



## BRITISH AMERICAN FOOTBALL REFEREES ASSOCIATION LIMITED

### **Elite Programme Policy**

#### **An elite programme for officiating in Great Britain**

#### **Introduction**

The following sets out the aims and procedures associated with BAFRA's Elite Programme.

#### **Aim**

The aim is to sustain a BAFRA Elite Programme (BEP) for officials and officiating. It is founded on the following principles:

- BAFRA members need to have a "career progression" path.
- The best British games need the best British officials.
- We need to provide additional training and opportunities in order to develop top-class officials.

The objectives of the elite programme are to:

- 1) Identify a corps of BAFRA members who by a combination of ability, commitment and potential stand out from the general membership.
- 2) Provide additional training for those officials, particularly in 6, 7 and 8-man mechanics and the interpretation of rules in games played to a high standard.
- 3) Provide additional opportunities for those officials to work in larger crews, in high-profile games and in games played to a high standard.
- 4) Develop officials who can go on to officiate at higher levels, including but not limited to IFAF and professional football.

#### **Implementation**

To achieve the above, BAFRA will:

- 1) Maintain a BAFRA Elite Programme panel set at approximately 25 officials (from 2019). The BAFRA Board of Directors will review and amend as required, the number of Officials on the BEP. This will be based on membership numbers and in consultation with the Selection Committee.
- 2) Run additional training clinics each year for BEP members (once or twice a year).
- 3) Develop additional training materials (and reuse ones developed elsewhere) to support the BEP.
- 4) Identify a number of games each year that will be worked by BEP crews. This will include the Brit Bowl games, a number of "big" regular season games, international/NP games played in GB, and other obviously high-profile games. The list may grow as the number of BEP members increases.
- 5) Pay travel expenses for BEP members attending BEP Games.
- 6) Seek opportunities for BEP officials to work games overseas and to work with overseas officials on British games.
- 7) Select GB's quota of IFAF officials from the BEP.

#### **Application and Selection to the BAFRA Elite Programme**

Applications to join the BEP must be made in writing to the [Director of Operations](#)

Applications will only be accepted during a 4 week period. The 4 week period will start on the closing date of the Annual BAFRA Examination. Officials selected to join BEP will remain on the list for 1 year only. Thereafter they can reapply in line with the above and undernoted guidelines. Tenure on the BEP will cease once the Selection Committee has chosen the next year's panel. Applications to join the BEP will only be considered from Qualified BAFRA Members who meet the following criteria.

- have at least 5 years officiating experience
- attend all national training events (or have a good reason to be excused)
- work all Elite Programme games assigned (or have a good reason to be excused)
- work regularly (defined as at least 10 senior competitive games in the previous season – games assessed or games worked in IFAF will count – or would almost certainly have worked 10 games but for injury/illness)
- Score 85% or above in the annual BAFRA exam
- Score 80% or above on the Selection Spread sheet
- As part of a BEP commitment to help the wider BAFRA membership, BEP members must perform (if assigned) at least one assessment to a satisfactory standard during the year to maintain their BEP status
- assist in the training and development of officials

Exception: The BEP may include a number of officials who currently have only 3 or 4 years' experience or fall below the above criteria, but who demonstrate outstanding commitment and potential.

The BAFRA Selection Committee is responsible for selecting the approximately 25 officials who will form the BEP Panel. The Committee will meet as soon as practically possible after the closing date for applications.

### **Criteria for Elite Programme games**

The BAFRA Executive Board shall determine whether a game notified to BAFRA is "elite" or not. Factors that should be taken into account shall include:

- The game is in category "international" (as defined in the Terms & Conditions, i.e. the visiting team is from outside Great Britain) or involves one of the Great Britain representative teams
- The game involves two of the "top" teams, or one of the top teams versus an international opponent
- The game is an "all-star" or similar game, or a trial for a representative team
- The game is likely to attract atypically large crowds or media coverage (including television coverage)
- The league or team(s) involved have requested an elite crew
- The game is taking place in the vicinity of an Elite Programme training event

Games that don't meet the criteria above, but for operational/training reasons would be convenient for the Elite Programme, may also be designated "elite".

Elite games must have at least a 6-man crew, preferably a 7 or 8-man crew. If, for operational reasons, it appears difficult to assign at least a 6-man crew, a game should not be designated as elite.

An elite game may exceptionally involve one or more officials from outside Great Britain who are deemed of equivalent or higher status. If someone drops out from an elite crew at short notice, and no elite panel official is available, they may be replaced by someone not on the Elite Programme.

We are aiming to have 6-10 games designated as elite each year (April-March). Once it looks like the upper bound will be reached, we should reserve elite status only for games that are very obviously so. If it looks like the lower bound may not be reached, we should look for opportunities to designate appropriate games as elite games.

Even if a game is not designated as elite, it should still have a 6, 7 or 8-man crew assigned to it if we have officials available.

By convention, the BAFL Division 1 and 2 bowls are not designated as elite, but the Brit Bowl is.

Normally, the Director of Operations shall make the decision about the elite status of a game after consulting the other directors.

## **Support**

BAFRA will take advantage of its good relationships with other organisations to achieve the above, including the following:

- BAFRA support in general, and financial support for specific aspects of the BEP.
- The support of leagues in identifying appropriate games for BEP coverage.
- The support of coaches in helping with training, etc.
- The support of IFAF, our US contacts and others in providing training and materials.

## **What we're not doing**

We are not intending to do the following:

- Repeat the "National Panel" concept we had between 1990 and 1993 of fixed crews covering all Division 1 games.
- Restrict selection for all bowl games to members of the BEP.
- Keep the BEP a closed shop. We expect there to be a small but regular turnover of BEP members each year.
- Restrict membership to the "old hands" of British officiating. Members who are rookies now could reasonably aim to be on the BEP within five years.