



Annual Report 2021

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Welcome to our 2021 annual report

“It’s been hugely gratifying to see more people than ever before step forward to help us deliver our sport and I want to extend my thanks for your commitment and passion”

Welcome to our latest Annual Report. The publication of this document, and the upcoming Q&A session with the Board highlight our continued commitment to be transparent and open with you – our members.



Positive progress

Despite the considerable challenges of the last year, it’s great to see British American football moving back towards a more normal playing environment. Covid-19 has had a huge effect on our community – financially, emotionally, and organisationally – and its wider impacts will remain with us for some time to come. However, we’ve shown tremendous resilience as a sport, and now have many reasons to be positive as we look ahead.

Positive is very much how I feel when I look at the progress we’ve made over the last year, and what’s in front of us in 2022.

Continuing to professionalise our sport

As I’ve said before, 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.

2020 gave us space to collectively pause and think about how we evolve our sport, and we were able to launch our ambitious 10-year vision to articulate that. It’s exciting that we’re now in a place where we’re actively building on that and starting to move towards tangible outcomes. This also puts us in a great place to engage more collaboratively with Sport England over the next twelve months. We’ve worked hard to make changes to the governance of our sport, and we hope to see the benefits of that soon.

Supporting our volunteers to grow and deliver

While we hope to further build out our paid workforce, volunteers continue to be the lifeblood of our organisation. It’s been hugely gratifying to see more people than ever before step forward to help us deliver our sport and I want to extend my thanks for your commitment and passion. You are hugely valued, and over the coming year we want to offer more opportunities to support you and help you to develop and grow within our organisation.

You can read more about the work of our volunteers – whether as board members or committee members – in the reports that follow. These aren’t exhaustive lists of everything that’s been done in the last year but will give you a flavour of what goes on behind the scenes and where our people are focusing their energies. I’m also hopeful it further demonstrates the positive change within the organisation and running of our sport.

Thank you for your continued support.

Nichole McCulloch
BAFA Chair

CEO's message – 2021 in review

“The dedication and passion from all our players, coaches, support staff and volunteers has given me the loudest message that this game will continue to develop and progress.”

I started my message last year by saying ‘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 and that I am proud and privileged to lead this organisation.’



In 2021 those words still could not be more apt. Despite great adversity and challenge caused by the continuing Covid-19 pandemic, the whole game came together and still delivered fantastic playing opportunities and completed a season - albeit an abridged version with a few bumps along the way.

Building back stronger

The resilience of our clubs was impressive. As were the efforts of everyone involved at every step of making sure we could return to play as safely as possible. I know how challenging, frustrating, and exhausting it must have been to negotiate the constantly changing pathway of restrictions back to competitive football.

I want to thank you all for your patience and support. And while Covid-19 is still with us, and is likely to be for some time, thanks to the progress of the vaccination programme and your constant vigilance, it does feel like we've turned a corner.

The dedication and passion from all our players, coaches, support staff and volunteers has given me the loudest message that this game will continue to develop and progress. And I know that having created the opportunities we have this year, we can only build and be back stronger than ever in 2022 and beyond.

Clearly not all aspects of our game have been able to be re-started as we would like. It was hugely disappointing to have to withdraw from the Flag World Championships in Israel given the operational, logistical, and reputational risks. We remain totally committed to the development of our flag game and we will put in place plans to develop our GB programmes to expand and progress over the next two-three years as we champion the opportunity for Flag Football to be part of the Olympic movement in the longer term.

Laying strong foundations

Our foundations of strong governance and the building blocks of a strong National Governing Body are now in place, and we approach the future development of the game with strength and optimism.

We've also have made great strides in the development of our key volunteers, and I cannot thank them enough for the fantastic work they are doing across the many different areas and formats of our game. A special mention to Ken Eaton for co-ordinating and leading the management of all our volunteers.

It was a huge step forward in November to announce the employment of our first part-time Operations Manager. Please join me in wishing Amanda McDonald every success in the role and I know she will make a huge difference to our Association.

Committed to growing our game

We're committed to growing our game to make it available to anyone, and work has been underway to bring wheelchair American football to Great Britain.



Our aim is to eventually develop a new British Wheelchair League and explore opportunities to enter events such as the Inter-Spinal Games and the Invictus Games. Our activity got fully underway with clinic sessions at Oxford Brookes and Nottingham Trent universities, and I can't wait to see where things go from here. Thanks to Geraint Griffiths and Chris Towler for their work on this.

We also continued to strengthen our engagement with the NFL, and our partnership with the Canadian Football League resulted in the first ever UK CFL combine in Bristol in January, hosted in conjunction with Bristol Academy PRIDE. I'm delighted that we'll be holding another in early 2022, as we continue to establish a true pathway to allow athletes to achieve their utmost potential in football.

Emerging from the pandemic

Given the ongoing challenges of emerging from the pandemic and our growing engagement with our external stakeholders, our long-term vision "to professionalise our game and inspire more people to play and play a part" becomes even more important.

We will strive to set out our strategies and objectives within key areas towards the end of the year when we can plan with more certainty and with the support of our stakeholders.

The recent launch of our coaching plans and flag strategy start to establish the key pillars for our longer-term plans. As we all work together to develop and grow our game, I also want to set out the key beliefs that will drive all our decisions and planning as we look to deliver our 10-year vision.

- **Progressive** - we will be innovative and creative
- **Responsive** - we will listen to our membership and key stakeholders
- **Inclusive** - we will remove barriers to participation
- **Driven** - we will do the right things and do things right
- **Enjoyment** - we will create the most engaging playing experience for all our participants

Together, these beliefs spell out the PRIDE I have to lead this game and continue to drive forward our vision and actions to make a difference to British American football.

Pete Ackerley
BAFA CEO



**Operational
reports**

Financial review

Financial Controller Francis Bevan

The level of income across all football activities reflects the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions in organised sporting activities this brought, with no football activities commencing until the late spring of 2021.

These events were reflected in the level of members renewing memberships later than the usual September/October, with the Board also agreeing to income being deferred from those who did renew until the start of any organised activities after the end of the financial year.

A decision was taken early in the pandemic not to furlough the only paid employee of the Association as it was felt an operational and administrative presence was required to be maintained.

As a result, the Association was able to access support funding from Sport England to help meet fixed and other costs during the period April – September 2020 and the result of this support is reflected in the accounts.

Overheads, and costs as you would expect reflect the level of organised activity during the pandemic with no National Leagues or National Programme to speak of.

In early 2021, as the lockdown began to ease, the Association was in contact with the government bodies responsible and incurred costs whilst finalising and presenting return to play protocols for the Association.

Current financial position

As people will be aware the Association is, currently, overwhelmingly dependant on its membership, among the players, teams, coaches, and officials who partake and support the sport.

The Association is pleased to report that participating numbers very quickly returned to 'normal' levels in the period since the return to play and financial and cash reserves are returning near to pre-pandemic levels. This gives the Association a solid financial footing from which to move forward with plans for developing the sport in the UK and attempting to bring in a greater proportion of external sources of income, as it does so.

If there are any queries or questions on any of the amounts of the workings of the finance function of the Association, I should be glad to answer them.



