



Get into American Football – the BAFA Whole Sport Plan. An interim report

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Chairman's statement

Further to the recent BAFA publication by Finance Director, Glen Schild, entitled: 'Membership fees – what we receive and where it is used', I would like to take the opportunity to inform the membership of the good work key stakeholders are doing under the guidance of the Whole Sport Plan (WSP) team (Glen Schild, Jim Messenger and myself) and the advisory team of Andy Fuller (NFL) Simon Newnham (NFL/BAFA) and Ken Walters (BAFA).

To begin this report, I am going to take the opportunity to answer a frequently asked question.

“... What is a WSP and what will it achieve? ...”

A WSP is exactly what it says on the tin – it is a plan for the whole of the sport. From grass roots through to elite, the WSP will identify our vision for the sport and how we will achieve it. This includes recruiting, training and retaining personnel to deliver our objectives. The plan will form a cohesive framework to enable people to start, stay and succeed in the sport of American Football (contact and non-contact) in Great Britain.

Our WSP will also be compliant with the new ways of directing funding and resources to a National Governing Body (NGB) and, if successful, will allow Sport England (SE) and other funding bodies to give focused investments to BAFA with the resources we need to drive our sport. Measurable results will also give SE and other bodies an indication of how well we are performing and if they are getting value for money from their investment.

In more detail, these plans will identify the help and resources we need to deliver our WSP – for example, partners such as county sports partnerships and programmes such as PE, School and Sport Clubs Links (PESSCL) and the Community Club Development Partnership (CCDP) as a minimum.

Of course, these plans may change in the coming weeks, months and years – and caveats will appear where appropriate to support this. The purpose of this report is to enlighten you all to the first steps that have been taken and the path we hope to tread. To quote the author of this report in a recent BAFA press release, “The sport of American Football in Great Britain is about to embark on a bumpy rollercoaster ride – we hope you will join us for the journey”.



Gary Marshall
BAFA Chairman



Executive summary

The following interim mission statement encapsulates the vision of our organisation:

‘... To be Europe’s leading American Football nation – delivering better opportunities for people to start, stay and succeed in American Football ...’

To deliver this vision, the BAFA recognises the five categories of people who form the pillars of our sport. These are:

- Players
- Coaches
- Referees
- Volunteers
- Fans

Fundamentally, anyone undertaking activity in the sport can be placed into one or more of these pillars. To understand where we need to go, we need to know where we have come from and where we are today. Crucially, we need to establish who is involved in the sport and understand what they do. To do this, we need to undertake an audit. This audit can only be done accurately and cost effectively through a central registration system that encompasses the five pillars of our sport. Our Centralised Registration Database (CRD) currently provides some, but not all of this information. Therefore, it is critical that the BAFA makes available the appropriate investment to develop this system (see ‘Play Smart’) to ensure we capture this information. Without this, we cannot deliver a WSP and access funding streams.

Pragmatically, key stakeholders already have the information in their knowledge and experiences. Therefore, the compilation of our WSP can continue unabated by the requirements of an audit. However, once we have captured this information via the CRD, we can commence analysis of the areas that require development and set tangible targets for inclusion in our WSP. For example, amongst many things it is generally agreed we need more referees. What the CRD will do is tell how many players and teams we have, reflect on the recent growth and allow us to accurately forecast how many competitive games we will have in the coming years – and therefore how many referees we will need. Knowing precisely the number of referees that will be required will allow us to plan and budget for a robust recruitment programme to deliver this amount of referees.

In conclusion, the purpose of this document is to report on the work undertaken so far and highlight the areas we need to investigate further. I hope you find it an interesting and inspiring read – any positive contribution will be welcome by email to kenwalters@bafa.org.uk.

