

British American Football Coaches Association

CODE OF ETHICS

Updated: December 2017

1. Preamble

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 The distinguishing character of the British American Football Coaches Association (BAFCA) is that its members are dedicated to the organisation, and are not influenced by personal gain. Those who select football coaching must understand it provides physical, social and emotional values for those who play it, and the game belongs to the players.
- 1.1.2 The welfare of the game depends on how the coaches enforce ethical conduct and how they remain mindful of the trust placed in them by their players and the public.
- 1.1.3 This Code should be studied regularly by all coaches and its principles should always be followed. Violation of the Code should be reported to the Executive Board of BAFCA.
- 1.1.4 Coaches unwilling or unable to comply with the principles of the Code of Ethics have no place in the profession.

1.2 Purpose

- 1.2.1 The Code of Ethics has been developed to protect and promote the best interests of the game and the coaching profession.
- 1.2.2 Its primary purpose is to clarify and distinguish ethical and approved practices from those which are not.
- 1.2.3 Its secondary purpose is to emphasise the purpose and value of football and to stress proper functions of coaches in relation to clubs, players and the public. This includes all activities of the British American Football Association (BAFA).

1.3 Amendments

- 1.3.1 Submission: All proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing to a member of the Executive Board.
- 1.3.2 Adoption: A majority vote in favour by the Executive Board shall be required to adopt said amendment.

1.4 Ethics Committee

- 1.4.1 The Ethics Committee shall consist of a Chairman and two members.
- 1.4.2 The Chairman shall be the Standing Ethics Officer as appointed by the Executive Board.
- 1.4.3 The members shall be appointed as and when necessary from full members of BAFCA in good standing who are NOT members of the Executive Board or BAFA Board.

2. Enforcement

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 The Ethics Committee is to investigate all violations of the Code of Ethics.
- 2.1.2 When an alleged violation is brought to the attention of BAFCA from any source the method of proceeding with investigative action and requesting an appearance before the Committee shall be determined by the Ethics Committee.

- 2.1.3 Upon a decision to bring an alleged violation before the Ethics Committee, the member coach shall be notified at least 15 working days prior to the scheduled meeting date.
- 2.1.4 There is to be no pre-judgement of evidence of a violation in any case.
- 2.1.5 The member shall not be presumed in violation of the Code of Ethics if the members team has been found in violation of BAFA or competition rules and regulations.

2.2 Proceedings

- 2.2.1 If the Ethics Committee finds the member coach not in violation of the Code of Ethics, the Committee shall inform the Executive Board, member coach, club management and BAFA, detailing their findings.
- 2.2.2 The proceedings before the Ethics Committee shall entitle both the Ethics Committee and the alleged violator to call witnesses on their behalf and the right to cross examine witnesses at the hearing.
- 2.2.3 If the Ethics Committee finds the member coach in violation of the Code of Ethics, it may elect one or more of the following courses of action:
 - a) Written warning.
 - b) Written warning with copies of the letter sent to the club and league management and the BAFA board.
 - c) Place the member coach on a one to three year probation period. Any further violation of the Code of Ethics during the probationary period will result in actions in subparagraphs d) or e) or f).
 - d) A fine in accordance with the BAFCA Ethics and Disciplinary Policy.
 - e) Recommend to the Executive Board the suspension of membership for a period of one to five years.
 - f) Indefinite suspension of the member.

2.3 Appearance and Notification

- 2.3.1 After proper notification, should the member coach refuse or fail to appear before the Ethics Committee without due cause, they shall be placed immediately on probation. Failure to appear at the subsequent meeting will result in a recommendation to the Executive Board that they be indefinitely suspended from BAFCA.
- 2.3.2 Any coach who has failed or refused to appear before the Ethics Committee, or who has been placed on probation or suspended for failure to appear before the Committee shall be required to appear before the Committee before they will be considered for reinstatement. Please refer to section 2.2 for following actions.
- 2.3.3 The decision of the Ethics Committee shall be communicated to the President of BAFCA before said decision is made known to any other party. The accused member coach will receive notification of the findings from the President as soon as possible, with written confirmation no later than 14 days after the decision.