BAFA P&L Accounts

	12 Mths to 31/3/2021	12 Mths to 31/03/2020
Income		
Membership & competition income	72,751	319,470
National programme Income	0	121,532
External grant Income	90,000	10,000
Sundry Income	0	15,718
BUCS Competition	0	6,000
BAFCA Fees	0	
BAFRA Fees	2,645	3,040
	<u>165,396</u>	<u>475,760</u>
Football Operations Cost		
National programme costs	0	218,070
National Leagues costs (inc finals)	4,405	66,284
Youth football programmes	0	12,995
Schools programme costs	0	1,667
BUCS final costs	0	0
BAFA Stock purchases	4,405	299,016
	<u>160,992</u>	<u>176,744</u>
Other Overheads		
Gross wages and salaries	55,000	32,084
Social security costs	6,377	3,733
Pension costs - defined contribution schem	1,651	688
Insurances	58,894	60,994
Officers travel costs	1,330	22,793
Legal costs	737	5,086
Consultancy fees	0	0
Other professional fees	6,176	18,119
Staff training	207	0
Website costs	5,298	564
Membership web portal	6,298	5,668
Marketing and communications	6,612	0
BAFRA grants	0	1,823
Subscriptions	3,046	4,902
AGM costs	0	595
Bookkeeping fees	1,249	3,402
Independant accounts examination fees	2,380	3,900
Office software costs	3,099	1,887
Equipment storage costs	2,046	1,988
Sundry expenses	1,202	690
Merchant charge fees	5,469	16,317
Bank charges	36	144
Provision for bad debts	0	(10,083)
Credit charges	1,959	2,469
	<u>169,068</u>	<u>177,763</u>
	<u>(8,076)</u>	<u>(1,019)</u>
Bank interest received	10	39
Corporation Tax		(7)
Net surplus/(expenditure) for the Year	(£8,067)	(£987)

Commission reviews

2021 presented continuing challenges for all levels of BAFA football due to Covid-19, but abbreviated competitive leagues were able to get underway from May onwards.

Flag Football Commissioner – Kyle Taylor

The 2020/21 period has continued to be challenging with Covid-19 still presenting a serious risk to the safety of our players and the game. That said we're very proud to have brought the sport back despite the ongoing challenges and play arguably one of the most successful seasons of flag from an organisational/league integrity perspective whilst in parallel investing significant effort into the long-term development of the sport in the UK. Despite disappointing news in other areas of flag, significant strides have been made in the improvement of the domestic game and a huge thank you is owed to our small group of volunteers for making that happen.



Strategic Development

The following have been implemented during the course of this period or developed and are soon to be launched. These have predominantly focused on the adult game to date as this currently represents the strength of our game at present but will be implemented across the flag ecosystem once proven.

- **New team/expansion team accreditation process** – enabling us to ensure a minimum standard of performance and sustainability at the point of participation
- **Core development strategy designed and provisionally launched for Adult Flag alongside supporting collateral soon to be release**
 - Club Development Plan
 - Athlete's Handbook
 - Continued Rebranding
 - Club & Event Managers Guide
 - Flag Officiating Strategy
 - Updated and simplified competition rules
 - Regional structure revamp to align all competitions
- **Full Commission Restructure** – This includes the appointment of Kyle Taylor as Commissioner for all of Flag Football and the establishment of specific committees to focus on what the sport needs e.g., Flag Officiating and Publicity
- **Commenced the implementation of minimum standards** - e.g., Minimum number of registered players. This has resulted in the desired effect and no teams this year have dropped out due to inability to complete the season. Fundamentally improving the integrity of the league.
- **New communications framework implemented** – purposes of different channels made clear and simplified. Frequency and quality of communications to the community improved (as supported by feedback received)



- **Women's League (WFFL) now has shared hosting costs** – this avoids a small number of teams absorbing all of the hosting costs annually and creates financial parity
- **WFFL play now centrally based** – All games are based centrally for participants evening out in-season travel which has previously been heavily weighted against some clubs
- **Women's League minimum playing surface standards implemented** – All WFFL games are now played on 3/4G. This has resulted in all games this year being played, without interruption from weather and the avoidance of athlete injuries due to surfaces. This is a significant improvement on years past where league integrity has been corrupted due to cancellations and inability to play.

Adult (Co-ed) Flag League

After the difficult decision to cancel the NFFL in 2020, it was great to be able to bring it back safely in 2021 and without incident. A huge thank you is owed to the community for getting on board with the additional measures and keeping everyone safe. The regional structure implemented as one of the safety measures mean that we weren't able to provide a national championship but congratulations to the regional winners Sheffield Vipers (North East Conference), Manchester Titans (North West Conference), Glasgow Hornets (Highlands Conference), London Smoke (South East Conference), Cardiff Hurricanes (Welsh Conference) and the Chichester Sharks (South West Conference).



We look forward to bringing the league back fully in the 2021/22 season, alongside, hopefully a number of other opportunities for play and welcoming our ten newly accredited teams including Moray Distillers, Lancashire Bombers, Waveney Wolves, West Lancashire Serpents, Coventry Panthers, Salisbury City Marauders and Solent Red Storm.

Women's Flag Football

Regular play for the 2020/21 season only concluded on 13 November with the Coventry Cougars and Hyde Park Renegades taking the top two spots in the league after exceptionally consistent performances throughout the season.

The WFFL Finals will soon be hosted in Ravenscraig regional sports facility, Motherwell on 11 December and we will see who is crowned national champions then. It has been great to see such strong performances for first time teams Grangemouth Fillies and South Wales Harpies and we hope to welcome even more new teams to the league next year once accredited like the Chichester Bears. We also hope to launch the Women's Spring Series in 2022, providing our female players with much needed challenge and opportunity, in better weather, however this is subject to the recruitment of a competition manager to help ensure the quality of the competition.

Youth Flag Football

2020/21 also saw the return of the YFFL. Kicking off a little later than the NFFL and due to scale, it was possible to successfully host national championships for both U14s and U17s with the South Coast Spitfires taking home the trophy in both categories showing the depth and quality of their setup. This year also saw further development for the U11 category, the shape of which we continue to consult with the community on amongst other tactical improvements now that the league entry deadline is upon us. Again, a huge thank-you to the entire community for respecting the guidelines and keeping everyone safe during play this last year.

Contact Football Commissioner - Mark Snow

Introduction – looking back on 2021

It has become clear from discussions with teams, management, and my own personal experience, that all that is ever asked is that there is timely and factual communication and efficient management for each of our competitions. It's my aim, along with the team I'm working with, to provide that.

Things may not be perfect, but we are definitely getting on the right track by ensuring the clubs are being consulted on the plans for the 2022 season, while also making sure the concerns and wishes of teams that came out of this past season are listened to and acted upon. The aims of the 10-year vision for our sport are also forefront in our minds, so we can bring it to reality. However, in saying that I would request that everyone please acknowledge that this is a two-way street, and we would ask that the clubs also provide the same in kind.

I know everyone has been frustrated by the lack of football over the past two years, and simply wants to know what's happening and how we as a group will be working to bring back something that was not possible in 2020 or 2021. 2021 was really an opportunity for teams, players, coaches, and administrators to dust off the cobwebs and have an opportunity to get back out onto a field and play some football.

