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BDC Benjamin Day Consulting

PLURALSIGHT

Professional Scrum Trainer Scrum.org

MVP Microsoft Most Valuable Professional

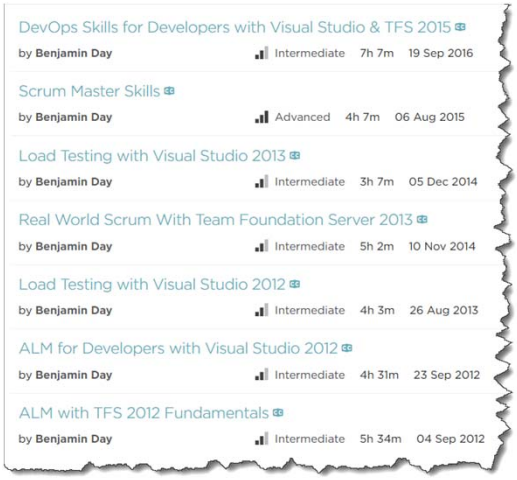
PLURALSIGHT

Pluralsight.com

Online courses

DevOps with TFS2017

Scrum Master Skills



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Getting Started with Visual Studio Team Services (VSTS)

PLURALSIGHT

Architecting an ASP.NET Core MVC Application for Unit Testability

Coming in ~November 2018

On with the show.

Overview

What does the Scrum Master do?

"Clearing the brush" toward self-organization

Coaching the team

Difficult Conversations

The Zen of Self-Organization

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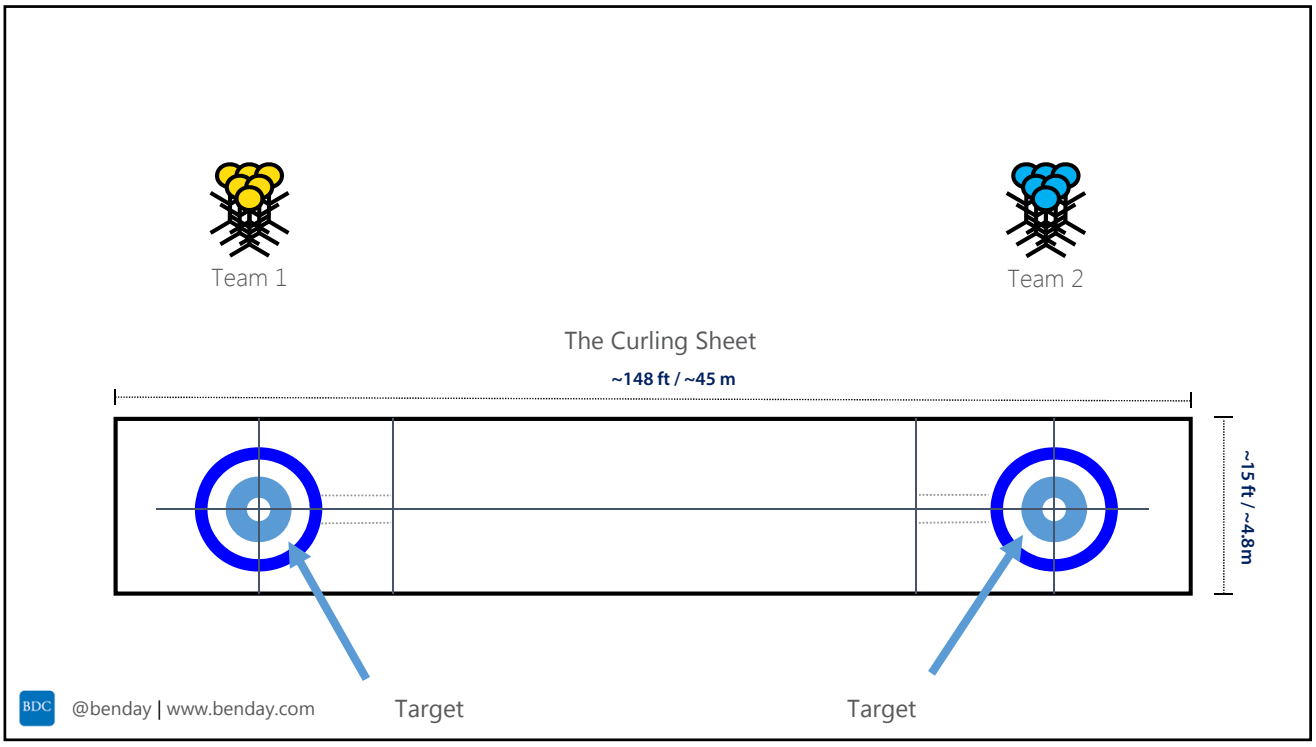
"What does the Scrum Master *do* anyway?"

