very closely linked things that you know you like to do and are good at from a particular position such as deep half guard for example. You can write down something like “Deep Half Guard Triple Threat” on the list instead of writing down each separate technique.
6. **You Don’t Need To Fill In All Spaces** – In relation to “Step 4” of this form, you don’t have to fill in all of the spaces just because there are spaces there. You want to try and have at least 2 to 3 options in each section as a general rule. However make sure you don’t force it by putting just anything in those list spaces that you aren’t even familiar with. Read Step 4.
7. **Make a Separate Game Plan for Each Style** – If you train No-Gi grappling make a game plan for that style. If you train Gi grappling then make a game plan for that style. Even if you train both then make a game plan for each one. I myself like to keep both my Gi and No-Gi styles similar however there

is usually always something that is different per style. You want that to be reflected in each game plan.

8. **Keep It Simple** – Take notice that with the example game plan that is on the last page that there is no huge descriptions and they lists are filled with simple descriptions. Just like your training you don't want to make your learning harder than it needs to be. Since you are the one writing down these sections (possibly with help from your coach) and these things in the lists are aspects you like and are working to incorporate you'll remember them better regardless of their simplified descriptions.
9. **Flow Them Together** – Create lines to link each section together accordingly. A good idea is to use colored pencils to make things easier to read. Then study how each section flows together.
10. **ACTUALLY PRACTICE THE GAMEPLAN!** – Don't just do all of this work and not use it. I would say this is the #1 thing that happens. Drill these situations over and over again. Break your game plan down in sections and then drill them. As you get used to each section it will all come together.
 - Talk to your coach – let your coach look at it and explain it to him/her. Analyze it with your coach.
 - Practice it after class
 - Go through the flow when you are drilling as it is seen in your game plan that is written out
11. **Systemize** – The goal is to create a grappling system for yourself. One that works for you over and over again. Once you feel very good with this system then build off of it. Add to each section but you can break it down more such as breaking down each individual list item under each section. You would write down answers to each obstacle you may encounter with each individual list in each section.

Think of your fundamentals as the trunk of a tree and your game plan sections as branches that are growing from the tree and little branches growing from each bigger branch and so on.

12. **Revisit** – Revisit your game plan constantly. While you're not going to completely change your game there is always adjustments to be made. The people who are great at grappling have options and movements they've used since they were beginners or white belt or blue belts, and they are still successful at them because they never stopped doing them and created SYSTEMS around them by adding adjustments.
13. **DRILL IT, DRILL IT, DRILL IT!** – Enough Said

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I Have Closed Guard:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

In Opponent's Closed Guard:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

I'm On Top:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

I Have Back Mount:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

I Have Mount:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

I Have Open Guard:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Type of Game Plan:

All Matches Start Standing:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

I'm Mounted:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

I Have Half Guard On Top:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

In Opponent's Open Guard

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Caught Under Top Game:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

I'm In Half Guard Bottom:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

My Back is Taken:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

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I Have Closed Guard:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

I Have Open Guard:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

I Have Half Guard On Top:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

In Opponent's Closed Guard:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Type of Game Plan: _____

In Opponent's Open Guard

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

I'm On Top:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

All Matches Start Standing:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Caught Under Top Game:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

I Have Back Mount:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

I'm In Half Guard Bottom:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

I Have Mount:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

I'm Mounted:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

My Back is Taken:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

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I Have Closed Guard:

1. Lapel Attack System
2. Flower Sweep
3. _____
4. _____

In Opponent's Closed Guard:

1. Stand up & open guard
2. Knee slice Double option
3. Low posture Double under pass
4. _____

I'm On Top:

1. Baseball bat Choke
2. Knee on Belly System
3. Arm Crush
4. _____

I Have Back Mount:

1. Bow & Arrow Choke
2. Rear Nake Choke
3. Get the Mount
4. _____

I Have Mount:

1. Ezeqial Choke
2. Triple Attack
3. Move to Top Game
4. _____

I Have Open Guard:

1. X-Guard Stand-up ^{swap}
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Gi Game Plan

All Match Start Standing:

1. Double Leg
2. Jump Closed Guard
3. Pull open Guard
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

I'm Mounted:

1. Elbow Knee Escape
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

I Have Half Guard On Top:

1. Long Hug Pass
2. Knee slide pass
3. Kimura
4. _____

In Opponent's Open Guard

1. Knee slice Double option
2. Special Spider Pass
3. Dive to Stack Pass
4. _____

Caught Under Top Game:

1. Shrimp to Knees - Pull guard
2. Hook to Half Guard
3. _____
4. _____

I'm In Half Guard Bottom:

1. Deep Half Guard System
2. Escape to full guard
3. _____
4. _____

My Back is Taken:

1. Flatten Back Escape
2. Shift Low & Turn
3. _____
4. _____

If opponent scrambles