Everyone knew and agreed there weren't any spots for promotion or relegation regardless of win/loss record for this past 'season.' This was primarily due to the restrictions that had been placed on us all, especially around travel restrictions and so we needed to be part of 'regional' groups. This meant teams were playing against those in different divisions, or that held a different status within BAFA.

For that, I want to thank each and every participant for their patience, and for allowing us to plan the season with the resources we were able to. I believe from the feedback I've seen this was generally well received, with games played in the spirit intended. Also, and although not ideal for them, it was good to see teams who had been granted Associate Status participating in games on a more regular basis than they would have done ordinarily against established teams. I thank both those teams as well as the Associate teams for their cooperation to allow the season to be one for all participants to enjoy and participate in.

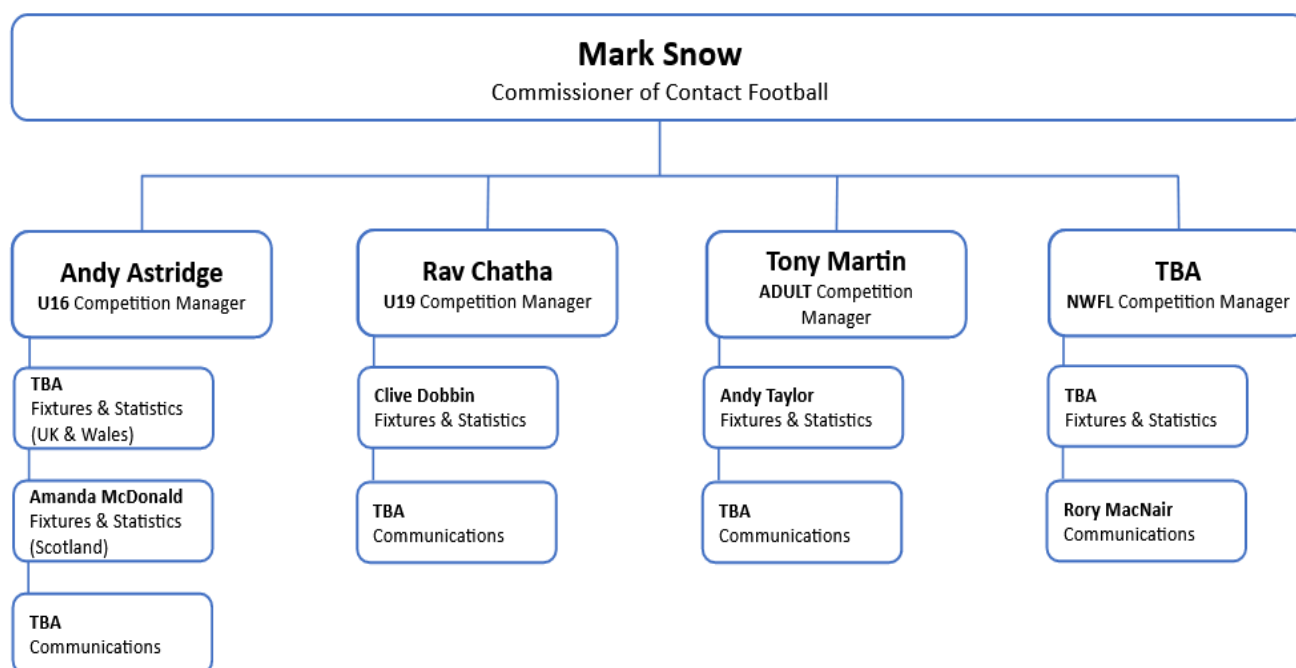
Finally, I would like to thank the BAFRA officials for also being integral in making the season possible thanks to your willingness to travel to games. Although, like many others, many were caught out by Covid-19 during the season, they were able to fulfil 98 % of adult games with many officials working double headers to cover junior games as well. 95% of U19 and 93% of U16 games were covered during the season, and for that I am thankful. Thank you also to everyone who needed to step in at the last minute to cover for officials not being able to travel or being unwell.

One of the things that I am currently undertaking is the formation of a committee to plan for BritBowl weekend for all facets of contact football. This will be undertaken in consultation with the BAFA Operations Manager (Amanda McDonald). e board of BAFA. If you would like to become involved with the Finals committee, please send me an email at mark.snow@britishamericanfootball.org.

Organisational Chart

In coming into the position of Commissioner of Contact Football, I have inherited a new organisational structure for each of the disciplines of contact football.





As you can see, there are still some positions to be filled but between myself and Ken Eaton (Volunteers Coordinator for BAFA), we are currently interviewing potential candidates and hope to be able to present an updated structure very soon.

Competitions

There are four competitions that fall under my remit, Under 16, Under 19, Adult Contact and the National Womens Football League (NWFL). We were fortunate that each of these competitions were able to be played over the summer. Although challenged on a number of fronts throughout, all teams were able to play at least some competitive football for the first time in nearly two years. To that end I would like to thank Warren Smart and his team for the work they did in the planning of and gaining the agreement by the clubs to play the regionalised season in 2021.

I have asked each of the Competition Managers to provide a brief summary of their respective areas:

Under 16 – Andy Astridge

Returning to some kind of normality and back to the sport we are all passionate about was a much-needed bonus in 2021. There were challenges for some teams with recruitment, but overall, I feel the season was successful and the teams were able to get on the field and for many, experience contact football for the first time.

My short-term focus and something I truly believe that to grow American Football in the UK we need to improve, is the “game day experience”, so during the 2022 season I will be working to try and see the game day experience of as many teams as possible. We all recognise that a better game day experience will attract more spectators, leading to more people hearing about our sport which will be a key driver to growing the participation levels. Some areas where we should all be looking at to improve include:

- Facilities (changing rooms, refreshments)
- Game area (quality of playing surface, field markings)
- Team presentation (uniformity of player, coach, and staff uniforms)
- Spectator amenities (seating, refreshments)
- Audible experience (music, crowd interaction)

Looking more long term, Scotland and Wales are two geographical growth areas that will have focus from myself, and I will be looking to shortly establish a focus group of all Scotland based Team Managers and Head Coaches to look at the opportunities available and what shape the growth of the competition should take for a sustainable future.

Wales will be a substantially larger task and starting with the larger cities (Cardiff, Swansea, Newport - areas around the South Wales Warriors), and so as to focus correctly I will be looking to commence that work in 2023/24 and build on the experience of the Scotland model.

Under 19 – Rav Chatha

As this is my first administrative involvement with BAFA, I can only comment from a personal perspective for the 2021 season. I think it goes without saying that the 2021 experience was not what we would have hoped due to Covid-19 restrictions and regionalised competition, but it has impressed me to see the resilience and drive of all of the teams and participants across the country and now the eagerness everyone has shown to return to play for 2022.

For the 2022 season, the aim is to pick up where the teams left pre-Covid-19 to ensure they have the time and support to continue to build in strength both on and off the field. So, in saying that there are no significant changes planned to the competition, but I will ensure that we will provide all of the necessary support to the teams to ensure there will be a competitive and successful season with teams divided between the North and South for both Division 1 and Division 2.