Policy and programme summary

In developing our WSP, we are reflecting upon the following policies to ensure our pillars are underpinned with appropriate protocol:

- Corporate Governance
- Financial Management
- Marketing
- Child Protection
- Risk Management
- Equity and Diversity
- Human Resources

Where appropriate, the BAFA will implement some or all of these policies prior to publication of the WSP. Those that have not been delivered before the publication of the WSP will be included in a 'BAFA Policy Underpinning' implementation programme. Thereafter, we have recognised the following programmes for inclusion in the WSP. It is important to note the WSP will not be limited to these programmes:

- BAFA Policy Underpinning
- 'Get into American Football'
- 'Available to everyone without prejudice'
- Corporate Governance Modernisation Programme (CGMP)
- ClubMark
- National Programme
- Provision for Youth
- International positioning
- Elite Programme
- Play Smart
- Talent Development Programmes (TDP)
- Provision for students

The aforementioned programmes are detailed as follows:

BAFA Policy Underpinning

As an NGB for a sport in Great Britain, the BAFA has a responsibility to underpin all its activity with policy and protocol. All policy and protocol will reflect on advice and guidance provided by government agencies. BAFA Policy Underpinning topics have been recognised and will provide a framework for organisational structure not only for the NGB, but also for every club in the country.

'Get into American Football'

'Get into American Football' will be the access point campaign and our mantra to attract people to the sport in Great Britain for the foreseeable future. The campaign will be multi-iconic relevant to our pillars and be flexible to cover the following mediums as a minimum:

- Advertising and promotional campaign
- Interactive road-show
- Website

Get Into American Football will be formally launched at the BAFA Convention on 30th June 2007.

'Available to everyone without prejudice'

The working title for our Equity and Diversity policy is 'Available to everyone without prejudice'. This policy will outline the framework for inclusion for all personnel in our sport.

Corporate Governance Modernisation Programme (CGMP)

After recent consultation by the British American Football Association Board of Directors, a Corporate Governance Modernisation Programme has been agreed. The programme will include the following key features:

- The installation of Vice/Honorary Directorships to support the profile of British American Football nationally and internationally
- A restructure of the current Directorate to support a discipline focus
- Formalisation of the new Directorate to perform strategically with a new Operational 'Workstream' team empowered to deliver programmes
- The installation of a 'Nations within BAFA' team to create Whole Sport Plan representation for England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales
- Inclusion into the WSP to progress to an Operational Directorate according to a prescribed schedule

Implementation of the CGMP will commence as a priority and prior to the publication of the WSP.

ClubMark

In BAFL circles, the 'Youth Academy' – a concept that has been discussed at many levels – will now be usurped and encompassed by the BAFA ClubMark. ClubMark will embrace SE ClubMark policy and practise and provide a framework and infrastructure for clubs to deliver the following:

- Management
- Coaching
- Recruitment
- Organisation
- Programmes

BAFA ClubMark will also give recognition of efforts and achievements established by SE. It is important to note that whilst SE ClubMark provides a framework for clubs to retain and develop members under the age of 18, BAFA ClubMark will provide a framework for all club members.

National Programme

We have begun dialogue with wider stakeholders with regards to the following subjects:

- Planning and budgeting to win the European Championship (for all disciplines and age groups)*
- Bid to host the Adult Contact European Champions in 2013
- Lobbying EFAF to include British policy in European youth championship activity

* At present, stakeholder meeting have taken place for Adult contact with consideration for Youth contact.

Provision for Youth

Behind the scenes, the BAFL and BYAFA have been working to create a partnership for operations. The first sign of this work has been the inclusion of the BYAFA National Championship game for Youth Contact at BritBowl XXI on 23rd September 2007. Further details of this partnership will be announced in the coming months.

