

The Academy Standardization Playbook

The 3 operational bottlenecks quietly costing youth clubs \$50K–\$300K a year — and the exact plays to standardize your club and close each one.

Built from real conversations with 15+ club directors running 40-plus-team clubs across the US.
The quotes are theirs. The math is yours to fill in.

START HERE

You already know something is leaking.

Families you fought to win disappear every season. Coaches drift from the plan. Your methodology lives in five different apps and your own head.

Here's what nobody tells you: **these aren't three separate problems. They're one broken system showing three symptoms.** And until you see the system, you'll keep putting band-aids on a hemorrhage.

 THIS PLAYBOOK GIVES YOU THREE THINGS — NO FLUFF, NO SOCCER HISTORY LECTURE

- 1 The exact math** of what each bottleneck is costing you — so you stop guessing and start knowing.
- 2 Why it keeps happening** — the structural reason, so you stop blaming people and start fixing systems.
- 3 A practical plan you can run this week** — with part-time coaches, no budget, and zero new software.

Let's find your leaks.

BOTTLENECK 01

The Retention Leak

The single most expensive problem in your club — and the one you measure least.

"The loss of players is the number one biggest problem."

— Director of Coaching, 40-team club

Every family that walks out isn't one lost season of tuition. It's the **entire remaining lifetime** of that family — plus the cost of recruiting a replacement — plus the referrals they'll now never send.

And the part that stings: **most of them don't leave because your training is bad.** They leave because they can't see the value.



THE HIDDEN COST CALCULATOR · 60 SECONDS, GRAB A PEN

Forget your club for a second. Walk through a club of **1,000 players** losing just **5% a year** — that's 50 families. (Conservative — many clubs lose 15–30%.)

Players lost per year	50
× Annual tuition per player	\$2,000
× Years a family would have stayed	3

\$300,000 in lifetime revenue walking out the door.

Now read this twice, because it's the part almost no director sits with: **that's every year.** Not once. To simply stay the same size, this club must recruit 50 new families every single season just to replace the ones who left. It starts every year 50 families in the hole. To actually *grow*, it has to beat that number first.

Take a real minute with that. The recruiting, the tryouts, the marketing, the open houses — a huge share of it isn't growth. **It's just refilling a bucket with a hole in it.**

The warning: if your real churn is *above* 5%, this isn't a leak anymore — it's the reason your club feels stuck no matter how hard you recruit. A club losing 5% can grow on modest recruiting. A club losing 20% spends *all* its energy treading water and never compounds. That's how clubs stagnate for years without understanding why.

NOW THE GOOD NEWS — FIX IT CHEAPLY

You don't have to plug the whole hole. Recover just **10%** of those families — a deliberately low bar — and on this club that's:

\$30,000 back, every year. No new building.
No rebrand. No bigger ad budget.

You get it by doing one thing: **letting families see their kid getting better.**

WHY FAMILIES ACTUALLY LEAVE

Use the simplest model of value there is. Every parent — consciously or not — runs this equation:

$$\text{Value} = (\text{Dream Outcome} \times \text{Perceived Likelihood it happens}) \div (\text{Time \& Effort it costs them})$$

A parent who **never sees evidence of progress** has no way to believe the dream — *my kid is getting better* — is happening. Perceived likelihood collapses toward zero, and the value of everything you do, no matter how excellent, collapses with it. They don't churn because you failed. **They churn because they couldn't see you succeeding.**

"We have to show our membership that the kids are getting better individually. Parents don't care if the team is getting better — the only thing they care about is the kid they're paying for."

— Sporting Director, 40+ teams

WORTH KNOWING

In subscription-based youth services — music schools, martial arts, tutoring centers — families with **monthly visibility** into their child's progress renew at **35–50% higher rates** than families without it. The same dynamic holds in youth soccer. The driver isn't the data itself — it's the *perception of momentum*.

THE PLAY — THE VISIBILITY LOOP

Three light moves. None require software. Run them this week.

- 1 Weekly context — one sentence.** Tell parents what the team worked on. *"This week: 1v1 defending and recovery runs."* That single line gives the parent a conversation starter with their kid in the car after practice — and a parent who talks to their kid about training is an involved parent. Involved parents don't leave. (You just raised perceived likelihood and lowered their effort — for free.)
- 2 Monthly measurement — one repeatable evaluation.** Speed, passing accuracy, 1v1 success — it doesn't matter *what*, as long as it's the same thing every month. When a parent sees *"September: 6/10 → December: 8/10,"* they stay. Even if their kid is on the third team. Even if the "letters club" is ten minutes away.
- 3 Seasonal snapshot — before re-registration.** Send every family a simple before/after of their kid's year right before renewal opens. You don't renew families on the checkout page — you renew them by reminding them *why they joined*, at the moment they're deciding whether to stay.

