

THE SUNDAY PROFIT

Umpire Tariff and Game Guarantee vs. Integrity of the Game vs. Religion

1 Source Document

- [The Sunday Profit Umpire Tariff and Game Guarantee vs. Integrity of the Game vs. Religion Politics 2025](#)
- [NotebookLM Generated Podcast](#)

The provided doctoral lecture scrutinizes the economic forces influencing youth sports in Oklahoma, particularly focusing on how Sunday scheduling practices, umpire payment methods, and game guarantees prioritize profit over the integrity of the game. It highlights how the USSSA tournament model drives these trends, leading to concerns about ethical standards, fiduciary responsibilities, and facility oversight. The text further explores the cash-based economy for umpires, the manipulation of game formats for financial gain, and the conflict between traditional Sunday norms and the demands of youth sports, often resulting in a "quiet compromise" from facility managers. Ultimately, the lecture concludes by offering recommendations for reform, advocating for greater transparency, labor oversight, municipal enforcement, and event ethics to restore the true purpose of youth sports.

Briefing Document: "The Sunday Profit, Umpire Tariff, and Game Guarantee vs. Integrity of the Game vs. Religion (Politics)": A Review of Oklahoma Youth Sports Ecosystem

Date: October 26, 2023

Source: Excerpts from "The Sunday Profit, Umpire Tariff, and Game Guarantee vs. Integrity of the Game vs. Religion (Politics)" – A Doctoral Lecture from "Integrity of the Game vs Economic Impact (Politics); The Oklahoma Business Plan"

Executive Summary:

This document summarizes key findings from a doctoral lecture examining the complex interplay of financial incentives, operational practices, and ethical considerations within Oklahoma's youth sports ecosystem, particularly as shaped by the USSSA tournament model. The core argument is that the current structure, driven by "The Sunday Profit," informal "Umpire Tariffs," and "Game Guarantees," prioritizes revenue generation over the "Integrity of the Game" and traditional community values, including religious observance. The lecture highlights a "commodification of children's play and public assets through contract labor loopholes and soft governance," calling for systemic reform across various stakeholders.

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Main Themes and Most Important Ideas/Facts:

- **The Dominance of the "Sunday Profit" in Tournament Scheduling:**
 - **Weekend Maximization for Profit:** Tournaments are explicitly structured from Friday to Sunday to maximize revenue. The source states, "Tournaments from Friday to Sunday are structured for profit."
 - **Sunday as Peak Revenue Day:** "Gate Fees peak on Sunday (championship brackets)" and "Concession Revenue rises as teams are guaranteed play." Case study data from Hidden Valley (2001–2024) indicates that "Sunday contributes 28–35% of total event revenue."
 - **Game Guarantees Drive Sunday Play:** Formats like 3-game and 4-game guarantees are designed to ensure teams play on Sunday, with a 4-game guarantee "almost always results in a Sunday 8:00 or 9:00 AM start time, particularly for consolation brackets." Tournament directors strategically "ensure no teams are eliminated before Sunday to protect gate revenue."
 - **The "Umpire Tariff":** An Informal, Cash-Based Labor System:
 - **Cash-Based Economy:** Umpires are typically paid "cash per game: typically \$55–\$60," with "No 1099s or formal payroll systems in place."
 - **Incentive Structure:** Umpires are incentivized to work "deeper into the bracket" for more games and higher pay, rather than through formal Sunday pay multipliers.
 - **Lack of Oversight and Ethical Risks:** Directors compete for limited officials, leading to situations where "officials go where they can earn most; no requirement for certification or background checks." The document notes "Verified examples exist where umpires with known background check issues still officiate."
- **Compromised "Integrity of the Game" Due to Financial Models:**
 - **Revenue Over Fairness:** The "Guaranteed Games Model prioritizes revenue over competition fairness." This leads to practices such as coaches "may rest top pitchers for Sunday" and teams "eliminated early on Sunday often forfeit."
 - **Weather-Related Manipulation:** Tournament directors often "delay formal cancellation until after noon checkouts" for Sunday play, incentivizing "stay-to-play" hotel overnights due to associated kickbacks. Manipulated formats can result in no refunds even if Sunday play is canceled, for instance, a "4-game guarantee with 2 pool games played = no refund; Sunday play canceled with zero overhead."