Curling.

Olympic sport. Played on ice.



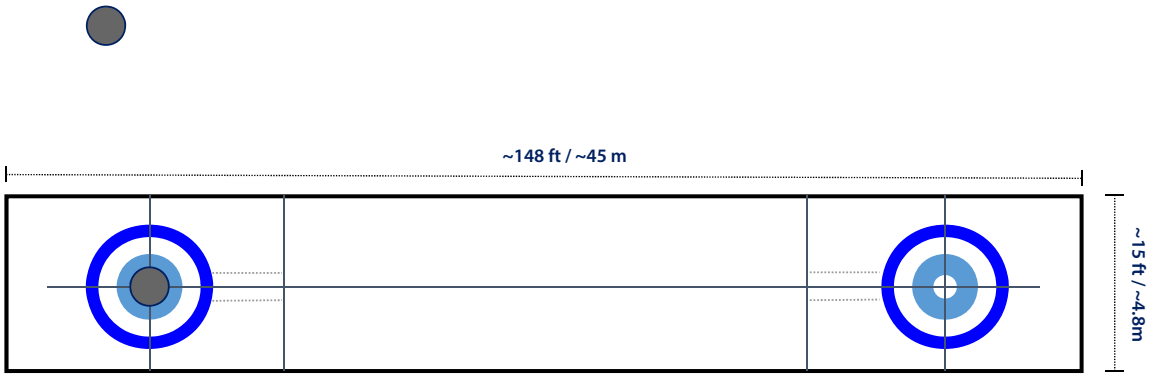
Curling Stones

~40 lb. stones

Polished granite

It's got a handle

8 stones per team



- Get your stones as close as possible to the center of the target
- Each team takes turns
- Team with the most stones closest to the center of the target

Note: that stone's not to scale

Throwing

3 team members per throw

Thrower
- Stone in hand
- Pushes off with legs

Starts glide towards target

Thrower has to release stone

The thrower might put some spin on it…

…but once released,
nothing can touch the stone.

After the release,
the Sweepers take over.

Sweepers

Two sweepers stay with the stone

Guide the stone to the target

Just to be 100% clear,
the sweepers don’t touch the stone.

“So, the brushing moves the stone?”

The brushing doesn’t move the stone.
It’s already moving.

The brushing subtly adjusts the ice
in front of it…

…and that can change the speed and direction of the stone significantly.

The sweepers – without touching it – are helping to coax and guide the stone so it lands correctly at the target.

"…and this has *what* to do with scrum mastering?

Scrum Master is a Coach

Scrum Master is not a management role

Team members don't report to the Scrum Master

Scrum Master isn't the boss

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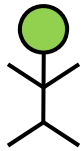
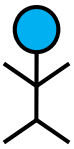
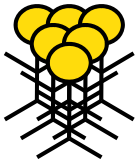
Three Roles in Scrum



Product Owner

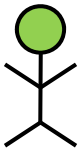


Scrum Master



Development Team

Three Roles in Scrum



Product Owner

Product Owner is as close to “a boss” as you’ll get

Provides the vision & goal

Considering the inherent bossless-ness, Scrum expects and relies on the team to self-organize.

**To be successful,
the team needs to use their creativity to deliver
done, working software.**

The team takes the Product Owner's goal and self-organizes to figure out how to deliver done, working software at the end of the Sprint.

The basic idea:
Give the team their goal and then get out of the way.

The Scrum Master helps the team to be creative and productive.

You can’t command someone to be creative.

“1...2...3...BE CREATIVE!!!!”

You can’t tell people exactly what to do and also expect them to figure it out for themselves at the same time.

And now back to curling…

Just like the sweepers can’t touch the stone…

…a successful Scrum Master doesn't command the team.

The Scrum Master guides the team and helps the team without actually giving any instructions.

The team is the stone

The Product Owner is the thrower

The Scrum Master is a sweeper, guiding the team towards the goal

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“What does the Scrum Master *do* anyway?”

