



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 their 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 1st November, even if the payment (of residue of the payment) is agreed to be received after that date. Priority for scheduling following 1st 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 their 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, 5-on-5 and Junior members receive a £5 discount in their year of joining, and, should they join after 1st 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 st day of October after officiating first game and thereafter annually.
Affiliate Member	£10 payable annually.
Junior Member	£10 payable annually.
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 th September). Restricted Overseas members are permitted to officiate a maximum of four games within a membership year.
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6. Honorary members in any category pay no subscription.

7. In addition, Associate, Qualified and 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 their 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 their representative) in order to be able to officiate.

16. Once 10 games have been worked to the satisfaction of the Director of Training (or their 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. They 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 their 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*

5-on-5 Member

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

20. 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.

21. 5-on-5 members may not officiate other forms of football as a BAFRA member.

22. 5-on-5 members wishing to become Associate Members, may do so on payment of the difference between the 5-on-5 membership and the Associate membership fees currently in force.

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 their 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 their 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 their deputy shall require the member to declare for which post they are 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 they currently hold 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 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 their 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 their votes are distributed amongst the remaining candidates according to their 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 their votes are distributed amongst the remaining candidates according to their 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 their 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 their 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 them 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 their 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. They 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 them.

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.

8. Procedure at for an Electronic AGM

a) Should it not be possible to hold a physical in person AGM then this will be done electronically, this will be decided no less than six weeks before the AGM unless there are exceptional circumstances deemed by the Board. All of the principles and dates set out in Sections 2.1 to 2.7 above will apply except a starting and closing date shall be included for the issuing and return of ballot papers to the Returning Officer for the elections.

b) These dates will allow a minimum of 21 days for members to return their votes.

c) The Returning Officer will provide to the General Secretary the results of all votes prior to AGM so that these may be announced at the AGM.

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. This can include using sporting events, where the official is operating, for promoting personal interests.
3. Sports officials have an obligation to treat other officials with professional dignity and courtesy and recognise 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 the protected characteristics stated in the Equality Act and Company Policy.

Disciplinary procedures

7. The BAFRA Disciplinary Committee will 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 or affiliated organisations, such as BAFA
- 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. pursued personal business interests in relation to a Company assignment
- h. otherwise brought the game or the Company into disrepute

8. Referrals to the BAFRA Disciplinary Committee may only be made by the complainant, a witness, and/or a member of the BAFRA Board.

9. A member is notified as soon as practicable, and in all cases within 10 days, once the Disciplinary Committee decides to consider a case against them, giving details of the allegation. The member(s) shall be given written disclosure covering the allegation against them and any evidence deemed relevant by the Committee. Supporting evidence in written or media format may be called for as required by the Committee and may be requested after the member(s) have responded. A submission by the member(s) concerned in defence or mitigation must be requested, and the member(s) shall be given 28 days to respond. A failure of the member(s) to respond within this timescale shall be determined that they do not wish to make a comment or offer a defence or mitigation. Any further evidence gathered after the member(s) response will be disclosed to the member(s) if deemed relevant by the Committee to the response from the member(s). The member(s) will then have 7 days to make any further representations based on this new evidence.

All correspondence between the Committee, the members involved, and any witnesses in relation to the case will be in writing or media (video, photographs, audio, etc).

10. In cases where the allegations are serious, the Directors may suspend a member from active participation in officiating, in any guise, 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.

The following are examples of, but not limited to, serious allegations:

- There are reasonable grounds to believe a suspension will reduce the risk of a further breach being committed

- There are reasonable grounds to believe a suspension will reduce the risk to the safety of any participant
- The police or another agency is investigating the case with a view to criminal charges or civil proceedings in court
- The incident in question resulted in serious harm to an individual
- The incident in question resulted in a large amount of damage to property

11. The principles of natural justice will apply to the conduct of disciplinary proceedings, including that an individual shall not be penalised unless they have been given prior notice of the case against them, a fair opportunity to answer it, and the opportunity to present their 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

It is incumbent on the members of the Disciplinary Committee to recuse themselves if they feel that there is a conflict of interest. The Chair of the Disciplinary Committee will have the final decision on whether an individual member shall hear the case if there is a question of impartiality, if there is a potential conflict of interest for the Chair then this decision will be made by the President or the General Secretary barring any potential conflicts of interest.

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 on a temporary basis for that specific case. All members of the Committee are appointed 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 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. The Committee will decide on whether the member(s) are guilty or not guilty of an offence. The Committee will use 'balance of probability' as the level of proof required for guilt in any case under these procedures.

16. 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. This warning will remain on the member's record for a period of 12 months and may be used in considering sanctions on further cases against the member within that period
- b. Successfully complete appropriate retraining and/or education
- c. Place restrictions on the games they may work, reduce a member(s) officiating level and/or Membership Category
- d. Issue a fine of no more than one senior league game fee for a crew of 4
- e. Non-payment as per any current policy
- f. Suspend them from officiating for a period of time
- g. Recommend expulsion from membership of the Company

17. 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.

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

18. A member found guilty by the Disciplinary Committee has a right of appeal to the Directors. An appeal may be either –

- a. against the outcome of the case
- or
- b. the sanctions imposed

It may be made on any grounds including, but not limited to –

- that certain evidence was not available to the Committee at the time the decision was made (although the appellant would have to show why any new evidence was not submitted originally when they lodge their appeal)
- that the sanctions imposed are unreasonably severe
- that the correct disciplinary procedure was not followed which significantly and unfairly impacted the decision made by the Committee
- This reason may be discounted if the outcome would not be overturned, provided it could be shown that reasonable care had been taken by the Committee in coming to its decision

19. A request for such an appeal must be lodged in writing with the General Secretary within 14 days of notification of the Disciplinary Committee's decision. The General Secretary, along with one other Director will consider whether there are valid grounds for appeal. If it is found that the grounds are not valid, then the appeal will be refused and the case concluded. The Chair of the Disciplinary Committee may be consulted to clarify details only and has no opinion on the validity of the appeal. If the appeal is deemed valid, the appeal will be heard by the Appeals Committee (a small group appointed by the Directors)

20. The member(s) may choose as to whether they wish the case to be dealt with by correspondence or by attending a virtual meeting. In the latter event, they may be accompanied by a person of their choosing who may speak on their behalf.

The Appeals Committee are not there to re-examine the case and are limited to looking at the grounds for the appeal and to determine whether or not the appeal's grounds have an impact on the decision made by the Disciplinary Committee.

The Appeals Committee or Director(s) 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
- c. Impose alternative sanctions

21. 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 item 4.12 above, also apply to the membership of the Appeals Committee.

22. Once the appeals process has been concluded there shall be no further right to appeal.

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.