



BRITISH

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

**Annual Report
2020**



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Welcome to our annual report

“When we started this year, I don’t think any of us could have foreseen where we are now. Sadly Covid-19 is going to continue to impact not only our sport, but all sports for the foreseeable future.”



The next 12 months are going to be tough both in the BAFA community but also for many members and their families who are facing personal challenges as well. The one thing I can promise is that we will continue to work hard for you, our members, to ensure that there is and will continue to be a sport and a National Governing Body for the future.

Over the last 12 months, society and sports have had a spotlight shown on issues such as financial sustainability, racism, inclusivity, and mental wellbeing, all of which are important issues to our community as well. It’s my hope that you can see some of the advancements we are making on these critical issues in this report and our commitment over the next 12 months to continue to address them.

Beyond Covid-19, the last 12 months have been an exciting time for BAFA. We can reflect on the successes and enjoyment we shared last year - hosting the Women’s European Championships, Britbowl having record attendance and being streamed on the BBC, GB Men’s Contact winning 34-0 over Russia in the IFAF 2020 European Championship qualifier, the CFL combine and our youth flag teams playing on the field at Wembley are just few of the highlights.

Professionalising BAFA

The biggest change over the last year has been the addition of Pete Ackerley, our CEO. It has been a privilege to work with Pete over the last 12 months and his energy, knowledge and passion for American football has allowed us to move our organisation forward.

This was a big first step forward in professionalising BAFA and ensuring we can compete for the best talent, commercial deals and funding, allowing us to continue to grow the sport and to ensure that everyone who has an interest and passion for American football can participate in a safe and fulfilling way for years to come.

Your passion and enthusiasm

Having been in my role now for over two years, I’m still amazed by the passion and enthusiasm our community has for the sport of American football and I’m encouraged about the increased level of engagement from our membership.

Your emails and suggestions are very welcome and I hope you can continue to reach out to myself, Pete, the BAFA Board and Commission Leads with your thoughts, ideas and constructive feedback, all of which is valued and essential as we grow the sport.

Finally and most importantly, I would also like to sincerely thank and recognize our volunteers who are the ones who keep our sport running; from volunteers at the board level to those who give up their time every week in their local clubs you are what makes this sport great. I hope this annual report highlights all of the hard work of these volunteers as well as all we have achieved over the last 12 months.

Nichole McCulloch

BAFA Chair

CEO's message – our year in review

“We are all privileged to be part of this great sport and we should be proud of the difference we make to people and their communities. I am certainly proud and privileged to lead this organisation.”

When I first joined BAFA a year ago, I saw an organisation with great potential and passion, and huge opportunities to grow the sport. I saw an exciting challenge ahead and a chance to build strong foundations for the future of our game. And despite the completely unprecedented events that have unfolded, I still see all of these things in British American football.

My initial aims on arrival were to put in place building blocks to create a high performing National Governing Body, establish strong partnerships with key stakeholders, good governance, a sustainable financial position for the organisation and create a long-term vision for British American football.



Making progress despite challenges

We've made significant progress on these aims despite the challenges we've all faced. BAFA has a strong and diverse board, with an effective governance structure to make good decisions. We have established important bodies to support our game, including the Diversity & Inclusion Committee, Science & Medicine Group and Athletes Commission. Valued partnerships are being developed with organisations like the NFL and BAFRA, and our alliance with the CFL is creating a clear pathway for British athletes to play the sport professionally.

We'd started to make great strides in developing our National Programme before the pandemic hit. This included the appointment of Michael Callan as Head of National Programme – a new role designed to help ensure we establish a clear DNA for our game at Great Britain level and develop successful, winning teams that offer an elite performance pathway for talented athletes in all disciplines and age groups of our sport.

We were also delighted to appoint Jason Scott as GB Men's Contact Head Coach and proud to work in close partnership with BUCS to confirm the return of GB Students and the appointment of Wayne Hill as Head Coach of the revitalised programme. I know that exciting times are ahead as soon as we're able to return to full activity at National Programme level.

Despite the difficult and challenging times over the past few months, we've still taken steps forward to develop British American football in partnership with the British American Football Coaches Association (BAFCA). We know that growing and developing coaches in Great Britain is a major priority as our sport continues to expand, which is why we've agreed to invest £23,000 for the provision of coach education and continued professional development.

Supporting a Return to Play

Crucially, we've had recognition by Sport England and a funding agreement established to support us during initial Covid-19 challenges, and have worked in partnership with the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to establish a Return to Play roadmap supported by Sport England, Sport Scotland and Sport Wales.

With frequently changing guidelines and restrictions across all areas of the UK we've also had to learn to be as agile and responsive as possible to react to the shifting situation and advise our members of any local impact while trying to continue to plan for the future.

A silver lining of our engagement with the home nations sports councils during the pandemic has been an increasing awareness and recognition of our sport, particularly in Scotland and Wales, giving us a strong foundation to build on during less chaotic times.

Making a difference – our ten-year vision

I believe this all represents a positive step forward for our organisation and sport, and is testament to the passion, knowledge and dedication of the people within our game. And of course, the hard work does not stop there! Over the coming months, there will be a focus on establishing a ten-year vision for British American football, with clear objectives and priorities alongside targets and performance indicators to show how we are progressing.

We will also have to continue adapting to this completely new world. The season cancellation was a massive disappointment for everyone. Yet the resilience of our sport is hugely encouraging, and we are building towards a sustainable future.

During the next 12 months, I will be focused on developing four key priority areas for our sport:

Participation – ensuring we have an inclusive offer to create a culture of lifelong participation and establishing the best structure for American football to deliver growth in all formats.

People – building a strong, skilled, supported and valued volunteer workforce and the aim, in the medium term, to invest in professionalising the sport in all areas – particularly in the vital areas of coaching and refereeing.

Places – investing and supporting our clubs and teams to build sustainable communities of football, establishing high quality environments to play and perform.

Pathway to Performance – creating a long-term athlete development plan to ensure the right progression from the fundamental skills required to achieving GB selection and podium success.

Ultimately, I want us to make a difference to all areas of British American football.

We're stronger together - thank you!

I want to give a heartfelt thank you to our volunteers – your commitment and passion are the lifeblood of the organisation, and the positive steps we have taken over the past 12 months are down to you. In these tough times, you see the best in people, and it has been phenomenal to witness how the football family has come together.

We should never underestimate the power of football and the impact we can make beyond the game and the social impact we can deliver. In the words of the great Walter Payton: we are stronger together than we are alone.

We are all privileged to be part of this great sport and we should be proud of the difference we make to people and their communities. I am certainly proud and privileged to lead this organisation.

Action without vision just passes the time. Vision without action is just a dream. Vision with action can change the world.

Pete Ackerley
BAFA CEO

Operational and board committee reports

“I hope that the following pages give you an insight into the work that goes on behind the scenes and at board level to allow BAFA to operate day-to-day and develop as an organisation that will be around for years to come.”



