

 ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT

Guide to

Athletic Development

Athletic Development and Scrum.

The Agile community is extensive and offers a broad set of values, principles and frameworks. Athletic Development echoes some of these; Scrum in particular.

Athletic Development emerged by passing through the stages of "shu, ha, and ri" excersizing Scrum. It may be considered emergent to it. We certainly don't value our approach over other practises and frameworks such as Scrum; we are athletic, not elite. We are proud that our experience with Scrum has allowed us to come to this design.

Athletic Development departs from Scrum on various topics.

Scrum is universally practised and has a strong professional foundation

Athletic Development is not, as how it may at appear to some, a 'linguistic redesign'; there are major fundamental differences!

A Coach and Captain in Athletic Development are not comparable to the Product Owner and Scrum Master roles. Where the Product Owner in Scrum represents the interests of stakeholders, in Athletic Development the whole team as a whole represents their interests. The product is 'owned' by the product creators. This sense of ownership, regardless on how it's commercially contracted, should make everyone more involved and committed to delivering the best outcome. The outcome is a representation of the team, not the contract.

The Coach in Athletic Development facilitates the team's collective decisions on its development. The Captain is a chosen representative by the team which may rotate and change as desired by the team; this is done to avoid the emergence of lasting authoritative defects. It also makes sure the team as a whole improves its facilitating skills. The lack of individually assigned authority may be a big challenge for a coalition, but the routine is setup so they can resolve this over time.

As with the existence of Dark Scrum, we aknowledge there can still be 'gaming' of Athletic Development. This approach will only as good as it's players.

The events are setup to promote a stricter routine. A Sprint is always one week in Athletic Development, and the team daily provides an opportunity for review to visualize progress. Although the Sprint and its events have timeboxes, individual tasks / work items do not. Teams commit to quality and to attempt to exceed expectations. They may commit to targetdates if they themselves believe that it is not detrimental to the delivered quality or the ability to exceed expectations.

In short, we are introducing this format, which differs from Scrum. The choice to step away from certain Scrum terminology, is to make it clear there are major differences to what is defined in the Scrum Guide and the experiments in Athletic Development.

Athletic Development.

'Athletic Development' is a simple but effective professional routine that develops a stronger team culture and stimulates delivery of higher-quality output, through continuous training and alignment.

The format is simple, but strict:

- 7 principles.
- 4 recurring events: Prep, check-in, check-out, recap.
- 4 roles: Athlete, coach, captain, spectator.
- Collaboration takes place from one location: The Arena.
- Progress is organised in: Tracks ▶ Sprints ▶ Steps.

This guide contains an easy to follow, step by step checklist, on how to follow the routine. Contents:

1. Cheat Sheet
2. Principles
3. Forming an Athletic Coalition
4. Setting up the Arena
5. Prep
6. Check-in
7. Check-out
8. Recap

CHEAT SHEET

ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT

Pillars

Harmony		Continuously align
Agility		Continuously adapt
Excellence		Continuously improve

Roles

Athlete		Performs
Captain		Represents
Coach		Facilitates
Spectator		Inspects

Principles

We get (it) together.
We align continuously.
We serve and involve.
We take the time to make it right.
We make a stand!
We abandon previous titles, roles and tools.
We give credit where credit is due.

Events

Prep		Weekly		60m
Check-in		Daily		10m
Check-out		Daily		30m
Recap		Weekly		60m

Terminology

Coalition

A co-located, multidisciplinary, self-organizing team with collective ownership towards achieving common goals.

Arena

A central location where athletic coalitions perform.

Track

Series of 'Sprints' in which progress is made towards achieving goals.

Sprint

A one week routine in which the coalition takes 'Steps' towards achieving goals.

Steps

A relatively sized definition of collective effort required to complete an objective within a 'Sprint'. Athletic Developers take the time to perfect steps through stringent accept criteria.

Forecast

An amount of 'steps' the coalition expects to complete in a 'Sprint'.

Score

Completed number of competed 'Steps' in a 'Sprint'.

Captains Log

A record of notable events in a Sprint.

1

We get (it) TOGETHER.

The value of a co-located team is greater than the effort to co-locate. No one works on anything alone. We don't divide and assign tasks by skillset. We continuously invest in developing our skills through collective practice. We build together, we train together. We help each other along the way. When challenged, we recover fast together. This is how we continuously improve reduce dependencies, increase transparency, and guarantee quality.