3. Appeals

3.1 Criteria and Background

- 3.1.1 A member not satisfied with the findings of the Ethics Committee may request their case reviewed. They shall notify the President of their intention to appeal and lodge with him an Appeal Fee of £100. The President shall then convene a Board of Review to consider the appeal.
- 3.1.2 The Appeal Fee will be forfeited to the BAFCA in lieu of expenses incurred by the BAFCA for the review procedure if found guilty.

3.1.3 The initial findings of the Ethics Committee and any course of action imposed by the BAFCA shall remain in force whilst the Board of Review considers the appeal.

3.2 Proceedings

3.2.1 The Ethics Officer of BAFCA as well as two members of the Executive Board shall serve as the Board of Review all with full voting rights. The Ethics Officer of BAFCA shall act as Chairman. The Board of Review shall have final disposition of any case it has been asked to review.

3.2.2 The Board of Review must make known any conflicts of interest. If such interests arise regarding a member of the Board of Review they will be removed and replaced. A majority vote by secret ballot shall suffice to determining the outcome of an appeal.

3.2.3 Whilst any proceedings are ongoing they should remain strictly confidential. Once the outcome of any proceeding has been determined, and all interested parties have been informed as detailed above, the situation and findings of the Ethics Committee and/or the Board of Review may be announced to the membership. However, names shall not be revealed.

3.3 Rejection of Appeal

3.3.1 The Board of Review may dispose of an appeal if there is credible evidence to support the finding of guilt, or legal prosecution has occurred.

3.4 Notification

3.4.1 If the Board of Review overturn the decision of the Ethics Committee they shall notify the appealing coach as soon as possible with written confirmation no later than 10 working days after the decision. They shall also publish their decision to club management, competition and other BAFA agencies concerned within the 10 working days. The Appeal Fee shall be returned to the appealing coach in full.

3.4.2 No apology should be expected for the earlier decision made by the Ethics Committee in carrying out their duties in good faith to the best of their abilities. If the Board of Review upholds the decision of the Ethics Committee the President shall notify the appealing coach as soon as possible with written confirmation within 10 working days after the decision.

3.5 The Executive Board will deem what consists of as breach for any of the above points within this section by a simple majority vote. If a member is found to be in breach of any of the above points within this section please refer to section 2.

4. Social Media

4.1 The abiding principle is that a coach's comments or actions on social media are no different to a coach's comments or actions in person.

4.2 A coach will take care and caution, ensuring that any BAFA organisation (BAFCA, BAFA, BAFRA and any affiliates), any individual acting on behalf of a BAFA organisation or the sport of American Football is not brought into disrepute by any comment(s) or action(s) deemed irresponsible by the Executive Board.

4.3 The Executive Board will deem what constitutes an irresponsible action by a simple majority vote. If a member is found to have taken an irresponsible action refer to section 2.

5. Coach Responsibilities

- 5.1 A coach should always be aware of the influence they wield on players under their care, for good or bad.
- 5.2 A coach should never place the value of a win above that of instilling the highest desirable ideals and character traits in their players.
- 5.3 Safety and welfare of players should always be uppermost in their mind and must never be sacrificed for any reason.
- 5.4 A coach must realise that certain rules exist that are designed to protect the player and provide common standards for determining a winner and a loser.
- 5.5 Any attempt of a coach to beat such rules, to take unfair advantage of an opponent, or to teach deliberate unsportsmanlike conduct, has no place in the sport or BAFCA.
- 5.6 A coach should set the example for winning without boasting and losing without bitterness.
- 5.7 The diagnosis and treatment of injuries is a medical problem and should under no circumstances, be considered a province of the coach.
- 5.8 Drugs**
 - 5.8.1 Under no circumstances should a coach authorise the use of drugs.
 - 5.8.2 Medicines, stimulants, or drugs should be used only when authorised and supervised by a physician. Coaches should be aware that the wilful oversight of drug abuse by players under their care may be construed as condoning such action.
 - 5.8.3 Coaches should be acquainted with, and remain aware of the current BAFCA anti-doping policy.
- 5.9 The Executive Board will deem what constitutes a breach of any of the above points within this section by a simple majority vote. If a member is found to be in breach of any of the above points within this section please refer to section 2.