The role of the British American Football Association isn't just about running a league – it's about developing a National Governing Body that's high performing and able to serve its members professionally, providing competitive leagues and opportunities for all to play and growing our sport and ensuring it gets the recognition it deserves.

I appreciate that sometimes things in our sport don't change at a rapid pace, however, I'm hopeful that as members of BAFA you're starting to see positive changes to the running and organisation of our sport.

One of the big things that's been highlighted to us over the last few months is that in the past BAFA haven't been clear on how your membership fee is spent. It's essential that we're clear and transparent

on what your membership fees contribute to and how they support the entire organisation. Areas your fees support include, but aren't limited to:

- Ongoing legal, financial, and operational costs to run an NGB including registration systems and IT infrastructure, CEO costs, volunteer expenses and communications and marketing
- Supporting coach and referee development
- Club development and support to ensure sustainable infrastructure and innovation to develop clubs long term
- Insurance that covers professional indemnity for clubs who might be at risk of claims against poor conduct, public liability that offers similar cover for the public when they interact with clubs, and personal accident cover to mitigate financial loss and help with medical costs and rehabilitation for those whom this isn't their main income but a hobby
- Lobbying the government on your behalf to ensure compliance, governance, and recognition to play and for our sport to go ahead both normally and in these current unprecedented times
- Working with key stakeholders at the Department of Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, Sport England, Sport Scotland and Sport Wales and the Sport & Recreation Alliance
- Ongoing and detailed stakeholder engagement and partnerships with the NFL, CFL, BUCS, AoC Sport, Youth Sports Trust and education partners

With the launch of BAFA's new website, we'll continue to increase this transparency by having all our policies and procedures available to review, as well as minutes of all board and committee meetings and up to date financial information.

The following pages provide an overview of the activities of the BAFA Board and the committees that support the Board in the running of our sport. These reports aren't an exhaustive list of activities but are an overview to demonstrate the work that's being done.

As always, if you have any questions or if you want to get involved with BAFA as a volunteer, please do reach out.

Nichole McCulloch
BAFA Chair

The background is a solid dark blue color. Overlaid on this are several large, organic, and flowing shapes in a slightly lighter shade of blue. These shapes resemble stylized leaves, petals, or perhaps the folds of a garment, creating a sense of movement and depth. The shapes are layered, with some appearing more prominent than others.

Operational Reports

Financial review

Review of Draft Accounts to 31 March 2020 presented for the AGM

Financial Controller Francis Bevan



Income

As in previous years most of BAFA's income is derived from membership fees across the various membership groups and whilst individual membership numbers and amounts rose again in the 19/20 financial year the total income fell.

This was mostly as a result of university players and teams moving from BAFA's GoMembership! system to register directly with BUCS instead. This is part of the new joint venture between BAFA/BUCS where each are allocated fees to cover admin support and the balance of membership income is allocated to the development of the student game.

National programme income reflects the level of organised events and games in the 19/20 year.

Grant income reflects an initial amount from Sport England in support of the reorganisation of BAFA in its structure and governance improvement programmes.

Overheads/outgoings

Costs, which we have tried to better expand and classify, reflect the first period of appointment of our CEO and all other costs of running the association for the year under review including the enlarged cost of operating increased National Programme activity across multiple membership groups and participating in competitions etc.

The Bad Debt credit reflects the ability to recover from BUCS teams a significant portion of the amounts owing at the end of 2019 where initially it was feared a greater amount of these monies would not be recovered.

2020/21 membership income – refunds

Based on the current method of accounting for membership income in the accounts, the refunds given across a number of memberships groups in 20/21 do not currently impact the 19/20 Trading Summary as existing policy is to defer all membership receipts between October 1 and March 31 to the subsequent year.

For information BAFA has refunded c£80K of membership fees since April 1 because of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and in accordance with announcements made on this.

Changes of accounting policy and financial governance going forward

BAFA is currently in the process of moving all of its financial reporting and accounting to a full, cloud based, accounting software suite to enhance reporting and the ability for BAFA to be better audited as it looks to grow its standing with funders and other governmental bodies.

As part of this overall enhancement in financial controls, the Board are now also reviewing, among other things, the income recognition policy referred to above (where membership income can be deferred to the start of the next financial and playing year).

This review is to consider if there is a better way of allocating what is currently an annual membership amount across the periods from which members derive benefits (playing insurance etc) and see if there can be a better alignment of income with the costs of operating BAFA.

Income

Registration fees	£381,704
National programme income	£82,423
Sundry receipts	£15,718
External grant income	£10,000
TOTAL:	£489,845

Expenditure

Wages and salaries	£33,780
Office software costs	£1,887
Insurance	£67,546
Subscriptions	£2,835
Travelling expenses	£23,388
Legal and professional fees	£20,445
Accountancy and bookkeeping	£8,628
Schools programme costs	£1,667
Equipment storage costs	£1,988
Merchant charges and fees	£1,965
Bad and doubtful debts	-£10,084
Website costs	£6,232
National programme expenses	£217,386
Sundry expenses	£332
NL expenses	£67,377
BAFCA Memberships	£27,366
Youth football	£12,995
BAFRA grants and other support costs	£1,823
TOTAL:	£487,556

Operating surplus	£2,289
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Once this review is finished and a suitable Income policy agreed upon there is likely to be re-representation of the accounts for 19/20 and 18/19 as amounts are adjusted in line and we are better able to report consistently going forward.

There is likely to be an update on this over the coming weeks and months.

Overall

As can be seen by the balance sheet BAFA is financially stable and actions since April 1 in terms of further external funding have been achieved.

Even when set against the value of refunds made, this would indicate BAFA remains well placed to further advance its operations when prevailing conditions state that this can be done in a safe and controlled manner.

Commission reviews

2020 has presented obvious challenges for all levels of BAFA football, with all competitive leagues due to start from April onwards cancelled due to Covid-19. Although there has been no activity on the field, this has presented an opportunity for our different disciplines and age groups to reflect and plan for the future.

Women's Flag Football – Commission Lead Kyle Taylor

The 2019 women's flag football season got underway in October 2019 and culminated in a finals event on Saturday 23 November at the University of Nottingham's David Ross Sports Village.

This was the only one of BAFA's National Leagues competitions to be fully completed during the 2019-20 period. Coventry Cougars were crowned National Champions for the sixth time in seven years, with a 35-7 finals win over Hyde Park Renegades.

In May women's flag teams were consulted on a number of changes which were subsequently introduced to help improve the quality of the game, including making 3G surfaces mandatory for games.



In early July, a remote meeting for women's flag team coaches and administrators was hosted by Adult Flag Commission Lead Kyle Taylor. Kyle was joined by women's flag organising committee representatives Andrew Gambrell (Southern Commission Rep SEC and SWC) and Heather McGowan (Northern Commission Rep - HNC and NEC) and BAFA CEO Pete Ackerley. This gave women's flag team management an opportunity to ask questions of both the commission lead and CEO and share feedback. A soft-rebrand of the league from Opal Series to Women's National Flag Football League was also confirmed.

