



## BRITISH AMERICAN FOOTBALL REFEREES ASSOCIATION LIMITED

### Officiating during Pregnancy

Pregnancy is neither an illness nor a disability and it is important that it is not treated as such. However, BAFRA recognises that the health of the mother-to-be and the unborn child is of paramount importance and, as an organisation we want to support any member who is pregnant in whatever way is appropriate to allow them to either keep actively officiating or take a break from active officiating according to their individual wishes and requirements.

Once a pregnancy has been confirmed, the member must notify the Director of Operations who will, subject to the member's wishes, keep this information confidential (except where it needs to be shared with other members of the Operations team to allow them to function in an informed way).

The member must obtain approval from either their general practitioner, midwife or obstetrician to continue as an active official which may or may not include restrictions on what they may undertake (for example, they may be approved to work single games but not double-headers or they may be approved to assess provided they are able to sit down for ten minutes in each hour). Any advice from one of the listed health professionals that the member should not officiate during the pregnancy shall override all other considerations. The member must give the Director of Operations (via e-mail) that this approval has been given (along with any advice given or restrictions imposed) but it is not necessary to produce a letter or certificate to this effect. This advice must be renewed on a monthly basis.

The Director of Operations will keep a record of such communications and be able to demonstrate that he/she has taken full account of them, in collaboration with the member. This will form part of the risk assessment.

The Director of Operations will agree with the member how games will be scheduled. This may include but is not limited to:

- What position(s) the member will work (Note: under no circumstances should the member be allocated to work a position with which she is unfamiliar or not confident)
- What the maximum travelling distance to a game will be
- How frequently the member will be scheduled to work
- Whether any special requirements to support the member need to be put in place.

There will be no repercussions if a member has to withdraw from a game at short notice because of their pregnancy although it is incumbent upon the member to give the Director of Operations the maximum notice of withdrawal. Likewise, if a member feels unable to continue during a game they should leave the field. In either case, an assessment will need to be made if this is likely to be a one-off event or if any changes are required to the agreement regarding the scheduling of games.

Following the birth, the member and the Director of Operations will agree a programme for returning to officiating (involving the Director of Training if necessary), again taking due account of any professional clinical advice.

It is normal practice for a member to start losing experience points on the Selection Committee spreadsheet if they do not officiate in more than one six-month period between Selection Committee meetings. Recognising that there may be a post-natal period when the member is unable to officiate in addition to a pre-natal period, the experience points will be protected for an additional six-month period following pregnancy. If the member

is a qualified member, she will be required to sit the annual examination to retain her qualified status. If this does not happen, she will be required to sit a competency exam before she is able to actively officiate again.