THE HONEST CEILING

You can run all three by hand — a shared note, a spreadsheet, an email. It works. It just doesn't survive scale: one monthly note times 1,000 players is a full-time job nobody has, so it quietly stops happening by November. The clubs that win retention didn't get more disciplined — they made visibility *automatic*.

[See how to make retention visibility automatic →](#)

BOTTLENECK 02

The Accountability Gap

You're not failing to create the methodology. You're failing to verify it ever reaches the field.

"If there's no accountability, it's just open-ended. That doesn't work."

— Club General Manager

Let's be fair to you first, because most "accountability" advice insults the director: it assumes your methodology lives only in your head. It doesn't. **You did the hard part.** You designed the curriculum. You built the periodization. You created the sessions, got them out of your head and into tools, and sent them out.

Then the loop just... ends.

"40% of my coaches will look at the topic and coach their own thing. 40% will actually open the document. And 20% don't even open it."

— Technical Director who counted his own staff

He only found that out by **physically driving to the fields and watching.** That's the gap. **Sending is not executing** — and right now, nothing tells you the difference.

THE COST — A GUT CHECK, NOT A CALCULATOR

Of all your teams, how many can you say — with certainty, today, without driving anywhere — actually ran your methodology this week?

If the honest answer is "a handful," you're not running a methodology. **You're running a hope.** And the cost shows up downstream as the exact inconsistency that feeds Bottleneck 01: your U12 plays nothing like your U14, families on the weaker side feel it, and they leave.

BOTTLENECK 02 • THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP

THE PLAY — CLOSE THE LOOP

The clubs that solve this don't *remind more*. They redesign the loop so non-compliance is **visible by default**. Two moves:

- 1 **One delivery point.** Pick the single place coaches get the session — and kill the rest. Drive *plus* WhatsApp *plus* email *plus* a planner is four places to *not* look. Make it one: "This is the only place content lives now."
- 2 **A confirmation signal.** End every session with a 10-second tap: *delivered as planned / modified / skipped*. A recurring Google Form works to start. No receipt = it didn't happen. Then add one rule: two missed confirmations in a row triggers a *conversation* — not another reminder.

That's the whole shift: from "I hope they're coaching it" to "I can see they're coaching it" — without visiting a single field.

THE HONEST CEILING

A Google Form gets you started. But chasing confirmations across 20+ coaches becomes its own part-time job, and the signal degrades the moment people stop filling it. The loop breaks exactly where it matters most — at scale, where you can least afford to be blind.

See the loop close itself — without chasing →

BOTTLENECK 03

The Fragmentation Tax

The most expensive person in the club has become the glue between apps that were never built for soccer.

"Se vuelve una sopa de muchas cosas." (It turns into a soup of too many things.)

— Club COO / Director of Coaching

Be honest about your actual Tuesday. To get **one week** of training to your coaches, you:

- design the session in a planner,
- export it as a PDF,
- paste it into a Google Doc so it's formatted right,
- drop it in a Drive folder,
- announce it in WhatsApp,
- rebuild the visual in Canva when the curriculum changes,
- and re-send it Thursday when three coaches ask *"where is it again?"*

Every director runs **4 to 7 disconnected tools** to manage the *sporting* side — not by choice, but because no single tool was built for it. So you became the workaround: **the human middleware** manually connecting apps that were never designed to talk to each other. Every. Single. Week.

"I have a Google Doc, a spreadsheet, and a Canva — keeping content current in three different spaces, which is driving me mad."

— Director, 40+ competitive teams



THE QUESTION WORTH SITTING WITH

Should my week be spent making sure the coaching is actually right — that the curriculum lands on the field, that kids are developing — or copying files between four channels that were never built for soccer?

Every hour on the second is an hour stolen from the first. **And the second is the only one a system can do for you.**

THE TIME TAX · 60 SECONDS, GRAB A PEN

Tools () × hours/week moving content between them () × 48 weeks =
hrs/yr

192 hrs

Example: 5 tools × 4 hrs/week × 48 weeks — nearly five full work-weeks a year spent being a copy-paste machine.

THE PLAY — THE ONE-SYSTEM AUDIT

One rule fixes most of it: **if it doesn't live in ONE place, it doesn't exist.**

1 Map it. Write the tool you use for each step:

Design sessions →
Store the library →
Coaches access sessions →
Track execution →
Evaluate players →
Parents see progress →

2 Count the unique tools. Four or more? You're paying the tax every week.

3 Pick your single source of truth and make everything else a satellite that *reads* from it — never a second place you re-enter the same data. Then eliminate the highest-friction transfer first: the one that makes you grind your teeth.