Activity over recent months has included scenario planning to look at options to push out what should have been the 2020 season into 2021. The decision has been made to keep the women's flag league to the usual time of year, with provisional dates in place and communicated and a planned start in early October 2021.

To help fill the long gap between women's flag competitions, there are also hopes to hold a short two-weekend women's flag Spring Series during March 2021, but this will be dependent on the current Covid-19 situation.

16 women's flag teams competed during the 2019 season, with 17 due to have taken part in the cancelled 2020 season. Continuing the upward trend, new affiliate teams due to enter competition in 2021 include Wearside Women and South Wales Harpies.

Women's Contact Football – Commission Lead Arran Harrison

The women's contact 2019-2020 regular season that started in December 2019 was completed, but unfortunately finals events for both Division 1 and 2 originally planned for Saturday 14 March had to be cancelled at short notice due to Covid-19, which was hugely disappointing for all concerned. The event would have seen the women's contact finals live-streamed for the first time.

BAFA would like to take this opportunity to further recognise the finalists who should have been taking part in the event. Finalists for Division 1 were Teesside Steelers, London Warriors, Birmingham Lions and Leeds Chargers. And the finalists for Division 2 were Cheshire Bears, Portsmouth Dreadnoughts, Kent Exiles and Leicester Falcons.

Arran Harrison was appointed as Commission Lead for women's contact football in late March, and since then has been engaging with teams and working to create a league management infrastructure and build a robust strategy for the future growth of women's football in Great Britain.

Extensive scenario planning and engagement has also been underway with teams to move the 2020-2021 winter season into summer 2021.

While this movement of the season presents a number of challenges, it's also meant the opportunity to bring forward several elements of the women's contact strategy which will facilitate the growth and development of the women's game in years to come.

On the assumption of the 10-year strategy for women's football being approved the intention for 2021 is as follows:

- Develop the league management structure and implement a formal league operational infrastructure
- Create and communicate a clear performance pathway from junior to National Programme football
- Target potential growth options
- Build the foundations of improving the standard of football.



An online league meeting for women's contact teams also took place in September, hosted by Arran and BAFA CEO Pete Ackerley. This was designed to give teams a chance to review and input into plans and strategy, ask questions and give feedback. A rebrand of the league from Sapphire Series to the National Women's Football League was also confirmed.

Adult Mixed Flag League – Commission Lead Kyle Taylor

The difficult decision to cancel the 2020 adult mixed flag league took place towards the end of June. An online adult flag Q&A session was held shortly afterwards with Commission Lead Kyle Taylor and BAFA CEO Pete Ackerley.

The session reviewed the announcement to cancel the mixed league, discussed broad strategic topics relating to the future of flag football and took questions from across the flag community.

Since then there has been an ongoing emphasis on improving communications, organisation, and standards of operation. Kyle Taylor also contributed extensively to BAFA's Return to Play submission to the UK Government's Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

The immediate focus has been on planning for 2021, with provisional dates already shared with the flag community, with the assumption that Covid-19 will not halt play. These dates have been chosen to minimise conflicts with other BAFA formats, the National Programme and make room for other products.

Associate Teams due to enter mixed flag league competition in 2021 include London Wildcats, Poole Dolphins, Berkshire Renegades, London Fruitbats, Stortford Stingrays, Salisbury City Marauders, Plymouth Wolverines, Lincoln University and Blackburn Bombers

Going forward, the successful Super 5s format will be rebranded to the All-conference series. The intention is to build on what was excellent about Super 5's and add some additional elements. The series will serve as a sandbox for player and coach development with sessions being split into coaching and competitive/team selection portions. A women's arm will be added to this series, and the set-up will become more of a pro-bowl format.

There are also plans to launch a new 7s format, which will be a Mixed Team, AFFL style, custom rules weekend tournament between home nations teams.

Looking further ahead, there will also be a focus is be on the future of the sport and how to close the gap between the community league and the national programme.

Children's Flag Football – Commission Lead Sreeni Shaji

Despite initial hopes to run a condensed version of the usual youth and cadet flag seasons in September and October, the 2020 youth and cadet flag seasons were cancelled in late July. It had become clear that the logistical challenges of hosting gamedays in the current environment of Covid-19 posed challenges.

As with many other formats, an online meeting was held for teams hosted by Children's Flag Commission Lead Sreeni Shaji and BAFA CEO Pete Ackerley.

The call covered many topics including overall strategy, return to play in 2020, the 2020 season, age ranges, flag coaching qualifications and much more.

Ally Reid, Schools Commission Lead, was also on the call and spoke about his role engaging schools with flag football.

Over the summer, a consultation took place on introducing new age groupings for children's flag to decrease disparity between upper and lower ages within an age group, create uniform differentiation between age groups and increase participation.



The age range changes have been introduced for the 2021 season, changing the existing split of youth and cadet flag football to new U17, 14 and U11 categories.

Adult Contact Football – (Acting) Commission Lead Warren Smart

The 2020 adult contact season was cancelled on 12 May. Since then, as with other formats, the focus has been on scenario planning and contributing to Return to Play plans.

The cancelling of the season provided an opportunity to undertake a review of league alignments. Normally league alignments are subject to relegation and promotion, and so can't be considered until September of each year.

The review was completed and shared with teams in June by then Adult Contact Commission Lead and Operations Manager Clive Dobbin. The overall aim was to minimise travel as far as possible and to try and avoid uneven divisions, but this was not always possible.

Operating under the assumption the 2021 season will be able to take place as normal, teams have also been requested to submit their availability to host games, where known, to help facilitate scheduling plans.

Teams in the Associate Process during the 2019-2020 period were Highland Stags, DC Presidents and Scunthorpe Alphas.

The pandemic has had an impact on the associate process, but BAFA were delighted to recently confirm the Alphas as the latest team to successfully complete the requirements and be placed in Division 2.



U16 and U19 Contact Football – Commission Lead Stuart Potts-Perkins

As with adult contact football, the U19 and U16 2020 contact seasons were cancelled in May. A virtual meeting took place in July to give members an opportunity to ask questions to BAFA CEO Pete Ackerley, then Operations Manager Clive Dobbin and Commission Lead Stuart Potts-Perkins.

Since then work has taken place to set a calendar of provisional dates for 2021, which have been shared with teams to help them plan.

Following discussion with and comments from member teams, it was also confirmed that going forward youth football, also known as U17 football, would be renamed to U16 football to more accurately reflect the age banding.

Similarly, junior football would become formally referred to as U19 football. Changes were made throughout BAFA's GoMembership! system to reflect this.

Game Development – Warren Smart

Several projects are being undertaken by Game Development Manager Warren Smart.

