Tutorial 4 (Shape-up | Betting)

Considering the three chapters in Shapeup regarding betting, the main concept goes over instead of having a never-ending backlog of tasks that make us feel overwhelmed, the chapters suggests a different approach. Instead of backlogs, before every six-week cycle, there's a "betting table" where the development team decide what tasks they will tackle next. They only look at the most recent pitches or any old ones that someone really believes in. There's no need to keep checking a massive list of old ideas. The pitches they look at are like bets. If they decide to go with a pitch, it gets worked on in the next cycle. If not, they just drop it. And if someone really believes in an idea that didn't get picked, they can bring it back up in the next cycle. Everyone can keep track of their own ideas, bugs, or things they want to work on, but there's no central list. This way, everything stays relevant and the development team doesn't have to deal with unknown backlog items.

Now, about the cycles, unlike scrum, here they're six weeks long. Two weeks is too short, and anything longer makes it hard to see the end goal. After each six-week cycle, there's a two-week "cool-down" period. This is when everyone can chill, think about what's next, and maybe work on some personal projects or fix bugs. When deciding what to work on in the next cycle, they have this "betting table" meeting. The devs look at the pitches and decide what to work on. They're not necessarily just planning, they're also making bets on what they think will be successful. If they bet on a pitch, the team gets the full six weeks to work on it without interruptions. If they can't finish in time, they don't automatically get an extension. This keeps projects from dragging on forever. If there's bugs in the project they either fix them during the cool-down, bring them to the betting table, or have a dedicated "bug smash" cycle which tackles the bug that they're facing. The key is to start each cycle with a clean slate and be flexible. Depending on where you are in your project, you might have different expectations for the cycle. But the main idea is to shape the work, bet on it, and then build it, and if there's unexpected bugs etc, the whole team gets together to tackle it.