Administrator's Guide

Version 1.1 - December 8, 2007

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Preface

Welcome to the FUMBBL administrator's guide. You are probably reading this because you are a staff member of FUMBBL, and are looking for information on what it is exactly that you're supposed to do as a member of the team.

The purpose of this document is to give you an idea of what the staff team does, and help deciding how to handle any particular situation that may occur whilst you're doing staff related work. I hope that you will find this text to be an invaluable companion and a source of insight when you are unsure of how to act.

The first chapter will cover basic staff code of conduct and what is expected of staff members; how to behave when dealing with other members of the community and the rest of the staff team.

Chapter two will cover the rules of the site, detailing the intent of the rules and how to interpret them.

Chapter three will cover support tickets and coach logs.

After that, chapter four will cover other aspects of the day-to-day things that the staff has to deal with that hasn't been covered previously.

At the end of the document, you will find appendixes with a list of offences and standard consequences of violations, a discussion of the team and player naming policy, and technical details on some aspects of the website and JavaBBowl client.

If you find any mistakes in this text or have ideas for how to improve it, please contact me directly and I will do my best to correct them or improve it according to your request.

Christer Kaivo-oja

Acknowledgements

I want to thank the invaluable assistance of Angie in writing this document. She has been a great asset in both proof-reading, reminding me of what needs to be written here, and helping out with making this document as complete as it can be. Any remaining mistakes in this text are surely of my own doing.

I would also like to thank the staff who have been helping to run the site over the years. Without them FUMBBL wouldn't be the fantastic place it is today.

Finally, I want to thank you. Yes, you! In reading this text, you have shown interest in becoming a member of the staff team. This is greatly appreciated, since I could not possibly run it all on my own. Your willingness to contribute is heart-warming.

Christer Kaivo-oja

1. Staff code of conduct

Confidentiality

Anything that takes place between staff and a user is considered confidential. A staff member may not discuss anything that takes place in the staff IRC channels, or anything concerning what goes on between the staff and users. Coach logs are highly confidential and are not to be discussed outside of the staff team at any time.

When communicating with a user, staff members may not discuss other users' accounts. Anything that relates to someone else's account will only be dealt with when that particular user is present.

It is the staff members' responsibility to ensure confidentiality at all times. In the event of a staff member stepping down from his or her duties, it is expected that this confidentiality is kept past the staff member's term.

Chat

Members of the staff team are expected to join all official chat channels. It is highly recommended that the chat client of choice is configured to highlight or otherwise notify the staff members when their name is mentioned. This way, it less likely that someone requesting the attention of a staff member will be left unnoticed.

Staff members are expected to follow the language policy of the site. This is even more important than for normal users. Staff members are scrutinised at all times and have to be on their best behaviour to show that they abide by their own rules.

Staff to staff communication

The staff are meant to work as a team. Users should never be aware of any disagreements within the staff team. This is the main reason for the coach logs (further detailed in chapter 3). Should a staff member feel that another member of the team has made the wrong call in a situation, it is expected that the matter is brought up in private. If the user has approached the staff member and is expecting an answer, ask them to wait while the matter is looked into more closely. If the staff member who made the initial ruling is not available at the time, the user should be informed that the matter will need some time to be reviewed and asked to come back later.

Please note that if a staff member tells a user that they will contact them, it is expected that this is done within a reasonable amount of time. For this reason, it is often better to ask the user to come back rather than wait for a message. This means that someone else can take over in case at any time. Also note that this event requires that an entry is added to the coach log.

All staff members are expected to read the staff forums, and check for new posts. Communication is essential, and the forums is where all important staff related issues are brought up.

Staff to user communication

Users will approach staff members with many questions. At times, these questions will seem extremely trivial or obvious. However, staff members are expected to remain courteous and respond to their questions in a professional manner. Users should never be ridiculed for their questions.

If a staff member has to leave the keyboard while talking to someone, this fact must be communicated to the user in a courteous way. If possible, the matter at hand should be handed over to another member of the staff team. To make this easier, users should be asked to communicate in the #FumbblAdmin chat channel rather than in private messages. By discussing the user's issues in public admin channels the staff member will ensure that the user does not misquote the staff and claim injustice. It will also give the other staff members an idea of how the issue at hand was handled which helps in ensuring that the staff team acts consistently in similar cases.

Handling issues

At times, a user will have complaints that are directed at one of the staff members. When this happens it is *very* important that the staff member this complaint is directed at is not involved in the resolution of the complaint. This also applies if a staff member feels that they are biased in a particular incident. The basic idea is that if there is a chance that a staff member will not be able to be objective, they should not handle the issue at all.

2. Site rules

This chapter covers the site rules and explains the intent behind them. This will allow staff members to decide whether a particular incident is in violation of the rules or not.

This chapter is currently based on Version 2.7 of the site rules, and will be updated when the rule set changes.

Rule clarifications

Preamble

- *In this text, any reference to the "FUMBBL administration" refers to the administrators and the security officers of FUMBBL.*
  This is just a definition of terms for the rest of the rule set.

- *The FUMBBL administration's interpretation of the rules is the one that counts.*
  This rule is not there to give staff members the right to do whatever they want. The intent of this is that the users should not be able to say: "but I thought it meant…" as an excuse for breaking the rules.

- *The administration reserves the right to overrule anything listed here in any specific case if deemed appropriate.*
  Similarly, this is meant as a way for the staff team to adapt the consequences of the rules to a particular situation without being accused of not following the rules. For example, a staff member may feel a need to prolong a user's suspension due to them being excessively rude and offensive. This rule gives them leeway to do that, but if this is done the reasons behind doing so must be logged properly.

- *Violations of the rules due to misinterpretations will not affect the consequences of your actions. If any of these rules are unclear to you then connect to the FUMBBL chat and go to the #FumbblAdmin channel and ask for a clarification.*
  This is a reiteration of an earlier rule, but gives the user instructions on where to turn to clarify the rules. Note that staff members are expected to be able to clarify each rule on the rules page. After reading this chapter all staff members should be able to answer questions regarding any rule.

Accounts

- *You are allowed only one account per person.*
  This means that one person may only register one account. Some users read this as one *active*

account at any one time, which is the wrong interpretation. The intent is to force people to take responsibility for their actions rather than just create a new account when they get suspended.

