



## Contact Competition Rules and Regulations – 2024

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## Preface

This document contains the rules which govern contact football competitions **for the 2024 playing season and come into effect from 7 November 2023**. It is meant to be read in conjunction with the most recent [BAFA Playing Rules, in particular the BAFA Regulations contained within them](#).

It is the responsibility of club management to ensure that all players, coaches and staff are aware of, and comply with the rules and regulations of the game as detailed in this document and in the most recent version of [BAFA Rules and BAFA Regulations](#).

In the event of a breach of the rules and regulations by a player, coach and/or staff members or in the event of improper behaviour by players, coaches, staff or spectators on a gameday, BAFA reserve the right to take action against the club and/or club management, in addition to any action it may take against the player, coaches, staff and/or spectator concerned.

These regulations may be updated and/or supported by additional guidelines for specific competitions.

## Summary of 2024 Amendments

The table below lists the main amendments to the Contact Competition Rules and Regulations for 2024 as issued on 7 November 2023.

Section	Amendments
Preface	Addition of specific reference to when the Competition rules come into force and to BAFA Regulations
2.4	Wording updated to refer to BAFA Regulations
3.1	Rewording to make clear league entry and status is at BAFA's discretion
3.3	To update entry deadline for 2024 competition
3.14	To clarify wording on rules for pregnant participants to remove ambiguity. Note – additional guidance is being developed relating to this.
4.3	To update health check deadlines and expand on steps for removal from the schedule of teams who do not pass health checks
4.4	To update minimum registered numbers for 9v9, and sideline numbers for 7v7 and 5v5.
4.10	Addition to make clear there is no automatic right of league re-entry for teams who have dropped out of competition for a season or more and what steps may be required
5.1	To clarify membership means holding an active membership of the appropriate category
5.2	Reference to only having a single membership profile added
5.3	To update wording around what is classed as a 'new player' for the purposes of three free trial sessions and to extend this status to BUCS and Flag Players who have not previously registered on JustGo with a National Leagues contact team.
5.9	Addition to also include change of status from player to player coach
5.16.5	Deletion of reference to debtor's list
5.19	Amended to include reference to 5.18
5.25	Changed reference to working days to just days
6.1	To update wording of transfer window deadline day to reflect this has been brought forward
6.2	Updated wording to clarify that approvals in this instance apply to the weekly transfer deadline
6.3	Updated wording to clarify five day approval window for transfers
6.4	Revised to bring clarity to transfer window and exceptions

6.8.1	Changed reference to working days to just days
6.8.7	Amended wording to allow for transfers submitted prior to the closure of the annual transfer deadline to run to conclusion of the approvals process
6.9	Revised wording to add additional clarification to international transfers and highlight these are also required for individuals playing in Ireland
7.3	Updated to clarify that awarded games are discounted for the purposes of tie breakers
8.4	Added guidance on engaging with opponents on live stream plans, especially where relating to streaming of U16/U19 fixtures from a safeguarding perspective
13.2	Revised to make clear that Competition Management determines the playing schedule
13.14	Addition of guidelines on how to request a bye week
13.15	Reiterating the Competition Management reserves the right to set the division and conference in which teams play, and additionally adding that any 'self-relegation' must be agreed by Competition Management.
14.4.5	Adding major road accidents causing significant travel impact as an example of a circumstance outside of a team's control
14.5.3	Updating minimum sideline numbers for 5v5 and 7v7
14.10	Updating information on surety bonds to include tiered amounts for small-sided formats
14.11	Including reference that awarded games are excluded for the purpose of calculating tie-breakers
15.5	Signposting the complaints procedure contained within the BAFA Regulations
16.1.2 ad 16.2	Signposting the appeals procedure contained within the BAFA Regulations
17.1-17.1.3	Updated wording to add that club compliance with regulations will be regularly reviewed and that action may be taken against clubs that regularly fail to comply with appropriate rules and regulations
17.8, 17.18, 17.18.1	Including reference to League Republic, and removing reference to the app or text services no longer in use

### Related Links

<b>Website</b>
<a href="#">British American Football Association Playing Rules – including BAFA Regulations</a>

# 1. Definitions

- 1.1 BAFA shall mean the British American Football Association.
- 1.2 Contact shall mean, in the context of the game, the variant of American Football where players come into contact with one another when tackling.
- 1.3 Club shall mean an organisation which offers one or more teams in competition in the organised competitions of BAFA.
- 1.4 Team shall mean any team as required by the context of this document which plays host to an individual member of BAFA registered for the purposes of taking part in competition.
- 1.5 Club administrator refers to those persons who hold an administration role for their club on BAFA's JustGo registration system.
- 1.6 Club Management refers to those persons who hold a designated role in the management of participating National Leagues clubs and teams. They are the nominated contacts for liaising with BAFA on matters that relate to their club and for ensuring that competition regulations are communicated and adhered to within their organisation.
- 1.7 Competition management refers to the official management personnel and structure for the Contact Leagues.
- 1.8 Contrasting colour shall mean a clearly different colour or different shade of the same colour that contrast with each other as to be immediately differentiated one from the other. For example, black and white are contrasting colours, but dark grey and black are not contrasting colours. If in any doubt, guidance should be sought from competition management.
- 1.9 Official game shall mean a regular season game, playoff game or associate fixture, pre-season game or tournament, and any game which involves at least one team representing a BAFA organisation (or any other game or tournament as may be specified by the competition management from time to time).
- 1.10 Game Management means the whole of the process of managing, controlling and organising a gameday or tournament. It includes arranging everything necessary for a game or tournament to go ahead, including any gameday facility hire, field setup, changing accommodation, and field equipment, medical provision, officials' assistant, prompt payment of officials and all other matters referred to directly or indirectly (by implication) in these regulations. Gameday Management is the responsibility of the host team.
- 1.11 Gameday shall mean the scheduled game or games taking place between BAFA teams
- 1.12 Officials' assistants are the chain crew (including down marker operator), ball persons and any other persons deemed appropriate to support by competition management or the Head Referee. Officials' assistants must be aged 14 years or older.
- 1.13 Game rules refer to the BAFA sanctioned rules which guide the playing of the game of American football and its recognised variants.
- 1.14 GDPR refers to the General Data Protection Regulation enacted in 2016. For more information on GDPR see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation>.
- 1.15 Referee and/or officials are those persons designated to take charge of the game or tournament and apply the game rules.
- 1.16 Registration Management refers to the dedicated administration team for the National Leagues registration system within BAFA.

- 1.17 These regulations apply to the competitions specified at rule 2.1 and do not apply to any events which may be organised by third parties. For the avoidance of doubt, therefore, the insurance cover provided as part of the BAFA membership does not apply to the participation of teams, coaches and players in such third party events unless sanctioned and agreed by BAFA. Teams, coaches and players are wholly responsible for organising their own insurance for such events, or for ensuring that the organisers of such events have in place adequate insurance.

## 2. Organisation and Administration

- 2.1 The competitions detailed in this document shall be known collectively as the British American Football Association National Leagues & Competitions (herein referred to *The National Leagues*). These shall encompass:
- 2.1.1 Adult Contact
  - 2.1.2 Under 19 Contact
  - 2.1.3 Under 16 Contact
  - 2.1.4 National Women's Football League (NWFL)
  - 2.1.5 Associate fixtures for any of the above
- 2.2 The competitions and all rights and properties associated with it shall be owned, controlled and managed by BAFA. From time to time, it may delegate its powers and authority in this respect to any sub-committee, company or individual(s).
- 2.3 The name of any or all of those competitions, divisions or conferences which comprise the National Leagues shall be preceded by the name of such sponsor as BAFA may direct from time to time, as well as the specific round at which the matches are taking place (i.e., Playoffs and National Finals).
- 2.4 The decisions of BAFA, or its nominee(s), in respect of these regulations and on any other matter related to the National Leagues competitions which is not provided for below, shall be considered final and binding on all parties (subject to the right of appeal which is specifically provided for **within the BAFA Regulations**).
- 2.5 It is the responsibility of all participants within the National Leagues to ensure that they are conversant with these Competition Rules and Regulations.
- 2.6 The BAFA National Leagues are currently strictly amateur both by rule and as a condition of our insurance. Payment of players is forbidden. Any proven breach of this rule will lead to serious disciplinary action against both the club concerned and the player(s) involved. Such action may incur sanctions which include, but are not limited to fines, suspension, loss of league points or loss of league status.