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- **Conflict with Religion, Politics, and Community Values in Oklahoma:**
 - **Clash with Sunday Norms:** "Traditional Sunday norms conflict with youth sports scheduling" in Oklahoma.
 - **Community Compromise:** "Community values are sidelined to avoid appearing anti-sport or anti-business." There's a contradiction where "Facility managers and municipal leaders invoke 'faith' and 'family' yet look the other way." Even churches are noted to "fundraise at facilities hosting Sunday play."
- **Facility Managers and Municipalities: The "Quiet Compromise":**
 - **Lack of Oversight:** Many facilities are leased to independent user groups, and "Municipalities assume nonprofit oversight = ethical compliance, but often fail to verify."
 - **Examples of Irregularities:** The source cites examples like a county commissioner noticing a "personal Venmo account used for gate fees" at Buck Thomas Complex, and Savage Park (Tulsa Little League) operating "USSSA events despite being a chartered Williamsport league."

Recommendations for Reform:

- **The document proposes several reforms to address these systemic issues:**
 - **Transparent Scheduling:** "Publish Sunday expectations" and "Provide Sunday opt-out without bracket penalty."
 - **Labor Oversight:** "Require certified umpires" and "Mandate 1099 filings and site background check audits."
 - **Municipal Enforcement:** "Require leaseholders to disclose third-party operator relationships" and "Conduct random audits of gate and concession collections."
 - **Event Ethics Protocol:** "Declare all stay-to-play arrangements" and "Require disclosure if the tournament is canceled post-checkout window."

Conclusion:

The lecture concludes that the current structure of Oklahoma youth sports, particularly influenced by the USSSA model, is not merely a logistical matter but a "deeply layered economic, legal, and moral ecosystem." The fundamental problem is a "commodification of children's play and public assets through contract labor loopholes and soft governance." True reform requires accountability not only from tournament directors and umpires but also from "state associations, municipalities, and national sanctioning bodies" to restore public trust and the "true intent of youth sports."

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Detailed Timeline

Pre-2001 (Implied):

- The USSSA (United States Specialty Sports Association) establishes a tournament model that prioritizes weekend maximization for profit, influencing independent leagues, municipalities, and facility operators.
- The practice of paying umpires cash per game, without formal payroll or 1099s, becomes standard in youth sports.
- The "game guarantee" model (e.g., 3- or 4-game guarantee) is implemented to drive tournament registrations, with the understanding that this often ensures Sunday play.
- The general cultural context in Oklahoma includes traditional Sunday norms, which are in conflict with the increasingly prevalent Sunday youth sports scheduling.

2001 - 2024:

- **Ongoing Revenue Generation:** Hidden Valley data from this period consistently shows that Sunday contributes 28-35% of total event revenue for youth sports tournaments. Tournament directors strategically ensure no teams are eliminated before Sunday to maximize gate revenue.
- **Umpire Practices Solidified:** Umpires continue to be paid \$55-\$60 cash per game, without formal multipliers for Sunday play, but with the incentive to work deeper into championship brackets for more assignments and pay. There is a continued lack of requirement for umpire certification or background checks, leading to instances of umpires with known background check issues officiating.
- **"Integrity of the Game" Compromised:** The game guarantee model leads to coaches resting top pitchers for Sunday and teams forfeiting early on Sunday. Delayed decisions on Sunday play cancellations become common to incentivize hotel overnights due to "stay-to-play" kickbacks, with cancellations often occurring only after noon checkouts.
- **Cultural & Political Compromise:** Community values regarding Sunday are largely sidelined. Facility managers and municipal leaders, despite invoking "faith" and "family," often overlook the Sunday scheduling conflicts. Even churches are noted to fundraise at facilities hosting Sunday play.
- **Lack of Oversight & Accountability:** Municipalities frequently lease facilities to user groups assuming ethical compliance, but often fail to verify this.
- **Specific Instances Noted (undated within this period):** A county commissioner at Buck Thomas Complex observes the use of a personal Venmo account for gate fees, highlighting a lack of transparency.