- *Your account is personal. You may not share it with others.*
One account, one person. For accountability reasons, the staff team expect users to have an account of their own. This is also good internet practise and will act as a way for people to realise that they should never share passwords to anything.

- *You are responsible for everything that is done using your account. If your brother, a friend or someone else breaks the rules you will be the one who has to deal with the consequences.*
Another accountability clause. The staff team aims to avoid situations where a user claims that someone hacked their account and broke the rules. The staff team expects people to have strong passwords and not share them. In a sense, rules breaches are dealt with based on the account and not the person (assuming it's not a multi-account incident of course).

Game Rules

- *The following order of rules interpretations will be in effect[…]*
This is simply a rule that says that the JavaBBowl client's way of interpreting the actual game rules takes precedence. The staff team cannot change how the client works, and this rule is the logical conclusion from that.

Differences from the LRB

- *The handicap table is only partially implemented. See the JavaBBowl README for more info.*
Another client-fact that is restated.

- *The tournaments section is not in effect. Specifically, there are no challenges.*
The tournaments section is not sensible in a league of FUMBBL's size, and is therefore not used.

Software

- *All matches must be played using SkiJunkie's JavaBBowl Client.*
This is the only option (for now) and is listed here for reference.

- *The latest version of the client should be used unless it is known to contain new bugs. In these cases, the last known working version should be used instead. The recommended client version is always displayed on the IRC channel topic.*
This means that the staff team does not want people to use old versions of the client to avoid using a feature that is expected to be used (for example, at the introduction of the 4-minute rule to the client).

- *Do not play using different client versions. The site will not accept your results if you do.*
Simple warning. The site checks for version mismatch and does not allow results to be reported if users use different versions.

- *Games must not be played in standalone mode as that will only produce one .zip file. So, don't play on the same computer against your friends or family.*
This tells users to not play in hot-seat mode. The reason is stated in the rule and it is there to reduce the amount of work for the staff team.

- *By using the correct FUMBBL rosters, all LRB options will be enforced. To remove unnecessary dialogue windows at start-up, please enable all 2k1 options in the client.*
  Almost deprecated at this point. Essentially tells users to use FUMBBL rosters to play. The site will not accept anything else.

Teams and Rosters

- *All players and teams must be named. Make an effort figuring out names. We don't want silly names like 'Lineman 1' or offensive names. Use your judgement.*
  Reference to the naming rules. Appendix A covers the naming rules in greater detail.

- *You must use the rosters from this website when you play in order to prevent mistakes and to ensure that all skills are present.*
  Users must use FUMBBL rosters. Again, the site will not accept anything else.

- *If any team roster changes, the current teams will stay in their current state but will be unable to purchase new offending players. However, any positions that change will be changed globally in accordance of the new rules.*
  This rule is sometimes referred to as the "grandfathering" rule. Note that in case a positional is given an extra skill, all positionals will be given the new skill automatically. In some cases, this means that a player will end up with the same skill twice. In this situation, the staff team does *not* change the duplicate skill unless it is according to the skill changing policy (see chapter 4 for further details on this).

- *Do not under any circumstances edit a team that is currently involved in a game.*
  This includes things such as transferring a team to another division, retiring players or the team, etc. Changing the team will often break the automatic upload, so this is explicitly against the rules.

- *If your team has bugs such as multiple players or double skills, do not play games or try to fix it on your own. Contact an administrator so it can be resolved properly.*
  Under certain circumstances, a team will end up with two skills picked on the same skill roll, or multiple players with the same player number. If a user has managed to pick the same skill twice, one can be deleted safely. However, care must be taken that the removed skill is a double-skill rather than a grandfathered one. The team log will show which of the cases is relevant. For "double player" problems, you click the "magic fix" link on the team page which will resolve the issue. The magic fix button will do a number of things, such as recalculating the stats for all players on the team (see Appendix C for more details). However, this link should *not* be used while the team has pending skill choices.

Starting matches

- *Do not discuss or agree on in-game events. This includes agreeing on not fouling or behaviour that implies an agreement such as clicking end turn for a significant part of the game.*
No coach should be given an unfair advantages. The staff team expects people to "play the game" properly. If one coach clicks turn for an entire half for no reason, it is a violation of this rule. Both users involved in the match should be heard in these cases to see what the reason was for this. However, if one team is getting trounced in the game, and decides to end turn instead of fighting back, that is fine. The intent of this rule is to prevent unfair benefits for one of the teams. Ending turn to protect the remainder of the team is perfectly acceptable.

- *A game is considered to have started at the moment the clients connect. At this point you are committed to the game and must play it out. Note that this includes scenarios where your opponent purchased new players after the mutual agreement to play. This rule does not apply if any of the participants connects with a team other than the one the game was agreed on.*
This rule is somewhat controversial. The intent is to avoid people from connecting to a game, and then disconnecting because of niggle rolls, or because the opponent hired a star or wizard. This is mostly the way it is so the staff team has a clear rule to point to rather than having to find out when an agreement to play was made in relation to hiring the star. Coaches choose to play against their opponent's team including the treasury. Whether or not the opponent uses that treasury before connecting is a risk they have to take. Note that a sentence such as "your chaos, my dwarves" only states races and not particular teams. If the opponent has two chaos teams, and connects with either of them, the match is considered valid according to this rule even if the challenger intended the other team.

- *Don't start a game where there is a chance you won't be able to finish without your opponent knowing about it. Unless you state otherwise, you are expected to be able to play for 90 minutes.*
This is mostly a matter of courtesy. Users are expected to have the time to play if they start a match. 90 minutes is more than enough for most games. If a game takes longer, a coach may postpone the remainder of the match for another time for whatever reason he or she may have.

- *You can not upload results for games played with teams from different divisions.*
Informational rule. The site will prevent this from happening.

Matches

- *You may under no circumstances delete and/or modify any files that are connected to a game that is not finished. This includes savefiles, cached team rosters or any file required for javabbowl to function properly.*
These files are necessary to reload a match properly and removing them would break the reload. Modifying files, however, could potentially be a cheat and should be looked out for.