6. Rules of the Game

- 6.1 The Football Code, which appears in the official BAFCA Rulebook, shall be considered an integral part of this Code of Ethics and should be carefully read and observed.
- 6.2 Each coach should be acquainted with the BAFCA Rulebook for the purpose of teaching the rules to their players.
- 6.3 The rules must be adhered to by the coaches.
- 6.4 Members must not gain an advantage by circumvention or disregard for the rules.
- 6.5 A coach is responsible for flagrant roughing tactics.
- 6.6 A coach shall not permit faking of injuries to stop the clock.
- 6.7 A coach must always remember that it is not the purpose of football to injure an opponent by legal or illegal methods.
- 6.8 The Executive Board will deem what consists of as breach for any of the above points within this section by a simple majority vote. If a member is found to be in breach of any of the above points within this section please refer to section 2.

7. Good Sportsmanship

- 7.1 A coach should not encourage permit or condone any activity which is dangerous to opponents.
- 7.2 A coach must teach fair play and good sportsmanship.

- 7.3 This aspect of coaching must be taught just as vigorously as the teaching of skills or scheme, and to the players it is far more important than all the technical aspects of the game combined.
- 7.4 Coaches shall not permit, encourage or defend the use of unsportsmanlike tactics.
- 7.5 The Executive Board will deem what constitutes a breach of any of the above points within this section by a simple majority vote. If a member is found to be in breach of any of the above points within this section please refer to section 2.

8. Officials

- 8.1 No competitive contest can be played satisfactorily without impartial, competent officials.
- 8.2 Officials must have the respect and support of coaches and players.
- 8.3 On or off the field, the recorded criticism of officials to players or to the public shall be considered unethical.
- 8.4 There should be a co-operative relationship between coaches and official's organisations, with frequent interchange of suggestions and ideas.
- 8.5 Coaches should whenever possible, accept invitations to attend officials rule meetings.
- 8.6 Coaches should extend officials invitations to discuss rules interpretations with their squads, and on occasion to officiate at team scrimmages.
- 8.7 On the day of a game officials should be treated in a courteous manner.
- 8.8 Conferences between coaches and officials should always be conducted according to procedures established by BAFRA.
- 8.9 The BAFRA Rule Book shall be followed in coach/official relationships at all times.
- 8.10 Any criticisms which the coach may have concerning officiating should be made in writing to BAFRA.
- 8.11 A coach must not permit anyone on their team or sideline to address, uncomplimentary remarks to any official during the progress of a game, or to indulge in conduct which might incite players or spectators against the officials, is a violation of the rules of the game.
- 8.12 Use of film or tape in checking officials: It should be recognised that slow motion study of controversial decisions by officials is far different from on the spot decisions which must be made during the course of a game.
- 8.13 To show film or tape, with the deliberate intention of questioning the competence of an official, other than to BAFRA must be considered unethical conduct.
- 8.14 The Executive Board will deem what constitutes a breach of any of the above points within this section by a simple majority vote. If a member is found to be in breach of any of the above points within this section please refer to section 2.

9. Public Relations

- 9.1 The term 'public comment' is used to cover statements made at public meetings, direct comment to media personnel or written submissions to publications, internet sites, forums and on social media.
- 9.2 Members of the news media should be treated with courtesy, honesty and respect.
- 9.3 Public comments made by a coach should not be derogatory or misleading. Direct questions should be answered honestly or not at all.
- 9.4 If good judgement indicates an honest answer would be prejudicial to the best interests of the game or individuals, ethical procedure demands that it not be answered.
- 9.4.1 In such circumstances, 'no comment' is justifiable.