The associate and membership process has been reviewed, with changes being forced by the impact of Covid-19 requiring practical solutions to growing the number of members.

Closer links with Sport England are being forged. Renewals are being more rigidly enforced to assist with moving the association to Sport England Tier 3 governance status thus making it more likely that grants and financial support can be successful.

Club Matters Workshops are being offered for free to help teams to develop valuable new skills and capabilities. Corporate partnerships are also being developed with news of important opportunities due soon.

In addition, the Forces American Football Association (FAFA) are working towards association membership along with MOD structure for sport (JSP). Chris Herbert has volunteered to liaise between BAFA and FAFA to make this development happen.

The various possible outcomes of the pandemic mean the association is having to be flexible and create plans that give us flexibility to deliver competition under a variety of circumstances.

Return to Play - review

Managing the impact of Covid-19 has been a huge focus for BAFA since we were forced to suspend all football activity in March. Difficult decisions to cancel our 2020 National Leagues competitions then followed over subsequent weeks and months.

Creating a Return to Play plan

As the three UK home nations with teams under BAFA's auspices started to gradually move out of the initial period of lockdown, and guidance became available on next steps for recreational team sports, our major priority became the requirement to submit a plan for our sport to Return to Play. This was required by the UK Government's Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and had to meet the strict criteria outlined in their return to recreational sport framework. Only by having our plan submitted and approved, could organised American football activity become exempt from legal gathering limits across all levels and participants be allowed to breach social distancing requirements in a narrow range of circumstances during practice and play.



The preparation and submission of this documentation required considerable work relating to transmission risk analysis for our different disciplines and age groups, and the proposal of appropriate mitigations and adaptations to how we do things to ensure the safety of our members. A roadmap outlining the stages of our Return to Play was also developed for approval.

The input used to create the documentation was gathered from appropriate representatives from across our sport. Advice and learnings were also sought from and gladly shared by other sports including rugby league, which helped inform and guide our submission and plans. The final submitted document totalled 62 pages and was submitted on 14 August, and the DCMS responded within 14 working days – well within their communicated maximum timeframe of 20 working days. As a testament to the depth and quality of submitted content, our plan was approved with no required changes.

The Return to Play submission was used as the basis to create community club guidance for each of the three home nations that have teams operating under BAFA's auspices. While the core principles of our Return to Play approach can be applied to Scotland, England and Wales, each home nation has followed different timelines for easing restrictions and has taken a different approach to reintroducing stricter measures and track and trace initiatives. This meant that creating and continuously updating bespoke guidance for each home nation was required. Additionally, for Scotland government approval of all guidelines was also required via Sport Scotland. An easy to find Covid-19 information hub was also added to the BAFA website, and a dedicated mailbox created to field questions relating to return to play.

Next steps

With frequently changing guidelines and restrictions across all areas of the UK, it's important that we remain as agile and responsive as possible to react to the shifting situation and advise our members of any local impact while trying to continue to plan for the future.

BAFA will continue to review the ongoing situation, take guidance from the DCMS and home nation sports councils and work to progress through our return to play roadmap where possible. CEO Pete Ackerley continues to attend update calls with the DCMS and engage with the senior leadership of other National Governing Bodies to make sure BAFA has remains on the front-foot wherever possible. Immediate next steps include looking at what adjustments might need to be put in place to start moving towards the phased return of contact football.

British American Football Referees' Association review

Board Members

President: Davie Parsons
 General Secretary: Richard Moger
 Director of Finance: Roger Brown
 Director of Recruitment: Ollie Maskell
 Director of Operations: Roger Goodgroves
 Director of Training: James Ford-Bannister
 DWP1: Pete Parsons
 DWP2: Steve Tonkinson



Main objectives

- To enable all American football games in Britain to have neutral officials.
- To improve the standard of officiating by training and examination, and by any other means.
- To promote and uphold the status of officials both collectively and individually.
- To co-operate and to cultivate good relations with all bodies concerned with American football, for the betterment of the game.
- To take such action or make such representation as a Company, or in conjunction with others as may be considered desirable, in the interests of American football in Britain in general or for the benefit of officials and officiating in particular.

Recruitment and retention

As with most other sports, recruitment and retention of officials is one of our primary areas of focus and greatest challenge. Our Director of Recruitment, along with our Media Team, has worked tirelessly over the last year to attract more people into officiating and our efforts have been highly successful. Over the last 12 months we received 105 enquires, albeit not all go forward and take up the stripes.

Covid-19 is also having an impact on recruitment with only 25 of those enquiries coming in since March. The positive outcomes from our recruitment campaigns are that we have 56 officials in training. This is the highest number we have had within our ranks for many a year. We look forward to the time when we can get back out on the field and complete their qualification training. We have also retained 146 of our qualified officials.

Training and development

Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 restrictions in April we had to cancel our Annual Convention. The Convention is our single biggest training event of the year and annually attracts 95% of our active Officials.

It was a disappointing decision; however, we have since invested in online systems such as Zoom and HUDL to help support the continued training and development of our officials, old and new.

Over the summer months many national and regional training events were held online which were very well attended. Local officiating groups throughout the country also hold weekly meetings and online training.



Given the possibility that return to play looks many months away, we have organised a “Winter Season of Training” for our members. Starting mid-October, running through to March, we have twice weekly training sessions covering topics from mechanics, rules knowledge, rules application and philosophy as well as positional presentations.

It’s a great way for our officials to stay engaged in the game and continue their ongoing development. There is also a social side to the sessions which we hope provides some support and respite to those who have had to isolate or have been working from home for the last eight months.

We also had all our officials take the annual BAFRA exam in April. This is a requirement for all officials in order to retain their qualified status.



Supporting Growth

Over the last few years, we have seen a considerable growth in American football as a participation sport. As well as adult and junior contact, formats such as flag and small-sided football has seen an increase in players as has woman’s contact football.

To help support this growth, we are developing induction training modules to assist teams in flag and small-sided games to self-officiate. Working with the relevant BAFA Commission leads, we hope to be in a position at the start of 2021 where we can roll out associated training.

Game Coverage

Attracting and retaining officials in any sport is a challenge in the modern world. At BAFRA we work continuously to meet ever increasing demand. During the 2019 season we covered 97.6 % of adult games and many of our officials worked double headers to cover junior games as well.

During the BUCS season that was cut short, we were on target to cover 90% of games. We maintain a positive attitude and drive towards our main objective, “To enable all American football games in Britain to have neutral officials”, whether that is through BAFRA-trained officials or by supporting the training and development of self-officiating.



Summary

2020 will not be remembered as a good year for our sport overall, however here at BAFRA it will be remembered as a time when we all had to adapt, our methods around training and recruitment had to change and individually we had the drive to maintain our motivation to stay engaged with the game we all love.

We will all be back on the field one day, sooner rather than later we hope. Until then, best wishes to everyone and we trust you, your families and your friends stay safe.

