



## BRITISH AMERICAN FOOTBALL REFEREES ASSOCIATION LIMITED

### REGULATIONS

#### 1 Membership

1. The regulations here supplement clauses 2-6 of the Articles of Association.  
2. An active official is one who wishes to participate in the officiating of American football games in one of the following ways (even if unable to actually do so for reasons of injury, illness, disablement or other extenuating factors):

- a) working games as an on-field official
- b) observing games as an off-field assessor
- c) training, mentoring and examining officials

#### Membership categories and subscriptions

3. The annual subscription shall cover the year from the first day of October to the last day of September. Subscriptions shall be due on the first day of October and shall be payable by the first day of November, after which the defaulting Member's name shall be removed from membership of the Association.

*The General Secretary will issue renewal notices to all existing members prior to the annual renewal date, and all members who pay their renewal fee in full within one month of the renewal date will maintain continuity of membership. Members who fail to renew by this time may rejoin the Association on payment of the full (undiscounted) renewal fee that has been set by the Directors. A member who re-joins too late to take the annual exam will have to go through the new member procedure (see paragraph 14 below).*

*Any member who has difficulty in paying his/her annual membership fee may, in confidence, approach the Director of Finance to agree payment spread over a period (or in the absence of the Director of Finance, the General Secretary). This would allow the person to maintain continuous membership, provided the arrangement is put in place prior to 1<sup>st</sup> November, even if the payment (of residue of the payment) is agreed to be received after that date. Priority for scheduling following 1<sup>st</sup> October will be given to those who have renewed membership (which includes those who have entered into a financial arrangement to pay their fees over an agreed period of time).*

*BAFRA does not lend money to members.*

*BAFRA may offer flexible payment terms for monies due to BAFRA from its members, e.g. Membership Fees. Such terms are agreed on a case by case basis by the Director of Finance, or in his absence Deputy Director of Finance. There is no automatic right to flexible payment terms.*

*Decision to offer payment flexible payment terms will take into account:-*

- Amount due
- Proposed payment schedule and time line, and likelihood of payment
- Any previous experience of that member in complying with flexible payment terms
- And will balance the needs of the member against that of membership as a whole.

*Abuse of this policy or failure to comply with the payment may result in disciplinary action and any payment due being treated as not paid.*

4. Existing members (i.e. those were a member in any category at any time during the previous membership year) get a discount of £5 if they pay before the first day of November. In addition, Affiliate, Flag/5-on-5 and Junior members receive a £5 discount in their year of joining, and, should they join after 1<sup>st</sup> June, a further payment will not be required to renew in the next membership year.

5. The membership categories and rates of subscriptions are:

Qualified Member	£40 payable annually
Associate Member	No charge to join. £40 payable on 1 <sup>st</sup> day of October after officiating first game and thereafter annually.
Affiliate Member	£10 payable annually.
Junior Member	£10 payable annually.
Flag/5-on-5	£20 payable annually.
Restricted Overseas Member	Free. This category is for overseas officials who are visiting Britain and wish to officiate games whilst here. It is valid from the date of joining until the end of that membership year (30 <sup>th</sup> September). Restricted Overseas members are permitted to officiate a maximum of four games within a membership year.

6. Honorary members in any category pay no subscription.

7. In addition, Associate, Qualified and Flag/5-on-5 members who are not already members of BAFA must pay the relevant BAFA fee; this includes honorary members in those categories. Members who are also members of another BAFA organisation must inform BAFRA of their existing BAFA registration number.

*The BAFA membership fee is payable at the same time membership is renewed. This will be at whatever rate is set by BAFA and the Director of Finance will pass such payments to BAFA during the financial year. This is only applicable to Qualified and Associate members (including any honorary members in such categories). For new members who join during or after the renewal period no BAFA fee is payable by the individual, but it will be paid on their behalf by BAFRA after they have undertaken their first game.*

8. The rates of all subscriptions shall be determined or adjusted as may be necessary from time to time by the Directors.

9. Resignations from membership shall be in writing and shall reach the General Secretary or his/her Deputy not later than the first day of November, otherwise the subscription for the current year shall be due.

### **Membership applications**

10. Applications for membership may only be made on the appropriate application form.

11. The Directors may at their discretion deny membership to any applicant who:

- a) has a criminal record, particularly involving offences against children, evidence of a propensity to violence, or that bring into doubt the individual's integrity
- b) has been subject to disciplinary action by another American football organisation
- c) has engaged in conduct that has brought, or is likely to bring, the reputation of the Association into disrepute
- d) refuses to satisfactorily provide information about their previous conduct

12. Applicants for membership will be asked to provide details of their criminal record. This information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the membership process. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar someone from membership.