- 9.5 Coaches should be aware of their high profile and the weight carried by even casual comments and opinions. Derisive public comments about other coaches and their programmes, officials or BAFA personnel belittle the whole game and will be considered unethical.
- 9.6 Coaches should assume the responsibility of teaching their players and staff how to conduct themselves in making public comments in the best interests of football.
- 9.7 BAFA recommends that, when this is applicable, the media be admitted to dressing rooms as soon as practicable after games.
- 9.8 Coaches should not stress injuries, disciplinary measures and similar personal matters.
- 9.9 Disciplinary matters should be a 'family affair' to be solved between the coach and the players. Injuries are essentially the province of the team physician or trainer. No good purpose can be served by emphasising such matters.
- 9.10 Coaches should avoid public comment about unethical recruiting.
- 9.11 Coaches should not predict game winners.
- 9.12 Accepting money or goods for endorsement of any product or commodity not in keeping with the traditions of the coaching profession is unethical.
- 9.13 Solution of professional problems should be within the profession and not in the public domain. Written articles or comments by a coach are their responsibility exclusively.
- 9.14 Coaches should not be associated in any way with professional gamblers and should not be present where gambling on team sports is encouraged or permitted.
- 9.15 The Executive Board will deem what constitutes a breach of any of the above points within this section by a simple majority vote. If a member is found to be in breach of any of the above points within this section please refer to section 2.

10. Scouting

- 10.1 It is unethical under any circumstances to scout any team, by any means whatsoever except in preseason or scheduled games.
- 10.2 BAFA guidelines state that when filming a game for scouting purposes the common courtesy of informing the Head Coach of the teams involved should be applied.
- 10.3 The Head Coach shall be held responsible for all scouting carried out on behalf of their team.
- 10.4 The agreed exchange of film in the interest of good working practice in game preparation is urged by BAFA.

11. Recruiting

- 11.1 All competition, BAFA and international regulatory body rules pertaining to recruiting and transfers shall be strictly observed.
- 11.2 In discussing the advantages of their club, the coach must confine their statements to an honest and forthright presentation of the facts.
- 11.3 Coaches shall refrain from making derogatory statements about other clubs and their officials.
- 11.4 It is unethical for any coach to make statements to any prospective player that cannot be fulfilled.
- 11.5 During the season, when wishing to talk with a prospective player the coach should first inform that player's current Head Coach that they intend to do so (note: players are effectively "Free Agents" once the season has finished).

11.5.1 During the season, should an approach be made to a coach by a player they should out of courtesy inform that player's current Head Coach of the situation and inform the player that they will be taking this action (note: players are effectively "Free Agents" once the season has finished).

11.6 Representative Events and Clinics

11.6.1 The direct recruiting of players at national or representative events at any time (GB National Programmes, All-star, Coaching Clinics etc.) by coaches involved is detrimental to the furtherance of the game and these actions shall be considered unethical.

11.6.2 Coaches approached by players in these circumstances should politely refuse to discuss the issue at the event and follow the guidelines as given above.

11.7 Conspiring with a player or any agent acting on their behalf to circumvent the letter and spirit of these rules shall be considered unethical.

11.8 The Executive Board will deem what constitutes a breach of any of the above points within this section by a simple majority vote. If a member is found to be in breach of any of the above points within this section please refer to section 2.

12. Gameday and Other Responsibilities

12.1 Before and after games, rival coaches should meet and exchange friendly greetings.

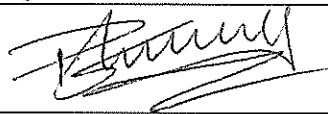
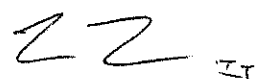
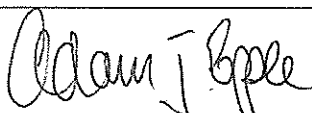
12.2 Coaches are also required to meet those officiating the game beforehand to exchange friendly greetings, club and player details as well as any other important information.

12.3 Coaches should ensure that all gameday paperwork is completed correctly. If incomplete or incorrect the coach is liable for any consequences as a result.

12.4 During a game, a coach should be as inconspicuous as possible. Coaches are encouraged to demonstrate a friendly and kindly attitude toward their players and staff. The attitude of coaches towards officials should be controlled and undemonstrative.

12.5 The Executive Board will deem what constitutes a breach of any of the above points within this section by a simple majority vote. If a member is found to be in breach of any of the above points within this section please refer to section 2.

Adoption of Rules

Role on BAFCA Board	Print Name	Signed	Date
President	Paul Sherratt		30/1/2018
Exec Member 1	JUAN TUCKER		15/2/18
Exec Member 2	Adam J. Apple		20/2/18

Adoption of the rules to the Membership taken on the 1st of March in 2018. This becomes effective as of this date and will be adhered to always.