Discussions with an Arkansas Baseball/Fastpitch Director

Historical Arkansas USSSA Operating Environment, 2001-2026, and a Comparative Examination of the Oklahoma Youth-Sports Business Model

Public Comparative Case Study
Youth Sports Governance | Municipal Facilities | Tournament Economics | Officials Workforce | Transparency

Source Protection: The Arkansas Baseball/Fastpitch director participating in the recorded 2025 discussion is intentionally not identified.

Research Standard: Documented facts, first-person statements, modeled calculations, and unresolved assertions are kept separate.

Executive Summary This case study examines a recorded 2025 discussion with an experienced Arkansas Baseball/Fastpitch director and places that conversation within a broader comparative analysis of the youth-sports operating environments of Arkansas and Oklahoma.

The director's identity is intentionally withheld. The purpose is not to investigate the individual, calculate personal income, or create a director profile. His participation provides a comparative operational perspective for the broader Hidden Valley - Integrity of the Game research.

Both states contain the fundamental ingredients of the modern travel-sports economy: sanctioned competition, private tournament entrepreneurship, team entry fees, municipal sports complexes, gate and concession activity, officials, traveling teams, hotels and restaurants, and communities pursuing economic impact through sports tourism.

> **How does private youth-sports enterprise connect to publicly supported sports infrastructure?**

The Arkansas director describes a business philosophy in which the tournament operator negotiates directly with the municipality and makes facility payments directly to the governmental entity controlling the complex. The Oklahoma structure described to him can instead include nonprofit user groups, local associations, individual directors, or other intermediaries possessing practical control over taxpayer-supported facilities.

I. Purpose, Scope, and Evidence Architecture Public event information may establish teams, events, facilities, directors, published entry fees, minimum games, and historical activity. It does not necessarily establish who ultimately received each dollar, actual gross receipts, director compensation, facility rental payments, gate collections, concession receipts, officials compensation, refunds, discounts, profit, taxable income, or disposition of funds after an event.

The methodology distinguishes documented public information from calculated, modeled, reported, alleged, and unresolved information. Arkansas is treated as a comparative operating-environment study, not as a second completed Hidden Valley dataset.

The recorded conversation is treated as attributed first-person evidence. Public Arkansas USSSA records are aggregated at the state, regional, and facility-system level so the confidential source is not indirectly identified through a unique tournament chronology.

II. Historical Arkansas USSSA Operating Environment, 2001-2026 The historical window matches the broader 2001-2026 research period, but this report does not claim that every Arkansas tournament, division, or team has been reconstructed.

Available Arkansas evidence demonstrates a longstanding tournament marketplace operating through multiple municipalities and facilities. Modern portal records show that large events can use numerous complexes across a region, allowing the tournament system to function as a regional network rather than a single-facility enterprise.

Regional facility networks distribute games, visitors, officials, maintenance burdens, and commercial activity across multiple communities. The physical production platform consists of land, fields, lighting, parking, roads, restrooms, utilities, drainage, maintenance equipment, public safety, and surrounding municipal services.

III. Economic Impact and Public Facility ROI Traveling families may generate hotel, restaurant, fuel, grocery, entertainment, and retail spending. Those expenditures can be meaningful regional economic activity, but they are not the same measurement as the return received by the taxpayer-supported sports complex.

A serious sports-economics analysis should separate Regional Economic Impact from Public Facility ROI. Tourism impact should not substitute for measuring the financial and community return of the public asset itself.

IV. Direct-Municipality Principle One of the most consequential portions of the recorded discussion concerns facility contracting. The Arkansas director describes his preferred business relationship as being with the municipality: facility payment goes to the city while the tournament operation remains a private business.

> **Tournament Operator -> Facility Agreement -> Municipality**

This does not require government to run tournaments, prevent entrepreneurial profit, or convert tournament proceeds into municipal revenue. It creates a traceable interface between private commerce and public infrastructure.

V. Oklahoma Intermediary Structure Described in the Discussion The Oklahoma structure described during the discussion can involve a municipality entering a user agreement with a community baseball or softball organization, with that user group possessing substantial operational control over the complex.

> **Municipality -> User Group / Nonprofit / League -> Tournament Operator or Director -> Sanctioning Organization -> Teams**

The additional layer is not proof of wrongdoing, but it can increase the distance between the public owner and the complete commercial activity occurring on its property.

VI. Entrepreneurship, Competition, and Community Mission Tournament directors recruit teams, organize schedules, market events, accept weather risk, coordinate officials, manage customer service, handle cancellations, negotiate facilities, and compete with other organizations. Legitimate entrepreneurial profit is not inherently inconsistent with public accountability.

If qualified tournament organizations can rent a municipal complex under transparent conditions, competition can occur around price, service, event quality, scheduling, team recruitment, umpire quality, and tournament experience.

Tournament sports and community league sports overlap but have different economic incentives. Tournament operations emphasize traveling teams and weekend throughput; community leagues emphasize recurring local participation, affordability, player development, field access, and community identity.

A taxpayer facility can generate impressive tournament economic-impact figures while still underperforming its local recreational mission. Economic impact should therefore be one performance measure, not the sole measure.