2

We align CONTINUOUSLY.

Our plan changes daily. We continuously collect new insights and update planning. We demonstrate results daily and process feedback instantly. This way we are always aligned and up to speed.

3

We SERVE and INVOLVE.

We serve qualitative output early and often. Daily we collect insights on what we serve from whom it is served to. We involve anyone who can provide valuable insights and work with them continuously to improve the output. We avoid proxies between us, the value creator, and those whom we service (the value consumer).

4

We take the time to make it RIGHT.

We deliver premium output only. We learn to do this at speed. What we deliver, is a representation of us. We don't make concessions. We make it work, the way it should work. For time spent developing something new, time is spent improving something existing. We estimate complexity not time. Our estimations are not deadlines. It is done, when it is done. We don't track time, we earn trust. If time is a constraint, we will align on what can be done without compromising quality or value. If neither can be assured, the outcome would not be valuable nor viable.

5

We make a STAND!

We uphold our principles. We dare to motivate each other to deliver sustainable value at high quality. We are honest about our abilities. We dare to say "no" to requests that are not valuable or viable. We take the time to learn, so we can do more tomorrow than we can today. We always strive to exceed expectations. This is how we earn trust.

6

We abandon previous titles, roles and tools.

The whole team takes collective ownership over all the steps that it decides to take. Although we keep our skills and talent, we are in it together. Every member represents the team and reports to the team! The team is a coalition which reports only to itself. There can be no hierarchy within the coalition. There can be no sub-teams. There can be no client/vendor relationship within a coalition. These should be made obsolete during its formation. Everyone shares a responsibility in getting the best result.

7

We give credit where it is due.

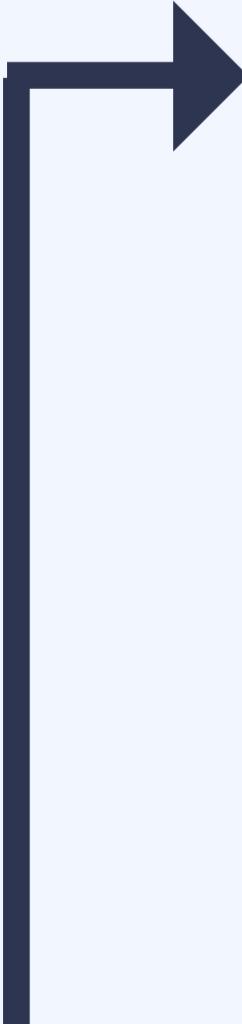
No one is to personally take credit for achievements, or be blamed for mistakes; it would be disrespectful to do so. We value mistakes. We learn from them. We celebrate success together. We respect open feedback and input.

Forming an Athletic Coalition.

The main goal of the Athletic Coalition is to create a sense of belonging for all its members.

- The coalition may be formed by specialists from various departments and organisations.
Once formed, the team departs from any pre-existing roles, titles, hierarchies and relationships, including its processes and tools.
- It takes collective ownership over all the steps that it decides to take. Now there are no more clients, designers, managers, product owners, marketeers, editors etc.
- Although we keep our skills and talent, we are in it together. So we commit to do what needs to be done! regardless of expertise and background; we help each other along the way.
- There can be no client/vendor relationship within a coalition; this is made obsolete after the formation. One can become an active team member, such as a 'coach', or be involved daily as a 'spectator'.
- An Athletic Coalition works at a pace in which it delivers premium output only.
They take the time to make it right, but learn to do this at speed.
- Athletic Coalitions don't require training, certification or professional coaching to start;
it's all integrated into the exercise; teams will gain experience by training and interacting continuously.
- The routine is tactical, planning is done **throughout** and is always aimed at delivering premium quality and value, but more importantly: to build close personal relationships.
- Athletic Coalitions are hard to form, they are rare and extreme, or else they wouldn't be athletic.
It requires a can-do mindset from the get-go.

So get together, stay together.

- All candidates check-in at the start of the formation event.
- All candidates are introduced to the standards and routine of Athletic Development.
- Candidates align on their understanding of Athletic Development.
- The main goal of the Track is stated and may be clarified.
-  Candidates may 'opt-out' of the coalition if they choose not to participate.
- All members who 'opt-out' will exit the event.
- Candidates that remain, will discuss how they can still commit to the stated mission.

