



FREE PLAYBOOK FOR TRACK AND FIELD COACHES

Keep them on track.

How to turn new athletes into squad members who stay for years.
The 6 moments athletes drift away, 8 habits that keep them
training, and messages you can send today.

6

moments athletes are most likely to
drift away

8

habits that keep athletes training block
after block

6

copy-and-send messages, plus a goal
bank for every event group

• WHY THIS MATTERS

One committed athlete is worth years of coaching.

Track and field coaches rarely struggle to find a keen new athlete. The coaches who grow are the ones who keep that athlete training, improving and racing for years.

\$1,920

One athlete in your squad, for a year

Squad fee of **\$160 a month**

× **12 months**

= **\$1,920 a year** from one athlete

\$5,760+

The same athlete over three years

Three years of squad fees, before you count private sessions, comp travel, camps or the training partners they bring with them. Lose them after one bad season and all of that walks away.

Replacing an athlete means trials, social posts and hoping they commit. Keeping one means a clear plan, visible PBs and a coach who notices when something's off.

Most dropouts are predictable. Athletes rarely quit out of nowhere. They drift away at a handful of moments every coach will recognise, and each one is a chance to step in. The next page shows you where they are.

Where an athlete's value really comes from

Squad training

The steady base: three or four sessions a week, in an event group, on a monthly fee.

Extras

Private technique sessions, camps, testing days and comp travel.

Word of mouth

Fast athletes bring training partners. A squad that PBs together grows together.

Figures are examples. Swap in your own prices, weeks and currency.

The 6 moments athletes are most likely to drift away

Know when athletes drift and you know when to step in. Watch these six closely.

AFTER THE TRIAL SESSION

1

“Is this for me?”

The first session is hard and nobody explains what the plan is. The athlete doesn't know if they're good enough.

Do this: show them their first block and where it leads.

A FLAT SEASON

2

No PBs for months

Times stall and the athlete starts to wonder if the training is working.

Do this: track small wins: splits, technique, testing results.

OFF-SEASON

3

The winter grind

Months of base work and no races. Motivation drops and sessions get skipped.

Do this: set off-season targets and run testing days.

AFTER AN INJURY

4

Not coming back

A hamstring strain or stress reaction keeps them out. Without a plan, six weeks out becomes a whole season.

Do this: agree a return plan and keep them involved.

EXAMS AND SCHOOL

5

Life gets busy

Exams, jobs and moving schools squeeze training out. The athlete feels guilty and stops replying.

Do this: adjust the plan, not the commitment.

MISSING SELECTION

6

A big race goes wrong

Missing a final or a team selection feels like the end. Some athletes walk away the same week.

Do this: debrief fast and set the next target.

Quick exercise: think of the last five athletes who left your squad. Which moment did each leave at? Most coaches find one or two moments explain most of their dropouts. Fix those first.

Habits that keep athletes training block after block

1 Show every new athlete the plan

The first sessions are where athletes decide if they belong. Show them where the training leads before they have time to doubt it.

TRY THIS

- ✓ In week one, agree **one season goal** and the races you're aiming at.
- ✓ Share the **first training block** in the app, so they see the week ahead.
- ✓ Run a **baseline test** (30 m fly, standing long jump, or a time trial) to measure from.

2 Coach in event groups

A sprinter, a thrower and a 1500 m runner need different sessions. Group athletes by event so every session has a purpose.

TRY THIS

- ✓ Split your squad into **event groups**: sprints and hurdles, jumps, throws, middle distance.
- ✓ Give each group a **lead coach** and a clear weekly plan.
- ✓ Run one **whole-squad session** a week so the group still feels like one team.

Ready-made goals for every event group

Pick two or three goals per athlete and adjust them to their level. These are examples to adapt, not official standards.

EVENT GROUP	TECHNIQUE	PERFORMANCE	TRAINING
Sprints and hurdles 100 m–400 m H	Three-step rhythm over every hurdle	Break 13 s for 100 m	Hit every 30 m fly in testing
Jumps Long, triple, high, pole	Consistent run-up, 8 of 10 on the board	A 20 cm PB this season	Finish every plyometric session
Throws Shot, discus, javelin, hammer	Full rotation in discus	A 1 m PB in shot put	Hit strength targets each block
Middle distance 800 m–3000 m	Even splits within 2 seconds a lap	Break 2:20 for 800 m	Complete 4 of 4 weekly runs

Before you move an athlete up a squad, check three things

Consistency

They hit their targets in training and at comps, not just on one good day.

Commitment

They make most sessions. The next squad trains more, not less.

Recovery

They're handling the load now. More training only helps if they recover from it.

Write the goal where they'll see it. A goal that lives in the athlete's app, next to their results and sessions, gets chased. A goal they heard once at the track gets forgotten.

3 Track every PB and split

Athletes stay when they can see themselves getting faster. Small numbers matter: a split, a run-up, a few centimetres.

TRY THIS

- ✓ Log **comp results and PBs** for every athlete, in every event.
- ✓ Record **testing results** each block so progress shows even without races.
- ✓ Share a **season progress** summary with each athlete at the end of every block.

4 Build a squad, not just a group

Athletes stay where they have training partners. The athlete who trains alone is the first to drift.

TRY THIS

- ✓ Pair athletes as **training partners** within event groups.
- ✓ Celebrate **squad PBs** out loud at training and in the squad chat.
- ✓ Travel to **comps together** where you can, and sit together on the day.

Keep it specific: “Your last 3 hurdles were 0.2 s faster than in March” means more than a long, general report. Specific beats long, every time.