## 3. Qualifications and Eligibility

- 3.1 BAFA's Competition Management reserves the sole right to decide which teams will be accepted to participate in the National Leagues and to set the division and conference in which they will compete, subject to its reasonable application of the regulations laid out herein or those identified in the Associate Process for emerging and developing teams.
- 3.2 BAFA will charge each team a competition entry fee and set a deadline for the payment of such, as a requirement for entry into the competition/league. Fees will vary dependent on

competition and service/scope of the competition provided and will be reviewed before each registration deadline. Full details of the current fees are available on the BAFA website.

- 3.3 Team entry fees are paid by purchasing a team membership via the BAFA JustGo registration system. For 2024 entry the deadline is 10pm on Friday 1 December for all formats of contact football. This includes submitting the required number of available dates to host games as requested by Competition Management in the competition entry form. Competition Management may extend this deadline on a case-by-case basis at their discretion.
- 3.4 By entering a team in the National Leagues, clubs agree that:
  - 3.4.1 They will abide by these Competition Rules
  - 3.4.2 They will abide by the Governing Body Regulations and wider policies; and
  - 3.4.3 They are able and willing to fulfil the costs and commitments of participation in the competition.
- 3.5 To qualify to participate in the National Leagues both the club and the team must be recognised and accredited by BAFA.
- 3.6 To qualify to participate in the National Leagues, a player, coach or other club staff member must be a member of BAFA. This is achieved by purchasing a membership on BAFA's JustGo registration system and having been accepted by the relevant club.
- 3.7 All players and coaches must meet the age ranges set for the respective competitions as set out by BAFA in these competition rules and published on the BAFA website.
  - 3.7.1 Adult Contact 18+
  - 3.7.2 U19 Contact 16-19. Players must be under 19 on 31 August in the year preceding the playing season. The minimum age is 16 years
  - 3.7.3 U16 Contact 13-16. Players must be under 16 on 31 August in the year preceding the playing season. The minimum age is 13 years
  - 3.7.4 NWFL 16+ (16 and 17 year olds can play with parental consent and are subject to such additional conditions as may be specified by the Competition Management from time to time).
  - 3.7.5 Contact coach or contact PlayerCoach 18+
- 3.8 Any contact player aged 16 has the option to choose between U16 contact OR U19 contact. Dual eligibility for U16 and U19 contact is not permitted. Once a player moves up an age group, they are not permitted to move back down. Dual eligibility is permitted between U16 or U19 and the NWFL subject to parental consent and will not be considered as a move out of the National Leagues age group.
- 3.9 Similarly, any contact player aged 18 has the choice to play U19 Contact or Adult Contact Football. Once a player moves up an age group, they are not permitted to move back down. Playing in University (BUCS) Football, NWFL or participating in a national team event (including a trial, practice, game, or other event), will not be considered as a move out of the National Leagues Age Group.
- 3.10 "Moving up" will be classed as taking part in any organised training session, scrimmage, or game at the older age group level. A player is permitted three sessions at a higher age group to trial out that higher age group, provided the coach, parent (if under 18) and player consent to trying out at the higher level, and the player is judged able to do so by reason of their size and/or ability. A consent form should be created by the club and uploaded to the player's profile on JustGo prior participating in any such training session. This must also be approved by Competition Management for the appropriate age groups.
- 3.11 Mixed age ranges may practice alongside each other in the same facility or field but must operate distinctly from each other during any competitive drills. No game-like scenarios should take place across any age ranges.

- 3.12 Each age range should be supervised by dedicated coaches who are shown on the appropriate team roster.
- 3.13 It is the responsibility of club management to make sure that age ranges are appropriately supervised by coaches and are not mixed during any practice session for any competitive drills. Failure to do so may result in penalties which could include but are not limited to fines and suspension of membership for club management and coaches involved.
- 3.14 **Players must not take part in contact football activity, including training or fixtures in any National Leagues contact competition when knowingly pregnant.**
- 3.15 Players or coaches with specific medical conditions should seek the advice and guidance of a general practitioner or other suitably qualified individual as to whether they should take part in the sport. It is recommended that all participants are subject to a health check prior to participation.
- 3.16 No restriction shall be applied to registration or play within the competitions by nationality for participants who are able to evidence they are ordinarily resident in the UK. However, competition management reserves the right to review this rule at any time for the purposes of ensuring the intended development of the competitions.
- 3.17 All coaches are required to be a minimum of 18 years of age and have passed a minimum of BAFCA Level 1 qualification. They must hold a current coaching membership with BAFA in order to undertake any National League coaching activity, including practices, scrimmages and games. Evidence of qualification must be uploaded to their profile on the BAFA Registration system provided by JustGo. Individuals who purchase a coaching membership and who do not hold a current qualification or who have no evidence of their current qualification uploaded to their profile may be suspended until this is resolved.
- 3.18 Where there is a crossover of ages from young person to adult safeguarding policies and processes should be in place to ensure that issues related to minors and vulnerable adults are assessed and addressed.

## 4. Team Registration

- 4.1 Clubs must register their teams on BAFA's JustGo registration system no later than the dates specified in rule 3.3 above. Failure to register on time will result in teams being categorised at associate level, making them ineligible for the coming season. Competition Management may grant an exceptional time extension on a case-by-case basis.
- 4.2 Club Management must advise their provisional home ground availability by the dates specified by their relevant competition management to allow for the preparation of a provisional schedule.
- 4.3 Regular roster 'health checks' will be conducted by Competition Management and Registrations Management for each participating National Leagues team to ensure numbers are sustainable and that each team has the required number of coaches and players to be considered for schedule addition. **These will take place during the scheduling process for all levels. Dates for these for 2024 entry are: 3 January, 31 January, and 1 March. Warnings will be issued to teams who do not make the 31 January deadline. Teams who do not meet the 1 March deadline will be issued a final warning and may be removed from the schedule. Factors impacting schedule removal for teams who do not meet minimum numbers may also include but are not limited to a review of their previous season's standings, geographical location and any yellow cards issued for forfeits.**
- 4.4 The minimum numbers of registered players and coaches and cut-off date shall be as follows. Individuals registered as PlayerCoaches will be counted towards the minimum number for players, but players registered on a trial membership only basis will not appear on the roster and not be included.



Format	Min Registered Players	Min Sideline Players to commence a game or tournament	Minimum Registered and Qualified Coaches	Minimum Sideline Registered and Qualified Coaches
11v11	35	22	3 x L1, 1 x L2	2 x L1, 1 x L2
9v9	22	18	3 x L1, 1 X L2	2 x L1, 1 X L2
7v7	18	14	3 x L1 (1 x L2 for NWFL only)	3 x L1
5v5	14	10	2 x L1	2 x L1

- 4.5 For clubs that have an A and B team, or two teams participating within the same discipline, players may move between the two teams during pre-season. All players must be registered to the team they will compete in prior to the start of that competition's season. Players must then remain registered within that team unless the movement is approved by Registrations and Competition Management
- 4.6 As part of registering their team, clubs are required to upload / refresh copies of the following documentation, which must be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an annual basis:
- 4.6.1 Governing document – usually in the form of a constitution or articles of association
  - 4.6.2 Club safeguarding policy and safeguarding commitment statement – this is required for working with both children and vulnerable adults
  - 4.6.3 Anti-bullying policy
  - 4.6.4 Sample codes of conduct/player or coaches agreement for players and coaches
  - 4.6.5 A document or spreadsheet detailing your current club management structure, including names of officers and including the name of your designated club safeguarding officer
  - 4.6.6 Copy of recent bank account statement in the name of the club or team as appropriate. Personal bank accounts in the name of an individual should not be used.