- *No coach may under any circumstances simply abandon a game. Either concede or play on. This applies even if your opponent fouls your players every turn, delays a touchdown or does other things you may find unsportsmanlike.*
  This means that games should not be left unfinished. It does not, however, say that a coach has to concede in case there is a real-life emergency and the user has to leave the computer. In those cases, coaches are expected to postpone the match until another time.

- *If a coach has to leave in the middle of a game for reasons beyond control or if a coach simply stops responding for 15 minutes with the client left running, that coach is considered as disconnected and you should follow the rules detailed below.*
  This is one of the rules that users often have to be reminded of. After the stated 15 minutes, a coach will be considered disconnected. The "disconnect time" is considered to be at the point where the coach stopped responding which means that the user left behind does not have to wait an additional 15 minutes to call the game off should he or she choose to do so.

Concessions

- *Concessions are to be made only when there is merit for them.*

- *In this context, merit means that the conceding team needs a reasonable in-game reason for conceding. The team taking excessive casualties is one acceptable reason to concede. Other reasons include having a very distinct lack of players left to play with, or being clearly outplayed in terms of touchdowns.*
  The intent of this pair of rules is to prevent teams from getting unfair advantages. Concessions in turn 1 or 16 are highly unlikely to be "proper". There are no exact lines as to what is an acceptable reason to concede so the staff team is expected to use their judgement. Remember that the intent is not to punish coaches for no reason, but to prevent unfair advantages.

- *Conceding when none of the above circumstances are fulfilled will require admin approval.*
  The intent of this is to allow the staff team to say: "Yes, it is OK to concede here", even though there are no in-game reasons for allowing this. Being a relatively new rule, this rule is not yet fully explored. Use judgement when applying this rule.

- *If you are unsure if your particular game qualifies for a concession, please consult the FUMBBL administration for a ruling.*
  A reiteration of the rule in the preamble.

- *A match where the administration rules that a concession is acceptable, even though it does not fulfil the policy stated here will have its match report page marked to reflect this.*
  This prevents the staff team from being flooded with reports of cheated concessions. It is important that the staff member allowing a concession adds a staff match comment to the result page in these situations.

Disconnections

- *If your opponent is disconnected during a game please wait for 15 minutes to see if he or she returns.*
  The staff team is not expected to handle disconnections until after the initial 15 minute period has passed. In certain cases, where it's clearly obvious that a coach has left on purpose, a member of the staff team can act on the disconnection as per the standard policies (detailed in chapter 4).

- *If your opponent does not return within this period of time you can, if you want, call the game off and move on to find another game. If you do so, the started game is completely abandoned together with any SPPs or injuries that had taken place. If you want to complete the game, you can not use the team in other games until the current game has been resolved. Either way, you should send a PM to the opponent to state your decision to him/her.*
  The intent is that the coach remaining online should not be forced to continue a match if it means waiting for days to finish it. Coaches are only forced to wait for the stated 15 minutes to see if their opponent comes back online.

- *If you get disconnected you must, upon returning to the site, contact your opponent in order to explain what happened and offer to resume the game. If your opponent is not online or not contactable when you return, you must send a PM with the offer and try to schedule a time to resume it. If there is no reply to this PM within 24 hours of sending it, you may call off the game as explained above and you should send another PM telling your opponent of your decision.*
  The coach that drops is not allowed to call the game off until 24 hours of no response from the opponent, and must try to resume the match. This, of course, assumes that the person who remained online has not already called the match off.

- *If the server goes offline or if the remaining coach leaves before the stated 15 minutes both coaches are considered to have disconnected and should act as explained above.*
  This is a way to handle situations where both coaches disconnect. Most often this happens when the server itself goes offline, but sometimes a coach will return within the 15 minutes only to find their opponent gone. As stated, both coaches are considered offline in these cases and must wait 24 hours for a response.

Result Reporting

- *After a match has been played, both involved coaches must upload the .zip file from the game.*
  Mostly deprecated since the client auto-uploads results.The intent is that coaches need to upload the results, and not delay this on purpose since teams are locked until this is done.

- *Coaches may not agree to refrain from uploading a result. If the game was started with the intention of being official, the game must be reported. A game is considered official if the FUMBBL Login option in the client is enabled. Note that if you want to play a game without uploading the result (learning games, friendlies, etc) you must disable the Fumbbl Login option.*
  A reiteration of the above rule, with an explanation of what coaches can do in order to play friendlies.

- *Naturally, editing the .zip file is not allowed.*
  There is no reason for anyone to edit the .zip files. The site uses the contents of the zip files for replays and result reporting, so users should never edit them.

- *In case of corrupted or lost .zip files, an administrator must be contacted in order to resolve the problem. Neither team may continue playing until the issue has been taken care of.*
  Usually, this means that the staff team pushes through the result that the coaches managed to upload. If neither coach has a result file, they can try reloading the match and finishing it again. If this is not possible, the match is called off and the coaches are free to play on (or play a new match between themselves if they wish to do so).

Client Bugs

- *If a game is corrupted into a point where it is unplayable the game is abandoned and no match report should be uploaded. Both teams are allowed to continue playing.*
  This is essentially the same case as when no result file was created. How to handle this situation is explained above.

- *If you are playing with a new client version and find a critical rules interpretation bug that did not exist in the previous version, the game is abandoned and you should switch back to a version known to function properly. Make sure that you report these types of bugs on the IRC chat and/or on the bugzilla system.*
  This is a way to abandon games started with a client version that is more or less unplayable.

- *If the client does something wrong in the result calculations it is considered as an interpretation of the rules and the match must be reported as-is. This includes out-of-sync type problems which make the client end the game prematurely.*
  This rule covers an aspect of the site that makes it very difficult to delete a match result that has been properly pushed through. Once a result is through, there are very few occasions where this will be undone. The only person capable of undoing a match result is Christer.

- *Abusing obvious bugs for your own benefit is not allowed. This does not cover rule interpretation issues which are listed in the appropriate text file in the JavaBBowl distribution.*
  At the time of writing, the only known bug that is considered abuse is a bug which makes it possible to try to start a chain saw multiple times per turn.

- *All bugs in the client should be reported to SkiJunkie by submitting them through the bugzilla section of the site.*
  This rule is more of a recommendation than a rule. The staff team does not force people to report bugs if they do not want to, and there is no punishment for not doing so.