THE HONEST CEILING

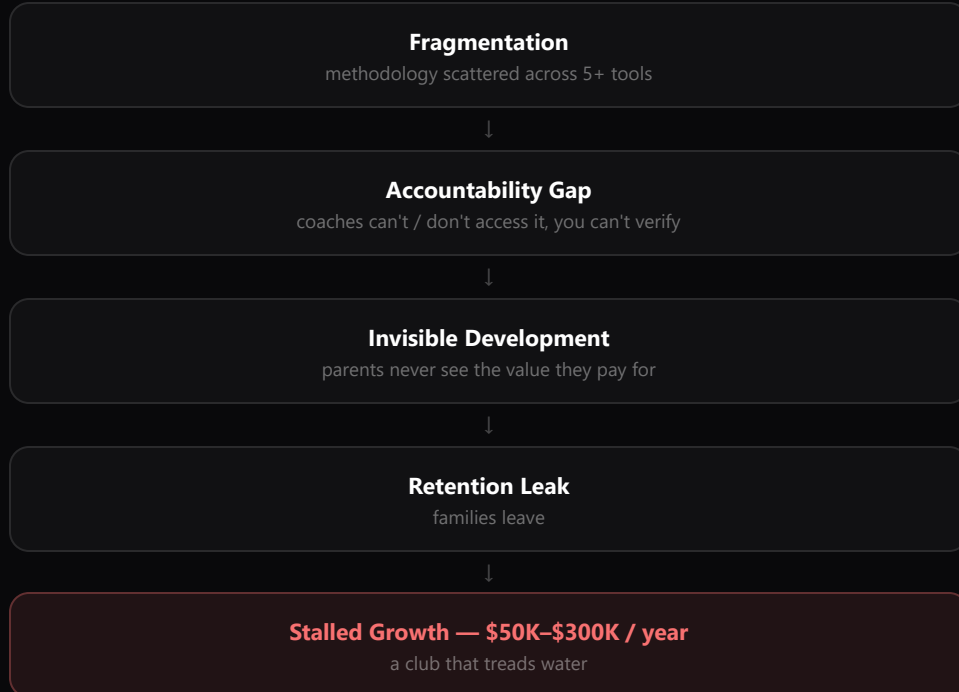
Here's where consolidation hits a wall most directors never see coming: you *can* merge your admin — registration, payments, scheduling live fine in a TeamSnap, a Byga, a Sprocket. But none of them touch the **sporting** side — your methodology, sessions, evaluations, progress. So even a "consolidated" club still runs the half that *actually develops players* on Google Docs. That's the leak nobody has plugged — because until recently, nobody built the tool for it.

[See the one system for the sporting side →](#)

THE DIAGNOSIS

It was one problem the whole time.

Read in the order they actually happen, the three bottlenecks are a single chain reaction:



Plug one leak by hand and the others quietly re-open, because they share one root cause: **there is no single system for the sporting side of your club.** The back office is solved. The half that develops players — and keeps families — still lives in a folder.

This isn't a tools problem or a people problem. **It's a systems problem.** And systems problems need systems solutions.

SCORE YOUR CLUB · 30 SECONDS

I can verify what every coach delivered this week *without* visiting fields

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10

Every parent can see their child's progress right now

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My whole methodology lives in ONE system coaches actually use

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10

I spend under 3 hrs/week on content distribution and follow-up

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/

10

Our family retention is above 85% year over year

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/

10

TOTAL

__

/

50

40–50: Top 5%. Protect what you've built.

25–39: Strong foundation — one system change closes the gaps.

Under 25: You're running on willpower and heroics. The system is overdue.

Wherever you landed — the next page is how you close the gap for good.

THE NEXT STEP

You can run these plays by hand. **You should.**

But you already feel the ceiling. Spreadsheets and Google Forms break at scale, they depend on *you* being the glue, and they never connect the parent experience to the coaching workflow.

We built the system that runs all three loops in one place — methodology, accountability, and parent-visible progress, connected. Designed for clubs like yours: 200–2,000+ players, part-time coaches, growth-minded directors. If you want, we'll get on a 30-minute call and:

- 1 **Pinpoint your worst bottleneck** — you tell us which one hurts most.
- 2 **Show you the exact module that closes it** — live, mapped to your club.
- 3 **Hand you an implementation roadmap** — even if you decide not to work with us.

Book Your Workflow Mapping Session →

No pitch. No pressure. Just an operator-to-operator conversation about fixing the system.

Built by BestLevel — the operating system that standardizes the sporting side of growth-minded soccer clubs.