*This can be done within the club details sections of the JustGo registration system*

- 4.7 As part of registering their teams, clubs are requested to enter information about home and away jerseys and contact details, including head coach and team manager, for each of their teams. This can be done in the team profile sections of the JustGo registration system.
- 4.8 Clubs entering teams at U16 and U19, NWFL teams with young players under the age of 18, or NWFL or Adult Contact teams with members who are vulnerable adults must ensure they follow BAFA's safeguarding requirements at all times. This includes making sure an appropriately trained named safeguarding officer and a club safeguarding policy are in place. BAFA also requires any individual engaged in coaching young people or vulnerable adults to undertake a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) (or Protecting Vulnerable Groups, PVG, in Scotland) enhanced check.
- 4.9 Clubs must be in good standing with BAFRA. Officials provided by BAFRA must be paid promptly in accordance with the BAFRA Terms and Conditions on [www.bafra.info](http://www.bafra.info). Any club who with outstanding debt owed to BAFRA by the annual team entry date may not be permitted to enter the league.
- 4.10 Teams who have dropped out of league competition for a season or more for adult or NWFL competitions must complete an appropriate associate process before being eligible to re-

enter the league. For U16 or U19 competition teams must either complete an appropriate association process, or may by exception, following a rigorous assessment of their status including registered numbers of players and coaches, be permitted to return to league competition. Such teams may, at the discretion of Competition Management, have to pay the League a surety that they will complete their next season, in which event the surety will be returned to the team.

This is tiered as follows:

£250 – D1 U19 teams (9s)

£150 – D2 U19 teams (7s) and U16

## 5. Registration of Members

- 5.1 As per Regulation 3.6 all players, coaches, club admins and staff present at training, gamedays and tournaments must be current members of BAFA and hold an active membership of the appropriate category assigned to the correct team.
- 5.2 Membership is achieved by registering and paying for a membership on BAFA's JustGo registration system. Members must only have one profile on the system, and must not set up an additional new profile to register with another team. In the unlikely event of a technology issue preventing the purchase of membership, temporary membership may be granted on request, by submitting member details to Registrations Management. Temporary membership is only confirmed once the submission is acknowledged as being valid.
- 5.3 All new players at all age groups and disciplines are entitled to three trial practice sessions with a team – this does not cover scrimmages or games. A player is classed as new to National Leagues contact football if they have not previously registered on the JustGo system with a National Leagues contact team – this includes players from the BUCS university league or from BAFA's flag leagues who have not previously registered with a National Leagues contact team. A player transferring between National Leagues contact clubs, or a player returning to National Leagues contact competition after a period of absence or injury is not classed as a new player. After three trial practice sessions they must register and pay for a full BAFA playing membership in order to be covered by BAFA for injury and liability insurance. Adult and NWFL players, those new to the sport, a player returning to the sport, or a BUCS player may alternatively, or in addition, purchase an extended trial membership to cover them during pre-season practice only. Please note, this will not cover them to participate in any games and will expire on 31 March annually. They must purchase a full playing membership before the commencement of the season in order to appear on the team roster and be insured to participate in games.
- 5.4 It is the responsibility of club management to ensure that all players, coaches and sideline staff are registered, and thus insured, to practice as well as take part in games or tournaments. Any avoidance of this responsibility will be taken extremely seriously by Registrations Management and Competition Management. Clubs suspected of allowing unregistered players, coaches or other sideline staff to participate in training sessions without BAFA membership may be investigated. In the event of an investigation concluding that unregistered players, coaches or other side line staff were knowingly allowed to participate in team practices unregistered, penalties could, but may not be limited to, fines and suspension of membership for club management.
- 5.5 Any players or coaches who participate in team practice sessions, scrimmages or games after this point without registering are not covered by BAFA injury or liability insurance, and their participation may impact on the insurance of all others present.
- 5.6 All membership costs are listed on BAFA's JustGo registration system and also on the BAFA website. Players who wish to play for more than one BAFA contact format may be required to pay a membership upgrade fee, as detailed on the BAFA website.

- 5.7 All teams must be in compliance with the official roster process, before taking part in an official BAFA game. Teams must be in possession of both an official BAFA photo roster downloaded from BAFA's JustGo system to use for a roster check, and a GDPR compliant non-photo roster of players, coaches and staff to provide to game officials. Only players, coaches and staff members listed on the official BAFA photo roster form are eligible to partake in game activity and be in the team sideline area unless there is written approval from Competition Management. The only exception to this rule is third party suppliers of gameday medical cover.
- 5.8 Rosters can be updated each week during pre-season and the regular season. A new addition to the roster must be added by 17:00 hours on the Friday prior to a fixture. Where the addition is a transfer, the request must be made via BAFA's JustGo registration system and must be approved by the club the member is leaving as well as the club the member is joining by 22:00 hours on the Tuesday prior to scheduled fixture. It is the members responsibility to submit their own transfer request. Transfers are not required between teams within the same club or from BUCS League teams
- 5.9 New players, coaches or other club staff members who have never previously registered with BAFA, who are returning from a period of absence with the club, or who have been registered with BUCS for university football may register with a team up until 17:00 hours on the Friday prior to the last game of the regular season for the relevant discipline and age bracket. Any change of status from coach to player coach, **or player to player coach is also not permitted after this point.**
- 5.10 Each team, via their designated club administrator, must have downloaded a copy of their most recent roster by 19:00 hours on the Friday prior to a fixture. You will not be able to download a copy of the roster from BAFA's JustGo registration system after this time. Issues with rosters must be notified to Registrations Management no later than 48hrs prior to the download deadline.
- 5.11 An identity check of players and coaches against the photo game roster form is mandatory prior to the beginning of every gameday and must be signed by team management and the head coach. This may be done either inside or outside, but bad weather is not an acceptable reason for it being omitted. If there are any discrepancies these should be notified to officials and the head coaches at the earliest opportunity. Gameday Management should note the discrepancy and send a report to Competition Management and Registrations Management. Failure to conduct a thorough identity check is a disciplinary offence. Rosters should be signed by both teams and retained by the host team for 21 days in accordance with GDPR regulations.
- 5.12 Competition management reserve the right to request a copy of the signed gameday photo roster at any point within the 21 day GDPR window and may require this to be submitted as supporting evidence in the event of a dispute.
- 5.13 Any player, coach or other club staff member not showing on the roster, or who is not easily identifiable by their roster photo is ineligible to play in that game or gameday, unless permission has been granted by a member of the Competition Management or Registrations Management. It is the club administrator's responsibility to ensure that all members photos are correct as per BAFA registration rule 5.17.
- 5.14 Roster discrepancies must be recorded, and details sent directly to Competition Management and Registrations Management. All evidence must be supplied within seven days of the game and will be resolved under the appeals procedure.
- 5.15 Before each game, each team must supply the Referee with a non-photo GDPR compliant roster form complete with numbered players. An example of this can be found on the BAFA website
- 5.16 A player, coach or other club staff member may not be eligible or active on a roster for a team in the following circumstances:

- 5.16.1 They are already on the roster for another team at this level / age group and have not followed the transfer process as stipulated. For the avoidance of doubt, this means members may not play or coach in two levels of the same competition – for example, U19 D1 and U19 D2, Adult D1 and D2 or NWFL Regional and NWFL National – in the same season.
- 5.16.2 They are under ban or suspension as a result of disciplinary action.
- 5.16.3 Incorrect registration procedure has been carried out.
- 5.16.4 They do not meet the age eligibility requirements.
- 5.16.5 They owe equipment or money to another team in any BAFA National League organisation or to BAFA
- 5.16.6 They are currently subject to a ban, suspension, or period of ineligibility from a governing body of another sport for a violation that would have been contrary to BAFA's own rules and regulations.
- 5.17 Any team knowingly playing an ineligible player or using an unregistered or unqualified coach in either a coaching or refereeing capacity in an official game will result in the club facing disciplinary action.
- 5.18 Any player, coach or staff members knowingly taking part in an official game when they are not eligible will face disciplinary action.
- 5.19 Disciplinary action in respect of sections 5.16 and/or and 5.17 and 5.18 will be severe and may include:
  - 5.19.1 A club fine of £100 for the first offence.
  - 5.19.2 A one game suspension for the individual, the Head coach, team manager.
  - 5.19.3 A loss of 1-0 in the fixture.
- 5.20 A secondary offence during the same competitive season will result in further fines and/or the team being withdrawn from the competition. Competition Management may also take such disciplinary action as it deems appropriate.
- 5.21 Each member over 16 years old is responsible for completing their own registration, including payment. Where a player is under 18 years old, the registration must in turn be corroborated by a parent or legal guardian (whose contact details must also be provided). A registration must not be completed on a member's behalf by any other person unless expressly authorized by Registrations or competition management. The person registering must ensure that all information supplied is true and accurate.
- 5.22 A member's emergency contact information must be their next of kin or other designated individual and not club management. The only exception to this is when club management are a family member of the individual.
- 5.23 Profile photos uploaded onto the National Leagues registration system are used to create photo rosters so must be clear and the member must be instantly recognisable. Photos should be a clear head and shoulders, passport style picture, and be of the individual only and unobscured. Members should not be wearing helmets, hats, sunglasses or anything else than that can obscure their head/ face (this includes eye blackener). Photos must be of the individual being registered and must not be altered or have filters added in any way. The only exception to this is where head coverings are worn for religious purposes.
- 5.24 Should a roster photo be deemed unacceptable by either competing team during a roster check at a gameday or tournament, a complaint must be raised with the game day officials and Registration Management within 24 hours so the issue can be investigated. Should a team insist on fielding a player with a photo deemed unacceptable, the game result could be overturned, or the club fined should Competition and Registration Management agree that is unacceptable following further investigation.