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- **Tulsa Little League at Savage Park**, despite being a chartered Williamsport league, operates USSSA events, indicating broader adoption of these practices.

Current (as of Doctoral Lecture):

- The "**Oklahoma Business Plan**" for youth sports is characterized by a "commodification of children's play and public assets through contract labor loopholes and soft governance."
- This **doctoral research project**, drawing on public data, interviews, field observations, and internal audits, is ongoing, aiming for reform-driven purposes.

Future (Recommendations for Reform):

- Immediate Action Proposed: Publish Sunday expectations for tournaments.
- Offer Sunday opt-out options without bracket penalties for teams.
- Require certified umpires.
- Mandate 1099 filings for umpires and conduct site background check audits.
- Require leaseholders to disclose third-party operator relationships.
- Conduct random audits of gate and concession collections.
- Declare all "stay-to-play" arrangements.
- Require disclosure if a tournament is canceled post-checkout window.
- Broader Systemic Change: The call for reform extends beyond tournament directors and umpires to state associations, municipalities, and national sanctioning bodies to restore public trust and accountability.

Cast of Characters

- **Author (of the Doctoral Lecture)**: The unnamed individual conducting the doctoral research project titled "Integrity of the Game vs Economic Impact (Politics); The Oklahoma Business Plan." The author is responsible for the analysis, observations, and reform recommendations presented in the document.
- **USSSA (United States Specialty Sports Association)**: A national sanctioning body whose tournament model sets the standard for most independent youth sports leagues, municipalities, and facility operators in Oklahoma, significantly dictating operational trends like Sunday games and umpire payment practices.
- **Tournament Directors**: Key figures in the youth sports ecosystem responsible for structuring tournaments, managing scheduling (especially weekend maximization), collecting gate fees and concession revenue, and setting umpire incentives. They are portrayed as prioritizing revenue generation.

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- **Umpires:** Individuals who officiate youth sports games, primarily paid cash per game (\$55-\$60). They are incentivized to work deeper into tournament brackets for more pay, operating within an informal labor market often lacking certification requirements or background checks.
- **Coaches:** Individuals managing youth sports teams. The source notes that coaches may rest top pitchers for Sunday games and that their teams sometimes forfeit early on Sunday due to the game guarantee model.
- **Facility Managers:** Individuals or entities responsible for overseeing youth sports facilities. They often lease facilities to user groups and are implicated in the "quiet compromise" of overlooking ethical issues related to scheduling and financial practices.
- **Municipal Leaders:** Officials at the city or county level (e.g., county commissioners) who manage public assets like sports complexes. They are criticized for assuming ethical compliance from nonprofit leaseholders and for looking the other way despite traditional Sunday norms, often for economic reasons.
- **County Commissioner (at Buck Thomas Complex):** A specific example of a municipal leader who "noticed personal Venmo account used for gate fees," highlighting a specific instance of financial impropriety or lack of transparency.
- **Tulsa Little League:** A chartered Williamsport league operating at Savage Park, mentioned as an example of a local sports organization that, despite its traditional affiliation, operates USSSA events, thereby participating in the described economic model.
- **State Associations:** Broader governing bodies within youth sports at the state level, identified as needing to evolve and be part of the reform efforts.
- **National Sanctioning Bodies:** Organizations like USSSA (and implicitly others) that set the rules and operational standards for youth sports, also identified as needing to implement reforms.