**Formation ends when no more candidates opt-out. This is a successful formation.
If all candidates opt-out, the formation is unsuccessful. Formations may be reattempted.**

Setup the Arena.

The value of a co-located team is greater than the effort to colocate.

If the commitment to achieve a goal is there, you can get a team to work as a team: from one location. All players need to be on the same field. This location is called an 'Arena'.

So get your team together so they can work together.

- What is needed to get the team together?
- What is needed for the team to work together?

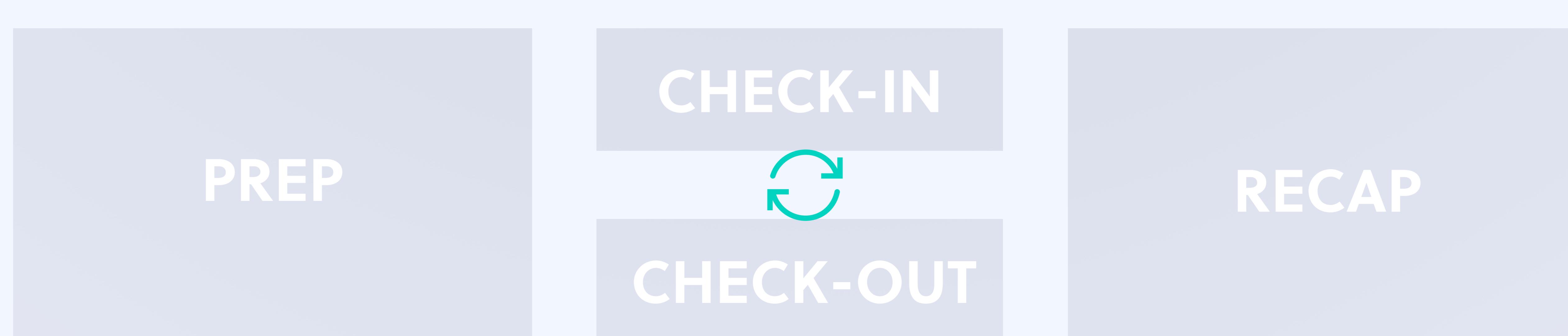


"We are what we repeatedly do; excellence therefore, is not an act, but a habit" - Aristotle.

Great teams have a strict routine. Establish the following routine:

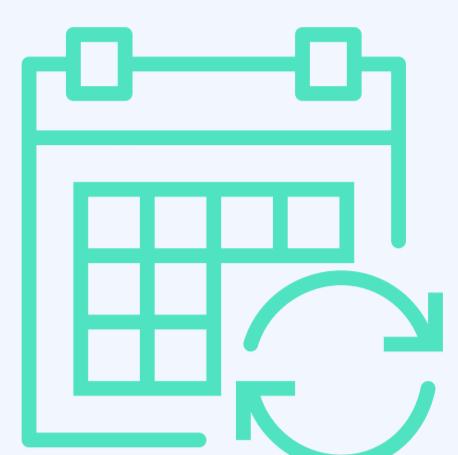
- Schedule **weekly** Prep sessions (60 minutes).
- Schedule **daily** Check-ins and Check-outs (10 and 30 minutes).
- Schedule **weekly** Recap sessions (60 minutes).
- That's all you need, cancel everything else!

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT



Stay on track!

Weekly
max 1 hour

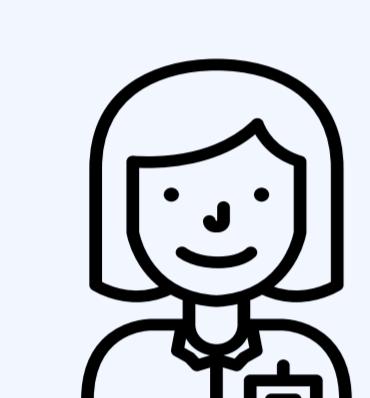


A week in which the team works towards achieving collective goals by following a strict routine is called a 'Sprint'. A 'Track' is a series of Sprints.

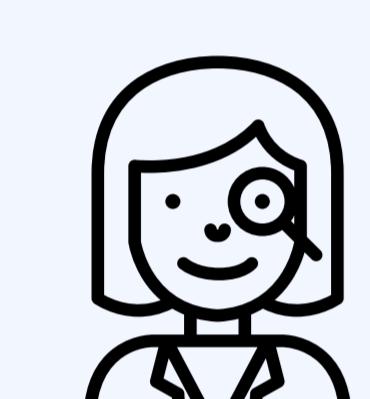
Align.



