



## BRITISH AMERICAN FOOTBALL REFEREES ASSOCIATION LIMITED

# DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

## INTRODUCTION

Disciplinary cases can be broadly separated into two categories - misconduct and unsatisfactory performance. This procedure outlines the process followed when a member is reported to the BAFRA Disciplinary Committee. All cases will be investigated by this Committee who will use their judgement in line with this Procedure. The member has the right to appeal as laid down in the Regulations of the Company.

## DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Normally where unsatisfactory performance or misconduct occurs, the official will be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with the stage of the BAFRA Disciplinary Procedure.

## MISCONDUCT

In cases of gross misconduct the official concerned will be liable to suspension from assignment to games, where appropriate, whilst the matter is investigated. Summary termination of membership will normally follow where the gross misconduct is proven or BAFRA has reasonable grounds to believe it was committed. In each case BAFRA will take into account the gravity of the offence and any individual mitigating circumstances.

Examples of misconduct include but are not limited to:-

- deliberate breach of BAFRA intellectual property rights
- unauthorised destruction of BAFRA property
- theft or attempted theft of monies or property belonging to BAFRA or any individual member official
- falsifying BAFRA documents or expense claims
- a criminal offence arising from or related to the officials representation of BAFRA (e.g. at a game in uniform, immediately on the way to/from a game, representing BAFRA at a meeting, etc)
- a criminal offence committed at other times serious enough such as to adversely affect BAFRA's reputation or the officials suitability to be an official (e.g. violent behaviour)
- drunkenness or being under the influence of illegal drugs whilst at a game in uniform, immediately on the way to/from game, representing BAFRA at a meeting, etc.
- practical joking or horseplay of a kind such as to endanger the health and safety of fellow officials, players, coaches or spectators.
- gross insubordination to BAFRA Directors or wilful disobedience (after due warning) in carrying out their reasonable requests
- excessive rudeness or other unacceptable behaviour to players, coaches or spectators.

It is stressed that the foregoing does not represent a complete list of possible offences and are only given by way of an example.

## SERIOUS MISCONDUCT SUSPENSION / WARNING

In cases where the misconduct concerned is of a serious nature, but not sufficiently gross to justify a summary termination of membership, the official concerned is liable to a temporary suspension from assignment to games. The period of suspension will vary in length at BAFRA's discretion according to the gravity of the misconduct but will not exceed four regular season games. Such disciplinary

suspension may also be accompanied by a final written warning or imposed independently. In any event, BAFRA reserves the right to proceed directly to the final written warning stage of its disciplinary procedure in all cases of serious misconduct.

## UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE

Where BAFRA considers that the official does not show the requisite skills or aptitude to perform on the field despite the training given and number of games experienced, BAFRA will inform the official of these shortcomings, provide a chance to improve and ultimately warn the official that if there is no improvement within a reasonable time then termination of membership will follow. The procedural stages which will be followed in such cases are those prescribed under the BAFRA Disciplinary procedure.

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Individual officials are not employees of BAFRA and so this disciplinary procedure does not form part of any contract with the individual official. It is merely a guideline that BAFRA will normally adopt in a disciplinary context.

BAFRA reserves the right to initiate the following procedure at any stage or to jump stages depending on the circumstances of the case or to take any clear action short of terminating membership of BAFRA (e.g. change of membership status, for example demotion from Elite to Qualified or Qualified to Associate) or to terminate membership or suspend membership of an official guilty of gross misconduct / gross negligence / gross unsatisfactory performance without instituting the following procedure.

### FIRST WARNING

In the case of unsatisfactory performance or breach of discipline amounting to misconduct, the official will receive a first written warning of the offence / shortcoming and the possible consequences resulting from any repetition of the offence or failure to improve. A note of the warning and its date will be made on the official's training record and will remain in force for 12 months.

### SECOND WARNING

In the case of more serious unsatisfactory performance or breach of discipline amounting to misconduct, the official will receive a second written warning and the possible consequences resulting from any repetition of the offence or failure to improve. The official will be given the opportunity to state their case. A note of the warning and its date will be made on the official's training record and will remain in force for 12 months.