The future exciting for Under 19 football and during 2022, we will be consulting with all teams on the best way for expansion, and potentially introducing the 11 a-side format for Division 1 and 9 a-side for Division 2 from 2023. We would also like to explore options for potential associate teams via friendlies or 'taster' sessions for participants.

Adult – Tony Martin

As I move into my fifth year as a BAFA volunteer and my first full season as the Adult Contact Competition Manager, I am confident that 2022 will see something resembling a 'normal' season, with ten fixtures per team, play-offs followed by the first Bowl games at that stage in three years!

It took a lot of effort from all concerned to get any sort of competitive games played in 2021, and for that I would like to express my thanks. Although not a formal competitive season, it was good to see so many back out on a gridiron playing and getting rid of the cobwebs after nearly two years of not being able to participate.

I would also like to express my thanks to the teams for the way they embraced the Covid-19 Return to Play guidelines put together by Amanda McDonald and Pete Ackerley to comply with the DCMS protocols and rules we all had to follow during the season. I would especially like to thank the Covid-19 Officers appointed by the teams to apply these guidelines.

As we look forward, we are currently reviewing the alignments of all teams who will be competing in the 2022 adult contact season, and these will be published once they have been finalised and ratified. During the 2021 season there were also a number of clubs who were going through the Associate Team Process, and we are happy to announce that the following five teams have been accepted to have their status changed from Associate to Full Member:

- Highland Stags
- Kent Squadron
- Leigh Miners
- South Lincolnshire Lightening
- Sussex Thunderbolts

We congratulate each of these teams and wish them success as they continue to build and develop their clubs.

Unfortunately, with good news there is also some disappointing news that the Bury Saints have announced that they will not be continuing as a club and will not be competing in the future.

I am looking forward to seeing some good football being played in a competitive environment and also hope to see a tight promotion and relegation battle.

National Womens Football League – Mark Snow

The NWFL returned over the summer period with five conferences comprising Northern, Central West, Central East, South East and South West. Seventeen teams competed (two were uncompetitive participants and played controlled scrimmages) with four tournaments per conference. Congratulations to all of the teams and participants for the manner the games were played and the comradery between the teams and players.

Unfortunately, we had three leaders of the NWFL leave due to personal reasons and I would like to personally thank Simon Browning, Arran Harrison and Krister Halvorsen for their passion, dedication, and support for the NWFL and wish them all the very best for the future. I would also like to thank Rory MacNair who is the Marketing Manager for the NWFL for his dedication and I look forward to continuing to work with him in the future.

We are currently looking for people who are passionate about the women's contact game to fill the positions of NWFL Competition Manager and the Fixtures and Statistics Manager. Ken Eaton and I are currently reviewing job specifications for both positions and will be posting the job advertisements shortly, but if you have any interest or would like to get involved with the NWFL please contact us at nwfl@britishamericanfootball.org

In the interim, I am acting in the Competition Manager role and am looking to review the alignment of the NWFL and make some exciting changes which will include the formation of a 9v9 competition stream while maintaining the existing 7v7 stream for teams who are still developing are also looking to continue the good work that was commenced by Simon with the NWFL Steering Committee, and I am seeking active participants who would like to contribute to the development of the NWFL for 2022 and beyond.

National Game Development Manager – Warren Smart

During the year I stood in to manage the Contact Commissioner role and oversaw the creation of the schedules for all three codes of contact football.

A new structure of competition leadership was suggested and developed with the commission lead roles reducing to two for flag and contact codes. Each code in contact has been reorganised to have a Competition Manager, Fixtures/Statistics Manager and Communication Manager.

Teams within the associate process were allowed to compete in the 2021 regionalised and non-competitive schedule. Five teams have now been granted full league position in the National Leagues.

The Forces American Football Association (FAFA) are now members of BAFA and have been approved by the MOD Joint Sports Council. Practices for each service team have begun and games with BAFA teams are expected to be arranged in spring 2022.

Return to Play - review

Managing the impact of Covid-19 continued to be a huge focus for all areas of BAFA during 2021

The swift roll-out of the vaccine programme in the UK, and the resulting relaxation of restrictions allowed us to gradually return to play from spring 2021 onwards. This was done through a phased resumption of activity with a clear pathway and guidelines for each of the three UK home nations with teams under BAFA's auspices.

Clubs, players, coaches, volunteers, and the wider football community were regularly updated with progress. Our Covid-19 information hub on the BAFA website was expanded with links to useful tools and templates, and BAFA guidelines were amended regularly to reflect wider changes to restrictions and changing timelines on the build up to return to play.



BAFA's return to play guidelines had to be closely aligned with overall UK government guidance and updates from the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). They also had to take the different timelines of each nation and their sports council guidelines into account as well as the different needs and challenges of our different formats. This initially led to the development of separate guidance for clubs in England, Scotland, and Wales, as well as slightly different guidelines for our flag formats, which were able to return to competition at a slightly faster pace due to the non-contact nature of the game. For Scotland, sign off was required via **sportscotland** at every stage.

BAFA worked closely with representatives from BAFCA and BAFRA to develop finalised guidelines for practice and off-field activity, as well as playing rules adjustments to keep players and officials safe on the field of play. We'd like to thank our clubs for embracing the guidelines and stepping up to put volunteer Covid-19 officers in place and swiftly provide risk assessments for their activities. To support them, the Sport England and CIMSPA funded ReActivate Covid-19 Awareness Award was made available free of charge to all BAFA clubs. Made up of several different modules, this industry leading award was designed to ensure that BAFA club staff were suitably trained to deliver their roles in the safest possible way for themselves and for participants. All clubs were encouraged to take advantage of this resource. Advice was also available throughout via a dedicated Covid-19 mailbox, which also served as a mechanism for clubs to report cases of Covid-19 – enabling us to identify any clusters and intervene or provide support where required and identify any issues or areas of concern.

Looking forward

Covid-19 hasn't gone away and will continue to be with us for some time to come. Some degree of Covid-19 guidance, mitigation and support will remain in place from BAFA to continue to support our clubs. Our current guidance and resources will be reviewed ahead of January and will be updated as required during 2022.

BAFA will continue to review the ongoing situation, take guidance from the DCMS and home nation sports councils and work to keep our sport and our members as safe as possible.

British American Football Referees' Association - review

Board Members

President: Davie Parsons

General Secretary: Richard Moger

Director of Finance: Roger Brown

Director of Recruitment: Susannah Taylor

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

Over the last 12 months we have seen a significant increase in the number of new recruits joining BAFRA. At present we have 67 officials at various stages of their induction and on field training which I'm sure everyone will agree is great news. We hope to progress all our new members to fully qualified status during the BUC's season and through the winter and spring months. Our Director of Recruitment, along with our Media Team, continue to explore various avenues to attract more people into Officiating and it is obviously having the desired effect.

Recruitment is a continuous process that must be maintained throughout the calendar year. There is no doubt that we can do more and consider alternative routes to promoting Officiating as an attractive way of accessing American football. As an Official you have a ringside seat and get to participate in every down.

If anyone reading this report is interested in taking up officiating or would like further information, complete the form at the undernoted link and a BAFRA Representative will contact you at a convenient time.