The initiator for the track is the '**Coach**' and provides direction, motivation and support for the team.
The coach is always an active member of the team! The coach reports to the team, not the other way around.



The team '**Captain**' is a representative to the team and makes sure the team stays focussed.
Each sprint the captain is selected through an anonymous vote! The captain also reports to the team.



'**Spectators**' are 'value consumers', 'stakeholders' and users who will review outcomes and provide the team with valuable insights and feedback.

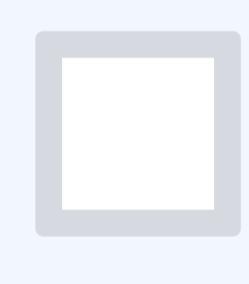


Vote for a team captain.

The captain facilitates and administers the Prep session.

A team needs clear and common '**Goals**' to which the whole team commits to for that week.

The team collectively determines goals and creates a forecast.



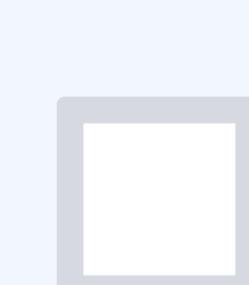
Define clear common goals for the sprint.



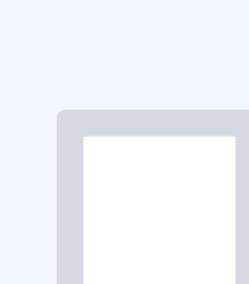
Discuss how the goals can be achieved (define steps).



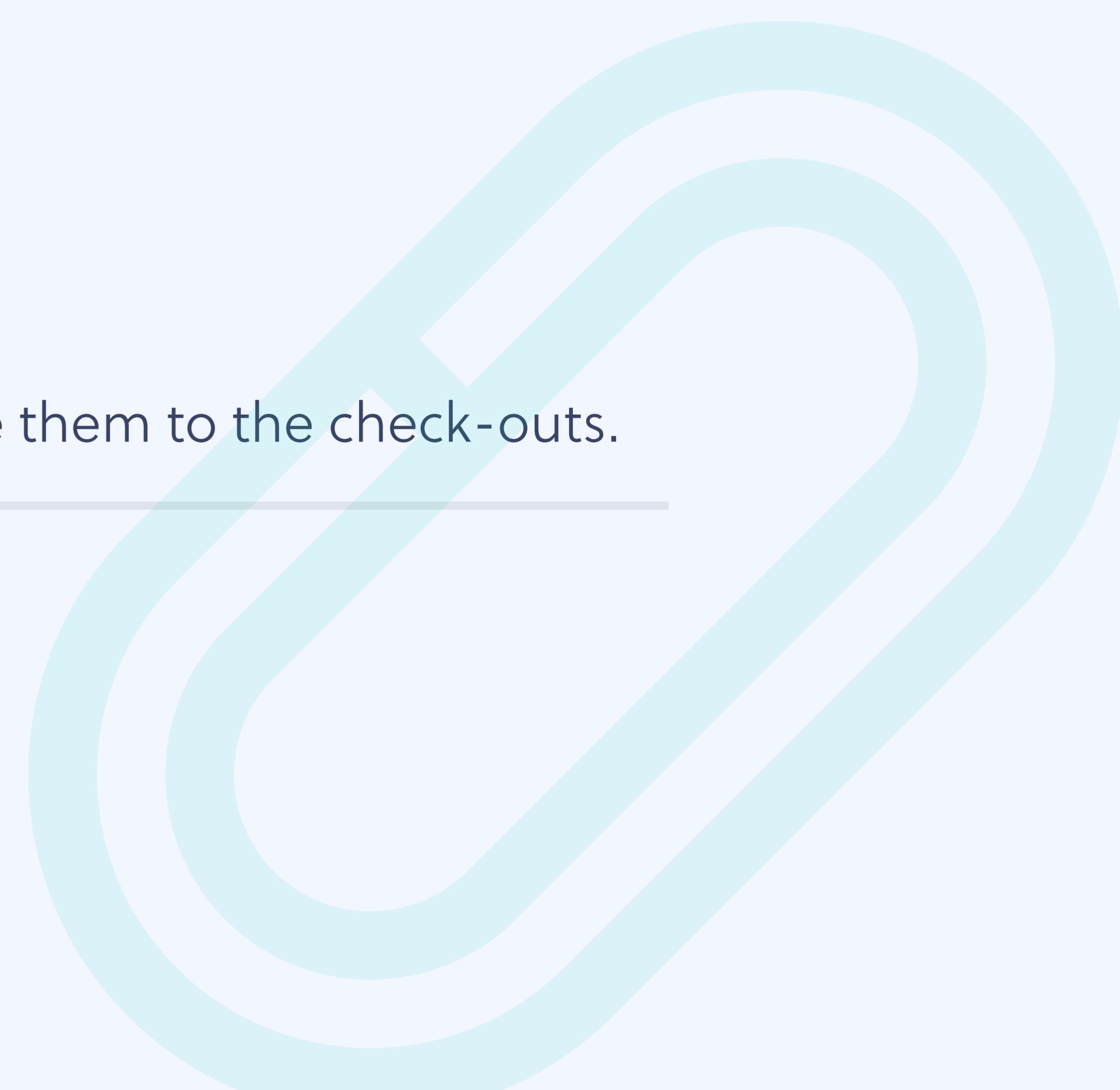
Make sure the whole team can agree to a forecast