- 5.25** Regular spot checks of roster photos will be undertaken by the National Leagues Registration Management (or appointed representative). In the event that any roster photo is deemed unsuitable, club administrators will be notified and will have five days to make sure a suitable replacement photo is uploaded. Should the original, unacceptable, photo remain after this time then a fine may be imposed and the membership licence of the individual concerned will be suspended until the fine is paid and the photo meets the standards required.
- 5.26 It is the club administrator's responsibility to ensure that all players and coaches registered on the National Leagues registration system have clear roster photos as defined in 5.23 and are eligible to register.
- 5.27 All members must confirm their identity by uploading one form of photo ID into the National Leagues registration system. Acceptable forms of ID include but are not limited to:
- 5.27.1 Passport.
  - 5.27.2 Current UK photocard driver's licence
  - 5.27.3 University or college ID card.
  - 5.27.4 Military ID card.
  - 5.27.5 Recognized national identity or proof of age cards such as Young Scot, Citizen Card and Validate UK.
- 5.28 It is recognised that serving military personnel may not hold suitable photo ID. For under 18s, a birth certificate and proof of address in a parent's name showing the same address as the player is registered against are acceptable alternatives.
- 5.29 Registrations Management reserve the right to accept or decline any other forms of identification submitted, on a case-by-case basis.
- 5.30 Individuals applying for BAFA membership must be able to produce proof of normal residency in the UK. Normal residency is defined by our insurers as having lived or planning to live in the UK for 6 months or more, with permission to stay. Exceptions include those residents in the UK on military assignments and students on a valid Student Visa.
- 5.31 For the avoidance of doubt, outside of the specific exceptions detailed in 5.30, individuals visiting the UK on holiday or other short stay visits are not eligible to become members of BAFA during their visit. Other individuals not normally resident in the UK will only be granted membership by exception and with permission granted by Competition and Registrations Management.
- 5.32 Players and coaches whose eligibility is in doubt should be highlighted to Registrations Management for investigation.
- 5.33 Competition management may from time to time request information from members regarding the details they have submitted on their membership forms. Failure to supply information when requested could result in disciplinary action and suspension of membership.
- 5.34 The registration system will require proof of residency from non-UK nationals - examples (not exhaustive) of the suitable documentation are detailed below.
- 5.34.1 A valid biometric residence permit (BRP) or current passport, endorsed to show they're allowed to stay in the UK. The permit of passport endorsement should be current, in the individual's name and issued by the Home Office, and needs to show that the individual has one of the following: indefinite leave to enter or remain in the UK, no time limit to their stay in the UK, a time limit to their stay in the UK of six months or more, a certificate of entitlement to the Right of Abode, exemption from immigration control
  - 5.34.2 A UK Government immigration status online share code showing settled or pre-settled status or right to remain
  - 5.34.3 A digital or non-digital certificate of application to the EU Settlement Scheme



- 5.34.4 A full and current UK photocard driving licence
  - 5.34.5 A recent HMRC tax notification such as a tax assessment, statement of account or notice of coding
  - 5.34.6 A local authority tax bill where the individual is named
  - 5.34.7 A current benefit book or card or original notification letter from the Department of Work and Pensions
  - 5.34.8 A recent utility bill (gas, electricity or landline telephone) where the individual is named.
  - 5.34.9 For members from within the common travel area, a valid passport or drivers licence issued in the Republic of Ireland, the Isle of Man, and the Channel Islands. (Please note – this does not include British Overseas Territories)
  - 5.34.10 Valid and current documentation proving that one of the two exceptions apply such as a student visa or copies of military orders
  - 5.34.11 For under 18s who may not have such documentation, any of the above in a parent/guardian's name showing the same address as the individual will be accepted.
  - 5.34.12 Any other documentation approved by BAFA Registrations on application.
- 5.35 The following are examples of documentation that is NOT acceptable to prove residency:
- 5.35.1 A tenancy agreement or rent card
  - 5.35.2 A bank statement
  - 5.35.3 A bill or statement for anything other than gas, electricity or landline telephone
  - 5.35.4 Any other letter sent through the post or any pictures of received mail
  - 5.35.5 A photo of an email from a school or university
  - 5.35.6 A provisional driving licence
  - 5.35.7 Membership cards – for example, gym membership or supermarket discount cards
- 5.36 BAFA reserves the right to ask for additional supporting evidence of proof of normal residence or of one of the two exceptions outlined in 5.30 at any point should they not be satisfied with any evidence produced or initially approved or should the validity of the evidence provided be in any doubt.
- 5.37 Non-UK nationals registering as players with BAFA may be required to complete either an international transfer or a self-declaration that they have not played for another federation previously without transferring or are exempt from a transfer. In particular, this may apply to any non-UK nationals who join a team from the BUCS league and / or are US citizens and have previously played for another federation of American football. This includes any US or Canadian nationals who may have played at high-school, college, semi-pro or professional level.

## 6. Transfers

- 6.1 Subject to proving that they are free of financial liability or subject to disciplinary action at their team of prior registration or the Governing Body, a player, coach or other club staff member, is free to request a transfer to join another team registered with BAFA from 1 October up until the transfer deadline day. **This is now set as the first Tuesday in June and is Tue 4 June for 2024.** This applies to both domestic and international transfers, and all clubs involved in the transfer must have approved and completed transfer requests by this time. In season transfers will not be accepted after this deadline has passed. In exceptional circumstances, appeals can be made through competition management.

- 6.2 Transfer requests must be submitted via BAFA's JustGo registration system and must be approved by both the leaving and receiving clubs prior to the **weekly** transfer deadline. A transfer must be completed by 22:00 hours on the Tuesday prior to the next scheduled fixture, for that individual to be eligible to participate. Transfers are only finalised, and players moved to their new club following each week's Tuesday deadline. It is the member's own responsibility to submit their transfer request in the National Leagues registration system.
- 6.3 **Club administrators have five days after the transfer is submitted to acknowledge or reject/approve any transfer requests from members wishing to leave their club. Should there be no response from the club administrator, Registrations Management will approve the transfer on their behalf. Note – the five day period does not include the day the transfer is submitted.**
- 6.4 **Members are only allowed two transfers during the active transfer window of each membership year, which runs from the period 1 October until the first Tuesday of June of each year. Exceptions to this may be permitted during the regular season only in agreement with Registrations and Competition Management for clearly evidencable reasons including, but not limited to:**
- 6.4.1 A significant geographical relocation**
  - 6.4.2 The team they are linked to withdrawing from league competition or ceasing to exist**
  - 6.4.3 Where returning to the sport from a period of absence, a team not otherwise available for their age range within their existing linked club**
- 6.5 An individual can only add themselves to one National Leagues club at any one time via BAFA's JustGo registration system. However, subject to the agreement of Registrations Management, and club management where appropriate, a member is permitted to join additional National Leagues clubs to coach or play for a team where no such discipline or age bracketed team exists in their primary club. For example, to play or coach for an adult contact team when already registered with another club for NWFL competition, where no adult contact team exists. Where an individual requests to join a second club that offers the same disciplines as their primary club, Club Management will be asked to give consent to ensure there are no conflicts of interest.
- 6.6 Individuals are not permitted to hold club administration privileges on BAFA's JustGo registration system for more than one club unless approved as an exception by Registrations Management.
- 6.7 All teams should ensure that any agreement entered into between the team and an individual with respect to fees, equipment loans and other such relations should reflect the dates pertaining to the end of the season. BAFA, should it be called to review a case, does not endorse or recognise agreements which exist on a multi-season basis
- 6.8 The following procedures will be followed in the case of a dispute concerning the rejection of a transfer where there is debt or equipment owed to a previous club:
- 6.8.1** Clubs can opt to reject a transfer request from a member who owes money or equipment. This must be done within five days of the transfer being submitted. Clubs should only reject a transfer for a valid reason.
  - 6.8.2 Where a dispute arises over the rejection, the club wishing to register the member, the club claiming that the member owes equipment or money, or the member can make a written appeal to BAFA's Transfers and Debtors Manager to seek a ruling. This must be done within 72 hours of the transfer being rejected.
  - 6.8.3 Rejecting clubs must be able to provide signed supporting evidence of debt or kit owed to the BAFA Transfers and Debtors Manager to support their rejection.
  - 6.8.4 BAFA's Transfers and Debtors Manager will mediate between the parties and attempt to seek an amicable resolution to the situation.