Player run Leagues/Tournaments

- *For all intents and purposes, leagues and tournaments run by players are considered equal with respect to these rules. Any reference to a league in this section refers to tournaments as well.*
  A league is a tournament.

- *Playing most games within a closed group of players is considered a league, regardless of which division you play in. If you want to play mostly among your friends, make teams in the [L]eague division for this purpose.*
  This means that even if there is no explicit group or tournament on the site, people are expected to vary their opponents. The staff team cannot know if a group of people are using a third-party website, or just keeping track of their internal group/league elsewhere.

- *Any league that allows members from divisions other than the [L]eague division and bases its scoring system on league or group membership must be approved by the administrators. Contact the admins for more info on how to do this.*
  This needs proper administrator approval. Christer must be part of any decision to allow tournaments outside the [L] division. Note that the wording of this rule means that groups which keeps score of the number of elves killed or some other system that does not involve group participation as a base for the system is allowed. These are known as "meta groups", which are accepted (such as the EMU).

Code of Conduct

- *First and foremost, we are aware that for most, these rules are obvious and should not even need to be said. Unfortunatly, a small minority have shown us that they must be said.*
  This is more of an introduction to the Code of Conduct than a rule.

- *FUMBBL is a competition league. You are welcome to introduce new players to the game, but do not upload results from learning games against a friend who does not know how to play. It's likely that a new player will suffer a number of losses while getting familiar with the game, and if these are all against one or two coaches those coaches will recieve an unfair benefit. Have your friend play people other than yourself; there are plenty of newer coaches joining all the time that will give them a more balanced game. If this rule is not followed, we will retire all of the affected teams.*
  This is for all intents and purposes the rule referred to as the "1/10" rule. Coaches are expected to play the same opponent at most one game in ten. This is not 100% strict, but the coaches who violate this tends to do it blatantly. Staff members should use their judgement when deciding if two (or more) coaches are violating this rule.

- *Upload your results immediatly after playing a game. No-one wants to be left waiting after a game. If you have time to play the game, you have time to upload the results. We understand that occasionally things can prevent you from uploading in a timely manner. If this happens, notify an admin as soon as you are able to do so. Repeated violations of this rule will result in the coach involved being blocked from play.*
  Not uploading on purpose is not allowed. This is a reiteration of an earlier rule.

- *Arranged games (ie. playing to lose) will not be tolerated. The same applies for coaches allowing each other to score extra touchdowns and all other SPP generating events.*
  Again a matter of fairness to the rest of the community. Coaches are expected to play the game properly.

- *Coaches are expected to play reasonably balanced games. Play against lower rated teams is allowed, but should not be abused. It is understood that sometimes teams need a recovery game against a lower ranked team after a particuarly bloody game, but excessive play against lower ranked teams creates an unfair advantage and will not be tolerated.*

    Again, a vague rule that is written this way on purpose. It gives the staff members a way to prevent excessive "cherry picking". As before, staff members are expected to use judgement when implementing this rule.

- *If you get disconnected in the middle of a turn, do your best to make it fair. If a play has already been made, try to replicate it as closely as possible. For example, if your opponent scored a touchdown the first time, it's only fair that the team scores after a reload. The same holds for other in-game events.*

    The key words in this rule are "as closely as possible". Sometimes, it's not possible to reproduce a situation in an identical way. However, the intent is to make the situation after the reload fair on both sides. Neither coach should gain an obvious benefit because of a disconnection. Sometimes, this means reloading the .BAK files.

- *Intentionally delaying the game by for example not ending your turn or by waiting for extended periods of time before moving is not allowed.*

    A rule targeted at petty people who resort to running the clock in response to their opponent's style of play. This type of behaviour is not accepted.

- *Playing multiple games at once is not allowed unless you have explicit permission by all involved opponents.*

    A courtesy rule. Playing multiple games at once will make the games go slower and should be discouraged. Another reason to discourage this is because multiple games at once will break the log files (and therefore the replays).

- *Personal attacks and excessive abusive language is not accepted. Discussing other people's styles of play does not qualify as personal attacks.*

    The staff team expects the users to be able to communicate in an adult manner, without resorting to name calling.

- *Offensive language - including but not limited to racism, sexual harassment and religious persecution - is not allowed in any form.*

    The much complained about censorship rule. The staff team does not want offensive language on the site and expect people to behave in an adult manner. Foul language is not accepted and should be dealt with when seen.

Naming and public blacklists

- *Publishing the names of other coaches, or links to such information, on FUMBBL is allowed with a few restrictions as follows.*

    Coaches are allowed to use the names of other coaches when communicating.

- *Naming players on your teams as other coaches is allowed. However, should the coach request it to be removed, this should be respected and done at the earliest possible opportunity.*
  This is a courtesy rule. If a coach feels that the context of the team is offensive even if the team itself does not strictly break the rules, he or she may request to have their name removed. This should be accepted without question, assuming the coach name is somewhat unique in nature.

- *Keeping blacklists or do-not-play lists can only be done as a pure list of coach names. No additional information, such as the reason for the coach being on the list, is allowed. This rule extends to other types of lists which may be considered offensive.*
  Stating "Blacklisted coaches" is fine, but not "blacklisted because of being a bad sport". Any type of reason for blacklisting is not allowed in any form. Coaches can use the site's built-in blacklist system any way they want and post reasons since these are only visible to the owner of the blacklist and staff members.

Consequences of breaking the rules

- *Violating the above rules may result in various consequences. This includes but is not limited to account blocking, warnings, team retirement and ranking reset. The actual punishment is dealt with on a case to case basis and depends on the gravity of the violation.*
  An informational rule saying the staff team will punish users who break the rules.

- *The decisions of the FUMBBL administration are final.*
  A way for the staff members to get rid of coaches who have broken a rule and tries to get a staff member to change the punishment administered.

3. Support tickets and logs

This chapter covers how to handle support tickets, and the when, what, and how to handle coach logs.