The Scrum Master helps the team to be productive and to use their creativity in order to deliver done, working software.

The Big Lesson:
The Scrum Master leads through influence not by command.

Suggestion:
Stop being a boss.

One of the most common & frequent moments of Scrum Master Bossitosity is the Daily Scrum.

The Daily Scrum is not a status meeting.

The team does not report to you.

Remind them of this if it happens.

If it still happens,
break eye contact.

Encourage them to talk to one another.

Remind them that the
Daily Scrum is for them.

Consider having someone else run that meeting.

(Which is good…because it frees you up to do other things.)

Suggestion:
Think like and/or be the team's therapist.

Consider going to see a therapist yourself.

Read their emotional minds.

Try that at the Daily Scrum.

Hang back and read the room.

Idea:
Levels of Listening

Levels of Listening

Level 1
- "me me me"

Level 2
- Laser-focus on the other person

Level 3
- "meta"
- The vibe of the conversation

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Arguably, the emotional reading trick is a level 3 technique.

When you're in a meeting with your team, listen to the contents of the conversations.

What "level" are they communicating on?

Lots of “level 1” and they might be talking past each other.

Suggestion:
Observe to the room

Let’s say you noticed something.

The “level 3” just changed.

It got tense.

It got boring, exhausted, defeated.

Observe that to the room.

“Hey. What just happened there?
It feels like we just got socks for Christmas.”

As Scrum Master, your job is to help the team be productive. It's your job to notice this stuff.

When that kind of stuff happens,
it's a great topic for conversation.
(And people probably didn't notice it either.)

Suggestion:
Get curious.

Embrace your inner “dumb”.

Ask a lot of follow-up questions.

Even if I *think* I know the answer,
I want to hear the answer come out of someone else's mouth.

I also want conversation.

Try to ask open-ended questions.

Closed-ended:
“Are you going to get that SQL code done?”

Open-ended:
“How’s that SQL code doing?
Can you give me an update?”

I really really want to avoid injecting my own opinion.

**If you have a theory,
give yourself an out.**

If you need to say something try…

"Check this out…could it possibly be *xyz*?"

"Try this on for size. What if we *asdf*?"

"I could be wrong but what do you think about *zxcvasdf*?"

Sometimes you have to inject "alternate theories of mind."

Alternate Theories of Mind

Teams sometimes get hooked on what someone *might* be thinking

"Is it possible that XYZ is thinking something else"

Never ascribe to malice what could just as easily be attributed to incompetence.

Suggestion:
“Difficult Conversations”

Read this.

When things get heated…

…one or both sides do not understand

- Their contribution to the disagreement
- That their interpretation of someone else's motivation is not actually correct

…there is often a difference between what is felt/thought vs. stated

A difficult conversation is 3 conversations

1. The "What Happened?" Conversation
   - Disagreement about what should or has happened
   - Who's right or wrong?
   - Who deserves the blame?
2. The Feelings Conversation
   - What are people feeling?
   - Are my feelings valid? Should I just suck it up?
   - What about the other person's feelings?
3. The Identity Conversation
   - What does this situation mean to me?
   - Am I good/bad at my job?
   - Worthy
   - Self-esteem

So what do we do with this?

You'll be coaching to all 3 sub-conversations.

“Difficult conversations are almost never about getting the facts right. They are about conflicting perceptions, interpretations, and values.”

To the “What happened?” Conversation

Coach that “we might not want to assume we know the truth”

Ask “do we have all the information?”

Try to drill into “what were the intentions?”

Try to avoid “blame”

- Focus on what went wrong
- Focus on how to avoid it in the future

To the “Feelings” Conversation

This is hard in business because often feelings “don’t exist”

“99% of the time it’s not a technical problem”

Remember it’s about feelings even if it’s not ok to say that

To the “Identity” Conversation

Listen for the hint that there’s something else at stake

The disagreement might be chipping at self-perception

“I’m not the kind of person who lets people down…”

“I’m not the bad guy…I’m always one of the good guys!”

Suggestion:
Coaching Self-Organization

“Fake it ‘til you make it.”
-Lyssa Adkins

Get comfy with silence.

Ask the team what they want to do.

"It looks like X is happening.
What do you want to do about it?"

Any last questions?

Thank you.

Benjamin Day Consulting

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