6.8.5 If no conclusion is promptly reached, then BAFA's Transfers and Debtors Manager will arbitrate and deliver a ruling on the situation.

6.8.6 The decision of BAFA's Transfers and Debtors Manager shall be final.

6.8.7 Where a transfer has been submitted by the final transfer deadline of the transfer window of that membership year, it will be allowed to progress through the normal approval / rejection steps to completion. If a rejection is disputed and is subsequently found to have no validity or the reason for rejection has been amicably resolved, the transfer may proceed at the discretion of BAFA's Transfers and Debtors Manager and Registrations Management.

- 6.9 All players and coaches seeking to play outside Great Britain with an international team linked to another IFAF member federation or vice versa, must complete an official IFAF International Transfer form. Please note, this includes playing with teams in Northern or Southern Ireland, which are governed by American Football Ireland. These forms can be requested from Registrations Management and are available on the BAFA website. Players who have played overseas who wish to re-associate with BAFA should contact Registrations Management for further guidance. Players who have previously been registered with BAFA should use their existing profile and should not create a new profile. In addition, players and coaches transferring from a BAFA team to an overseas team should submit a transfer request through the registration system provided BAFA's JustGo registration system by requesting a transfer to 'ITC'.
- 6.10 Due to the nature of International Transfers, once cleared, a player or coach has until 19:00 hours on the Friday prior to a game to register.
- 6.11 Players or coaches must not register with a National Leagues team until their International Transfer has been completed and approved by the International Transfer Coordinator and Registrations Management.
- 6.12 Players, coaches and staff must go through the correct transfer process when moving clubs, and must not set up a new, additional profile to register. It is the club administrator's responsibility to ensure that this rule is upheld. If players were registered to another BAFA club before 2012, pre-dating the online registration system, they should contact Registrations Management for guidance.

## 7. Competition Structure and National Finals

- 7.1 The National Leagues will be comprised of competitions which have differing categories and formats as determined by BAFA.
- 7.2 Each contact football format has competition conferences set out by Competition Management.
- 7.3 In order to rank teams the following tie breakers will be used (note – awarded games are excluded for the purposes of calculating tie breakers):
- 7.3.1 Won / Loss / Tied record
  - 7.3.2 Head to Head points differential during regular season (when two teams tied on same W/L/T record)
  - 7.3.3 Lowest Average points conceded in games played
  - 7.3.4 Highest Won/Loss/Tied record for scheduled away games
  - 7.3.5 Lowest number of players ejected
  - 7.3.6 A coin toss by the Competition Management



- 7.4 If three or more teams are tied on a final W/L/T, then the tie breakers will be followed until a team is excluded. The tie breakers will then restart for the remaining two teams. The same tiebreakers are applicable for ranking teams threatened with relegation. The team with the superior performance remains in the division, or is awarded a place in the play offs, as the case may be.
- 7.5 In the event that it is not possible to play a playoff game or playoff game within a tournament due to circumstances beyond the control of both teams, the winner shall be decided by the following procedure:
- 7.5.1 Competitive record for both teams when facing each other during the season based upon win / loss / tied record and subject to that being equal, the cumulative lowest number of points conceded in those fixtures will be used.
  - 7.5.2 Competitive record for both teams against common opponents during the regular season based upon win / loss / tied record and subject to that being equal, the cumulative lowest number of points conceded will be used.
  - 7.5.3 Win / Loss / Tied record within the regular season in comparison to that of their opponents.
  - 7.5.4 A comparison of average points conceded against the top three teams within the division.
  - 7.5.5 A coin toss

## 8. Competition Properties

- 8.1 All rights and properties associated with the National Leagues are owned, controlled and managed by BAFA.
- 8.2 Permission must be sought from competition management should any team seek to have their League fixtures broadcast (either via visual or audio means) by an external party. All broadcasters will be required to comply with terms and conditions as set by BAFA.
- 8.3 The Governing Body may elect to broadcast any regular season, play off or National Finals game. They will organise broadcast of any particular league game by notifying the host team at least 10 days prior to the scheduled date for any such game during the regular season, and 5 days prior to the scheduled date for any such game during the post-season.
- 8.4 If your organisation plans to live stream any game played under the auspices of BAFA (such as National Leagues, friendly or exhibition matches), or you permit this to be done by a third party, you must notify your opponent of your intention to do at least 48 hours in advance of streaming and seek their consent. If sufficient notice and / or permission is not given, the game should not be streamed. Where U19 or U16 games are to be live streamed, you must ensure that consent is in place from the parents / guardians of all participants under 18.
- 8.5 Teams may not attach monikers to official competition names without the approval of competition management. This encompasses sponsor names and any other title.
- 8.6 In maintaining copies of fixtures, results and tables on team websites, social media or any other form of publication, teams must use the full titles and correct signage (if used) of the competition (incorporating sponsor names where appropriate).
- 8.7 Teams failing to comply with the above may face a fine of up to £500.

## 9. Fixture Arrangements

- 9.1 The schedules for all National Leagues games and tournaments shall have a centrally managed fixture calendar. Teams requesting changes to the schedule (gameday date, time or running order) need to seek approval by relevant competition management. These requests will only be accepted outside of the stated schedule window for a given year in exceptional circumstances.
- 9.2 Games will be played on fields, in venues and with appropriate support provision which meets the minimum standards as laid out below and in the BAFA Rule Book unless otherwise agreed by the Competition Management.
- 9.3 Unless otherwise stated by competition management, the host team shall be responsible for meeting the standards of gameday management and laid down by BAFA.
- 9.4 Game management must provide changing rooms for the home team, the visiting team(s) and the officials. These changing rooms must be separate and access to one should not be via another.
- 9.5 Separate changing facilities should be available for both male and female participants where required.
- 9.6 Where the standard of available changing facilities differs, the visiting team must be provided the higher standard one (unless the visiting team head coach(s) agrees otherwise).
- 9.7 The home team or designated host team shall have first choice of uniform colour for gamedays.
- 9.8 It is the responsibility of the host team to conduct a risk assessment of their gameday facility and to ensure it's of a suitable standard.
- 9.9 The home team or designated host team shall notify their gameday opponent(s) of the following no later than noon of the Tuesday prior to the fixture, or five working days for a weekday fixture:
  - 9.9.1 The host team's choice of uniform colour for the gameday.
  - 9.9.2 Address and directions to the venue including map
  - 9.9.3 Surface on which the game is to be played and any specific requirement for footwear. This should include any requirements for non-playing staff.
  - 9.9.4 Length of the field and any unusual aspects to it or its surrounds
  - 9.9.5 Description of venue including car parking, coach parking, spectator facilities, any entry charges
  - 9.9.6 The number of available changing facilities available for both male and female players and staff
  - 9.9.7 Accessibility of venue, including changing facilities and toilets, for disabled participants and supporters
  - 9.9.8 Availability of first aid or physio room
  - 9.9.9 Confirmation and details of gameday medical provision
- 9.10 Changes to any of the above should be notified to competition management, BAFRA Operations and the impacted teams as soon as the change is known.