Support tickets

The FUMBBL support ticket system allows users to contact the staff team even if they are not able to connect to the IRC chat for technical reasons, or if there are no staff members available when the user is online. If a user joins the admin channel with a complaint regarding another user, it is recommended that he or she is asked to file a support ticket, so that the staff team has these accusations on record in case of future developments involving the coach. If this is not viable for the situation (for example, if the user requests to remain anonymous), it is important that the staff member writes a log entry in the appropriate place (see Coach logs below).

Once a user submits a support ticket, it will be accessible from the support ticket page which is linked on the website. Once the ticket is opened, it is very important that the *entire* submitted ticket text is read before any action is taken. Since the system is template based, many of the tickets will look similar but users can add additional information to the ticket. Make sure the response is relevant to the actual ticket.

Tickets have three status levels:

- *New* - This means that the ticket is pending and needs to be responded to.

- *Assigned* - This is a special status which is used to assign a ticket to an individual staff member. If something is directed at a particular staff member, that staff member should change it to the Assigned status to hide it from other members of the team. When this is done, the user who submitted the ticket should be informed that this has taken place. Most tickets will never have this status at all.

- *Resolved* - This means that the ticket is resolved. When a ticket is marked as resolved the *Resolution* text will be PMed to the user who submitted the ticket. Some of the more common resolution replies are available as template answers, but care must be taken to make sure that the response is relevant to the ticket before submitting this message. The template messages are there to help the staff members in responding to the most common problems, but they should not be used carelessly on every ticket.

Tickets also have a *Comment* box, where further information can be added if necessary. This box is to be used as a way for staff members to communicate within the context of the ticket. It is advised that all comments added in this field are marked with the author's name. This extra information is inaccessible to the users.

Coach logs

Every user on the site has a log connected to them. This is the main place where staff members write notes on all incidents concerning the user where the staff team has been involved.

Since issues are sometimes handled by different staff members, it is *very* important that the coach logs are updated as appropriate. All manual account blocks or unblocks must always be accompanied by an entry in the coach log. Likewise, if a message is sent to a user asking them to contact the staff team, the staff member who sends that message must make sure that there is a corresponding coach log entry so that other staff members knows what the issue is related to. If there are more than one coach involved in an issue, a log entry should be added to all involved coaches' logs.

As a general rule, it's better to log too much than too little. The staff team uses the logs to keep each other informed of cases, and expects that there is information there to be read.

Never edit another staff member's log entry. All log entries are signed and time stamped and this information needs to be retained properly. If a staff member has something to add, a new log record should be added. This applies to deletion of log entries as well.

4. Other staff duties

Match report resolution

By default, matches that are played will be automatically uploaded to the site without any problems. However, due to the large amount of matches that are played, many matches do not pass smoothly through the system.

There are two basic things that needs to be kept in mind when dealing with match reports. First off, the intent is to make it difficult for users to use the system to gain personal benefit. The second thing that must be kept in mind is care; the site design makes it very difficult to remove a match that has been pushed through. Therefore, care must be taken when handling match results and staff members must ensure that one person is handling a particular match result. It is technically possible for one match result to be pushed through twice, which will cause a lot of grief for the users and staff.

To minimise the risk of problems, staff members handling match results should communicate with the rest of the staff team in the #FumbblAdmin channel. The idea is to let the other staff members know that a particular match is being taken care of *before* a match is pushed through. If someone is already dealing with a match-report related issue, no other staff member should touch the match report unless explicitly asked to do so by the staff member who is currently on the issue.

The administration interface for matches lists all pending matches. There are two types of match results on this page, shown with different icons. Matches where only one coach has uploaded a result file are marked with a yellow W (read as Waiting) icon and matches where the results are mismatching are marked with a red B (read as Blocked) icon. Clicking on this icon will display more details about these reports.

No match reports should be dealt with without it being requested by a coach.

That being said, match result problems come in three groups:

1. Missing .zip file
This is perhaps the most common problem. One of the coaches involved in the match does not have a result .zip file. When this happens, the staff member handling the issue asks the coach who does not have a result file to confirm the score of the match. Assuming the result is correct, the staff member can then validate the match on the website.

In some cases, the coach who has not uploaded is not available. In these cases, a match can be validated when 24 hours have passed from the initial result upload. If a coach has contacted the staff team before these 24 hours have passed, the coach should be asked to send a message to the

opponent asking him or her to upload the result manually or contact the staff team. The coach should also be told to return after 24 hours have passed if there has been no response.

2. Opponent left before uploading

This is treated as if the opponent is missing a result .zip file, and is not available. Ask the coach to send a message if it is within 24 hours of the uploaded result and return if there has been no response. In certain circumstances, this can be overruled by individual staff members. For example in situations where the opponent took a large number of casualties or had other reasons to be upset.

3. Mismatching results

Occasionally, match reports will differ due to disconnections that occur during games. In these cases, the best way to resolve the issue is to manually check the two reports, and ask both coaches to verify which result is the correct one. When the coaches agree, the staff member validates the agreed upon report.

If only one coach is available for questioning, the staff member can validate the match report that favours the non-present coach. For example, if the reports say 2-0 and 3-0, and the winning coach is the one asking for assistance, the staff member can validate the 2-0 match without the presence of the losing coach. However, had it been the losing coach that was asking for help, the staff member could validate the 3-0 result instead. The policy is that the opponent will be unlikely to object to the result that favours him or her being validated.

If this is not acceptable by the coach asking for help, he or she should be instructed to contact the opponent and asking him or her to confirm the result to the staff team.

As before, if the match has been locked for more than 24 hours, the staff member is allowed to validate either result on validation of either coach.

Sometimes, the result will look broken on one side (for example, 0 gate) in which case the staff member should validate the result that makes sense, and no coach verification is needed.

Very rarely, the match reports will differ completely, with teams not being the same. Staff members are advised to use extreme caution and review the situation in detail before handling the issue. If there is any doubt, this should be reported to a proper administrator and left alone.

Image approval

Staff members are expected to keep an eye on images pending for approval. The number of images is listed in the site interface.

There are two types of images that are handled separately:

1. Coach images

Coach images are only allowed if the image depicts the actual user. The staff team cannot be entirely sure if a photo is really of the user who uploaded it. It is up to the judgement of the staff member to decide whether an image is authentic or not.

Any image that displays something other than a person should be denied.