Davie Parsons

BAFRA President

On behalf of the BAFRA Board of Directors

Communications and social media

Head of Communications

James Platt

Communications team

Tara Bunker, Web and Social Media Manager; Owen Widdowson, Assistant Web and Social Media Manager; John Kohl, Assistant Design and Communications Manager.



Main objectives

Enhance and protect the reputation of BAFA both internally and externally through effective communications. Develop a communications strategy to support the long-term vision of the organisation and help grow the sport sustainably. Key areas of responsibility for the communications team include the BAFA website, social media channels, media relations and branding.

Recent accomplishments

This year has seen the growth and increasing professionalisation of the communications team, with three important new hires to our volunteer workforce in the form of a Head of Communications, Web and Social Media Manager and Assistant Web and Social Media Manager. There has also been a focus on improving the quality of output, particularly through social media, to align with the important organisational goals of growing the sport and inspiring and attracting new participants (particularly in youth categories).

Key achievements this year include

- Streamlining of BAFA social media channels (three core accounts – Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) to ensure timely, relevant and quality output across all accounts that appeals to a range of audiences.
 - A notable action was the relaunch of the BAFA Instagram account (previously dormant since March 2019).
- Significant growth in audience across social media channels:
 - 88% increase in followers on Instagram.
 - Over 5% increase in followers on Twitter and Facebook (growth not as marked as Instagram due to these channels being already established).
- Implementation of a new content strategy with a focus on quality images and graphics, relevant hashtags and consistent messaging to increase impressions and engagement.
- Record high numbers for interaction with content (highlights including over 23,000 impressions for a single tweet and over 7,000 Instagram story views for CFL combine content in January).
- Increased interaction with content from key partners including the NFL, CFL, BAFA and BAFRA.
- Successful launch of #ThisIsWhyWePlay member engagement campaign, leading to multiple video submissions from members across formats and the delivery of an overview video (over 6,500 impressions on Twitter to date).
- Ongoing media outreach with highlights including positive features on the CFL combine in The Times and Reuters, CEO podcast interviews (Exs & Os, That American Football Show) and a Wembley Stallions appearance on BBC The One Show.
- Integral role in the drafting, preparation and dissemination of multiple updates and resources on the organisation's response to Covid-19.
- Publication of, on average, two news stories a week (total amount over 100) in the past year, all of which promoted across social media platforms.

Activities in progress

- New website launch – this project has taken longer than anticipated due to team turnover and resource being prioritised on the COVID response, but the project is on track to be completed in October with the new website launched in November.
- New brand – once signed off, the updated branding will need to be incorporated into the new website before it launches, with social media channels also updated accordingly.
- Ongoing roll out of content strategy and support to the organisation in terms of publication of news items, particularly related to Return to Play.
- Editing and publication of additional #ThisIsWhyWePlay content.



Rules committee – review

Chair: Professor Jim Briggs

Committee Members

Noel Cassar, Sam Kendall, Pete Parsons, Steve Rains, Shawn Sombati, Martin Steers, Paul Sutton, Steve Tonkinson

Main objectives for the Committee

- Review the effect of previous rule changes
- Make proposals for change on behalf of BAFA to IFAF (to any timetable set by IFAF)
- Determine BAFA-specific amendments to rules as permitted by IFAF (once IFAF has issued any changes)
- Advise the BAFA Board on the changes to the BAFA Regulations



Recent accomplishments

The contact rule changes for the 2020 season were announced in February along with publication of the latest version of the rulebook: *BAFA Football Rules and Interpretations 2020*.

The changes this year mainly reflected those changes made by IFAF. Because of Covid-19, these changes have obviously not yet been tested in action.

Activities in progress

- Consideration of 2021 rules change proposals
- Implementation of the forthcoming revised IFAF flag rules

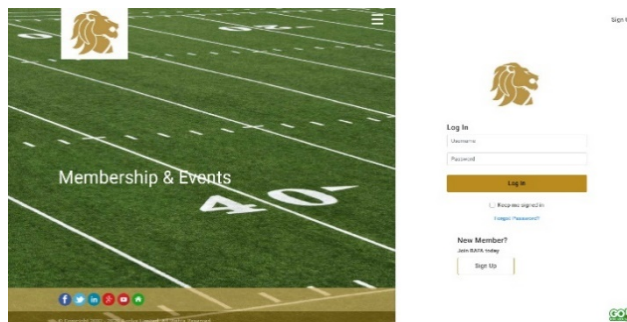
Registrations and membership

Registrations team

The BAFA registrations team comprises Faye Eastwood, Amanda McDonald and Tony Martin. The team manage the GoMembership! system that allows participants and teams to register with the British American Football Association and manage their club membership and rosters.

Main objectives

Our day-to-day activities include everything from responding to membership queries from clubs and individuals and approving ID and other credentials required for registration to managing the relationship with system provider Azolve to deal with technical issues, manage system changes and look for ways to improve user experience.



In addition, we process transfers between National Leagues clubs in conjunction with BAFA transfers and debtors manager Gary Lee, and international transfers between federations with BAFA's international rep Gary Marshall. We also provide extensive reporting such as regular 'health checks' on team and member registration numbers, manage event system bookings for National Programme and other BAFA events and create and manage user guides to help people use the system. We also regularly provide advice, input and support to many other operational areas of BAFA including commission leads, the game development manager and the CEO.

During the 2019-2020 membership year the registrations team supported:

18 Event bookings

151 National Leagues clubs

301 National Leagues teams

722 transfer requests

4,500+ email queries

5,600+ partial refunds

6,749 active National Leagues members

Recent accomplishments

The 2019-2020 period was a particularly challenging time for the registrations team, requiring us to work with system provider Azolve to come up with creative solutions to easily extend memberships and offer partial refunds for different membership types on a rolling basis as decisions were made for different competitions. Although the majority of partial refunds and extensions were largely automated, many of those licences which had previous manual adjustments – such as upgrades or changes of licence type – were unable to be included in this process and had to be manually identified and processed.

In recent months we've also enabled approved access to the system and training for reps from BAFCA to enable them to manage coaching qualifications and credentials and help them identify coaches who are yet to update their qualifications. Our improved dialogue with BAFCA will allow us to better support their

requirements. We've also worked increasingly closely with game development manager Warren Smart to enable access for auditing purposes and enable functionality for clubs to load up required documentation

A number of system changes were also managed and tested ahead of reopening registration for the 2020-2021 period, including changes to naming conventions and age ranges for member and team licence types, and the addition of a new U11 format – all of which have an extensive back-end impact on system 'logic' for age checking, membership purchase, rosters, user guides and reporting.