## 10. Gameday Management

- 10.1 Regular season gameday management shall be the home team or designated host team's responsibility. The management of the National Finals (or other fixtures as specified), will be the responsibility of Competition Management or its chosen agent, regardless of the host location.
- 10.2 Gameday management shall ensure that all games or tournaments are played in accordance with the administrative rules set out in these regulations. Teams are encouraged to meet the standards specified by rule wherever possible: where issues are faced Competition Management should be notified at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 10.3 Gameday management shall do everything necessary and supply everything necessary, whether or not specifically stated in these regulations or BAFA's game rules, to ensure that the gameday or tournament takes place and is satisfactorily concluded.
- 10.4 All teams shall designate a head coach to the game officials. If a team has joint head coaches, they must designate one as having final responsibility for team discipline and adherence to all rules, regulations and ethical issues pertaining to the role of the head coach.
- 10.5 Any team that does not have a head coach who fulfils all the requirements contained within these Regulations shall forfeit all games until such time as these obligations are fulfilled.
- 10.6 The referee and away team(s) should report any breaches of mandatory gameday management rules to competition management within 48 hours of the game or tournament.
- 10.7 Where there is a contravention of these regulations or the BAFA Game Rules concerning game management, Competition Management will adjudicate on the effect and seriousness of the infraction, its impact on the likely outcome of the game or tournament and the disciplinary action to be taken and the penalties imposed.
- 10.8 The Referee shall be sole arbiter in respect of decisions as to whether to cancel, delay, suspend or abandon the game or tournament. In games without BAFRA officials, the responsibility lays with the Head Coaches of the participating teams, or (in the case of facility issues) the groundskeeper. Competition Management reserves the right to review all decisions made to preserve the integrity of the competition. Non-BAFRA officials should follow BAFA's self-officiating guidelines and are required to carry out a pre-game health and safety check of the field and its surrounds. Game Management is responsible for making this takes place.
- 10.9 Games and tournaments should begin at the scheduled time. A maximum delay of 1 hour (60 minutes) is permitted, unless it is clear or becomes clear that any problems causing the delay will not be rectified. For example, away team cancelling, necessary improvements to pitch surface not possible or alternative medical cover not available. A longer delay period may be agreed but only if unanimously agreed by both head coaches (if both present) and the referee (if present), at which time the extension shall be specified as a period of time.
- 10.10 Competition management shall impose sanctions on teams that breach game management rules. Such sanctions shall be at the discretion of Competition Management and may include warnings, restrictions on the use of a venue, the award of a game or forfeiting the right to playoff football.
- 10.11 Competition management may from time to time arrange for a representative to attend a game to ensure minimum standards are being met. Representatives of Competition Management should not be charged any entrance fee where the venue or club charges an entrance fee.

## 11. Incident Recording and Reporting

- 11.1 Clubs are required to keep an accident record and ensure that details of all accidents and incidents are recorded, both in terms of on-field activity and wider club-sanctioned activity. This will enable them to provide written evidence regarding the circumstances, nature and extent of any injuries sustained.

*This procedure should be followed for ALL injuries and accidents, regardless of whether medical treatment is given.*

- 11.2 All clubs must have the following information for participants at every game and tournament:
- 11.2.1 Any specific medical information which would be useful to the emergency services in the event of necessary treatment.
  - 11.2.2 Contact details of next of kin and/or one other contact in case of emergency or assistance required. This can be downloaded by a club administrator from the reports section of the club area in the National Leagues registration system.

## 12. Officials and sideline staff

- 12.1 BAFRA officials are appointed in line with the terms and conditions and payment terms outlined on [www.bafra.info](http://www.bafra.info)
- 12.2 If BAFRA officials assigned to a game or tournament do not turn-up, the fixture will be postponed unless the head coaches agree this can be self-officiating by currently qualified and registered coaches.
- 12.3 If no officials are available to be allocated to a game or tournament and the team has been notified of this at least three days in advance, then the teams must make provision for the game to be self-officiated by currently qualified and registered coaches.
- 12.4 Where self-officiating is required, the game or games within a tournament must be officiated by a minimum of three BAFCA Level 1 (or above) qualified coaches (for 11 vs 11 or two for smaller sided contact variants) who are currently qualified and registered with BAFA, have undertaken a field audit and have undertaken the reading of the rules of the game and the BAFA Guide to Self-Officiating. Coaches officiating games will have the full powers of regular officials and must be treated with equal respect.
- 12.5 If no neutral stand-in officials can be found, it is the home or designated host team's duty to provide a minimum of three registered and qualified coaches to act as officials. The visiting team may also provide registered and qualified coaches to act as officials. (See BAFA Guide to Self-Officiating).
- 12.6 If a BAFRA crew arrive and deem the game unplayable due to the condition of the field, alternative fields can be sought and approved by either the officials and / or the Competition Management.
- 12.7 For 11v11 and 9v9 fixtures, the home team or designated host team must provide a **minimum** of five persons to act as ball persons and chain crew. They must be available at least 30 minutes prior to the start time of the fixture.
- 12.8 It is mandatory that persons under the age of 14 years must not be used as ball persons or chain crew. Teams are recommended to appoint a regular crew of assistants who will be available to do these jobs for every game. Chain crew and ball persons under the age of 18 remain the responsibility of game management at all times and must be supervised by a responsible person appointed by game management.
- 12.9 Fresh drinking water must be made available to all players, officials and sideline staff.

## 13. Game Scheduling

- 13.1 Subject to full registration by the appropriate deadline, Competition Management shall allocate each team a set number of regular season fixtures. Each team will also be provided with details and fixtures for their home gameday(s).
- 13.2 BAFA's Competition Management reserves the sole right to determine the final playing schedule for all teams participating in National Leagues regular season, playoff and National Finals games or tournaments.
- 13.3 Unless otherwise specified, games will be played on Saturdays or Sundays, with Sunday considered the primary day for Adult Contact and U19 D1 Contact fixtures, and Saturday the primary day for U16 Contact, Women's Contact and U19 D2 fixtures.
- 13.4 Kick off time shall be the following, unless otherwise notified to the teams by the Competition Management and relevant third parties (i.e., referees / medical staff) and as agreed between all teams participating.
- 13.4.1 Adult contact - between 12:00 noon and 16:00 on a Sunday for all adult fixtures.
  - 13.4.2 U19 D1 contact – between 12:00 noon and 14:30 on a Sunday for standalone U19 games. For games with adult double-header attachments, kick-off should be agreed between all teams involved and the Competition Management and should be no earlier than 12 noon and no later than 16.00pm. Game management are strongly encouraged to consider the travelling time of visiting U19 teams and take this into account when planning and setting kick off times for double-headers. Competition Management has final approval on kick off times for U19 / adult double headers.
  - 13.4.3 U16 contact, U19 D2 and Women's Contact - 12:00 noon or 13.00 on a Saturday for all tournament fixtures unless otherwise notified to the teams by the Competition Management and relevant third parties (i.e., referees / medical staff) and as agreed between all teams participating.
- 13.5 Playing time shall be determined as per the Rules. Competition Management reserve the right to determine different playing time for certain games.
- 13.6 Scheduling problems must be brought to the attention of the Competition Management at the earliest possible time. Failure to do so may result in the game or tournament not being played and the rules on unplayed games enforced.
- 13.7 All teams must be available to participate in games or tournaments on all weeks of the regular season unless specifically exempted by the Competition Management prior to week one of the regular season. There are restrictions on games or tournament taking place on certain weekends. No games or tournaments may be scheduled on the same weekends as the BAFCA Coaches' Convention or the BAFRA Convention. Restrictions may also be placed on games our tournaments taking place on National Team training or game weekends.
- 13.8 Teams should request sanction from Competition Management for any games or scrimmages they propose to play in addition to official games, whether these are against other League members or otherwise, including post season friendlies, tournaments or tours. Additional games or scrimmages will only be sanctioned where teams have met the minimum required number of registered players for competition.
- 13.9 Teams must seek BAFA's sanction to host or participate in any games or tournaments against opposition from outside the UK. Approval is unlikely to be granted if the game or opponent does not have recognition from an IFAF member governing body or equivalent.
- 13.10 BAFA insurance coverage does not apply where National Leagues teams travel outside of Great Britain to participate in a fixture against an international opponent. It is the

responsibility of club management to make sure adequate insurance provision is in place before doing so.

13.11 The regular playing season shall be determined by the Competition Management but will normally run from April through to September.

13.12 Playoffs for all disciplines will usually consist of teams from each division going through to a knock-out format culminating in a championship game. The format for the playoffs will be communicated by Competition Management prior to the start of the regular season.