[British American Football Referees Association \(bafra.info\)](http://BritishAmericanFootballRefereesAssociation(bafra.info))



Training and development

Planning for our 2022 Convention is well underway and we look forward to welcoming our members back to our single biggest training event. We typically attract 95% of our active Officials and expect this to continue.

The event is a highlight of our calendar with officials who work at some of the highest levels of the game in the US and abroad sharing their knowledge with us through a series of clinics. We also make use of our best officials to run breakout sessions on rules, mechanics, positional work, and other aspects of the game such as fitness, nutrition, and personal development.

We are also currently planning a continuation of the online Zoom sessions that we ran during the Covid-19 pandemic. With most officials working every week, we aim to offer these in short bursts during the offseason. These typically fill in the gaps of topics that we can't quite fit into the convention schedule and include mechanics, rules knowledge, rules application and philosophy, as well as positional presentations.

The Elite programme is back in full swing, with geographical crews maintained whilst we still deal with the effects of Covid-19. The programme allows our best officials to work crews of eight on higher profile games and focus on developing skills at their main position. Each game is reviewed by experienced video reviewers and fed back to the crew in the week following. This is followed up by a review meeting where the crew discuss the successes and points for improvement. We then share this as a recording to the membership so all members can learn from it. There is also targeted, high-level training sessions for the 25-strong panel, which have included online clinics and video review by NFL officials. In the past, we've run in-person Elite days and hope to do so again soon. BAFRA is currently trialling a development programme to identify the next generation of Elite officials, offering them a similar experience to Elite games, where they can develop their skills and put their case forward for inclusion when future panels are selected.



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 2021 season we covered 98 % of adult games and many of our officials worked double headers to cover junior games as well. 95% of Junior kitted and 93% of youth kitted games were covered.

Davie Parsons

BAFRA President

On Behalf of the BAFRA Board of Directors

National Programme - review

Head of National Programme – Michael Callan

National Programme Calendar

A multiple year plan has been drafted and will be implemented going forward for all National Teams. Weekends have been set aside to allow for ease of scheduling and planning for players and staff.

This is a big step moving forward for British American Football and the National Programme.

Adult Mens Contact

The Adult Men's team, led by Jason Scott, has returned with great enthusiasm, organisation, and energy. There has been an identification and injection of new talent into the existing squad.

Although the team did not compete in 2021 due to Covid-19, it's primed to make a statement in 2022 European Qualifications and seeding rounds.

Women's Contact

The Women's Contact team have hit the field running with new and returning players joining a new coaching staff, led by Chris Stone. They've been working meticulously all year and were finally able to return to the field this month.

The Women's Contact team are preparing for the World Championships to be held in Vantaa, Finland in late July/early August 2022.

U19/U17 Contact

There was lots of enthusiasm and energy on display at the trials in October. Both the teams are currently in the process of rebuilding, and we expect to be competing in 2022 at the European Championship qualifying stages.

Men and Women's Flag

It's been fantastic to bring both Flag teams under the umbrella of the National Programme. Coach Young and Coach Whittingslow and their respective teams have put in a tremendous amount of work this year coming out of Covid-19 as they were able to start earlier.

Though it was unfortunate that we were unable to travel and compete in Israel in December of this year, there are plans in place to compete against elite nations in 2022.

Students

In recent weeks we've been able to announce our intentions for the Students team, led by Wayne Hill, to return to action in 2022. Plans for a North/South game to showcase the talent at university level are well underway, with a game scheduled to take place in April.

Canadian Football League partnership

In early 2022, BAFA and the CFL will work in partnership to hold a second UK combine. This will once again give us the opportunity to showcase talent that is being developed here in the UK.



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, Maurice Anton Brown - Media Manager



Main objectives

Enhance and protect the reputation of BAFA both internally and externally through effective communications. Develop and deliver an ongoing communications and digital strategy to support BAFA's 10-year vision 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 continued professionalisation of BAFA communications, with two hugely important projects delivered in the first half of the year – the launch of the new BAFA brand and associated relaunch of the BAFA website. These two milestones have played a significant role in improving the identity, reputation and reach of British American football. The website included the introduction of BAFA's first-ever, fully customised, club finder tool, supporting the ambition to grow the game and inspire more people to play. Both the brand and website received overwhelmingly positive feedback from across the British American football community.

Other key achievements this year include:

- Further growth in audiences across social media channels:
 - 62% increase in followers on Instagram (this channel was reintroduced in 2020 and continues to see strong growth).
 - 6% increase in followers on Twitter (at the time of this report, we are four followers away from 10,000).
 - A small increase in followers on Facebook (this is the most established channel so a lower rate of growth is to be expected).
- Development of new BAFA sub-brands for Flag football, NWFL and the new Hall of Fame initiative, providing these programmes with a unique visual identity while maintaining consistency with the overarching BAFA brand.
- Delivery of improved content and engagement for milestone days, in particular International Women's Day which included partnership with NFL UK.
- Support and delivery of a range of content for the CFL Global Draft, delivering over 50,000 impressions across channels.
- Redesign of BAFA League Republic pages, creating a more engaging resource aligned to the new brand.
- Integral role in the drafting, preparation and dissemination of multiple updates and resources on the organisation's ongoing response to COVID and return to play.

Activities in progress

- Replacement for the Head of Communications position.
- Development of a new digital strategy.
- Enhancement of the club finder tool, and establishment of analytics and regular reporting on web performance.
- Development of a sub-strategy to grow participation, particularly in youth formats

Volunteer Coordinator Report

Volunteer Coordinator - Ken Eaton

Main Objectives

The role of Volunteer Coordinator is to help support, coordinate, and grow our volunteer team within the BAFA and work with the Executive team and Board to ensuring our sport has the right people in the right roles and are recognised for their contributions.

- Supporting the Executive and Board on sourcing and recruiting volunteers through various techniques
- Collecting information on availabilities and skills to ensure we are proactively recruiting volunteers
- Keeping detailed records of volunteers' information and assignments
- Maintaining a Volunteer Database of current volunteers and potential volunteers
- Coordinating the Volunteers Handbook for new volunteers and all other relevant paperwork
- Identifying and arranging for appropriate training when needed
- Communicating frequently with volunteers to ensure they are satisfied and well-placed
- Developing a method for rewarding and recognising volunteers



Activities during 2021

- Created a database of current and past volunteers, their roles and contact details
- Prepared an organisational chart to help understand the roles and committees within BAFA
- Organised and ran monthly meetings, attended by an average of 23 volunteers, to share information and what has been happening in the organisation and create an awareness of the different activities in BAFA
- Develop job descriptions for new and existing roles to better describe the responsibilities, activities, and competencies of volunteer roles
- Engagement with new and existing volunteers to hear their concerns and give feedback to the Executive team to help improve areas and reinforce good practices
- Organised a set of email templates for job descriptions and communications to provide consistency in the onboarding process
- List of additional roles that might aid in the running of the organisation
- Prepared a structure to store and review applications for new roles and applicants who apply on an ad hoc basis
- Managed the delivery and recording of signed copies of the Volunteers Handbook / Code of Conduct for existing and new volunteers
- Provided a format for the request of emails and their approval process
- Worked with the comms committee to develop a volunteering opportunities webpage to attract new volunteers

Activities in progress:

- Continual updating of the volunteer's database.
- Continual updating of the BAFA Organisational Chart
- Updating the Volunteers Handbook to including a section on Safeguarding provided by Richard Watson. (Formatting and graphics of the new Handbook to be developed).
- Develop a formal system and process for the recruitment of volunteers to fill vacant roles within the committees and Commissions.