Membership overview - by licence type

The tables below show membership figures for the 2019-20 period covered by this annual report, along with figures for the 2018-2019 period for comparison. Key differences to note between these figures are:

- A change to remove the 'development' category and bring it in line with the associate category
- The move of university player registration from GoMembership! to BUCS play
- The impact of Covid-19 on membership registration from March onwards, particularly impacting on flag formats who tend to register later in the spring and university coaches amending their registration to player/coach after the end of the BUCS season to participate in National Leagues.

Note – an active member may hold more than one active licence type – for example an adult contact member who also plays adult flag, or an adult flag member who also plays women's flag - and any additional licences or upgrades will be added on at a reduced fee.

The BAFA membership year runs from 1 Oct – 30 September.

Membership year 2019-2020		Membership year 2018-2019	
Adult Contact	2,557	Adult Contact	4,091
Adult Flag	385	Adult Flag	952
Associated Adult Contact	153	Associated Adult Contact	436
Associated Adult Flag	15	Cadet Flag	203
Associated Cadet Flag	45	Coach Contact	504
Associated Junior Contact	23	Coach Flag	47
Associated Youth Contact	39	Coach Uni	334
Associated Youth Flag	23	Dev Adult Contact	18
Cadet Flag	199	Dev Adult Flag	36
Coach Contact	432	Dev Cadet Flag	20
Coach Flag	34	Dev Junior Contact	86
Coach Uni	355	Dev Youth Contact	66
Junior Contact	681	Dev Youth Flag	71
Opal	196	Junior Contact	908
Other	185	Opal	199
Player Coach Contact	292	Other	317
Player Coach Flag	30	Other Uni	143
Player Coach Uni	65	Player Coach Contact	398
Sapphire	385	Player Coach Flag	41
Youth Contact	690	Player Coach Uni	174
Youth Flag	113	Sapphire	419
ACTIVE LICENCES	6,897	Uni player	4,285
ACTIVE MEMBERS	6,749	Youth Contact	786
		Youth Flag	250
		ACTIVE LICENCES	14,784
		ACTIVE MEMBERS	13,781

The background is a solid dark blue color. Overlaid on this are several large, organic, and flowing shapes in a slightly lighter shade of blue. These shapes resemble stylized leaves, petals, or perhaps the folds of a garment, creating a sense of movement and depth. The shapes are layered, with some appearing in front of others.

Board Committee Reports

Athletes – board committee review

Committee Chair

Kenny Bello

Committee Members

Colin Allen, Jared Gray, Will Hobbs, Ted Hope, Ruth Lewis, Owen Seddon, Anna Young.

Main objectives

- Represent the views of the athletes within BAFA, protect their interests and uphold their rights and obligations.
- Serve as a consultative body and a link between active athletes and the BAFA Board.
- Create, manage and promote platforms and structures for athletes, which facilitate communication and the sharing of knowledge and experiences amongst the group.
- Develop, collate, provide and promote resources for athletes on topics of direct concern including but not limited to athlete health and welfare, national programme pathway, anti-doping etc.



Recent accomplishments

Newly formed, the committee's drive clearly lies in ensuring that our sport is accessible, safe, meaningful and fun for any individual that might want to play. An important initial activity, already underway, will be working with the Diversity and Inclusion committee on a survey designed to help us identify precisely *who* plays our sport and a little about people's particular situations.

The committee will also be working on opening channels of communication with the playing populous in order to find out what is important to athletes and what we should be doing to make the game better for all those who play.

Activities in progress

- **Youth Focus Group** – establishing a voice for those that play both flag and contact under the age of 19.
- **Identifying player pathways from both participation and elite standpoints** – what can be done to ensure that there is a clearly defined pathway as players grow up or want to move to a higher level of playing?
- **Accessibility to the sport at all levels** – how to remove barriers, whatever they may be, to playing the sport here in the UK?
- **Player engagement and retention** – how to encourage the community to connect with the committee? How to ensure the best players do not feel a need to travel abroad to play? How to inspire athletes to become coaches.

Audit – board committee review

Committee Chair

Nichole McCulloch (Interim)

Committee Members

Bruce Leatherman and Ian Deakin

Main objectives

The audit committee sits independently from the CEO and Head of Finance to provide oversight around issues such as risk, financial controls and governance. In addition, the committee reviews and approves the organisation's accounting policies, the annual report and accounts of BAFA, including the process for review of the accounts prior to submission for independent review. This committee also reviews the in-year financial performance of BAFA and ensures that financial control is being maintained, variances to budgets and forecast are identified and managed.



Recent accomplishments

- Appointment of Francis Bevan as Head of Finance to continue to professionalise our finances
- Creation and maintenance of BAFA's internal risk register
- Appointment of new accountants, allowing for automation of day to day finance activities as well as an increased independence and oversight of BAFA's finances
- Creation of BAFA's whistle-blowing policy
- Creation of BAFA's Anti-Bribery and Gifts policy and register
- Creation of Sports Betting Policy
- Compliance with Tier 2 Sport England Corporate Governance Code

Activities in progress

- Approval of 2018-2019 Accounts
- Appointment of new chair of committee
- Maintenance of Risk Register
- Complete review of financial control policies and procedures
- Continue towards Tier 3 Sport England Corporate Governance Code

British American Football Coaches Association – board committee report

Committee Chair: Wayne Hill

Committee Members

Matthew Roberts Harbour, Damon Kirby, Peter Laird, Adam Copple, Ieuan Tucker, Alex Lilly

Main objectives

The purpose of the Coaches Association is to build and maintain the highest possible standards of coaching American football in Great Britain:

- To formulate short-term and long-term strategies for the development of coach education and accreditation programmes in Great Britain.
- To determine the direction and components of the BAFCA Coach Education Programme with input from the national and international sports associations and to monitor and evaluate implementation.
- To liaise with national and international sports governing bodies and institutes of higher education in Great Britain and overseas concerning matters relating to coach education.
- To provide a forum for the discussion and study of all matters pertaining to American football and coaching in Great Britain.
- To make the game as safe as possible for all participants through coach education, national governing body legislation and the rules of play.
- To have a strong voice in the domestic and international legislation affecting football programs within Great Britain and those representing Great Britain.
- To exchange freely information on coaching methods, education and technique.
- To promote good fellowship and social contacts within the Association and American football in Great Britain.



Recent accomplishments

- Pre lockdown meeting with BAFA and NFL UK to look to develop the strategy and alignment of flag football participation in the UK.
- The delivery of a variety of different programmes to support the ongoing education of our coaches and increase CPD opportunities through the lockdown period. These included:
 - Focused social media content on the opportunities through lockdown, such as: threads on coaching books, recommended podcasts and links to other sports based coaching courses (UK Coaching / AFCA) and return to play.
 - Online coaching clinics
 - Roundtable coaching sessions
 - Virtual coaching convention
 - In total 32 forms of this type of online content were created during lockdown.
 - Development of the BAFCA Podcast – (Credit must go to BAFCA Member Adam Lillis.)
 - Adjusted BAFCA Level 1 qualification (Provisional) with the support of USA Football's Youth Coaching Certification
- Support, advice and guidance provided to BAFA in relation to the Return to Play strategy and DCMS requirements.