This will depend on the circumstances and background of the offences. The Association undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any membership applicant on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

*• Membership applications will be first considered by the Membership Subcommittee of the Directors consisting of the General Secretary and the President.*

*• Appeals will be considered by the Membership Appeals Sub-committee consisting of three other Directors selected in the following order: Director of Finance, Director of Operations, Director without Portfolio #1, Director without Portfolio #2, Director of Training, Director of Recruitment.*

*• In the event of a tied vote of either sub-committee, an applicant will not be accepted for membership.*

13. In making a decision on membership, the Directors will consider the following factors:

- a) The Association's policy on the membership of ex-offenders
- b) The seriousness of the offence and its potential relevance to the practice of officiating
- c) The length of time since the offence occurred
- d) Any relevant information offered by the applicant about the circumstances which led to the offence being committed
- e) Whether the offence was a one-off, or part of a history of offending
- f) The degree of remorse, or otherwise, expressed by the applicant and their motivation to change

### **Progression to Qualified Member**

14. New members (or those who have not taken the most recent annual examination) who wish to actively officiate must join as an Associate Member.

*The Director of Recruitment in consultation with the Director of Training (or their representatives) will:*

- contact the Associate member and discuss their training requirements*
- appoint a mentor to supervise the Associate Member's training*

15. Before being assigned to work a game on the field, an Associate Member must pass a competency test administered by the Director of Training (or his/her representative) in order to be able to officiate.

16. Once 10 games have been worked to the satisfaction of the Director of Training (or his/her representative), the Associate Member becomes a Qualified Member.

17. A Qualified Member who does not sit the annual exam will automatically become an Associate Member on the closing date. He/she will have to pass a competency test (as above) before being assigned to work a game on the field.

a) Qualified Members who do not sit the exam because they are involved in the setting or testing of it are exempt from this provision.

18. If a membership applicant can show evidence of considerable experience of American football officiating (e.g. in another country or as a BAFRA member in the past), then:

a) the Director of Training may deem a member "competent" on an individual basis

b) the Directors may deem a member "qualified" on an individual basis

This procedure will not normally be used to give "qualified member" status to someone who has been inactive for more than 2 years or who has not sat the most recent BAFRA exam.

*Whenever a member's status changes, the Director of Training (or his/her representative) will:*

• *inform the General Secretary who will update the member's status on the Association's membership list*

• *inform the Editor of Newsflash who will publish the member's new status*

### **Flag/5-on-5 Member**

15. People who have undergone a BAFRA-approved training in Flag and/or 5-on-5 football and passed a competency examination based on that training may join BAFRA as a Flag/5-on-5 member. Such members will be required to pass an annual competency examination to retain their membership.

16. Flag/5-on-5 members have the same rights and responsibilities as other members except they do not have the additional rights of a Qualified Member with regard to voting or standing as a Director. .

17. Flag/5-on-5 members may not officiate other forms of football as a BAFRA member.

18. Flag/5-on-5 members wishing to become Associate Members, may do so on payment of the difference between the Flag/5-on-5 membership and the Associate membership fees currently in force.

*Flag/5-on-5 members wishing to convert to Associate Members should contact the General Secretary for information on how to proceed.*

## **2 Directors and elections**

1. The Directors shall be elected or appointed to one of the following offices:

a) President

b) Director of Finance

c) General Secretary

d) Director of Operations

e) Director of Training

f) Director of Recruitment

g) Director without portfolio #1

h) Director without portfolio #2

2. The term of office of each director will end, as follows:

at the close of the annual general meeting in even-numbered years

President

General Secretary

Director of Training

Director without portfolio #1

at the close of the annual general meeting in odd-numbered years

Director of Finance

Director of Operations

Director of Recruitment

Director without portfolio #2

3. Only Qualified Members may:

a) stand for election as a director

b) nominate or second a candidate for election as a director

c) vote in elections for a director

Restricted Overseas members may not stand for election, nominate or second a candidate for election as a director or vote in elections for a director, even if they are treated as qualified for officiating purposes.

4. The General Secretary or his/her deputy will request nominations from qualified members no later than 49 days prior to the date of the general meeting at which the election will take place.

5. Nominations must be made to the General Secretary or his/her deputy at least 28 days prior to the date of the general meeting at which the election will take place.

