

2026-27 BUCS AMERICAN FOOTBALL SAG - MEETING 1- MINUTES

Date Monday 26th October 2026
Time 16:00
Location Google Meet

ATTENDEES

Tonye Dokubo
 Sam Johnson
 Chris Winrow
 Peter Laird
 Amanda McDonald
 Dan Maher

ORGANISATION

BUCS
 UCL
 BUCS Consultant
 Edinburgh Napier
 BAFA
 UWE

APOLOGIES

Matt Kellam
 Dion Karl Duke

ORGANISATION

UCLAN
 ARU

Item	Action
1. Apologies / Welcome Welcomed all to 2026-2027 American Football SAG Apologies were received from Matt Kellam and Dion Karl Duke	
2. Minutes and Matters Arising (Meeting 4 2025-26) 2.1 Tie-breaker rules BUCS advised that updates to the Playwaze competition-management platform have enabled changes to the way tie-break procedures are calculated. The regulations' wording and calculation process have been updated, with the aim of reducing the likelihood of the issues experienced last season. A proposal to add average points gained from scheduled away fixtures was discussed at national level but has not been added at this stage. The concern raised was that teams, particularly in some Tier 2 leagues, may play different numbers of away fixtures, meaning the opportunities to achieve the same average may not be equivalent. The SAG reiterated the aim of reducing reliance on a coin toss to resolve ties. Further discussion is to take place at a future SAG meeting on whether additional tie-break criteria could be appropriate, including average points in away fixtures or points conceded in away fixtures. BUCS explained that the updated process now applies a consistent route for ties involving two or more teams, using average league points rather than league points alone. If a team is removed during the tie-break calculation, the process continues with the remaining tied teams. BUCS noted that this change was informed by the previous American Football scenario and applies across other BUCS sports as well. BUCS offered to share the updated regulation wording with the SAG.	
2.2 Ball-person / officials' assistants	

The regulations have been amended to state that the home team is responsible for ensuring that five officials' assistants are present. Teams may agree between themselves to an alternative arrangement; an away team may provide its own ball-person if agreed with the home team.

2.3 Student representative position

The SAG remains without a student representative. Members highlighted that student experiences and challenges can differ substantially between the Premiership/Tier 1 and Tier 2, and that representation across both performance-focused and participation-focused experiences would be valuable.

BUCS agreed to issue a new advert and explore direct outreach to the American Football membership through Playwaze, following an approach that had reportedly worked for another sport. The ideal would be a performance student representative (Premiership or Tier 1) and a participation representative from Tier 2, while remaining open to any suitable applicant.

The SAG noted that the other roles are currently filled and that the group has a consistent membership, subject to Danilo stepping away and recruitment of student representation.

Action: BUCS to advertise for student rep via playwaze platform

3. Season Objectives & Annual Action Plan

Chair outlined proposed objectives carried forward from previous seasons:

- Continue reviewing current operations and identifying areas for improvement.
- Increase awareness and visibility of the SAG within the BUCS American Football community, including helping players, teams and coaches understand the group's purpose.
- Review rules and regulations and support positive development of the sport.
- Raise the sport's profile and support increased participation.
- Support BUCS events as appropriate and contribute to establishing a season calendar.
- Support the BUCS American Football Coordinator.

No additional objectives were formally agreed during the discussion. Members were invited to consider further objectives for a future meeting.

3.1 Long-term ambition and programme development

Members discussed whether the BUCS American Football Championship / Touchdown Tuesday could be developed into a larger, more prominent event. BUCS stated that it is open to suggestions, while noting that budget and operational constraints need to be considered.

BUCS described the longer-term ambition as developing American Football into a BUCS "super sport". Discussion noted that progression would depend in part on whether institutions and teams could sustainably meet the costs and other requirements associated with a higher level of competition.

Members also discussed possible expansion of the National League. BUCS said expansion is possible but should be evidence-led and supported by a clear competitive and programme-development rationale. Current league sizes support fixture scheduling; competitive balance and evidence from promotion/relegation outcomes will also be relevant to any future decision.

3.2 Injury surveillance study

BUCS reported that an injury surveillance study was conducted with National League teams during the previous season, led by a member of the BAFA Medical Committee. The report has been released and shared with relevant groups and head coaches.

BUCS offered to share the report with the SAG. The study's conclusions were limited by the level of engagement from participating teams. One recommendation was to consider repeating similar studies annually, subject to capacity and budget. Some recommendations may be more directly relevant to clubs and coaches than to central BUCS operations. Action: BUCS to share injury Surveillance study – SAG to consider other objectives and impacts toward developing AF	
4. Vacant & Upcoming Roles The SAG's main outstanding vacancy is student representation. The recruitment approach and desired representation across Premiership/Tier 1 and Tier 2 are recorded under item 2.3. BUCS will issue a new advert and explore direct outreach to the membership. Danylo Blackburn has step away from role following time as student rep and performance tier rep/advisor with SAG. Action: BUCS to advertise SAG student rep role	
5. Upcoming Events– season planning, relevant events, and 2026 BUCS confirmed that Touchdown Tuesday is scheduled for Tuesday 23 March 2027 and will be hosted at Loughborough. Loughborough's hosting was extended by one year following the previous tender period. The tender process beyond 2027 is led by the BUCS Events team; no further information was available at the meeting. The flag football calendar has not yet been confirmed. BUCS is working with BAFA, with the current plan remaining for regional events and a national final in Term 3. Dates are still to be confirmed. One American Football showcase/live-stream game has been pencilled in by the BUCS digital engagement team: Brunel versus UWE.	
6. Whole Programme Changes – BUCS reviewing governance review – including SAG BUCS confirmed that a wider governance review is expected to take place during the 2026–27 season, subject to the governance team's capacity. The review covers the BUCS governance structure, including sport stakeholder groups and competition groups. Relevant groups may be contacted by the BUCS governance team to provide information or assist with the review. The current whole-programme-change submission process remains unchanged; the process introduced approximately two seasons ago continues to apply.	
7. NGB Updates – relevant National Governing Body update and key implications for BUCS American Football BAFA reported that it is in a pre-season review and planning period, with team re-entries and membership processes due to begin. BAFA is reviewing the structure of mixed adult contact football. The proposed direction is to establish a new national top tier, with a more focused flagship competition and minimum standards, while retaining a Premiership tier beneath it and reviewing the structure of the lower tiers. The proposed national tier may be ring-fenced for several years. BAFA is working with clubs on the competition's structure, governance, participation criteria and club relationships. BAFA also reported that it is reviewing its competition regulations (distinct from playing rules).	

8. SAG Administration & Communications – Microsoft Teams channel, agenda/minutes process, action tracking and next meeting arrangements BAFA reported that it is in a pre-season review and planning period, with team re-entries and membership processes due to begin. BAFA is reviewing the structure of mixed adult contact football. The proposed direction is to establish a new national top tier, with a more focused flagship competition and minimum standards, while retaining a Premiership tier beneath it and reviewing the structure of the lower tiers. The proposed national tier may be ring-fenced for several years. BAFA is working with clubs on the competition’s structure, governance, participation criteria and club relationships. BAFA also reported that it is reviewing its competition regulations (distinct from playing rules). Further details and confirmed arrangements were not available in the meeting.	
9. A.O.B. Non Action:	

Dates and times of meetings for 2026-27 season.

Meeting 1 – 26/10/2026 16:00

Meeting 2 – TBC

Meeting 3 – TBC

Meeting 4 – TBC