



Code of Practice for Coaches

Rights, Relationships and Responsibilities

We know that coaching encourages people to start in sport and physical activity, improves enjoyment, maintains engagement, improves fitness, develops skills and builds lifelong connections to sport and activity.

This means that coaches, leaders and instructors play a critical role in the development of any sport or activity, and in the lives of the people they coach. Good coaches ensure participants have positive experiences, so they are more likely to continue and achieve their potential.

Coaches must demonstrate a high degree of honesty, integrity and competence. The need for coaches to understand and act on their responsibilities is vital to any sport, as is the need to promote participation for fun and enjoyment, as well as development and achievement.

This is implicit in good coaching practice and promotes a professional image. This *Code of Practice for BAFCA Coaches* defines all that is best in coaching practice.

Good coaching practice reflects the following key principles:

Rights
Relationships
Personal standards
Professional standards
Sports specific standards

Rights

Coaches must respect and champion the rights of every individual to participate in sport and physical activity.

Your Responsibilities

BAFCA Coaches should:

- Create an environment where everyone has the opportunity to participate.
- Maintain an environment free of fear and harassment.
- Recognise the rights of all participants to be treated as individuals.
- Recognise the rights of participants to seek advice from other coaches and experts.
- Promote the concept of a balanced lifestyle, supporting the well-being of participants in and out of the sport.

Your Behaviour

BAFCA Coaches should:

- Treat all individuals with respect at all times.
- Do not discriminate on the grounds of gender, marital status, race, colour, disability, sexual identity, age, occupation, religious beliefs or political opinion.
- Do not allow any form of discrimination to go unchallenged.
- Do not publicly criticise or engage in demeaning descriptions of others.
- Be discreet in any conversations about participants, coaches or any other individuals.
- Communicate with and provide feedback to participants in a way that reflects respect and care.

Relationships

Coaches must develop a relationship with their participants (and others) based on openness, honesty, mutual trust and respect.

Your Responsibilities

BAFCA Coaches should:

- Must not engage in behaviour that constitutes any form of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, bullying).
- Should promote the welfare and best interests of their participants.
- Must avoid sexual intimacy with participants, either while coaching them or in the period of time immediately following the end of the coaching relationship.
- Must take action if they have a concern about the behaviour of an adult towards a child or vulnerable adult.
- Should empower participants to be responsible for their own decisions.
- Should clarify the nature of the coaching services being offered.
- Should communicate and cooperate with other organisations and individuals in the best interests of participants.

Your Behaviour

BAFCA Coaches should:

- Be aware of the physical needs of participants (especially at the developmental stage) and needs of children and young people, and ensure that training loads and intensities are appropriate.
- Ensure that physical contact is appropriate and necessary, and is carried out within recommended guidelines (provided by governing bodies of sport) with the participant's full consent and approval.
- Do not engage in any form of sexually related contact or activity with any participant for whom you have responsibility. This extends to sexual innuendo, flirting or inappropriate gestures and terms. Coaches are in a position of power and trust in relation to participants. By entering into an intimate/sexual relationship with a participant, a coach may be deemed guilty of abusing this position and, in relation to children and young people, this may be unlawful.
- Inform parents/guardians immediately if you are at all concerned about the welfare of a child, unless there are concerns that this would not be in the interests of the child.
- Know and understand the relevant BAFA or BAFCA child protection/safeguarding policies and procedures, and follow them.
- Follow the reporting procedures laid down by your club or BAFA/BAFCA if you have a concern – non-action is unacceptable.
- Arrange to transfer a participant to another coach if it is clear that an inappropriate or intimate relationship is developing.
- Discuss with parents/guardians and other interested parties the potential impact of the programme on the participant.
- Respect participants' opinions when making decisions about their participation in the sport.
- Encourage participants to take responsibility for their own development and actions.
- Allow participants to discuss and participate in the decision-making process.
- Discuss and agree with participants what information is confidential.

- Inform participants or their parents/guardians of the requirements of the sport or activity.
- Inform participants or their parents/guardians of any potential costs involved in the sport and accessing the coaching services on offer.
- Be aware of and communicate any conflict of interest as soon as it becomes apparent.
- Do not work with any other coach's players without first discussing or reaching agreement with both coach and participant.
- Identify and agree with participants which other experts or organisations could offer appropriate services.

Personal Standards

Coaches must demonstrate proper personal behaviour and conduct at all times.

Your Responsibilities

BAFCA Coaches should:

- Must be fair, honest and considerate to participants and others in their sport.
- Should project an image of health, personal hygiene and functional efficiency.
- Must be positive role models for participants at all times.

Your Behaviour

BAFCA Coaches should:

- Operate within the rules and the spirit of your sport.
- Educate participants on issues relating to the use of performance-enhancing drugs in sport and cooperate fully with UK anti-doping, UK sport and BAFA/IFAF policies.
- Maintain the same level of interest and support when a participant is sick or injured.
- Display high standards in use of language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation.
- Encourage participants to display the same qualities.
- Do not smoke, drink alcohol or use recreational drugs before or while coaching. This gives a negative image and could compromise safety.
- Display control, respect, dignity and professionalism to all involved in your sport.
- Ensure they take care and caution when using social media and instant messaging. Making sure that always behave responsibly and respectfully when online or texting and ensuring best practices are followed and BAFCA/BAFA is not brought into disrepute.
- 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.
- Assume the responsibility of teaching their players and staff how to conduct themselves in making public comments in the best interests of football and good sportsmanship.