13.13 All teams qualifying for a National Finals will be required to provide a full team numbered roster, club logo and any other information needed for inclusion in event promotional materials such as printed programmes.

13.14 Teams may request a bye week during the playing season for reasons including but not limited to charity events, touring or exhibition games or taking part in European competition. A bye week will be approved by exception and on a case by case basis providing there is no significant impact on the integrity of the National Leagues schedule. Requests for a bye week must be submitted by no later than the deadline for competition entry, which for 2024 is 10pm on Friday 1 December.

13.15 As per 3.1, BAFA's Competition Management reserves the sole right to set the division and conference in which teams will compete. Where teams wish to 'self-relegate' to a lower division, this must be agreed with Competition Management.

## 14. Cancellations, Forfeits and Abandoned games

14.1 If all teams and Competition Management agree, any regular season or playoff game or tournament may be rescheduled. Competition Management must be informed of any reschedule requests no later than 22:00 hours on the Tuesday prior to kickoff for any game or tournament.

14.2 Should a game or tournament be abandoned, and all teams agree it that it is to be rescheduled, the proposed new date must be submitted for approval to the Competition Management within 14 days of the original scheduled date. Should there be no agreement to reschedule, or no suitable date can be agreed, Competition management reserves the right to award the game/s. Should either team be actively uncooperative or deemed vexatious in the process of attempting to reschedule a game, Competition management also reserves the right to class the game as a forfeit against the uncooperative or vexatious team.

14.3 If Competition Management does not give written consent to a change of date or location of a game or tournament, then the originally scheduled date and location remains in force.

14.4 Teams may not voluntarily cancel fixtures except in circumstances beyond their control. Evidence clearly showing specific circumstances were outside of the control of the team may be requested. Circumstances beyond a team's control include, but are not limited to:

14.4.1 'Act of Nature' – events outside of human control such as floods, other extreme weather or natural disasters.

14.4.2 Major incident that requires the implementation of special arrangements by one or more of the Emergency Services, the NHS or local authority for the initial treatment, rescue and transport of a large number of casualties.

14.4.3 Venue booking cancellations within 5 days for games or tournaments

14.4.5 Government restrictions

14.4.5 Major travel incidents, such as serious traffic accidents resulting in significant road closures or curtailment to travel



Teams are encouraged to explore all options to mitigate extreme heat before cancelling a game, including but not limited to working with Competition management, their opponent and BAFRA to rearrange the time of kick off where possible to avoid the hottest part of the day, shortening the duration of the game or putting other hot weather protocols in place around shade and hydration. Please refer to BAFA's guide to [training and competing in the heat](#) for more information.

14.5 Circumstances considered within a team's control include, but not limited to:

14.5.1 Player unavailability due to holidays, social events or life events such as weddings.

14.5.2 Insufficient player numbers to provide cover for injured or unwell team members due to lack of depth at specific positions such as Offensive and Defensive line.

14.5.3 Lack of player or coach numbers overall or inability to meet the minimum number required on the sideline to commence a game or tournament. Should the minimum numbers required not be available on the sideline to commence the game or tournament, this fixture should be abandoned and will be declared a forfeit by the team who are unable to field the required numbers and the financial and disciplinary penalties for forfeits detailed within this section of the competition rules will apply. Competition management should be notified immediately should a game be abandoned under these circumstances.

Format	Min Sideline Players to commence a game or tournament	Minimum Sideline Registered and Qualified Coaches
11v11	22	2 x L1, 1 x L2
9v9	18	2 x L1, 1 X L2
7v7	14	3 x L1
5v5	10	2 x L1

14.5.4 Failure to put the required medical provision in place.

14.5.5 Failure to book referees.

14.5.6 Insufficient funds to cover travelling expenses.

14.5.7 Venue booking issues with more than 5 days' notice for games and tournaments.

14.5.8 Insufficient coaches to be able to self-officiate, where required to do so, or being unable or unwilling to self-officiate for any other reason.

14.6 Teams must notify Competition management and their opponent no later than 22:00 hours on the Tuesday prior to kickoff for any game or tournament that they intend to cancel or forfeit any scheduled game or tournament. Exceptions to this rule include but are not limited to those outlined in section 14.4 due to the nature of the cancellation request.

14.7 Competition management must always be notified of any intended reschedule, cancellation or forfeit ahead of the rescheduling, cancelling or forfeiting team posting notice of this on social channels or websites. Teams are strongly encouraged to engage with Competition management as soon as they have a concern about their ability to fulfil a fixture. Teams that fail to observe this requirement may be subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to a fine.

14.8 If a fixture is not fulfilled due to a cancellation or default by one or more team or by the officials, Competition Management will decide whether to reschedule the fixture (or permit its

rescheduling by the teams) or to use their discretion to settle the result of the unfulfilled fixture.

- 14.9 If a team at any level forfeits a game, a tournament or the equivalent number of games of a tournament for their format over a number of tournaments (voluntarily or due to any reason deemed by competition management to be within their control as outlined in rule 14.5), they will be awarded a yellow card. Such teams will also not be eligible for progression to the play-offs. The League will also consider whether games or tournaments have been forfeited to try and gain an unfair advantage for the offending team i.e., fewer points conceded.

If this team is in the top two tiers of the adult contact football league structure or the game forfeited is a playoff game for the adult contact football league this will result in automatic relegation at the end of the season. This may result in demotion to a lower division, or to associate status as appropriate. Any team incurring two yellow cards in a rolling 24-month period will be placed back into the associate process for their level of football for the following season. Competition Management may also take any other such disciplinary action as it deems appropriate in regard to forfeits.

- 14.10 Teams that forfeit a game, a tournament or the equivalent number of games of a tournament for their format over a number of tournaments (voluntarily or due to any reason deemed by competition management to be within their control as outlined in rule 14.5), may, at the discretion of the Competition Management, have to pay the League a surety that they will complete their next season, in which event the surety will be returned to the team.

This is tiered as follows:

£500 – adult contact teams

£250 – D1 U19 teams and NWFL National Teams (9s)

£150 – D2 U19 teams, NWFL Regional Teams (7s) and U16

- 14.11 Fixtures not played by the last week of the regular season will be deemed either 0-0 ties or 1-0 awarded games for the purposes of identifying playoff contenders and positions. All awards will be made at the conclusion of the regular season (unless awarded earlier at the sole discretion of the Competition Management). note – awarded games are excluded for the purposes of calculating tie breakers.
- 14.12 Any costs incurred or loss of revenue as a result of a fixture cancelled later than the notice period detailed in 14.6 will be determined by the Competition Management in consultation with the respective teams. Core costs which will primarily be considered will be travel costs, game field and changing facilities hire and medical provision. In the case of a referee's cancellation or non-attendance at a game the costs incurred will be sought from BAFRA via Competition Management. All details relating to costs incurred or loss of revenue must be substantiated by submission of appropriate receipts, invoices or evidence of payment from the club or team's bank account.
- 14.13 Where revenue loss is speculated Competition Management will only consider amounts when provided with detailed financial evidence relating to the three preceding fixtures for the team claiming, such as receipts and bank statements.
- 14.14 Competition Management will not be responsible for any costs, nor will it be responsible for any loss of revenue or costs as a result of teams folding or leaving the National Leagues.
- 14.15 Teams will be permitted to request a rescheduled fixture should they have three or more individuals involved in a BAFA sanctioned international representative fixture which coincides with a league game weekend. The individuals must be involved in either a playing or coaching capacity and appear on the official roster submitted to the international federation.
- 14.16 A visiting or hosting team that, without reasonable excuse, fails to show up for a game or tournament, forfeits on the day of a game or tournament after arriving, or cancels a game or tournament for any reason within its own control may incur any or all of the following:



- 14.16.1 Forfeit the game or any games within a tournament 1-0; and
  - 14.16.2 Where the cancellation is advised later than the notice period detailed in 14.6, pay fees incurred for the game or a share of for a tournament, including travel costs where appropriate
  - 14.16.3 Be considered to be ineligible for the playoffs (this shall also apply where a team forfeits the equivalent number of games of a tournament over a number of tournaments, for example - two games for Women's Contact and three games for U16)
- 14.17 If a fixture is not played for reasons beyond the control of the team involved, then Competition Management may use their discretion to reschedule the game or deem it a tie.
- 14.18 The venue for a rescheduled match shall be the choice of the home team, unless:
- 14.18.1 The visiting team have already travelled, in which case it will be the choice of the visiting team, OR
  - 14.18.2 The visiting team have incurred the cost of travel, in which case the home team will have the opportunity to reimburse the visiting team within one week, to retain their option of venue, otherwise the visiting team will have the choice.
- 14.19 All rescheduled fixtures must be approved by the Competition Management (see 14.1 and 14.2)
- 14.20 Any games or tournaments which are postponed for reasons beyond either team's control, or which cannot be rescheduled safely will be recorded as a 0-0 tie or have no result allocated. Where no result is awarded, Competition Management may decide league position (and relegation and promotion) on win percentage for games played.
- 14.21 In the event that it is not possible to play a playoff game or playoff game within a tournament due to circumstances beyond the control of both teams, the winner shall be decided on the following basis:
- 14.21.1 Competitive record for both teams when facing each other during the season based upon win / loss / tied record and subject to that being equal, the cumulative lowest number of points conceded in those fixtures will be used.
  - 14.21.2 Competitive record for both teams against common opponents during the regular season based upon win / loss / tied record and subject to that being equal, the cumulative lowest number of points conceded will be used.
  - 14.21.3 Win / Loss / Tied record within the regular season in comparison to that of their opponents.
  - 14.21.4 A comparison of average points conceded against the top three teams within the division.
  - 14.21.5 A coin toss
- 14.22 A team that terminates a game in progress will be deemed to have forfeited that game by a score determined by playing Rule 8-1-3 (BAFA Rulebook).

## **15. Competition Complaints Procedure**

- 15.1 On gamedays, all queries and complaints should be directed in the first instance to the home or designated host team's gameday management, and then escalated to Competition Management if required.
- 15.2 Where the complaint relates to the opposing team, playing surface or other playing arrangements, a protest must be made before the game or tournament begins (or as soon as possible after the issue becomes apparent during the game or tournament) to Competition

Management by Gameday Management or the head coach. As long as the conditions are safe, the game or tournament should continue. The complaint must be acknowledged by Competition Management, who will decide what action should be taken retroactively.

- 15.3 Where the complaint relates to the playing surface, photographic and video evidence must be submitted in order to justify the protest.
- 15.4 Where the complaint relates to the playing of a fixture, the scoring, and/or its result, the game management or head coach, must do the following:
  - 14.4.1 Inform their opponents and the officials of their complaint.
  - 14.4.2 Explain the issue in full to Competition Management.
- 15.5 Complaints relating to the governance or administration of the competition by Competition Management will be dealt with under the complaints procedure **detailed in the BAFA regulations.**
- 14.6 Complaints relating to behaviour of an individual or team participating, volunteering or attending the competition that could be considered a disciplinary offence under BAFA's Disciplinary Regulations will be dealt with in accordance with the processes set out in BAFA's Disciplinary Regulations.

## 16. Appeal of Competition Management Decision

- 16.1 There are two strands of appeals relating to decisions made within National Leagues contact competitions:
  - 16.1.1 The first is the Disciplinary Appeals process for players, coaches or others who are recipients of disciplinary action. This is managed via the BAFA Disciplinary process.
  - 16.1.2 The second is the Competition Appeals procedure **detailed in the BAFA regulations.** A party to a complaint submitted under Sections 15.2 and 15.4 shall have the right to appeal a decision made by the Competition Management in relation to that complaint if the decision has a potential impact on a game result, a league table, or the outcome of the competition.
- 16.2 These are the only grounds of appeal, and any appeal must be submitted in accordance with the appeals process set **out in the BAFA regulations.**

## 17. Miscellaneous Provisos

- 17.1 The performance of all Clubs with regard to their compliance with these and other relevant regulations issued by BAFA shall be regularly reviewed. Clubs will be advised in writing by competition management of any perceived shortcomings and the remedial action necessary and given a reasonable notice period to address these issues.
  - 17.1.2 Failure to comply with any regulation will result in a fine of £25.00 in the first instance, which will double in further instances. Additional sanctions outlined in this document may also be imposed.
  - 17.1.3 BAFA shall be entitled to take additional appropriate action for against clubs consistently failing to comply with appropriate rules and regulations. (This includes but is not limited to: written warnings, the deduction of points, fines, suspensions and expulsions from the competition)

- 17.2 All participants acknowledge that participating in the sport of American Football involves a risk of personal injury and by taking part in the National Leagues competitions whether as a player, team member, team official, other official or spectator, each participant does so at their own risk.
- 17.3 The use of stadium clocks is encouraged.
- 17.4 A scoreboard is encouraged during the regular season and playoff games
- 17.5 Statistics submissions are not currently mandatory, but teams are requested to collect their own statistics for performance and promotional reasons.
- 17.6 National Leagues management supports the ethical practice of scouting and filming for coaching and officiating purposes in the interest of improving the game. All teams should accept and expect official games or tournaments to be scouted and/or filmed by BAFRA, potential opponents or representatives of the teams involved. It is not necessary to seek permission to film for the purposes of coaching unless there are minors involved. The BAFA Safeguarding Team should be informed of any issues where there is a request for no filming.
- 17.7 The Competition Management mandates that if there are minors present, where possible they and their parents / guardians should be informed that filming is taking place and consent sought.
- 17.8 Host teams must submit the final scores of all games or tournaments **on the League Republic system** no later than 12 hours after the final game has finished. All teams should verify the scores uploaded and contact competition management should they need to query.
- 17.9 In event of a clash, the home team or designated host team will always have first choice of shirt colour. The away team will then be expected to wear a jersey of contrasting colour. Teams with more than one year of National Leagues play are expected to have home and away jerseys of contrasting colour. If the visiting team does not have a change available and the home team does, the home team are encouraged to wear their alternate strip or offer it to the away team to wear in the interests of good sportsmanship.
- 17.10 All team names are subject to final approval by BAFA and must include a specific geographic location.** BAFA recognises the right for teams to adopt a moniker. In regard to monikers, competition management reserve the right to refuse entry to National Leagues or endorsed Competitions for teams who choose monikers that could be viewed as bringing the sport into disrepute.
- 17.11 BAFA requires teams entering its competitions to have unique names. Whilst teams may share a moniker, they may not have the same geographic prefix (or a part thereof) and the same moniker i.e., team 1: London Towers, team 2: South London Towers.
- 17.12 BAFA requires emerging teams and current teams which may be re-branding to refrain from using the moniker 'Lions' as this is the moniker for the National Programme. BAFA also requires emerging and current teams to refrain from using the moniker 'Allstars' or a derivative thereof.
- 17.13 BAFA requires teams which compete in its tournaments to refrain from using geographic names which could imply that they are a regional or national representative team unless they have received permission from competition management.
- 17.14 No team will be allowed to compete if they use the following names without the express consent of BAFA: Great Britain, Great British, Britain, British, England, English, Scotland, Scottish, Wales, Welsh, UK, United Kingdom, British Isles. Use of these names in the Scottish or Welsh language will also be prohibited.
- 17.15 Where teams use county names then there are a series of stipulations:
- 17.15.1 The team is located within the said county.
  - 17.15.2 The moniker does not include multiple counties or Regions.

17.16 Teams must gain approval of the Competition Management to change any or all of the following:

17.16.1 Club or Team Name (either the Institution, Town, City or Nickname part)

17.16.2 Institution of representation

17.16.3 Colour of the component parts of the team uniform (socks, pants, shirt and helmet) For the avoidance of doubt, no team may operate under a new Team Name, or use a new uniform, until prior approval has been received. Due to the number of teams already using black jerseys, approval will not normally be given for teams to change to black jerseys.

17.17 Competition Management may from time to time arrange for a representative to attend a game to ensure minimum standards are being met. **BAFA representatives should be accorded free entry to any events when attending in an official capacity.**

17.18 Reporting of game results to BAFA. With the introduction of the BAFA **League Republic** results and fixtures website there is a mandatory requirement for teams to report their results. A timeline for this will be communicated by Competition Management.

**17.18.1 Both Home and Away teams need to report the result in League Republic**

17.18.2 Failure to meet this requirement will result in the club being fined £25 on each occasion

17.19 BAFA or its nominee(s) reserve the right to amend these regulations throughout the year.