2. Player images

Player images, which also include team images, follows the language rules of the site. Any offensive material should be denied, which mostly means that nudes or sexual innuendoes should be denied. Images of historic personae (such as images of Adolf Hitler) are allowed assuming the context of the images is not offensive. Again, this is up to the judgement of individual staff members.

Team modifications

Users will contact the staff team in order to have modifications done to their team. The following details the various types of changes that the staff members are allowed to do, and under what conditions. If a user requests a change that is not listed here, the request should be denied.

Team name

Staff members are allowed to change team names for two reasons. First, to remove characters from the team name that cause problems in starting matches (such as international characters or unusual accents). The second reason that is acceptable is to change typos in teams. The staff member should use his or her own judgement to decide whether a change is a typo or not.

Staff members should *not* change a team name because the user wants to reuse it.

Player name

Players can be renamed freely, assuming the new name follows the naming policy of the site.

Skill changes

Since it is possible to "misclick" a skill selection, staff members are allowed to change skill choices on players. However, this change may only take place directly after the skill has been selected. In this context, "directly after" means that the team has not started any games since the skill was chosen. The administrative interface will display the latest skill roll made, *or* the time when the team started a match. Any changes must be within the rules for what the player could take originally. Remember that if a skill is changed from or to a stat increase, the team must be "magic fix"ed (see Appendix C for details).

Dealing with rules breaches

A lot of what the staff team does revolves around the rules, and coaches who break them. When dealing with these issues, it is important that the staff member stays calm and level-headed. At no point should a staff member resort to offensive language towards a user, regardless of the rules breach or how much the user complains. If an issue has been dealt with and the user informed of what the consequences of his or her actions are, the strongest way for a staff member to end the conversation is to kick and ban the user from the chat channel(s).

Maintaining professionalism is imperative to being a part of the staff team, and it is expected that a staff member that is becoming frustrated ends the conversation rather than speak back.

When making a ruling, the individual staff member has some leeway as to how hard he or she should be when implementing the policies. If a user seems truly apologetic and takes responsibility for his or her actions, the consequences can be lessened to some extent, while a user with a long record of incidents who is offensive and aggressive in the discussions with the staff team can be given a harder punishment. Under most circumstances, however, the policies listed in Appendix A should be implemented.

5. Troubleshooting

Coach is unable to spectate matches

In order to spectate matches, the client must first be started with a new game. Most incidents where a coach is unable to spectate a match is due to recently installing, or reinstalling, the client. Starting a match in standalone will solve this. The game must be taken to the start of the player set-up phase before it can be closed down.

If this is not enough to solve the issue, the coach is likely to be affected by Java Web Start issues (see the JBBLaunch section in Appendix C for details) or network issues such as firewalls. The coach should be asked to verify the IP number, port, and proxy name of the game that is being connected to.

By default, proxy games should be spectated on the same port as the game is being played on. When playing in direct connect mode, the spectate port is most often the port that the game is being played on plus five. For example, if the game is played on port 8080, the spectate port is 8085. Note that it is actually possible to modify this in the client, but it is very rare that this is done in practise.

Coach is unable to start a match

When a coach tries to start a match, a large number of things must be working correctly. The system will complain in a number of different ways depending on what part of starting the game is not working. In order, the following things need to be in place to start a match:

1. Java
   The currently recommended version of Java to use for JavaBBowl is the latest Java2SE 5.0 update (note that this is an old release). This can be found on http://java.sun.com for a number of platforms. The client only requires the Java Runtime Environment (JRE) as opposed to the full development kit (JDK).

2. JavaBBowl
   Naturally, the latest version of the JavaBBowl client should be used. A number of issues can occur due to a faulty installation of the client. The most common issues will be detailed below.

3. Web browser settings
   In order to launch the game from the web, the web browser must be properly configured. The browser must be configured to start .JNLP files with an application called javaws.exe (Java Web Start). Users must not confuse this with the other Java applications (such as java.exe, javac.exe, etc). Java Web Start is installed as a part of the runtime environment. Some users using Internet Explorer as their web browsers may get an error which implies that a JNLP file is missing (usually this involves an error message containing the string "temporary internet files"). This is a problem

with how the browser manages files which are marked as not cacheable. The recommended action in these cases is to suggest the user to switch to Mozilla Firefox, or another browser that does not have this particular bug.

4. JBBLaunch

   JBBLaunch is a very small, nearly invisible application that can cause some confusion. A full description of JBBLaunch is found in appendix C.

5. JavaBBowl - Exception while loading teams

   The client is not fully internationalised, and will sometimes be unable to load teams whose names contain accented or otherwise special characters. To solve this issue, the team which contains these characters must be changed. Staff members should never change team names without the consent of the team owner.

6. JavaBBowl - Unauthenticated roster

   In order to prevent a number of ways to cheat, the FUMBBL site requires coaches to enable the "FUMBBL Login" option in the client. This forces coaches to log in using their site login and password to start a game. This error message shows up if one of the players has not enabled the FUMBBL Login option.

   Another, but not nearly as frequent, situation of this occurring is when a user is connected to the Internet using a mobile connection. A few of these mobile connections use a compression system which removes information from the team rosters that JavaBBowl downloads that is required to verify the validity of the team. In this case, the coach should switch to another connection, or alternatively remove this compression setting (this may not even be possible).

7. JavaBBowl - Unknown host name

   Literally, this means that JavaBBowl is unable to find fumbbl.com. However, if this was a network issue, the user would probably not be able to contact the staff at all. Therefore, the most common cause of this issue is that the client is somehow firewalled. The user should configure their firewall, or Internet security suite, to allow Java to connect to fumbbl.com.

8. JavaBBowl - Splash image corrupt or missing

   The literal problem of JavaBBowl not being able to load the splash image is in practise more likely to be an indication that the user has either installed only a JavaBBowl patch, or that the JBBLaunch application is pointing to an old version of the client. The coach should reinstall a full JavaBBowl client. If the problem persists, appendix C details how to solve issues with JBBLaunch.

