FIELD GUIDE / AT WORK

When a friend keeps arriving late

The five minutes your friend missed were the five minutes somebody else had to cover. Bring it up privately, while you can still describe what happened. Start with the person who was late. A reminder to the whole group leaves everyone guessing who it was for.

A shift handoff

You were promoted last month. Twice this week your friend came in at 9:05. Both times Sam stayed past the end of the overnight shift.

Start here. “Got a minute? On Tuesday and today, Sam stayed after nine to cover the desk until you got here. What happened?”

If they say, “It was only a few minutes.” “It was five. Sam was supposed to be on the way home by then. Is there something about the nine o’clock handoff we need to work out?”

Agree on tomorrow. Listen before proposing a fix. If the issue is predictable, work out coverage through your usual scheduling process. If the start time works, try “Can you take the desk at nine tomorrow? If something changes, call me as soon as you know so I can arrange cover.”

Check back after the next shift. “Sam got out on time today. Did the handoff work on your end?” If the pattern continues, use the same attendance process you would use with any team member.

FIELD GUIDE / AT PRACTICE

A captain speaks to a friend

Coaches and advisers can read this scene aloud. Two teammates carried the bases out while everyone else started warmups. The friend who had agreed to help missed setup twice.

Give the captain an opening. “Hey, can we talk before we head out? We counted on you for bases twice this week. Both days Alex and Jo missed the first throws to get them out. What’s going on?”

If the friend says, “It was only a few minutes.” “Yeah, it went fast. Those were the minutes we had to set up. Can you make it for setup Thursday?”

Leave room for an honest answer. If a ride makes that impossible, the captain can say, “Want me to go with you to ask Coach about switching jobs?” The coach decides assignments. The captain can check in Thursday and thank the friend who follows through.

Run it with your group

Use the companion sheet, *The five-minute handoff*. Give each pair one fictional scene. Spend two minutes setting it up, three practicing the opening, three switching roles and two agreeing on a follow-up. Ask, “Which words made it easier to tell the truth about why you were late?”