6. No member may stand for election to more than one post in any election. Should more than one nomination be received from a member, the General Secretary or his/her deputy shall require the member to declare for which post he or she is standing. If the member fails to make such a declaration, all nominations from that member will be deemed void.

*If an existing director whose tenure in office extends beyond the date of the election wishes to stand for a post other than the one he or she currently holds shall not be required to stand down from their current post when submitting their nomination. If they are successful in being elected to the new post they will be required to immediately stand down from their existing post. If their tenure in office expires at (or before) the date of the election, they will be treated no differently to any other member in respect of only being nominated to one post.*

7. Procedure for the conduct of an election at a general meeting

a) Elections shall take place at the AGM. Members may vote either in person or they may appoint a proxy to vote on their behalf. The Teller for the election shall be the Returning Officer or a member appointed by the Directors to act on his/her behalf.

b) Prior to the AGM, the General Secretary will provide the Returning Officer (or Acting Returning Officer) with a list of those entitled to vote.

c) If only one nomination has been accepted for a Directorship, or only one or two nominations have been accepted for Director without Portfolio when both are up for election, that person or in the latter case persons shall be deemed elected unopposed.

d) Where two or more nominations have been accepted for any election (with the exception of the Director without Portfolio when both are up for election), the following procedure will apply.

i) Any ballot form that unambiguously signifies a preference for a candidate will be counted. Other ballot papers may be designated as spoilt by the Returning Officer/Acting Returning Officer. The Returning Officer (or Acting Returning Officer) is the sole judge of whether a ballot paper is spoilt or if the voting intention is ambiguous or unclear.

ii) Where two candidates have been nominated, the candidate with the majority of votes shall be elected to the post.

iii) Where more than two candidates have been nominated, the system of Alternative Vote (AV) will be used

iv) For the AV system of voting, all of the first preference votes are counted. If a candidate receives 50% plus one of the votes cast, then that candidate is elected. If no candidate receives 50% plus one of the votes cast, then the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated and his/her votes are distributed amongst the remaining candidates according to his/her second or subsequent preference. In the event of a tie amongst candidates with the fewest votes, the candidate whose votes will be redistributed will be decided by drawing lots. This process continues until someone has 50% plus one of the votes. In the event of a tie for first place after the final step in the redistribution of votes, the winner will be the candidate who was in the lead after the most recent distribution prior to the final redistribution. If candidates are still tied for first place, the winner will be decided by drawing lots.

e) Where three or more nominations have been accepted for the Director without Portfolio when both posts are up for election, the procedure will be as follows.

i) All first preference votes are counted. If a candidate receives 50% plus one of the votes cast, then that candidate is elected. If no candidate receives 50% plus one of the votes cast, then the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated and his/her votes are distributed amongst the remaining candidates according to his/her second or subsequent preference. In the event of a tie amongst candidates with the fewest votes, the candidate whose votes will be redistributed will be decided by drawing lots. This process continues until someone has 50% plus one of the votes.

ii) This process is then repeated, with the successful candidate's votes distributed amongst the remaining candidates according to his/her second or subsequent preference, until a second person reaches 50% plus one of the available votes.

f) The first elected will be appointed to the Director without Portfolio post with two years before it is next up for election and the second elected will be appointed to the other Director without Portfolio post.

g) Any member who is entitled to vote will be sent a proxy voting form with his/her notification of the election.

h) A member may not vote both by proxy and in person. Proxy forms shall be completed and submitted either in hard copy form or electronically to the Returning Officer to arrive with him/her a minimum of seven days prior to the AGM. To be accepted the form must either:

i) Have the signature of the member submitting it;

- ii) Where a signature is not possible, the form can only be accepted if it comes from the e-mail address of the member as recorded on the Membership Listing in the Members' Area of the BAFRA Website.
- i) The proxy form will indicate who the member has agreed may vote on his/her behalf. This must be a member of BAFRA and may be a candidate standing for any of the Director posts. It is not the responsibility of the Returning Officer or Teller to ensure that the proxy votes in accordance with the member's wishes.
- j) For each election, the Teller will issue one ballot paper to each person present who is entitled to vote, and one ballot paper to each nominated proxy. He/she will validate the person's entitlement to vote against the membership list provided by the General Secretary and a list of proxy nominations sent to him/her.
- k) Those entitled to vote will complete their ballot papers in secret and return them to the teller for counting. The teller will announce the outcome of the elections in the order on the agenda paper.