9. JavaBBowl - Error loading / reading the save file

   To properly reload a game, both involved coaches must be playing using the same computer they originally played from. This is because the client requires both coaches to have a proper save file. Coaches should be asked to make sure that the save files are properly saved in the JavaBBowl folder before proceeding further with identifying the problem. The file names of the save files should be of the form AaaavsBbbb.xxx, where Aaaa is the first four letters of the coach's own team and Bbbb is the first four letters of the opponent's team and xxx is either dat or inc. There

are also two BAK files, one each for the dat and inc respectively. Note that due to this naming scheme, the save files will be "mirrored" in file names. The host of the game (ie, the coach that does the actual reload) will point out the file to load, while the client waits for an instruction on what file to load from the local drive. In some cases, one or both of the teams has characters in the first four letters that cause problems. To allow the coaches to reload the game even if the client has trouble finding the correct file, coaches can make sure that any accented letters are changed on both sides. For example, a file named MöebvsForg.dat for the server could be called ForgvsM?eb.dat for the opponent. In this case, coaches could rename the savefiles to MoebvsForg.dat and ForgvsMoeb.dat respectively and the reload should work as normal.

In extreme cases, this renaming of save files needs to be done at the same time as a save file recovery. If so, coaches should rename the save files each time they are expected to reload the match.

If one coach has trouble finding the save file at all, the procedure for save file recovery (Appendix C) should be followed.

Match upload errors

When uploading matches, a number of errors can occur. This section will list them and provide details on what they mean in more detail.

- *User authorization failed*
  This is a very very rare issue. The error only occurs during JavaBBowl automatic uploads and means that the user name and password do not match with the details that the user has in JavaBBowl. Normally, this will only happen if the user changes their web site password during a match. A manual upload will solve the problem.

- *Your account is blocked. Please contact the administrators to sort this out.*
  Another auto-upload specific error. This happens when the user has been blocked while playing a match. Staff should proceed depending on what the block is about. Normally, it also means pushing the pending result through to avoid keeping the opponent locked for longer than necessary.

- *You cannot upload twice using the same upload page. Try uploading again.*
  This happens if a user clicks the "back" button and tries to upload a new match using the same instance of a manual upload page. This is one measure used to try avoiding matches being uploaded more than once. Note that this error may occur if a user double clicks the upload button as well. Staff members should check to see if the match is already uploaded if this happens.

- *Error reading file. Make sure you provided the .zip file.*
  This means that the web site was unable to unzip the file that was uploaded. The user should confirm that they are uploading the correct file. If this does not help, the staff member should treat this problem as a missing result file.

- *The zip archive you uploaded didn't contain a proper result file.*
  Another rare error message. This means that the site did not see the uploaded file as a proper JavaBBowl result file. This problem is dealt with in a similar way to the .zip file error above.

- *It appears as if you did not use the proper fumbbl.com roster. The match cannot be uploaded.*
  This means that the web site could not validate the team used by the user in the match against the team stored on the server. This is commonly caused by a match already being uploaded. There is also a problem with JavaBBowl which can cause this error for one of the players. If one player could upload the match, the staff member should treat the problem as a missing report file and proceed as normal.

- *It appears as if your opponent did not use the proper fumbbl.com roster. The match cannot be uploaded.*
  Same error as above, but checks the opponent's team instead. Treat as above.

- *Your match report appears to be corrupt*
  This is another security measure taken by the web site. This happens if the tamper protection check fails. It should be very rare.

- *The game was played using conflicting client versions and cannot be allowed*
  The most common instance of this problem is due to the client not properly handling reloaded matches. Staff members should not take this error message literally, unless there has recently been a version change. Note that the client will also warn when matches are played with conflicting version. One of the more common instances of this issue happens when a match is reloaded after the coaches update to a more recent version of the client.

- *The game was played using the wrong options and isn't allowed.*
  This happens when JavaBBowl reports more than a total of 2 MVPs on the teams. This should not happen under normal circumstances.

- *Unable to find team: [...]*
  The web site is unable to find the team that is named in the report file. Very rare to ocurr, and very very difficult to solve when it does.

- *You can only report games for your own teams*
  Shows up when a user tries to upload a match result with someone else's team. Unlikely to happen, and unlikely that users will complain if it does.

- *Your [opponent's] team is not active and the match cannot be uploaded at this time. Please contact the administrators*
  Happens when a user tried to upload a match involving inactive (retired for example) teams. Staff members should solve the issue with the team in question and ask the user to upload manually.

- *Unable to upload: Could not acquire lock. Please try again*
  Technical problem caused by users trying to upload at the same time. Ask the users to wait 2 minutes and then try uploading manually.

- *You can't play against your own teams.*
  Self-explanatory error message. Unlikely to cause a stir.

- *You can't play against teams from other divisions*
  The teams involved in the match are in different divisions. Staff members should check the logs of the teams to see if one has transferred to another division during the match. Christer is the only person able to freely move teams back to divisions. Staff members should remember to transfer the team back to the other division after the match has been resolved.

- *You may not play against teams with differing progression*
  This happens when one team is marked as no-progression and the other one is not. The options here are to forget the match, or have one team change progression (if possible).

- *You may only play within the same faction as your team [...]*
  Most often, this happens when a FQ team plays against an inactive team. Ask the coach of the inactive team to activate it and then upload manually. The other fairly common situation is when a match ends just after a new round has been generated. If so, the match is to be ignored.

- *The team rating on your [opponent's] team doesn't seem to be right*
  The team rating reported by JavaBBowl does not match the one stored on the site. Most likely this is a sign of someone modifying their team during a match.

- *Your team is scheduled for a tournament match against someone else and this game is not allowed.*
  As stated, the team is scheduled in a tournament against another team. Staff members are advised to ask the user to contact the tournament organiser to have them properly removed from the tournament.

- *Your team has already played against that opponent or your opponent is not a part of the tournament.*
  This is an error that may occur in OpenRoundRobin tournaments. Most often, this means that a team has been replaced with another, and the person who was originally in the tournament already played against one of the teams involved in the match. The match is ignored.

- *You may only play within 40 strength in this division.*
  Self-explanatory error message. Only happens in the [R]anked division.

- *You are not allowed to play twice against the same team*
  The team played against the opponent in the last match. This is not allowed.

- *Your opponent played you last so this game is not allowed.*
  Same as above, but the other way around.

- *Error reading file [...]*
  The result file is corrupt. Treat as a missing result file.