Professional Standards

To maximise the benefits and minimise the risks to participants, coaches must attain an appropriate level of competence through qualifications, and a commitment to ongoing training to ensure safe and correct practice.

Your Responsibilities

BAFCA Coaches should:

- Ensure the environment is as safe as possible, taking into account and minimising possible risks.
- Promote safe and correct practice.
- Be professional and accept responsibility for their actions.
- Make a commitment to providing a high quality service to their participants.
- Actively promote the positive benefits to society of participation in sport and activity, including the contribution it makes to achieving improved health, well-being and educational outcomes for children and young people.
- Consistently promote positive aspects of the sport (e.g. fair play) and never condone rule violations or adopt or encourage the use of prohibited or age-inappropriate substances or techniques.
- Contribute to the development of coaching by exchanging knowledge and ideas with others, and by working in partnership with BAFCA and other agencies and professionals.
- Gain qualifications appropriate to the level at which they coach.

Your Behaviour

BAFCA Coaches should:

- Follow the guidelines of BAFCA / BAFCA and your own organisation.
- Plan all sessions so they meet the needs of the participants and are progressive and appropriate.
- Maintain appropriate records of your participants' progress.
- Recognise and accept when it is appropriate to refer a participant to another coach or specialist.
- Seek to achieve the highest appropriate level of qualification available.
- Seek continuing personal development (CPD) opportunities to develop your coaching skills and competencies, and update your knowledge.
- Be aware of relevant social issues and how the sport can contribute to local, regional or national initiatives.
- Actively participate in recruitment and education opportunities in your sport.
- Actively contribute to local, regional and national initiatives to improve the standards and quality of coaching both in your sport and sport in general.
- Work in an open and transparent way that encourages other coaches to contribute to or learn from your knowledge and experience.
- Use self-analysis and reflection to identify your developmental needs.
- Manage your lifestyle and coaching commitments to avoid the burnout that might impair your performance.
- Do not assume responsibility for any role for which you are not qualified or prepared.
- Do not misrepresent your level of qualification.
- Promote good coaching practice in others and challenge any poor practice you observe.

Sports specific standards

Sportsmanship is the core of our game, the foundation of our values. It is the thread that ties together the desire of everyone in BAFCA to win ethically, with fairness and respect. Sportsmanship is the vanguard of public confidence — the keeper of game integrity.

Rules of the Game

- The Football Code, which appears in the official BAFA Rulebook, shall be considered an integral part of this Code of Ethics and should be carefully read and observed.
- Each coach should be acquainted for having the rules taught and interpreted for their players.
- The rules must be adhered to by the coaches.
- Members must not gain an advantage by circumvention or disregard for the rules.
- A coach is responsible for flagrant roughing tactics.
- A coach is responsible for illegal substitutions.
- A coach shall not permit faking of injuries to stop the clock.
- A coach shall not permit an illegal shift with the intent of drawing an opponent offside.
- A coach must always remember that it is not the purpose of football to hurt or injure an opponent by legal or illegal methods.

Good Sportsmanship

- A coach should not encourage permit or condone performance which is dangerous to opponents.
- A coach must teach fair play and good sportsmanship.
- This aspect of coaching must be attacked just as vigorously as the teaching of offense and defense, and to the players it is far more important than all the technical aspects of the game combined.
- Coaches shall not permit, encourages or defends the use of unsportsmanlike tactics shall face action.

Officials

- No competitive contest can be played satisfactorily without impartial, competent officials.
- Officials must have the respect and support of coaches and players.
- On or off the field, the recorded criticism of officials to players or to the public shall be considered unethical.
- There should be a co-operative relationship between coaches and official's organisations, with frequent interchange of suggestions and ideas.
- Coaches should whenever possible, accept invitations to attend officials rule meetings.
- Coaches should extend officials invitations to discuss rules interpretations with their squads, and on occasion to officiate at team scrimmages.
- On the day of a game officials should be treated in a courteous manner.
- They should be provided with a private room in which to meet and dress for the game.
- Conferences between coaches and officials should always be conducted according to procedures established by BAFRA.
- The official Rule Book shall be followed in coach/official relationships at all times.

- Any criticisms which the coach may have concerning officiating should be made in writing to BAFRA.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Scouting

- It is unethical under any circumstances to scout any team, by any means whatsoever except in preseason or scheduled games.
- 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.
- The Head Coach shall be held responsible for all scouting carried out on behalf of their team.
- The agreed exchange of film or videotape in the interest of good working practice in game preparation is encouraged by BAFCA.

Recruiting

- All competition, BAFA and international regulatory body rules pertaining to recruiting and transfers shall be strictly observed.
- In discussing the advantages of their club, the coach must confine their statements to an honest and forthright presentation of the facts.
- Coaches shall refrain from making derogatory statements about other clubs and their officials.
- It is unethical for any coach to make statements to any prospective player that cannot be fulfilled.
- 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.
- 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.
- The direct recruiting of players at national or representative events (GB. National, All-star etc.) by coaches involved is detrimental to the furtherance of the game and these events shall be considered unethical.
- Coaches approached by players in these circumstances should politely refuse to discuss the issue at the event and follow the guidelines as given above.
- Conspiring with a player or any agent acting on their behalf to circumvent the letter and spirit of these rules shall be considered unethical.