- Coordination with Football America to provide a BAFA Store for volunteer's kit
- Coordinating with volunteers to understand the issues they are facing and working to find suitable solutions.
- Working towards a solution for the continual issues with requests for emails and the type and method of emails used.

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

Because of Covid-19, neither IFAF nor BAFA made any tackle rule changes for 2021. The 2020 rulebook was therefore first used when football returned in June 2021.

IFAF did publish a new flag rulebook in March 2021, and this was immediately adopted by BAFA.

A number of COVID-era modifications for all forms of the game were discussed and announced in June (<http://rules.bafra.info/covid-19/index.html>).

These were designed to encourage social distancing and other aspects of COVID safety during games. These continue in force until we are advised that such measures are no longer necessary.

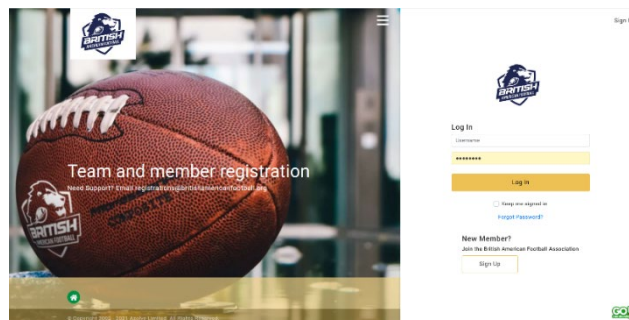
Activities in progress

- Consideration of 2022 rules change proposals
- Revisions to the BAFA Regulations for 2022
- Setting up working groups for specific forms of the sport

Registrations and membership

Registrations team

The BAFA registrations team comprises Faye Eastwood, Amanda McDonald, and Tony Martin. The team manage the JustGo system that allows individuals and teams to register with the British American Football Association and manage their club membership and rosters. 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 transfers manager Gary Marshall.



Main objectives

Our day-to-day activities include everything from responding to membership queries from clubs and individuals and approving individual and club credentials to managing the relationship with system provider JustGo to deal with technical issues, manage system changes and look for ways to improve user experience. We provide extensive reporting such as regular 'health checks' on team and member registration numbers, manage event system bookings for National Programme and other BAFA sanctioned events and create and manage user guides to help people use the system. We regularly provide advice, input, and support to other operational areas of BAFA including commission leads, BAFA and the CEO.

During the 2020-2021 membership year the registrations team supported:

40 Event bookings (2267 people)
201 National Leagues clubs
473 National Leagues teams
1260 transfer requests
16,800 email queries
9,738 active National Leagues members

Recent accomplishments

The 2020-2021 period was another challenging time for the registrations team, as well as managing changes to competition names and age ranges, we continued to work with our system provider to come up with solutions to extend memberships and offer partial refunds. The system was also amended to add a field to capture named Covid-19 officers for each club, and to accept club Covid-19 risk assessments, which were reviewed and approved within the team with feedback being given where required.

Immediately after return to play was announced for England the system and the team managed what would normally be several months' worth of registrations and queries within a single two-week period. Another busy period for the team was the resumption of activity for the 2021 BUCS season, where we worked closely with university coaching teams, BAFA and university sports and athletic unions to ensure that the required number of coaches were registered ahead of games resuming. Minor enhancements were also made within the system to accommodate the change of membership cycle for women's flag football, to add additional and more inclusive gender options, and to rebrand the system with BAFA's new look and feel. Fee adjustments were also put in place to enable 'early bird' registration discounts. The system itself also recently rebranded from GoMembership to JustGo.

Activities in progress

The Registrations team are working closely with BAFA on a move to a new, more flexible release of the JustGo system, that will bring improved functionality. This will include the ability to require specific qualifications and other criteria, such as DBS/PVG checks in order to purchase coaching memberships. We are also progressing the removal of personal ID from the system, both historic and new, and reconfiguring the system so that personal ID is no longer required to be submitted by the majority of our membership.

Membership overview - by licence type

The tables below show membership figures for the 2020-2021 period covered by this annual report, along with figures for the 2019-2020 period for comparison. Key differences to note between these figures are:

- Changes to naming conventions for women's only football formats
- Change to the player membership cycle for women's flag football to 1 July – 30 June annually
- Changes to age ranges, with the removal of cadet and youth flag and the introduction of U11, U14 and U17 flag football, and U7s training only option
- Youth and junior contact football renamed as U16 and U19 football
- 'Other' category renamed as Non-Coaching Staff, and sideline staff sub-option removed and replaced with other defined roles to clarify what this membership category is entitled to do

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 are added on at a reduced fee. The BAFA membership year runs from 1 Oct – 30 September. For the 2020-2021 playing year, this was extended to 31 October as part of our Covid-19 response, however, figures below for 2021-2022 are up to and including 30 September.

Membership year 2020-2021

Adult Contact	3,998
Adult Flag	946
Associate Adult Contact	352
Associate Adult Flag	126
Associate U11 Flag	176
Associate U14 Flag	75
Associate U16 Contact	98
Associate U17 Flag	26
Associate U19 Contact	70
Coach Contact	582
Coach Flag	61
Coach Uni	144
Player Coach Contact	406
Player Coach Flag	47
Player Coach Uni	33
U14 Flag	222
U16 Contact	704
U17 Flag	190
U19 Contact	965
Women's Contact	466
Women's Flag	171
U7s Flag (Practice only)	4
Non-Coaching Staff	367
ACTIVE LICENCES	10,229
ACTIVE MEMBERS	9,738

Membership year 2019-2020

Adult Contact	2,557
Adult Flag	385
Associated Adult Contact	153
Associated Adult Flag	15
Associated Cadet Flag	45
Associated Junior Contact	23
Associated Youth Contact	39
Associated Youth Flag	23
Cadet Flag	199
Coach Contact	432
Coach Flag	34
Coach Uni	355
Junior Contact	681
Opal	196
Other	185
Player Coach Contact	292
Player Coach Flag	30
Player Coach Uni	65
Sapphire	385
Youth Contact	690
Youth Flag	113
ACTIVE LICENCES	6,897
ACTIVE MEMBERS	6,749



Board Committee Reports

Athletes – board committee review

Committee Chair

Kenny Bello

Committee Members

David Fallon, Jared Gray, Teddy Hope, Ruth Lewis

Main objectives

We view the Athletes' Committee as a conduit - a means of providing information to and receiving feedback from those who play our sport. As such, we have five key focus areas:

- Accessibility - making sure that anyone who wants to play, can play and any barriers to this are minimised.
- Safety - whether this is to do with injury prevention, concussion protocols or safeguarding, all athletes should be able to play and compete safely and in a safe environment.
- Being a voice - it is important for athletes to feel listened to, understood and considered by decision makers. We will be the conduit for information both ways.
- Opportunity - looking at pathways from grassroots to the elite and even beyond into coaching, officiating and team management.
- Fun - it is important that the sport remains enjoyable for all!