### FINAL WARNING

A note of the warning and its date will be made on the official's training record and will remain in force for 18 months.

## TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

If despite the final written warning there is no improvement, BAFRA will normally exercise its right to terminate membership. Before the decision to terminate is taken, the official will be given the right to appeal to the BAFRA Board of Directors.

## REFUND

If membership of BAFRA is terminated, no refund of the BAFRA or BAFRA fee is payable.

## RE-JOINING

BAFRA reserves the right to decline a future application for membership from a past member whose membership was terminated under this Disciplinary Procedure.

## PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

The normal means of judging an official's performance is by means of an infield assessment by a recognised BAFRA assessor and BAFRA will endeavour to do this. The normal means of judging an official's improvement is by means of a further infield assessment. In the unusual case of an official who

only exhibits problems with Rules knowledge (by having a consistently poor annual exam mark), then the normal method of judging improvement is by comparing consecutive exam marks. In such a case, extenuating circumstances (including but not limited to dyslexia) will be taken into account.

## MISCELLANEOUS POINTS

As BAFRA is a small part-time organisation of volunteers, this disciplinary process will be undertaken by letter / Email. Face to face disciplinary hearings will not normally be held due to cost and time restraints and cannot be insisted upon by the individual official or by BAFRA. If a face to face hearing is held, then the official has the right to be accompanied by an officiating colleague if they wish. At each stage of the procedure, the official will be given the opportunity to explain the alleged misconduct / poor performance. A copy of this Disciplinary Procedure will be made available to all members on the BAFRA website. This procedure forms the basic guidelines for disciplinary action. Where disciplinary action against an official is being considered, it is essential that the case should be discussed with the BAFRA General Secretary prior to any action being taken against the official.

## NOTES

BAFRA General Secretary will keep notes of action taken on the individual officials file.

### Appendix A

BAFRA has a responsibility to ensure that its members remain up to date with their rules and mechanics knowledge and perform at an acceptable level on the field. To this end, it sets out the following methodology to address issues of underperformance and the remedial support to be given to the official.

The performance of an official comes under the responsibility of the Director of Training, who will ensure that all cases of alleged underperformance are followed up appropriately. Underperformance may be brought to his/her attention in a number of ways:

- Report from colleagues who have worked with an official
- Report from coaches who have observed the official
- Report from an assessor who has assessed the official
- Report from an appropriate person (usually a BAFRA official) who has observed the official

The report may be verbal or written and may be backed by video evidence. Usually it would take more than one such report to start the remedial support process. This is to eliminate the possibility of bias against the official by another person.

Unless the official is deemed to be so dangerous to him/herself or others normally the Director of Training will arrange for an urgent assessment of the official to be conducted by someone not involved in making the original report(s) and, if possible, by someone who has not previously seen the official work. This assessment is to take place on a size of crew with which the official is used to working and in a position they are used to working. If the reported problem is only with the official working a specific position, then the assessment will take place with them working that position. If necessary, the official should be kept off the field until this assessment has taken place. If possible, some re-training with a mentor should take place at the same time.

Once the assessment has been received, and assuming it identifies one or more significant problems, a remedial programme will be put in place for the official. This may involve any or all of the following:

- Further theoretical training
- Further practical training
- A requirement to observe other officials at work (e.g. by working a down box at a game)
- A requirement that the official only works at or does not work at a specific position or positions
- That the official re-sits the competency exam
- Any other action appropriate to a specific case

Once it is deemed appropriate the official will be re-assessed by a different assessor to see if any improvement has been achieved. This may lead to a further support plan (even if some progress has been made) or to the official being signed-off from remedial support. If not signed-off, a further assessment will be made after a suitable period of time (after the remedial support has been given) and if significant problems still persist, a frank discussion will be held between the official and the Director of Training about whether or not the official should continue as an official. If this does not lead to a resolution, the Disciplinary Procedure as outlined will commence.