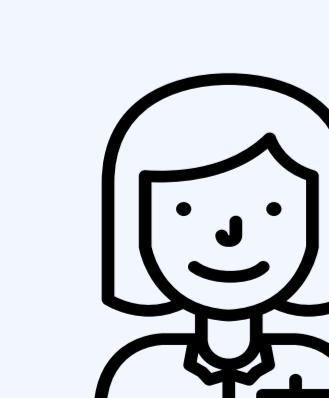
Determine who can best inspect the output (spectators) and invite them to the check-outs.



How will the team train for this sprint?



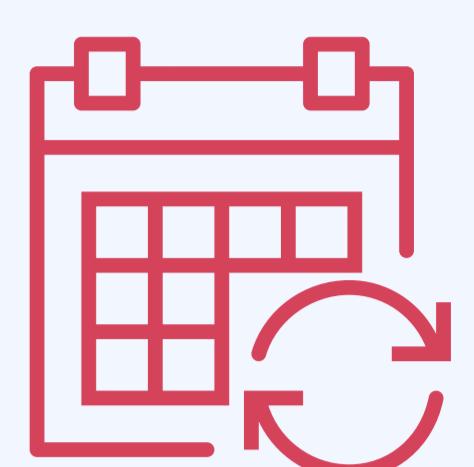
Deliver an epic pre-match speech!



Coördinate a pre-match Haka!

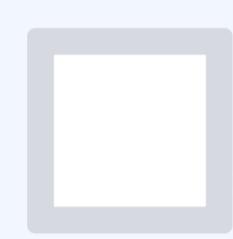
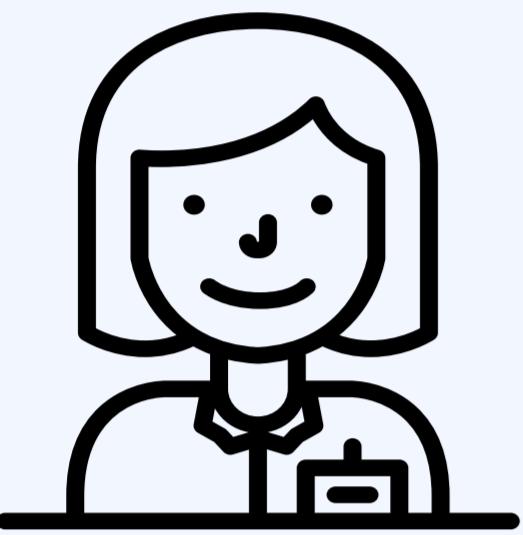
Check-in

Up to speed !

Daily
max 15 minutes

Daily the whole team needs to know where it stands towards achieving the goals. All team members must share openly and honestly where they stand and what they ran into in relation to achieving the goals. Secondly the team will instantly react to any new input and insights gained to ensure fast feedbackloops, response- and cycletimes.

At the end of a check-in, the team is up to speed and knows what it needs to focus on.