The Athletes' Committee also work with other BAFA advisory committees acting as representatives to provide insight from the athlete perspective.

Recent accomplishments

- The committee worked with the ED&I committee to create an athlete persona document that provides insight into those that play American football here in the UK. The document is an ideal tool for the Board as it helps to paint a clearer picture of opportunities and barriers around our athletes
- Athletes' Huddles launched in April this year as a forum for athletes to receive information but also to share and discuss any pertinent issues. These webinars focus on different age-ranges and allow conversations to remain topical for those attending. In only the first two instalments, we have had talks from CEO Pete Ackerley, a Q&A session with future CFL star David Izinyon, and presentations from four of the six GB Head Coaches! Those who attend are also invited to share their 'Thoughts, Questions and Ideas' in an open floor segment at the end of each webinar. Feedback on these sessions has been fantastic and we can't wait for the next round of webinars in December
- For the first time - at least in recent history - we have a quarterly newsletter going out to athletes wishing to receive them, providing information on current events in BAFA, upcoming opportunities and initiatives. We want to keep everyone in the loop as this will be integral to driving the growth of our sport

Activities in progress

- 'People of British American Football' – will celebrate our most valuable commodity.... you! We want to shine the light on amazing people in our sport who use football to impact those around them in a positive way, or on whom football has had a positive impact

- British American Football Honours – the biggest American football awards evening in the land! This will be an opportunity to recognise Hall of Fame inductees, season MVPs, achievement awards and so much more in 2022
- A changed landscape – it will be some time until we understand the full effect of Covid-19 on all of us. However, it is important that we continue to monitor how changes are affecting and continue to affect our athletes. This will be done through surveys and focus groups to provide the best advice for the Board in the coming year

Audit – board committee review

Committee Chair

Umar Akhtar

Committee Members

Bruce Leatherman and Nichole McCulloch (Interim)



Main objectives

- The Audit & Risk Committees primary function is to support the Board by providing oversight through monitoring and reviewing BAFA's financial information, as well as reviewing the organisations internal control and risk management processes
- The Committee has the authority to conduct "deep dives" on risks and challenge BAFA's risk register. The Board recognises the need to actively manage risks that could potentially impact organisational performance or reputation
- The Board is ultimately responsible for the published financial information and the effective management of the organisation's risk.

Recent accomplishments

- Appointment of Head of Operations who will manage the maintenance of BAFA's internal risk register and associated processes
- Creation of a finance calendar and finance policies in the areas of reporting, planning and internal financial controls
- These policies and procedures provide further confidence in BAFA's annual financial statements being fair and balanced

Activities in progress

- Approval of 2019-2020 Accounts
- Maintenance of Risk Register
- Overall review of financial governance and control as we aim to meet the Tier 3 Sport England Corporate Code of Governance

British American Football Coaches Association – board committee report

Committee Chair: Wayne Hill

Committee Members

Jon Wyse, Damon Kirby, Peter Laird, Ieuan Tucker, Alex Lilly, Lydon Ward Best

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

- Continued development of the working relationship with BAFA and all representative parties associated to the development and delivery of British American Football in the UK
- Representation as part of the BAFA Return to Play Working Party
- Partnership working with BAFA Flag and BAFA Wheelchair Football developments
- Continued partnership working with BAFA regarding Discipline procedures
- BAFCA Website Redesign
- BAFCA App Launch
- BAFCA Rebrand to align with BAFA
- Two Virtual Conventions
- Successful series of virtual coaching clinics including: Tackling Round Tables, Offensive Line Round Tables Interview series with Simon Hatcher, Nzone System Clinic Series, National Programme Clinics, Britballin Coaching Interviews, BAFRA Blocking Updates



- 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.
- Software solutions audit and the development of a partnership with Qwikcut for all BAFA National Programmes and BAFA clubs.
- National Programme WR Development Clinic Series for National Programme identified players and coaches.
- Initial discussion about the alignment on Flag education and delivery with NFLUK Developmental partnerships with Sport Structures, Archon, Coach Tube, QwikCut, Nzone Systems, Athlete Era, NFL Flag, Britballin
- Promotion of additional CPD opportunities via UK Coaching, Sport England, Mind, USA Football, Coach Tube
- Continued partnership with USA Football:
 - Prep for contact sessions – more coming
 - Level 2 Advanced Contact
 - Return to Play Partnership
- Education redesign which included:
 - Alignment of course content with other NGB's
 - Formal course outlines published
 - Prerequisites for Level 1 & 2
 - Blended learning approach to include – Online Learning, Virtual Classrooms and Practical Assessments
 - 267 Candidates for Level 1 since March
 - 102 Candidates for Level 2 since March
 - Continued updating of content based on UK Coaching, Sport England and CIMSPA guidance
 - Training of new BAFA Educators
 - Observation and Evaluation Programme
- Initial meetings held with Sports Structures and CIMSPA regarding the National Strategy and Review of Coach Education in Sport
- Working in partnership with Sport Structures for the development of CPD provision linked to BAFA's Education Pathways of Continued Professional Development and Specialist Professional Development

Development of 10 Year Working Group

- Collation of research, feedback and strategy to formulate the 10 Year Vision Strategy Document
- 10 Year Vision Strategy Document includes:
 - Education Pathway
 - Player Coach Ratios
 - Code of Ethics
 - Minimum Coaching Qualifications
 - Updated Structure and Working Groups
- Continued research and development into the retention of coaches, which includes published research. Continued development of opportunities to develop Women into Coaching
- Supported development opportunity for female players converting into coaching with the Girls Football Development Clinic.
- Partnership with BAFA Women's NL and GB Women's for coaching and game development.
- Access to the registrations 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.
- Working directly with Athletic Unions and Student Unions to identify unregistered coaches and ensure minimum standards are being adhered to.

Activities in progress

- On-going work with the BAFA registrations team and JustGo to enhance the BAFA registrations system to provide greater accountability, functionality, tracking and monitoring of coaches within the system. This will include, automation of communications with coaches to review their qualifications, CPD-points and mandatory minimum requirements, calculation of CPD-points and prompts associated with the renewal of coaches licenses and memberships. Also, moving forward we are exploring the possibility digital ID-badges as proof of registration and qualifications.
- Working in partnership with BAFA Finance Director and BAFCA Finance Committee Member to move accounting systems to Xero to align with BAFA and allow greater functionality.
- Development of an annual calendar of BAFCA-events and themed weeks.
- Initial discussions with BUCS in relation to adjustment and development of rules in association to minimum coaching, squad and safety standards.
- Investigations currently being completed on regional position specific coaching clinics and regional workshops and networking groups.
- Ongoing practical assessments for coaches who have completed their Level 1 & 2 online modules.
- Partnership with BelievePerform to support Coach, and Athlete, Education with a clear focus on Mental Health and Wellbeing.
- A week of online virtual events planned for January 2022.
- Plans are in place for the return of the BAFCA Annual Convention in July 2022.
- Meetings scheduled for December with UK Coaching, CIMSPA and Sport Structures to further develop partnerships to enhance provision for coaches.