5 Plan the way back after an injury

Injuries happen in track and field. What matters is whether the athlete comes back to a plan, or to nothing.

TRY THIS

- ✓ When an athlete reports an injury, reply with **what they can still train**.
- ✓ Store **physio notes and clearances** on their profile.
- ✓ Keep them at the track: **timing, filming or helping** keeps them part of the squad.

6 Make the off-season count

Base training is hard to love. Give the off-season targets so athletes have something to chase.

TRY THIS

- ✓ Set **off-season goals**: strength numbers, testing times, technique changes.
- ✓ Run a **testing day** every 6 weeks so progress is visible.
- ✓ Set **home sessions** athletes tick off in the app, like mobility or core.

Watch your numbers by group: if jumps keeps losing athletes and sprints doesn't, look at that group's coaching, timing and plan first.

7 Act on three quiet weeks

Athletes rarely say they're quitting. Missed sessions come first. If an athlete has missed three weeks, they're already drifting.

TRY THIS

- ✓ Check each week for athletes who have **missed three weeks** of sessions.
- ✓ Send a **personal message**, not a group one: "Everything OK? We missed you at hurdles."
- ✓ Offer an **easy way back**: a lighter week or a different session time.

8 Plan the next block before this one ends

The end of a block or season is when athletes decide. Make the next step obvious before the question comes up.

TRY THIS

- ✓ Share the **next block's goals** two weeks before this one ends.
- ✓ Keep squad fees **rolling monthly**, so there's no restart decision.
- ✓ Ask anyone who leaves **one question**: "What's the main reason?"

Make staying the default: when fees roll on and the next block is already planned, more athletes stay. Leaving should take a decision.

6 messages you can use today

Swap in the words in teal and send by SMS, email or your app. Short and personal works best.

After the trial session

HABIT 1

Hi **name**, great first session today! Your first block starts **Monday**. You'll see it in the app. Season goal: **sub-13 s 100 m**.

New PB

HABIT 3

Hi **name**, **12.84 s** in the **100 m**, a new PB! That's **0.3 s** since **March**. The block work is paying off.

Injury note

HABIT 5

Thanks for telling me, **name**. No sprinting this week. You can still do **upper body and core**. Come to the track **Thursday** and help with timing.

Testing day

HABIT 6

Hi squad, testing day is **Saturday 8 am**:
30 m fly, standing long jump, med ball throw. Bring **spikes**. Results go in the app the same day.

Quiet weeks

HABIT 7

Hi **name**, missed you at **hurdles** the last few weeks. Everything OK? Happy to adjust your sessions around **exams**.

Next block

HABIT 8

Hi **name**, next block starts **date**. Focus: **speed endurance** for the **state champs**. It's in the app now. Any questions, reply here.

Send them from one place. When messages live in one app instead of your personal phone, any coach in your squad can pick up a conversation and nothing gets lost.

Know your retention rate

Squads run in blocks and seasons, so measure it monthly. It takes two minutes and tells you whether your new habits are working.

$$\frac{\text{Athletes training last month and this month}}{\text{Athletes training last month}} \times 100 = \text{Retention rate}$$

Example: 64 athletes trained with your squad in May. 56 of them trained in June too. That's $56 \div 64 \times 100 = 88\%$ retention. You kept 56 of last month's 64 athletes.

Your monthly scorecard

Fill it in at the start of each month. Splitting by event group shows you exactly where athletes are leaking out.

MEASURE	HOW TO WORK IT OUT	MONTH 1	MONTH 2
Retention rate	Use the formula above		
Trials that joined	Trial sessions that turned into squad members		
Session attendance	Sessions attended ÷ sessions planned		
PBs this month	Athletes with at least one PB		
Quiet athletes	Athletes who missed 3 weeks in a row		
Injured athletes	Athletes out, and how long for		
Top reason for leaving	From your one-question exit check		

Watch the trend, not one number. If most of your losses happen in the off-season, that's where to put your effort next year.

A simple plan to get started

You don't need to do everything at once. Pick up one or two habits a week and they'll soon be part of how you coach.

WEEK 1

See where you stand

- ☐ Work out last month's retention rate
- ☐ List five athletes who left, and why
- ☐ Split the squad into event groups

WEEK 2

Fix the first month

- ☐ Set a season goal for every new athlete
- ☐ Share the first block in the app
- ☐ Run baseline tests

WEEK 3

Make progress visible

- ☐ Log every result and PB
- ☐ Book your next testing day
- ☐ Set home sessions for each group

WEEK 4

Lock in the next block

- ☐ Message athletes with three quiet weeks
- ☐ Share next block's goals early
- ☐ Set fees to roll monthly

Tip: put a reminder in your calendar for the first day of every month to fill in the scorecard on page 10. Small, steady improvements add up fast.

Run all 8 habits without the extra admin

Every habit here works with a spreadsheet and a phone. They're far easier to keep up when your software does the remembering. That's why we built Outcoach.

Event groups

Group athletes by event, with coaches and sessions for each group.

Results and PBs

Log comp and testing results, and see every athlete's progress.

Training blocks in the app

Share the week's sessions and home work athletes tick off.

Goals from templates

Set goals for each event group and update them every block.

Quiet athletes flagged

See who has missed three weeks before they drift away.

Rolling squad fees

Monthly fees billed automatically, with reminders.

Keep your squad on track

Outcoach brings squads, event groups, private sessions, results, comps and payments into one app, with AI that does the admin for you.

Start your free trial at outcoach.io

Questions? Email support@outcoach.io and a real person will get back to you.