

# How Justin Outten's high school coaching roots molded the new Broncos offensive coordinator

By Kyle Newman  
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In 2008, less than two years removed from his playing days as a two-year starter and team captain at Syracuse, Justin Outten walked into his interview for an assistant coaching job at Westfield High School in Houston. It looked like he had been preparing his whole life to coach.

"He came in with his playbook, his drill-book, DVDs of all of his drills," current Westfield head coach and then-assistant Matt Meekins said. "Justin was highly organized and detailed. Attention to the small parts of preparation, the overall knowledge of the game. You could tell he had a good head start as a player and (Syracuse) graduate assistant before he even got here, and he just continued to build on that foundation and grow as a coach."

Then-Westfield head coach and current Houston assistant Corby Meekins recalled a focused young coach, someone who earlier this month was named the Broncos' offensive coordinator. Outten, along with head coach and primary play-caller Nathaniel Hackett, is tasked with reviving a stagnant Denver offense.

Outten was with Westfield from 2008-15 before jumping to the NFL with the Falcons as an offensive intern (2016) and offensive assistant (2017-18). He spent the past three seasons as Green Bay's tight ends coach.

"On paper, you had a feeling he was going to be a special coach," Corby Meekins said. "He killed the interview, and he was everything I thought he was going to be in the film room, at practice, on the sideline..."

"The units he coached always played smart, played disciplined. On top of that, he's great at building relationships. With not only his fellow workers, but especially the athletes. He gets really close with those guys, people like him, and when people know he cares about them, he's able to get more out of them on the field."

Outten called his decision to pivot from coaching in college to high school early in his career "probably the best decision I ever made as far as going down to a lower level."

Part of the reward of that decision came from his work as a special education teacher at Westfield, in addition to the close relationships he formed while he helped develop young talent. With Outten's guidance, 24 of the offensive linemen he coached at Westfield received scholarships to play in college.

"When I (started) as a graduate assistant at Syracuse, I knew I wanted to teach and coach," Outten said. "The responsibility you take on as a teacher separate from being a coach is just (learning) organizational skills and making sure that everybody is on the same page... And I was dealing with a wide variety of different learning styles (in the classroom).

"At that high school itself, it was a free/reduced lunch situation and there were a lot of guys that didn't have anywhere to lay their heads most of the nights. I learned a lot from those kids. I actually learned

more from them than they probably learned from me. You're not only a coach, but you're also a mentor. You're also a father figure, you're an educator. You're always dealing with a ton of different gymnastics throughout the entire day. That's what I loved about it. No day was ever the same. You've got to find ways to get things done."

Outten is not the only Westfield alum on Hackett's staff. Offensive quality control coach Ramon Chinyoung also coached with Outten at Westfield and spent the past 10 years coaching Texas high school football. Hackett said Chinyoung will be "working with the offensive line, drawing a lot of the runs and stuff like that."

Matt Meekins believes the pair will bring a lot of fresh ideas and a terrific work ethic.

"The preparation for the game is 365, and nobody embraces that more than Outten and Chinyoung," Matt Meekins said.

# Broncos OC Justin Outten knows the importance of being a teacher

By James Merilatt  
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When it comes to the new Broncos coaching staff, a common theme keeps appearing. All of them place a priority on teaching.

That message came through loud and clear on Tuesday when Nathaniel Hackett introduced his new coordinators to the Denver media. Justin Outten, Ejiro Evero and Dwayne Stukes all spoke about the importance of finding a way to connect with players, communicate what they want to get accomplished and convey their message.

They all bring a different approach, one that has been formed from their various experiences throughout their career. For Outten, however, a unique stop on his journey to becoming the Broncos offensive coordinator had a major impact on his coaching style.

After spending the 2007 season as a graduate assistant at Syracuse, Outten took job at the high school level. He was named the assistant head coach and OC at Westfield (Texas) High School.

For the next eight years, Outten not only coached at the prep level, but he stepped into the classroom to teach kids. It was an experience that had a big impact on the Broncos new offensive coordinator.

“Being a high school coach was probably the best decision I ever made,” Outten said on Tuesday. “I learned a lot from those kids. I actually learned more from them than they did from me.”

Those lessons have helped him throughout his career.

“The responsibilities you take on as a teacher, separate from being a coach, helped with organizational skills and making sure everyone is on the same page,” Outten said. “It really prepared me organizationally and for finding creative ways for guys to learn. You have to keep it interesting. The attention span at that age isn’t long. There’s a lot on their mind. So you have to find ways to connect with those kids.”

In the classroom, the Broncos offensive coordinator also took in some valuable lessons.

“I was working in the special ed department, so I was dealing with a wide variety of different learning styles,” Outten added.

In addition, Outten honed his ability to deal with all sorts of issues. At Westfield, it wasn’t just about football and school. Those challenges were impactful.

“There were a lot of kids who didn’t have anywhere to lay their heads most nights,” Outten continued. “You’re not only a coach. You’re a mentor and a father figure. You always dealing with a ton of gymnastics throughout the entire day. That’s what I loved about it. You have to find ways to get things done. You

gotta make sure the players are getting to practice. You gotta make sure they're eating breakfast, lunch and dinner."

The Broncos new coaching staff is all about teaching. It was a message that came up multiple times on Tuesday.

For Justin Outten, the ability to excel in that area doesn't come from just his experience on the football field. He learned it in the classroom.