Both the BYAFA and BAFL will work in partnership to support programmes that are reflective and compliant with initiatives from the following organisations as a minimum:

- National Council for School Sport (NCSS)
- Youth Sport Trust (YST)
- Association for Physical Education (AforPE)
- Sports Coach UK (SCUK)
- British Sports Trust (BST)/Sports Leaders UK
- Institute of Youth Sport
- English Federation of Disability Sport
- Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU)
- Department for Education and Skills
- Department of Culture, Media and Sport
- SkillsActive
- Coachwise (for resources)
- All Sports Councils

International positioning

Consideration of the BAFA position on the global landscape as the NGB for the sport in Great Britain and the role it plays in the development of the sport globally are being made. In particular, the following roles that the BAFA can play internationally are currently being considered:

- Representative football for students – working in partnership with BUSA/FISU/EFAF/IFAF to support the inclusion of American Football as an exhibition sport at the World Student Games in the future
- International TDP's – the development of programmes for British personnel to play a role in other countries as well as involving foreign personnel in British based programmes.
- GB Lions participating in the IFAF World Championships

Elite Programme

Elite Programmes currently in existence for Players (Elite Player Programme or, EPP) and referees. These programmes are under review and will form a cohesive Elite Programme to encompass a pathway of recruiting, training and retaining players, coaches, referees and volunteers. The recording of all activity will be undertaken by Play Smart – an IT project management and communication tool.

Play Smart

Underpinned by the CRD, Play Smart is an IT project management and communication tool that will support the delivery of all BAFA programmes to a greater or lesser degree.

In summary, the 'Elite Programme' will be a pathway for athletes, coaches, referees and volunteers via a pathway record. For example, a player pathway record will set goals and targets and outline a process to undertake testing and recording against these goals. These pathways or TDP's will be available in the following areas:

- Schools (primary and secondary)
- Universities and colleges (tertiary)
- Community clubs
 - BAFL
 - BCAFL
 - BYAFA
 - Clubs/members of the forthcoming 'association' for British adult Flag
- Regular season games/play-offs/finals (statistical records)
- NP related activity

From an 'all stakeholders' perspective, Play Smart will also support the following activity as a minimum – but not be limited to:

- National Programme selection (players, coaches referees and volunteers)
- Game roster publication
- Statistical game-day performance publication for players, coaches, referees and volunteers
- Team statistics publication
- Financial management of all aspects of the sport

In summary, Play Smart', a development of the CRD, will support the planning, recording, financial management and communication thereof of all BAFA activity.

Talent Development Programmes – TDP

There currently exists a number of programmes for players, coaches and referees that have support to a greater or lesser or degree from BAFA and outside organisations. These programmes include BAFA/NFL Junior Player Development camps and NFL Coaching Education Programmes. The BAFA are also aware of some programmes that are delivered in Great Britain without consultation with the BAFA.

These programmes are delivered without a cohesive plan that benefits the sport as a whole and, in some instances may be considered without equity and diversity.

The BAFA are committed to reflecting on all current programmes, and developing and delivering a new cohesive plan. These TDP's will manifest for players, coaches, referees and volunteers alike.

Provision for students

Due to the current postponement of representation from BSFA within the BAFA, wider stakeholders for this group are the WSP team (Gary Marshall, Glen Schild, Jim Messenger, Andy Fuller, Simon Newnham and Ken Walters) with advice and guidance from the Central Council of Physical Recreation (CCPR).

Consultation within this group includes (but is not limited to) the following topics:

- Student inclusion in the NP
- Processes to provide representative football for students internationally (potentially via BUSA/FISU/EFAF and IFAF)*
- Inclusion in national and international TDP's
- Support to elevate the profile of the Student National Championship game
- Compliance with BUSA recommendations for team sports

* It is important to note that with regards to international competition for students, it is the intent of the BAFA to undertake a feasibility study to ascertain if a student representative team within the NP can have appropriately recognised competition. Currently, as there is no recognised international competition for student football, this activity cannot contribute towards achieving the KPI's set by Sport England for our WSP. To these ends, BAFA is prepared to commit to a 'pioneering role' with BUSA, FISU, EFAF and IFAF. This project is currently under consideration with wider stakeholders within BAFA.

Features within the WSP

The development process has, so far, considered many of the research, advice and guidance documents and notes that are provided by many government and sports bodies. Further projects will include (but not be limited to) the following:

- Sports development for young people in schools
- Accredited personnel qualifications
- A semi-professional/professional representative league in Great Britain.
- Bidding to host European and World Championship events
- NFL grassroots development partnership in Great Britain
- The impact of increased NFL media exposure

Wider stakeholder meetings with appropriate personnel will be undertaken in due course.

