
Coaching Policy

Purpose

This policy outlines the expectations the Baulkham Hills Hawks Australian Football Club (BHAFC) has of the coach and how the coach executes their role/duties, including management of players within the team. Understanding and acceptance of this coaching policy will form part of the selection of all coaching staff.

Coaching Appointments

- At the end of each season, each coaching position for every team in every age group is declared vacant.
- Prior to the commencement of the new season expressions of interest are sought for coaches. Existing coaches are encouraged to re-apply for teams they have previously coached.
- A coach may only coach three (3) consecutive years unless the club decides the coach is the most appropriate person for the role.
- The Club will actively seek nominations for coaching positions toward the end of each season through advertising both internally and, where appropriate, via external mediums.
- Expressions of interest are to be submitted to the General Manager – Football (GM - Football).
- Coaching appointments will be made by the GM - Football in consultation with a selection panel of committee members.
- The Club supports the concept of a Junior Coach and Assistant Coach or Assistant Coaches for each team. If there is more than one application for Junior Coach, the selection panel will select the Coach based on qualifications, experience, and an interview process.
- The Committee reserves the right to terminate the coach or any staff under the control of the coach without notice if there is a fundamental breach of any Club Policies or behaviour that is demonstrated outside of the Club Values.

Qualifications and Security Clearances

All coaches must be registered and accredited prior to Round 1. It is expected that first year coaches are at Bronze level and coaches with 2 or more years' experience are at Silver level as a minimum. All coaches must hold a valid Working with Children Check (WWCC), as required by the league and state regulations.

Injury Prevention

- A basic knowledge of first aid is considered desirable. Coaches should be able to recognise injuries and ensure players are directed to a suitably qualified first aid provider. As part of their AFL coaching accreditation, all coaches receive concussion awareness training and are expected to apply this knowledge when assessing and managing potential head injuries.-
- Training techniques, including warm-up, should be based around injury minimisation.
- Checking the field for possible hazards prior to training or playing is imperative and the responsibility of the coach.
- Coaches must comply with all directions from accredited medical staff regarding injuries, including concussion assessments and return-to-play decisions. These decisions are final and cannot be overridden.
- The coach must respect and accept the recommended rehabilitation process as determined by a qualified health professional.

Coaching Philosophy – General Guidelines

Coaches, as representatives of BHAFC, should always

- display a positive image and behaviour appropriate for a junior sporting club
- wear club colours and club-supplied apparel at all games, training sessions, and Club events to promote a positive and professional image of BHAFC

Coaches should:

- build a growth mindset in players, including good sportsmanship and pride in representing BHAFC
- seek assistance and advice from the GM - Football when not sure of Club policy
- strive to maintain sound relationships with players, administrators/officials, umpires, opponents and opposition coaches, parents, and other coaches within the club.

Coaches should be:

- skilled communicators, able to relate to children, parents, opponents, and officials
- confident, assertive, consistent, friendly, fair, and competent
- able to explain and justify why things are done in a certain manner
- prepared and committed to self-improvement through performance appraisal and ongoing education.
- responsible for the behaviour of team representatives such as team managers, runners, assistant coaches, and water carriers. Poor sportsmanship, foul language, and inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated on or off the field.

Training

- Training times and the number of sessions should be consistent with player ages and in line with association norms.
- Training sessions should only be conducted at authorised locations, unless otherwise directed or applied for and approved by BHAFC.
- Lead by example in cooperation, good sportsmanship, self-discipline, respect for officials and opponents, and proper attitudes in language, dress, and deportment.
- Be organised for each session, the week, the month, and the season.
- Emphasise development of the player in terms of skill and character; keep skills training consistent with age and development.
- Base training on “How” and “Why”: explain the rationale and demonstrate the correct technique.
- Accept responsibility for maintaining discipline throughout training sessions.
- Treat injuries promptly and to the best of knowledge and ability; seek qualified assistance when needed.
- Develop qualities such as, self-discipline, goal-setting, dedication, emotional regulation, teamwork, self-confidence, self-esteem, initiative, and perseverance.

Matches

- Ensure all matches are played in the spirit of the game.
- Never allow the desire to win to override skill development and fair play.
- Maximise participation, and wherever practicable, equal playing time per game for all players regardless of ability. Game time must be recorded (on paper or in an app) so that any concerns can be reviewed and addressed.
- Emphasise respect for opposition players, umpires, and team officials at all times. Address any poor behaviour promptly to avoid detrimental incidents.
- Players who are reported, sent off, or otherwise sanctioned by umpires must be spoken to promptly by the Coach to address the behaviour that led to the sanction. Players are expected to accept all penalties without dispute. Any further argument with umpires or officials by players or coaches is unacceptable. The Club will review all incidents and apply additional disciplinary action where appropriate.

Players

- The Team and Selection Policy must be followed at all times.
- Feedback should be constructive. Players should never be humiliated or ridiculed.
- Participation should be emphasised. Winning should be the result of good coaching, not the main purpose of playing.
- Players should never be blamed for losing. Coaches may analyse opportunities for further player development and address them constructively.
- Individual player performance should never be used as an excuse for losing. Coaches should redesign training programs to strengthen these areas.
- All players should be treated equally. Players may develop at different stages, coaches should be cognisant of this, and coaching sessions can be designed to support this.
- Avoid overuse of “star” players at the expense of developing others. Balance development across the team.
- Treat the player as a person and not just a player; consider the physiology and psychology of growing young players.