Equality, Diversity & Inclusion – board committee review

Committee Chair

Phoebe Schechter

Committee Members

Heather Smith, Jake Paul, Dionne Johnson



Main objectives

- The Equality, 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 organisation 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.
- The group should act as a channel to challenge the organisation in terms of our practice, approach and development of diversity and inclusion; in particular where progress is limited or, in support of underrepresented or disadvantaged individuals/ groups.

The BAFA Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) committee formed in August 2020, from a good pool of candidates we identified four individuals who had knowledge and experience across the EDI landscape. There was an intentional choice to keep the committee small at this stage in our evolution and we looked for individuals that would 'do' to build momentum initially.

Recent Accomplishments

Despite a tough year of no or very little playing activity happening due to Covid-19, the group has achieved a good amount, not least coming together to be a functioning unit. In the 2021 season we have:

- Drafted and consulted on our Trans and Non-binary policy,
- Established a rolling calendar of communication activity on social media to demonstrate a change in BAFA's focus on EDI
- Supported wheelchair Football, SEN and women and girls development projects
- Designed and implemented a survey to understand our baseline demographics across the game
- Launched an interim solution to the absence of a reporting mechanism for anyone experiencing discrimination or harassment within the sport via the inclusion@ and discipline@ inboxes

The survey highlighted a number of areas of focus for us, not least the challenges of collecting this data in a robust way across the game. This needs to be a key step change for the EDI committee and the game going forwards.

The committee has also recognised that a mixture of tangible and visible initiatives mixed with some longer term and less visible cultural change pieces of work will be the key to making a meaningful difference to the sport.

Aims and Objectives for 2021/22

The 2020-21 survey showed that ethnicity, gender, and disability all emerged as priorities for BAFA to address. For some of these demographics there will be specific projects taken on by sub-groups and feeding into the EDI committee but there is a recognition from the EDI Committee that these are all very broad groups and that targeted interventions won't be the only approach. We need to create a broader culture of celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion across the sport.

It is felt that this is a better space for the committee to be focusing on, whilst supporting targeted projects i.e., wheelchair variations of the game. Below are the priority areas for the committee over the next year.

Having robust data to inform our decision making for and understanding of American Football in the UK

- **Updating the BAFA registration system to collect data** - Working with the registration team and across other committees who may also benefit from this data set (ie. athletes committee) we will continue to seek solutions to collect this valuable data.
- **Regular listening sessions with the BAFA community** - to supplement the qualitative data collected via the survey, we also want to understand experiences of people across the game with regards to EDI, both in terms of their experience and understanding of it. This will help guide our future plans and also allow us to understand if a change in culture is happening as a result of our efforts.

Building a network of champions across the game to influence positive culture with regards to EDI

- **Recruit at least one champion per club and build regular dialog with them** - Working alongside the club affiliation process we would like to include the suggestion for all clubs to have an EDI champion, whilst we recognise that mandating this role may make it tokenistic, we hope that we will be able to build a core group of champions who are invested in EDI and help us move the game forward.
- **Support with knowledge, tools and opportunities that support them in influencing their communities** - We see this group of champions as our key route to the game, and will signpost opportunities, and curate a platform of information they can access to make positive impacts in their environments.

Ensuring our policies, governance and reporting processes work for everyone in the game

- **Review of existing policies** - As with the trans and non-binary policy that was created in 2021 we suspect there are a number of policies that either don't exist or will need reviewing as a result of the ever changing EDI landscape. We will review or create on a rolling basis policies relating to EDI.
- **Development of reporting processes for discriminatory/ exclusionary behaviour** - In 2021 we launched an email address to report incidents of harassment and discrimination, however we need to work with the disciplinary team to develop this into a more robust process and positive experience for anyone accessing these channels.
- **Ensuring diverse representation across BAFA, especially in governance structures and with power holders** - In line with the Code of Sport Governance we will update and implement the action plan which primarily focuses on this aspect of the organisation.
- **EDI committee is functioning well with engaged volunteers** - Keeping engagement and momentum within the committee is paramount, we propose that we continue to meet on a monthly basis and get together for a day at least once a year.

Advising and guiding projects and programmes that support EDI within American football

- **Oversight and guidance of wheelchair, women's, SEN projects** - As mentioned above a number of passionate individuals have begun projects with a focus on a specific demographic. We will support and guide these projects to ensure that they are all delivered in line with BAFA's strategic priorities and approach.

Safeguarding & Welfare – board committee review

Committee Chair

Richard Watson

Committee Members

Kim Pearce, 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

- Provision of new templates for clubs – safeguarding children policy, anti-bullying policy and club safeguarding commitment statement
- 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
- Implementation of a recording system – My Concern across the game, this is due to be launched alongside our training process highlighted below
- Board Safeguarding Training – The board of directors have all attended a bespoke safeguarding course around organisational responsibility and risk.

Activities in progress

- Safeguarding regulations and policy and procedures - a full review of current safeguarding policy and revised document. Production of a set of safeguarding standards for ALL affiliated clubs to be expected to adhere to. Safeguarding policy template for all affiliated clubs. A number of other resources which can be made available on the BAFA website for club to use, for example child friendly safeguarding.



- Implement a recording system for safeguarding - a recording system that can be accessed on the BAFA website and accessed by CWO's. Training for ALL BAFA affiliated welfare officers and safeguarding staff
- Training for BAFA clubs and volunteers - dependant on identified needs this will be child safeguarding training and adult at risk training. Delivered to ANYBODY who would like it. Emails will be sent to all affiliated clubs
- Identify potential scope to increase welfare officers or safeguarding champions within BAFA - a questionnaire to be developed and sent to all affiliated club welfare leads to gauge level of experience and suitability
- Consultation with Disclosure Scotland on how we ensure our Scottish clubs are supported with the completion of PVG processes

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

The Board of the British American Football Association has established a Sport Science and Medicine Committee as a subcommittee of the BAFA Board to support them in their respective responsibilities for representing all aspects of player development. The Committee seeks 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.



Activities in progress

- Undertaking a review of BAFA medical policies, to be completed by the end of 2021, so that recommendations can be incorporated in the 2022 rule book
- Conducting a review of the current anti-doping landscape/situation in the sport and forming a subgroup to ensure compliance with UKAD Assurance Framework
- Development of guidance and protocol resources for athletes and clubs
- Conduct an injury surveillance project – specifically focused on concussion
- Seek to build an American football practitioner network that can share ideas, best practice and that BAFA could disseminate knowledge through, linked to BAFCA



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.



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 teams 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.



Umar Akhtar – Non-Executive Director

Umar has over 20 years of experience working as a professional within the worlds of finance and programme management. His experience spans from small corporates to a FTSE100 retailer. Umar has successfully led programme teams in delivering business and technical change for Tesco and holds professional qualifications in both accountancy and programme management. He also has over a decade's worth of experience as a trustee and treasurer of sports-based charity the Muslim Women's Sport Foundation. Umar helped the organisation promote diversity and inclusion in sport as well as strengthening the organisation from a financial and governance perspective.