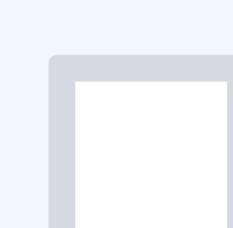


As a team captain, make sure everyone prepares their input for the check-ins!

Align. max 10 minutes.



What steps will the team take today?



What might the team run into today?



What does the team need today?



What will the team train / learn today?

During the day the coach and captain stay on top of the situation:

Inspect.



Make sure the team is working **and training** together, rather than individually!

Be aware of challenges the team faces; and try to remove any obstacles.

Keep notes on observations (in the 'captains log').

Do at least one thing that motivates a member of the team.

Answer any question the team might have.

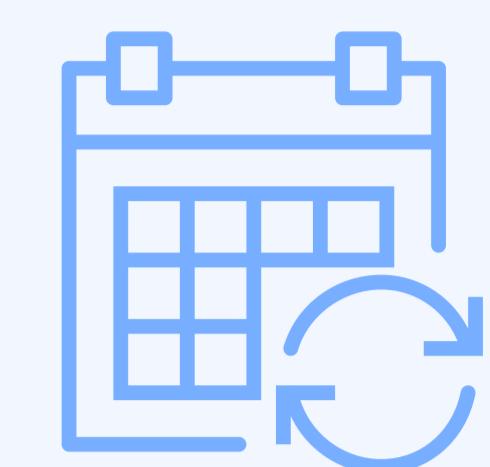
Manage expectations of spectators.

Involve those who can provide insights on the team's output.

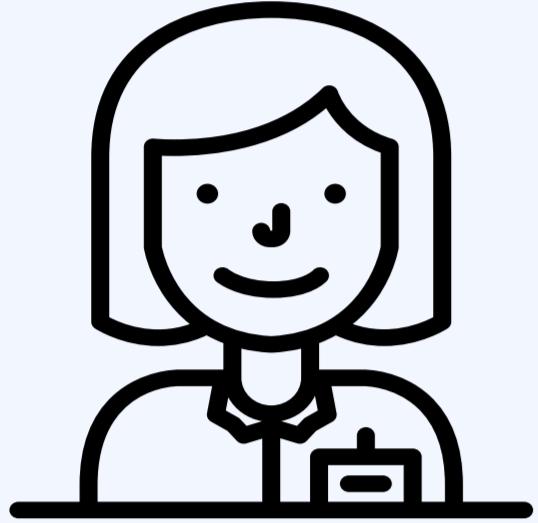
Collect data and insights and prepare these for the next check-out.

Check-out

Check this out!

Daily
max 30 minutes

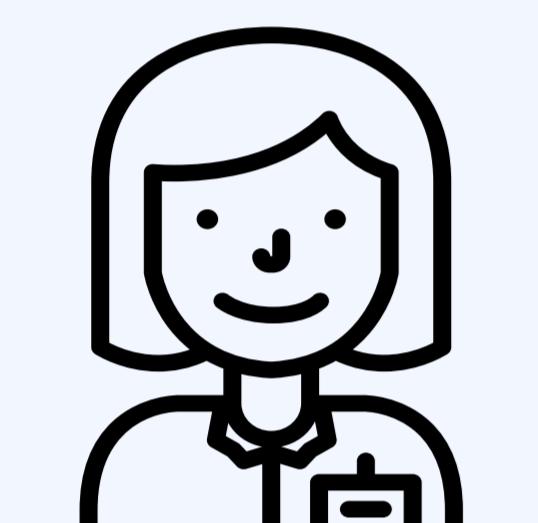
In order for the team to learn, improve and stay motivated, it needs to be part of the inspection of the delivered results. The check-out is a daily review where teams reflect, inspect and adapt.



As a captain, make sure everyone prepares their input for the check-out!

Reflect.

max 10 minutes.



