



# 2023 BAFCA CODE OF PRACTICE FOR COACHES

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## 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, 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.

*Someone engaged in coaching may do so under the title of activator, coach, instructor, teacher or leader. Regardless of the badge they wear, this Code applies to all those who help others achieve their goals through sport and physical activity.*

**UK Coaching 2018**

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.

What our athletes should expect for you as a BAFCA Coach:

- A coach's number one responsibility is the health and safety of all participants.
- Coaches will never place the value of winning over the safety and welfare of the players.
- Be qualified to the minimum of BAFCA Level 1 and hold mandatory liability insurance.
- Coaches will be positive role models and set the standard for sportsmanship and behave with honesty and integrity at all times.
- Coaches will adhere to the guidelines laid down by the club and always act in the best interests of the club.
- Coaches will treat officials, all players, staff, opposing coaches and parents with respect at all times.
- Coaches will refrain from bullying, refuse to tolerate it in others and report any occurrences where appropriate and respect the rights, dignity and worth of all participants regardless of age, gender, ability, race, cultural background, religious beliefs or sexual identity.
- Coaches will keep the sport in proper perspective with each player's other responsibilities: family, university, work, other sports, etc.
- Coaches will be sensitive to each player's individual developmental needs and strive to have each player reach their full potential.
- Coaches will develop each player's appreciation for the game. Players will have fun and receive positive, constructive feedback.
- Coaches will encourage players to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and performance.
- Coaches will cooperate fully with other specialists, such as medical personnel, in the best interests of their players.
- Coaches will refrain from using inappropriate language when representing the team, particularly around supporters and young people.
- Coaches will continuously develop themselves through an agreed CPD with the Head Coach.
- Coaches will support and be positive about other members of the club coaching staff to players at all times.



## **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.
- Be an advocate of equality on the grounds of gender, marital status, race, colour, disability, sexual identity, age, occupation, religious beliefs or political opinion.
- Ensure any form of discrimination does not go unchallenged.
- Promote a positive environment by not publicly criticising or engaging 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 all NGB members – players, coaches, officials etc. 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.
- Ensure equality with the players and coaches you are working with, to avoid the influence of favouring specific members.
- 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, vulnerable adult or anyone within their organisation.
- 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.
- Be aware of the mental health of all participants and show openness to accommodate them with appropriate language, behaviour and activities
- 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.

### **Your Behaviour cont.**

- 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, understand and follow the relevant BAFA/ BAFCA/Club/Local Authority/University child protection/safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Follow the reporting procedures laid down by relevant BAFA/ BAFCA/Club/Local Authority/University if you have a concern – non-action is unacceptable.
- Report to the relevant safeguarding/welfare officer at relevant BAFA/ BAFCA/Club/Local Authority/University 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 and promote an image of a health and wellbeing , 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 or drink alcohol 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 different forms for media to communicate with participants and fellow coaches. Making sure that you 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 a minimum standard of competence through qualifications and ensure a commitment to ongoing training to provide safe, up to date and correct practice.

### Your Responsibilities

BAFCA Coaches should:

- Ensure the environment is as safe as reasonably practicable, taking into account and minimising possible risks.
- Promote safe and correct practice.
- Act in a professional manner and accept responsibility for their actions; displaying accountability.
- 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.
- Commit to ongoing personal and professional development by adhering to BAFCA's CPD programme. This can include exchanging knowledge and ideas with others, and by working in partnership with BAFCA and other agencies and professionals to gain additional qualifications.
- Gain qualifications appropriate to the level at which they coach and adhere to BAFCA's minimum coaching standards.
- You have a responsibility to protect any personal information you and your club holds on participants. You should be able to identify what information should be treated as confidential in your role as a coach.

### Your Behaviour

BAFCA Coaches should:

- Follow the guidelines of BAFA / 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.



### **Your Behaviour cont.**

BAFCA Coaches should:

- Recognise and accept when it is appropriate to refer a participant to another coach or specialist.
- Seek to achieve qualifications appropriate to the level you are coaching at and to continue your coaching development.
- 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 promote recruitment and education opportunities in the sport.
- Actively contribute to local, regional and national initiatives to improve the standards and quality of coaching both in American Football 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 outlined in this document to others and challenge/report 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 Practice 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 accountable 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 officially 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 teams situation.
- 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. Coaches should act in the best interests of the individual player at all times during any recruiting conversations.
- Should an approach be made to a coach by a player they should out of courtesy inform that player's current Coach of the situation & 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.