- Access to the registration system to enable BAFA to approve qualifications, identify coaches who have not updated qualifications and support with the ongoing development of the system to be more functional for all.
- Work with BAFA to develop a plan for the adjustment of minimum qualification standards for all codes of the sport.
- KPI's developed to support the delivery of the additional funding provided by BAFA to BAFCA.
 - The development and access of a range of flag coaching qualifications to support with the overall development of flag football coaching.
 - To increase the recruitment and retention of coaches and to provide evidence of this including action research into the barriers associated to recruitment and retention of coaches.
 - The introduction of a female coaches network to include both education and ongoing CPD opportunities specific to the network's requirements.
 - The formulisation of a coach mentoring programme to support young coaches and the development of coaches moving into the National Programme structure.
 - The development of both online and regionalised CPD opportunities for our existing coaches.
 - A redefined education structure to fall in line with other NGB's and provide professional nationally recognised qualifications.

Activities in progress

- On-going support for the Return to Play strategy with the support of BAFCA representatives on the RTP Committee.
- Redesign and updating of the BAFCA website.
- Movement of specific aspects of BAFCA coach education courses to a new online portal which will include both e-learning, virtual classrooms and portfolio submissions (Level 3).
- APL application process being defined to be rolled out in conjunction with the new online qualification portal.
- Additional requirements to be released for coaches to obtain qualifications.
- Piloting two additional online based CPD courses with USA Football and NZone Systems.
- Continued work on the registration system to support the uploading of certifications and counting of CPD points. Also, work with the registrations team on the lists of certifications and additional CPD categories.
- Work with the registrations team in the identification of coaches that are yet to update qualifications and thus will be suspended until they have done so.
- Redesign of BAFCA mobile app to be re-launched in November to support flag delivery.
- Investigations currently being completed on regional position specific coaching clinics.
- Initial meetings taking place with strength & conditioning / performance development online portal / programme.
- The development of 3 and 5 year development plans along with a 10 year vision for coaching in the UK



**ENGAGE
EDUCATE
ENERGISE**

Diversity & Inclusion – board committee review

Committee Chair

Phoebe Schechter

Committee Members

Heather Smith, Jake Paul, Lucie Vickers

Main objectives

The Diversity & Inclusion Committee has responsibility for ensuring the development and delivery of the organisation's diversity and inclusion agenda.

The group will promote, champion and encourage diversity, inclusion and equality in the workplace and will monitor the key areas of performance.

The group will also consider the future strategic agenda relating to diversity and inclusion and will advise and make recommendations on appropriate initiatives and activities that will help BAFA achieve its key diversity aims.



Recent accomplishments

- Kick off Black History Month
- Survey to all stakeholders
- Mental Health Awareness Day
- Integrating equality and diversity training into coaching qualifications

Activities in progress

- The creation of a four-year diversity and inclusion strategy which will be published to the membership to tackle all areas of the sport and to continue to ensure American football is accessible to all.
- Transgender Policy - To be published January 2021
- Diversity & Inclusion Lead for each team (appointed by the team)
- Calendar of events for 2020 & 2021
- Disciplinary policy
- Wheelchair specific formats

Nominations – board committee review

Committee Chair

Nichole McCulloch

Committee Members

Ian Deakin, Pete Ackerley, Bruce Leatherman, Colin Allen

Main objectives

The nominations committee regularly reviews the structure, size and composition (including the skills, knowledge, experience and diversity) of the BAFA Board and makes recommendations to the Board with regard to any changes. This includes performance assessment of the CEO and overall board, succession planning, managing, and appointing new board directors.



This committee also keeps under review the leadership needs of the organisation, both executive and non-executive, with a view to ensuring the continued ability of the organisation to compete effectively in the marketplace and ensure the origination is run efficiently and is diverse and inclusive, meeting Sport England's Tier 3 Corporate Governance requirements.

In addition, the committee looks at the overall human resources of the organisation ensuring BAFA has policies and procedures in place to support our volunteers, contractors, and staff.

Recent accomplishments

- Appointment of CEO
- Creation of a Volunteer Handbook-including volunteers code of conduct
- Creation of Board Skills Matrix to ensure the BAGA Board has the appropriate mix of skills
- Creation of Board Handbook and induction plan
- Creation of Board Recruitment Policy

Activities in progress

- Managing the search for a new NED/Chair of Audit Committee
- Annual Performance Review of CEO
- Working with the Diversity and Inclusion committee to develop BAFA's strategy around increasing the diversity of our board, executive team and volunteers
- Creating a Volunteer Liaison role to ensure our volunteers are properly supported and recognised
- Creation of robust succession plan for the CEO

Safeguarding & Welfare – board committee review

Committee Chair

Richard Watson

Committee Members

Vacant position, Kenny Bello, Christian Oldcorn, Steve Peach

Main objectives

BAFA is committed to ensuring that all children who take part in football activities are able to have fun and participate in an environment that keeps them safe from harm.

Every sports organisation should designate a team to promote the welfare of children within the sport. The role includes managing the DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) process, co-ordinating the dissemination of relevant policy, procedures and resources as well as supporting Club Welfare Officers in their roles.

The safeguarding team also provides support for the case management group as well as managing cases of poor practice/abuse within the sport. This includes being the central point of contact for enquiries such as from complainants, LADO (Local Authority Designated Officers), children's social care and the police.

The purpose of the case management group is to ensure decisions relating to safeguarding children are reached following a fair, open and transparent process. The group comprises a minimum of three people, with the exact membership determined by the nature of the case and availability of members. The group may call upon whatever professional input they feel is required.

Recent accomplishments

- Establishment of a safeguarding commitment statement that all clubs will be required to complete
- Creation of template safeguarding policies for all clubs
- Creation of template policies for all clubs that are provided and ensure we have a minimum standard across the board
- Change of our DBS providers requirements to allow clubs to be set up to use the site
- Creation of a BAFA Case Management group which consult on safeguarding sanctions

Activities in progress

- Recruitment of a new Designated Safeguarding Lead for the organisation
- Setting up of all CWO's in England and Wales to use the GBG Disclosures site to complete their own club's checks
- Consultation with Disclosure Scotland on how we ensure our Scottish clubs are supported with the completion of PVG (Protecting Vulnerable Groups) processes – the equivalent of DBS
- New Safeguarding Children Policy – in draft at this time with consultation being requested from various support agencies
- New Adults at Risk Policy - in draft at this time with consultation being requested from various support agencies



Sport Science & Medicine – board committee review

Chair

Colin Allen

Committee Members

Beverley Analuwa, Professor Jim Briggs, Dr Alex Bowmer, Jo Clubb, Dr Liam Harper, Alex Moore, Dr Andrea Scott-Bell, Eleanor Travis, Jon Wyse

Main objectives

To improve the care provided to athletes and the professional knowledge of practitioners, to ensure that effective support is available to American football players at all levels of the sport in the UK.