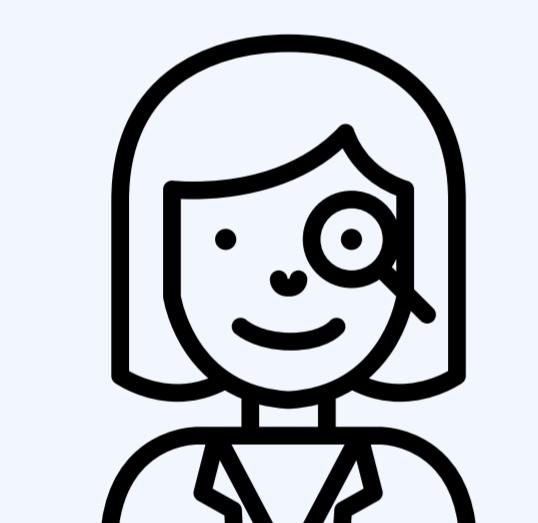
The captain, supported by the team, proudly presents the outcome of that day to the spectators.



The captain describes the steps taken and challenges overcome.

Inspect.

max 10 minutes.



The spectators review the outcome.



The team answers any questions the spectators might have.



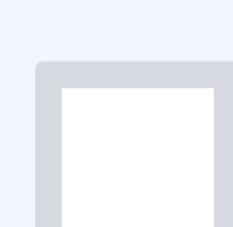
The team updates the track with the feedback inspectors provided.

Adapt.

max 10 minutes.



The coach demonstrates potential updates to the track based on input and insights collected that day



The coach answers any questions the team members might have.



The team administers and estimates the complexity of newly collected input.

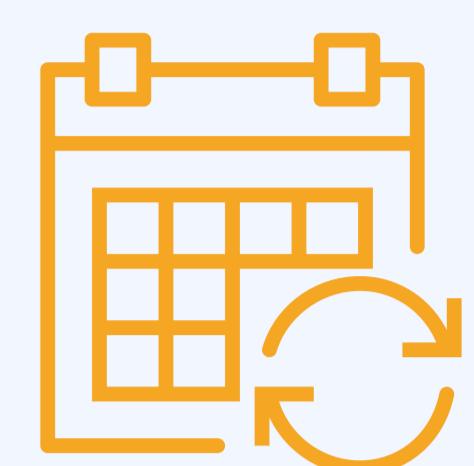
Train.

Team members may continue training after checking out.

Recap!



Give credit, where credit is due.

Weekly
max 1 hour

To conclude a sprint, each member, in turn, hosts a **social event** in a **personal** way, during which team members build stronger relationships. The team reflects and adapts.

For this session we urge teams to make it fun and rewarding and to remain **open, honest and respectful**.

Don't assign blame. Don't be 'Captain Hindsight'. It's okay to disagree!



In turn, a member prepares a fun and valuable recap; Be creative!

Tip: inspect and share the 'captains log' for preparation.

Reflect. max 15 minutes.



Each member may briefly present what didn't go so well; and why.



Each member may briefly present what went well; and why.

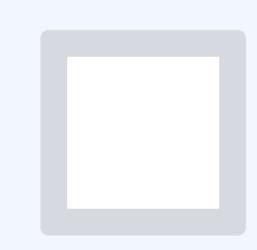
Adapt. max 15 minutes.



Register potential improvements as goals or steps for the next sprint.



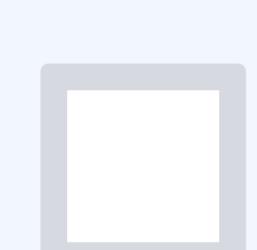
Remember, we value our effort above result and this is how we rate a sprint.
In the end, this is how teams will learn to exceeding expectations.



Each member (including coach, captain and inspectors) rates the sprint.

Party!

Regardless of results, you became a better team; now celebrate!



Karaoke?



GETTING STARTED: TIPS!

- △ Be nice.
- △ Understand **SHUHARI** as an adoption pattern to mastery.
- △ Stick to the guide before introducing 'house rules'.
- △ The ideal size for an Athletic Coalition is **3 to 11** members.
- △ Principles first. Take them to heart. Study them. Reference them. Discuss them. Apply them.
- △ The Athletic Coalition has to be **cross-functional**;
- △ The whole Athletic Coalition needs to be trusted and enjoy **autonomy**.
- △ Value a '**growth mindset**'! be willing to try (and fail!)
- △ 'Demonstrate' in order to 'convince', rather than 'convince' in order to 'demonstrate'.
- △ Take the time to do it right.
- △ Be in it to win it.
- △ It's okay to disagree.
- △ Stick to the **routine**! Spend each day training, leaning, teaching something new!
- △ Eliminate meetings, use the events.
- △ Help each other along the way.
- △ There is always a '**next step**' to take.