### **3 Delegation of responsibility to committees**

1. Clause 21 of the Articles of Association permits the Directors from time to time to delegate the authority to determine policy and procedures for the Company to committees.
2. The Directors may override a decision of a committee only where:
  - a) there is a legal duty on the Directors to do so
  - b) the decision makes a financial or similar commitment that the Company cannot keep
  - c) the committee makes a decision beyond its authority
3. The following Committees are established with the specified terms of reference:
  - a) Rules and Mechanics Committee
    - i) Determination of the mechanics of officiating to be employed by BAFRA members
    - ii) Determination of BAFRA's view on game rule change proposals
    - iii) Its chairman to represent BAFRA on the BAFRA Rules Committee
    - iv) Interpretation of game rules on behalf of BAFRA
  - b) Selection Committee
    - i) Determination of the selection of members to officiate prestige games, including league playoffs, advancement to higher levels of officiating (e.g. the BAFRA Elite Programme and IFAF panel) and other assignments that may need to be made from time to time
    - ii) The Chairman will be appointed by the Executive Board, but will normally be the Director of Operations.
    - iii) The other members will be appointed by the Executive Board, normally after a call for nominations/volunteers. The normal term of office will be three years after which a member should not normally be re-appointed until a further 1 year has elapsed.
    - iv) BAFRA considers it desirable that members of the Selection Committee should work with or observe as many officials as possible.
    - v) Members of the Selection Committee are themselves eligible for selection, but shall not participate in the decision-making about any position for which they are a candidate.
    - vi) The Committee may meet in person or remotely, or conduct its business by correspondence.
    - vii) The Chairman may act on behalf of the Committee where time precludes a full consultation. This may include applying policy and practice to replace officials who become unavailable for any reason.
    - viii) The Chairman shall inform all members at least annually of the details of the implementation of selection.
  - c) Disciplinary Committee
    - i) Determination of the guilt or innocence of BAFRA members alleged to have committed a disciplinary offence
    - ii) Determination of the penalty to be imposed on a BAFRA member found guilty of having committed a disciplinary offence
  - d) Examination Committee
    - i) Determination the procedures to be applied to the setting, conduct and results of BAFRA examinations.
    - ii) Members of the Examination Committee shall sit the exam at least once every four years unless exempted by the board of directors in the interests of setting the exam.



## **4 Conduct of members**

### **Ethical principles for sports officials**

1. Sports officials must be free of obligation to any interest other than the impartial and fair judging of sports competitions. Without equivocation, game decisions which are slanted by personal bias are dishonest and unacceptable.
2. Sports officials recognise that anything which may lead to a conflict of interest, either real or apparent, must be avoided. Gifts, favours, special treatment, privileges, employment or a personal relationship with an individual or team which can compromise the perceived impartiality of officiating must be avoided.
3. Sports officials have an obligation to treat other officials with professional dignity and courtesy and recognize that it is inappropriate to criticize other officials publicly.
4. Sports officials have a responsibility to continuously seek self-improvement through study of the game, rules, mechanics and the techniques of game management. They have a responsibility to accurately represent their qualifications and abilities when requesting or accepting officiating assignments.
5. Sports officials shall protect the public (fans, administrators, coaches, players, et al.) from inappropriate conduct and shall attempt to eliminate from the officiating avocation/profession all practices which bring discredit to it.
6. Sports officials shall not be party to actions designed to unfairly limit or restrain access to officiating, officiating assignments or association membership. This includes discrimination based upon economic factors, race, creed, colour, age, gender, sexual orientation, physical handicap, country or national origin.

### **Disciplinary procedures**

7. The BAFRA Disciplinary Committee has been established to consider cases brought from either internal or external sources, against any member of BAFRA who is alleged to have:
  - a) breached the code of ethics
  - b) breached the rules, regulations, bye laws or policies of the Company
  - c) committed a criminal offence
  - d) been involved in betting on any match or competition in which the member has any involvement, or provided information to any other person that is not publicly available in relation to betting
  - e) sold, offered or exposed for sale, either directly or indirectly, a ticket for a match in excess of the face value of the ticket
  - f) incurred financial or other costs to the Company as a result of their disregard for Company policies and procedures
  - g) otherwise brought the game or the Company into disrepute
8. Reports may come to the Committee from any source but must be in writing, supported by evidence and may not be anonymous.
9. A member is notified immediately once the Committee decides to consider a case against him/her, giving details of the allegation. Supporting evidence and interviews may be called for as required by the Committee. A submission by the member(s) concerned in defence or mitigation must be called for, and the member(s) shall be given 28 days to respond.
10. In cases where the allegations are serious, the Directors may suspend a member from active participation in officiating and the running of BAFRA pending the outcome of disciplinary and/or criminal proceedings.