The BAFA five-year plan

The WSP will consist of many projects. During the development of the WSP, all projects are being created and developed conceptually in consultation with wider stakeholders and on reflection of models from government agencies/bodies and or other established sports in Great Britain.

All relevant stakeholders are being asked to consider concepts with the following brief:

“... Is the concept appropriate for the sport of American Football in Great Britain and (if yes,) can we consider ‘Issues to deliver are actions to address? ...”

All WSP concepts (and therefore the resulting projects) will be reflective of SE key performance indicators (KPI's). These projects will be delivered to a prescribed schedule that is reflective of achievable goals. All of the projects are created with consultation of the ‘Strategic Directorate’ and, when appropriate, in partnership with the ‘Operational Management’ team. All projects will be delivered by the ‘Operational Management’ team.

A pragmatic view...

The BAFA, via its member bodies, is committed to providing the processes necessary to recruit, train and retain personnel (players, coaches, referees and volunteers) into the sport of American Football (contact and non-contact) in Great Britain. Once registered as a member of BAFA, personnel will be eligible to participate in BAFA approved programmes and competitions – BAFL, BYAFA, BCAFL and the soon to be created British association for adult Flag Football – and with the support of BAFRA and BAFA.

Personnel will be beneficiaries of our 'Equity and Diversity' policy – "Available to everyone without prejudice". Programmes and competitions will then be subject to segmentation (where appropriate) by the following:

- Age:
 - Young persons (under-18's)
 - Adults (over-18's)
- Gender:
 - Male
 - Female
- Discipline:
 - Contact
 - Non-contact (Flag)

Thereafter, further distinctions may be made such as:

- Students (according to BUSA requirements for team sports)
- Young persons by age limit
- Flag for mixed genders (male and female)
- Flag for veterans (over-35's)

All personnel will have access TDPs that will be integral to the EP. Performance on TDPs will be recorded in Play Smart. Play Smart will underpin the EP. The EP will, in turn, underpin the NP. The NP will deliver international competition according to EFAF and IFAF. All programmes will be focused to delivering SE KPI's. Play Smart will provide the reporting against these KPI's. Any activity beyond the NGB will therefore not be supported by the BAFA and its membership.

Delivery

All WSP related projects would have a budget to deliver them. These budgets will be found in our business plan. Our business plan will be a feature within our WSP. To deliver the WSP projects through to 2013 and beyond will require funding to a greater or lesser. This funding will come from the following areas:

- A growing membership
- Fees generated from this membership
- Public sector funding – based on the sport's ability to meet government objectives
- Private sector funding – based on the attractiveness of the sport as a vehicle for sponsorship
- Commercial investment – based on business opportunities associated with BAFA

Methodology to secure funding via these streams will be included in the WSP.

Conclusion

I look forward to giving a presentation on WSP developments at the BAFA Convention on 30th June 2007. A second interim report will also be made available at this time. Our WSP will be published at BritBowl XXI on 23rd September 2007. Our implementation programme has already commenced in some areas – but will formally commence on 1st October 2007 and continue until 2013. An annual report will be published in the September of future years and work on a second WSP addressing longer-term objectives will commence in 2011. It is anticipated that the second WSP will be published in 2012, overwrite 2013 plans and run until 2023. It must be noted, however, if private and public sector opportunities occur during this period, this plan and the contents thereof will be subject to review.

There is a great opportunity ahead for our sport in Great Britain. We are currently experiencing growth many times greater than SE's targets. With increased media exposure of the NFL this coming year and in future years, we can only expect this growth to increase. Our challenge is not meeting SE targets – this is a given. Our challenge is equipping our members to maximise the opportunity presented to us!

Acknowledgments

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... And the following organisations:

Central Council for Physical Recreation
National Council for School Sports
Sports Coach UK (SCUK)
Sport England
Sports Officials UK (SOUK)