Discipline within the Team

- Establish behaviour expectations for players at the first training session including attendance, punctuality, behaviour, sportsmanship, and training standards
- Explain the reasons for each rule and the penalties for breaching them to all team members.
- Inform parents of behaviour expectations and disciplinary measures that will be used, appropriate to the age group.
- Take a firm, fair, and consistent approach to discipline.
- Focus on the breach of the rule, not the individual. Do not publicly insult, humiliate, or embarrass players. Discipline the individual for poor behaviour, not the whole group. Avoid over-use of punishments such as laps or push-ups.

Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures

Coaches are expected to interact professionally with parents and officials. If players, parents, or officials believe there is a legitimate cause for complaint against a coach or a member of the coaching staff, the following pathways apply:

- Internal complaints should be addressed first to GM – Football for escalation to the BHAFC Executive as required.
- Minor complaints will be investigated by the GM - Football, who will take appropriate steps to resolve the issue.
- Serious matters should be directed to the BHAFC Executive for consideration and action as deemed appropriate.
- Complaints from external organisations, opposing clubs, or others should be directed to the President or members of the BHAFC Executive for consideration and action.

Junior Coach

Objective

To provide the highest standard of coaching and skill development to the players of the appointed age group.

Responsibilities

Coaches are expected to understand and comply with all Club Policies, including the Coaching Policy, Team and Selection Policy, and the Club Code of Conduct.

Coaching Standards

- All coaching must reflect the Club's core values.
- Skill development for every child on the team list is the primary objective. This includes providing one-on-one support for less experienced players where needed to help them contribute confidently on game day.
- The desire to win must never override the priorities of skill development, participation, and fair play. Winning should be the outcome of good coaching, not the purpose of playing.

Conduct & Compliance

- Apply and model the Code of Conduct for coaching staff and players at all times, on and off the field.
- Ensure player selection and game time align with the Team and Selection Policy and the Coaching Policy.
- Instruct and support all players under their care, ensuring they receive appropriate and sufficient training.

Training & Development

- Develop and implement an appropriate preseason training program.
- Where practicable, run training sessions for the entire age group together to support consistency and cohesion.
- Liaise with other coaches to maintain a consistent coaching approach across the Club.
- Assist with junior development initiatives outside the Club where appropriate.

Game Day & Operations

- Provide game-day coaching expertise and leadership.
- Complete the AFL Sydney Juniors Umpire Feedback Form after each game in a timely and constructive manner.
- Recommend suitable football support staff to the GM – Football for committee approval.
- Attend Club functions as required.
- Provide weekly reports on team performance throughout the season.

Relationships

Reports to GM – Football.

Accountability

Accountable to the Club President and Committee.

Assistant Junior Coach

Objective

To assist with the highest standard of coaching and development to the players of the appointed age group. Availability should be at least 70% of the sessions.

Responsibilities

- Abide by and understand the terms and conditions of all Club Policies, especially the Coaching Policy, Team and Selection Policy, and Club Code of Conduct.
- Apply the Code of Conduct for coaching staff and players that supports the objectives of the Club on and off the field.
- Be available to assist the Coach in developing and establishing an appropriate preseason training program.
- Be available for, assist with, and occasionally lead training throughout the preseason and season.
- Assist the Coach with game day coaching expertise.
- Liaise with and/or assist the Coach to ensure that all players are receiving selection and game time in line with the Team and Selection Policy and Coaching Policy.
- Occasionally assist with weekly reports on team performance as directed by the Coach when necessary.

Relationships

Reports to the Coach.

Coaches Code of Conduct

As a coach at Baulkham Hills Hawks Australian Football Club (BHAFC), you commit to:

- Act as a positive role model: display and promote respect, integrity, and fairness at all times; lead by example in behaviour, language, and attitude both on and off the field.
- Prioritise player welfare: place the safety and welfare of players above all else; ensure activities are appropriate to the age, ability, and experience of players.
- Promote participation and enjoyment: encourage participation for fun and skill development, not solely for winning; ensure fair and equitable opportunities for all players at training and on game day.
- Respect all participants: treat players, officials, parents, and opposition with respect and courtesy; never ridicule or yell at players for mistakes or losses.
- Maintain professional boundaries: avoid behaviour that could be misinterpreted as inappropriate; never engage in harassment, discrimination, or abuse.
- Wear club colours and club-supplied apparel at all games, training sessions, and Club events to promote a positive and professional image of BHAFC.
- Commit to self-improvement: seek continual improvement through education and feedback; be open to constructive feedback and new ideas.
- Uphold club and league policies: abide by all club policies, codes, and league rules; support and enforce the club's disciplinary procedures.
- Communicate effectively: provide clear, honest, and constructive feedback to players and parents; address concerns or complaints through appropriate club channels.
- Promote good sportsmanship: encourage players to respect officials' decisions and the rules of the game; foster a positive environment, valuing effort and improvement.
- Protect the reputation of the Club: always represent BHAFC with pride and professionalism.

Acknowledgement

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read, understood, and agree to abide by the Baulkham Hills Hawks Australian Football Club Coaching Policy and the Code of Conduct for Coaches.

Coach Details and Signature

- Position Held: _____
- Name (print): _____
- Signature: _____
- Date: ____ / ____ / 20 ____