Appendixes

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Appendix A - Consequences

This appendix lists the most common rules violations and the standard consequences administered to coaches who violate them.

Arranged game
Involved teams are retired

Dropping game
Set up a scheduled match between the two teams. After 24 hours, block the offending coach. No further action is taken against the dropped coach at this point.

Playing on after dropping
Award a concession to the "victim". Retire offender's team and block for 3 days.

Duplicate account
Permanently block the duplicate account. Add a 7 day block to the original account per duplicate account. Remember to add log entries to all involved coach pages.

Feeder account
Retire all teams that played against the feeder. Apply duplicate account punishment if it applies (ie, same person), otherwise add 3 days per feeder.

Modifying teams during game
This includes retirement and reporting their own or opponent's teams. Unretire/approve and sort the upload. Block offender for 3 days (prolonging progressively).

Offensive language
First offence, warning unless it's very abusive. After that apply 1, 3, and 7 days blocks respectively. If it continues, leave the matter to full admins for potential permanent ban.

Playing too much against the same opponent
Retire teams involved.

Disconnections in [F]action
Reduce the 7 day waiting time for forced concessions to 2 days (plus the standard 24h for ticketing purposes). Other than that, proceed as normal.

Appendix B - Naming policy

This part is adapted from the site help file on the subject. Credit for this should be given to the people who helped writing it[1].

Absolutely Not Acceptable

1. Swear words of any language! This includes the obvious but also extends to any sort of wordplay that hints at swearing as well. Juvenile snickerings aren't names!

2. Numerical Sequence: Your players already have a number...no need to have names such as Bill 1, Bill 2 etc. Almost all numbering names will be disallowed.

3. Positional Names. Lineman Bill, Blitzer Bob etc. We know what they are...no need to name them thus.

4. Keyboard smashes and/or alphabet sequence. Abc, Lmnop, jdbauic, ahwd, etc.

5. NAMES IN ALL OR MOSTLY ALL CAPS ARE UNACCEPTABLE!

6. Any team or player names that in any way denigrate or insult any race, religion, sex, etc. will NOT be accepted.

7. Names referring to genitalia including but not limited to: Balls, Nuts, Fanny, Penis etc, this includes wordplay that refers to the afore mentioned.

8. Names that will look identical in Java BB: I am the player that says Ni, I am the player that says Boo etc. will read the same during play.

Mostly Unacceptable!

The following is a bit subjective. While they may ultimately find a sympathetic approver be prepared to wait or be disallowed by others who DON'T like these.

1. L33T names that U think are r0x0r. AlSo NoTe that wEiRD Cap sequences are frowned uPon!

2. One letter name changes. Peggy, Teggy, Meggy, Leggy, Keggy etc. Not against the rules per se...but VERY lazy and highly disliked those who see them everyday.

3. Outrageously long names. "I am the guy who catches the ball and runs with it for a while than passes it sometimes" No thanks.

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[1] Authors as reported by the website: ozjesting, Colin, Mezir, Angie and PurpleChest

Appendix C - Technical details

"Magic fix"

The magic fix link is available to staff members on all team pages. This mysterious link does a number of things and will sort out many issues with teams. In detail, it does the following:

- Removes any duplicate players, refunding the gold as appropriate.

- Recalculates all player stats. Useful after changing a player skill from or to a stat increase.

- Gives players new skill rolls if they have more SPPs than they have skill choices. This is the main reason the feature should not be used when a player on the team has pending skill rolls.

- Recalculates the team rating or team value.

- Recalculates the team strength.

Save file recovery

At times, the staff team has to help coaches solve a problem where one user does not have a save file available. To solve this issue, the following will allow the users to resume the match. Note that this must be followed exactly to make it work properly.

Recovering a save

Coach A, who has save files	Coach B, who does not
Move the existing save files from the saves folder to a safe location.	
Start a new match with the teams involved in the match. Play on until both coaches see a "Game Saved" message, and then close the game.	
Copy the original save files back to the saves folder.	
Reload the match.	
	Sync to Coach A.
At this point, the game should be reloaded. *However, there may be two balls on the pitch now. If so, continue as follows.*	
Finish the turn without touching the ball carrier. Note that "End turn" must be done.	
Reload the match using the .dat file.	

JBBLaunch

JBBLaunch is a small application that acts behind the scenes when a coach launches JavaBBowl from the web site. In detail, the process works as follows:

1. The user clicks the play or spectate link on the site

2. The user's browser downloads a JNLP file with the information on what the user wants to do.

3. This JNLP file is sent to Java Web Start, which is an application that comes in the Java Runtime Environment package.
   Potential problem: Internet Explorer has a problem with storing these JNLP files to the user's hard drive at times. In these cases, Java Web Start will complain that the file does not exist. The recommended solution to this problem is to switch to Mozilla Firefox, or another browser that does not have this issue.

4. For security reasons, Java Web Start can not start JavaBBowl directly, but instead downloads the JBBLaunch application from the FUMBBL website and runs that.
   Potential problem: Due to the same security reasons, the JBBLaunch application is signed with a certificate. This certificate needs to be accepted by the coach so that Java Web Start is allowed to run the application.

5. JBBLaunch tries to locate a configuration file called JBBLaunch.conf. This file contains a path to the JavaBBowl directory that the user has pointed out (see step 6).

6. If the configuration file does not exist (which is the case the first time the user runs the application), or if the path contained in the file does not point to a proper JavaBBowl folder, JBBLaunch shows a dialog asking for the directory where JavaBBowl is installed.

7. JBBLaunch starts JavaBBowl using the parameters that was passed from the browser in step 2.

Sometimes, a coach will say that they have reinstalled the JavaBBowl client, but they are still experiencing problems (such as the "Splash missing" error, or the launcher starts an older version of the client). To resolve this, the user should do a search on the computer for any files named JBBLaunch.conf and remove them all. After this has been done, JBBLaunch will ask for the JavaBBowl location and the user can point out the newly installed version instead of the old (and possibly corrupt) copy.

Appendix D - Changelog

- Version 1.0 - November 25, 2007
  Initial version

- Version 1.1 - December 8, 2007
  Added troubleshooting and JBBLaunch sections. Short clarification on how to deal with matches that are excessively different.