Suspension is a neutral act not a disciplinary procedure and does not imply innocence or guilt.
11. The principles of natural justice will apply to the conduct of disciplinary proceedings, including that an individual shall not be penalised unless he/she has been given prior notice of the case against him/her, a fair opportunity to answer it, and the opportunity to present his/her own case.
12. The Disciplinary Committee consists of three regular and two alternate members (designated first and second). Three Committee members consider all cases. A member of the Committee shall not hear a case if:
  - a) They have any involvement in the matter,
  - b) They are a member of the same local association or geographical area as the member(s) under consideration or if they have any other close links as the member(s) under consideration.
13. The first alternate will substitute for a regular member as required. The second alternate will substitute if two regular members (or one regular member and the first alternate) are unable to hear

the case. If further alternate members are required the Directors will appoint them. All members of the Committee are appointed annually by the Directors.

14. It shall be an absolute defence to an allegation if the individual was at the time of the alleged offence:

a) a director or appointed officer of BAFRA; and

b) acting on behalf of the Company in carrying out their duties in accordance with Company policy and/or proper procedures, and relevant law and ethical principles

15. Having decided the outcome of a case, the Committee may employ one or more of the following sanctions against a guilty member:

a) Issue them with a written warning concerning their behaviour.

b) Place restrictions on the games they may work.

c) Issue a fine of no more than one senior league game fee.

d) Suspend them from officiating for a period of time.

e) Recommend expulsion from membership of the Company.

16. The findings (what the Committee holds in the balance of probabilities to be the facts) and the outcome of a case (guilty or not guilty), and the sanctions imposed, shall be notified to the member(s) concerned, to the President and to the General Secretary (who shall report it to the Directors), and to the source of the complaint.

In cases where guilt is established, the Directors may also decide that BAFA and its other member organisations should be made aware of the outcome.

### **Appeals**

17. A member found guilty by the Disciplinary Committee has a right of appeal to the Directors. An appeal may be against the outcome of the case or the sanctions imposed. It may be made on any grounds including, but not limited to, that certain evidence was not available to the Committee (although the appellant would have to show why any new evidence was not submitted originally), that the sanctions imposed are unreasonably severe or that the correct procedure was not followed. In the latter eventuality, an outcome would not be overturned, provided it could be shown that reasonable care had been taken by the Committee in coming to its decision.

18. A request for such an appeal must be lodged in writing with the General Secretary within 28 days of notification of the Disciplinary Committee's decision. Since the time to the next scheduled meeting might be quite long and also because a member might not feel comfortable making a case to the Directors, the Directors may delegate their powers to a small appeals committee. The member may choose to have his appeal heard by either the Appeals Committee or by the full Board of Directors, but having made a choice it can not be revoked.

By choosing to have their case heard by the Appeals Committee, the member waives their right to appeal to the Directors as a whole.

19. Whether the member chooses to have his/her appeal heard by the Directors or by Appeals Committee, they have a further choice as to whether they wish the case to be dealt with by correspondence or by attending a meeting in person. In the latter event they may be accompanied by a person of their choosing who may speak on their behalf. Appeals Committee can:

a) In the light of new evidence refer a case back to Disciplinary Committee for reconsideration.

b) Uphold the sanctions imposed by the Disciplinary Committee (including expelling the member(s) from the Association).

c) Impose alternative sanctions.

20. The Appeals Committee is normally chaired by the President together with two other members appointed by the Directors. No member of the Disciplinary Committee can be a member of Appeals Committee. The restrictions on membership of the Disciplinary Committee listed in paragraph 4.12 above also apply to the membership of the Appeals Committee.

### **Non-members**

21. If disciplinary action is initiated against an individual who is no longer a member of BAFRA, or who ceases to be a member during the disciplinary and appeal process, the action shall be suspended until such time as the individual applies to rejoin BAFRA. However, the action shall be abandoned after 2 years unless in the opinion of the Directors it is in the interests of the Company to pursue it.

22. In appropriate cases, BAFA and/or one or more of its member organisations may be informed and/or asked to take action on BAFRA's behalf.

## **5 General regulations**

1. A technical breach of these regulations that in the balance of probabilities did not affect a decision or the outcome of a process shall be disregarded.
2. Directors, committee members and officers shall declare when they have a fiduciary or non-fiduciary interest in the outcome of any decision (other than the setting of fees or expenses).

*Notes like this are not part of the Regulations, but reflect current policy and practice in implementing the Regulations.*