The committee will advise the BAFA Board and responsible officers to ensure that the development and welfare of British American football players is adequately supported at all levels of the sport. This will be achieved by the committee performing the following duties:

- Emphasise best practice delivery across all areas of sport science and sport medicine.
- Provide counsel on the framework for player conditioning at all levels from grassroots to senior GB, inputting expert, evidence-based advice in areas including strength and conditioning, nutrition, physiotherapy, psychology and medical.
- Collate and create educational resources to support practitioners and allow them to develop their professional skills to adapt to evolving player needs and expectations at all levels of the sport.
- Advise the BAFA Board regarding the current state of medical provision in British American football, as well as providing guidance on future policy changes.
- Provide independent advice regarding cases affecting medical professionals in the sport. This will NOT be legal advice, instead the Committee can be used as a sounding board for questions or concerns regarding cases.
- Develop and review guidelines using latest evidence base for 'return to play' following injury and head trauma.
- Guide, collate and generate resources to support the mental health and wellbeing of players at all levels of the sport.
- Lead on the consultation and engagement of the partnership with UK Anti-Doping (UKAD)
- Work on the development of anti-doping policies and procedures.
- Act as a sounding board for anti-doping cases.
- Introduce new technologies, research, resources and services from external organisations that add value to British American football.
- Make recommendations to the BAFA Board and responsible officers on the development of the GB Talent Pathway.
- Consider partnerships and generate resources that can be used to support the transitions of players at the end of their playing careers.

Recent accomplishments

The group formed in the summer of 2020. During the short time that it has been operational, the SS&M Committee has supported the Return to Play developments and guidance following the Covid-19 pandemic. The group has also begun to review the anti-doping landscape in British American football.

Activities in progress

- Continue to provide expert support to the Return to Play developments and guidance following the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Lead on the consultation and engagement of the partnership with UK Anti-Doping (UKAD), working on the development of anti-doping policies and procedures for the sport.
- Providing medical and scientific guidance to the Equality and Diversity Committee relating to the development of a Transgender Policy for British American football.



Appendix

BAFA Board Biographies

BAFA Board members – biographies



Nichole McCulloch - Chair

Nichole has an MBA and is an experienced management consultant and executive search professional with over a decade's worth of experience advising boards, CEOs and government officials globally across Energy and Natural Resources. Nichole is a strong advocate for diversity and inclusion and is the former Managing Director for Women in Mining (UK) and is a frequent speaker on issues such as governance and talent management. She has a family of American football enthusiasts with an uncle that is a former NFL quarterback and is keen to bring British American football to a wider audience and participation base.



Ian Deakin – Senior Non-Executive Director

Ian is an employment solicitor, predominantly working with professional sports clubs from the top tiers of football and rugby. He has extensive commercial law experience and is skilled in giving simplistic, succinct and pragmatic advice to his clients. He has also served on the board of Warrington Wolves Supporters Trust and White Rose Academy Trust. He is a fan of all types of football in the UK, including football, rugby and of course American football



Pete Ackerley - CEO

Pete has over 25 years of senior executive experience in sport development, including roles as Head of Development for the England and Wales Cricket Board and Head of Participation for the Football Association. Since 2017 he's been consulting in the field of sport development. In addition to his extensive work experience, Pete also volunteers as a Trustee of Wembley National Stadium, a member of the England and Wales Cricket Board's Participation and Growth Board, Chair of Charitable programmes for The Lord's Taverners and an independent non-executive director for the Lancashire Cricket Foundation.



Bruce Leatherman - Director

With over 12 years of experience as a technically focused manager, Bruce has delivered multiple enterprise level software projects within the national government and financial sectors. He currently works as part of the senior leadership team for a global IT company, managing an engineering team based across the UK, Ireland and the Nordics. He has extensive experience of data security principles and will apply this knowledge to BAFA's business and data processes. A qualified American football coach and official, he has been involved in the British game for over 28 years.



Richard Watson - Director

Richard is currently County Safeguarding Advisor at England & Wales Cricket Board and brings a wealth of specialist knowledge in safeguarding, discipline and supporting a volunteer workforce. Richard has extensive best practice knowledge from working in a national governing body of sport and hopes to apply this to BAFA. He is also a level four Football Association referee and a big fan of American football.



Colin Allen – Non-Executive Director

Colin has worked within the field of elite national athlete programme development for over 14 years. He started his career as an Athlete Investment Officer at UK Sport in 2006, before originally joining the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) in July 2010 as a Project Manager. He moved across to Northumbria University in June 2014, to work as part of their performance sport programme as a Talent Identification and Pathway Manager, before re-joining TASS in October 2015. Colin is currently the National Lead for Operations and is responsible for overseeing both the strategic and day-to-day planning and coordination for the scheme. Another aspect of his role involves leading on programme and

project work to support the development of National Governing Bodies' England Talent Pathways and growing revenue streams by identifying and taking advantage of new opportunities.



Kenny Bello – Non-Executive Director

Kenny is founder and Managing Director of The UK Dukes – a company created to promote participation in American football all over the world. Often seen jet-setting as part of the popular social media venture, his day-to-day role includes leading a national school's programme, working closely with several highly regarded charities, and supporting teams (domestic and internationally) to develop and improve. Kenny has a breadth of experience in American football spanning 16 years. In this time, he has worked as a fully qualified teacher, broken a Guinness World Record and worked for NFL UK on Community and Grassroots Development, bringing unique insight and aptitude to the innovation

of their programs. A USA Football Master Trainer and Flag Development Officer for British American Football Coaches Association (BAFCA), Kenny has himself participated in both the flag and contact disciplines of the sport to the highest level, representing Team GB as a player and most recently, as a coach on the contact Women's GB team.



Heather Smith – Non-Executive Director

Heather is Head of Programmes at Plan International UK. Prior to this she spent five years at Women in Sport as Associate Head of Innovation, which involved overseeing the development and management of new projects and relationships, as well as ensuring the long-term sustainability of the charity's work through grant fundraising. Heather is a current member of the Sport for Development Coalition's (SFDC) Board, representing a network of organisations committed to changing lives through the power of sport. She has been instrumental in writing the SFDC's new four-year business plan and securing continuation funding for the organisation.

Before joining Women in Sport, Heather worked in the development team's at British University and Colleges Sport (BUCS), the Rugby Football Union and Rugby Football League. She graduated from the University of Birmingham in 2007 with a degree in Sport Science and Heather was part of the Sport Industry Group's NextGen Leaders in 2017. In 2016, Heather launched Half Backs, a fun and engaging rugby-themed activity business for young children ages two to six. She has since sold Half Backs but is still actively involved in rugby union, having retired from a 20-year playing career is now the current chair of Teddington Rugby Club's women's team.