VII. The Missing Ledger Public tournament architecture can often establish who played, where and when they played, who directed the event, what entry fee was advertised, and how many games were guaranteed.

A second ledger is required to answer who received the money, who paid the facility, how much the facility received, who received gate and concession revenue, how officials were paid, what was reinvested, and what remained as profit. That second ledger cannot responsibly be invented; it requires financial records, contracts, reconciliations, or other primary evidence.

VIII. Municipalities as the Practical Point of Reform Municipalities frequently own the underlying asset and can establish contractual requirements without regulating the entire youth-sports industry. Proof of insurance, rental payments, field-use reporting, background checks, maintenance obligations, officials standards, concession agreements, gate policies, and post-event reconciliation can all be conditions of commercial use.

Municipal contracting is therefore one of the most practical points for transparency reform.

IX. Officials and the Hidden Labor Economy of Tournament Baseball Officials represent one of the most important - and historically least visible - components of the youth-sports economic system. Every tournament requires fields, teams, and administration, but games cannot occur without officials. An economic analysis that measures entry fees, gate receipts, facility utilization, and visitor spending while excluding the officials workforce leaves a major operating component unexplained.

Teams -> Tournament -> Scheduled Games -> Officials Assignments -> Officials Compensation

More teams generally create more games, which creates greater demand for officials. Historical event and Game Center data can help reconstruct historical labor demand even when payment records are unavailable.

Public portals may establish schedules, brackets, scores, and game counts, but generally do not establish crew size, actual pay rate, payment method, paying entity, tax treatment, mileage, assigning fees, UIC compensation, or total officials payroll.

Any reconstructed officials expenditure must therefore be labeled modeled officials compensation unless primary payment records are available.

X. What the Recorded Discussion Adds About Officials The recorded discussion repeatedly returns to officials, compensation, and the difficulty of sustaining a sports-facility business model when the officials workforce

is scarce and compensation is difficult to observe through ordinary public records.

The discussion describes an Oklahoma environment in which obtaining umpires has historically been associated with cash compensation and competition among tournament operators for a limited workforce. This is part of the Oklahoma research perspective discussed with the Arkansas director, not proof of a comprehensive statewide Arkansas payment system.

> **The games can be visible while the financial treatment of the labor can remain much less visible.**

XI. Officials as a Constrained Workforce Large tournaments create concentrated short-duration labor demand. As an illustration, a 200-team event producing 300-400 games and using two officials per game would create roughly 600-800 individual officiating assignments. That does not mean 600-800 different people because officials commonly work multiple games.

When several tournament organizations operate simultaneously in the same region, they may compete for the same officials. Scarcity can influence per-game compensation and tournament operating costs. This is ordinary labor economics; the governance concern is whether the size and financial treatment of that workforce can be documented.

XII. Officials and Economic Impact Officials compensation can be one of the strongest components of legitimate local economic-impact analysis because it represents direct payment for labor rather than a generalized tourism multiplier.

For illustration only: 350 games using two officials per game creates 700 assignments. At a hypothetical $60 per assignment, that equals $42,000 in direct officials compensation.

The $42,000 example is not an Arkansas finding and should not be treated as observed expenditure. It demonstrates why officials compensation deserves its own economic category when actual rates and assignment records are available.

XIII. Cash, Documentation, and the Correct Research Question Cash is a lawful method of payment and does not itself establish wrongdoing. Likewise, independent-contractor treatment can be lawful depending upon the facts and applicable rules.

The useful questions are whether compensation was documented, who made the payment, what entity treated the payment as an expense, whether applicable reporting obligations were satisfied, and whether payments can be reconciled to actual assignments.

XIV. A Professional Officials Workforce Model Officials should be treated as a workforce rather than an afterthought. A professional system can include recruitment, standardized training, certification, coordinated scheduling, predictable documented compensation, performance

evaluation, advancement pathways, retention strategies, insurance, and appropriate tax documentation.

A transparent event ledger could include Event ID, Game ID, date, facility, field, official, assignment, games worked, rate per game, gross compensation, payment method, paying entity, and payment date.

This would transform officials compensation from a difficult-to-observe operating expense into a measurable component of the youth-sports economy.

XV. Officials as Human Infrastructure Youth-sports infrastructure is usually described in physical terms: fields, lights, parking, restrooms, concessions, scoreboards, and buildings. But a field without officials cannot host a sanctioned competitive game.

> **Physical Infrastructure + Human Infrastructure = Operational Capacity**

Officials should therefore be understood as human infrastructure. A sustainable facility plan must consider both physical infrastructure and the workforce required to operate it.

XVI. Historical Reconstruction of Officials Demand, 2001-2026 The Historical Arkansas USSSA Operating Environment can potentially be reconstructed through the sequence:

> **Event -> Division -> Teams -> Game Center -> Games -> Estimated Officials Per Game -> Historical Compensation Rate -> Modeled Officials Expenditure**

Historical compensation rates should not be invented. Where Arkansas-specific pay documentation cannot be established, the analysis should leave compensation uncalculated, present a clearly labeled sensitivity range, or report official assignments without attaching a dollar value.

This same methodology allows Arkansas and Oklahoma to be compared while preserving a clear distinction between observed game demand and modeled financial assumptions.

XVII. Proposed Tournament Reconciliation A municipality does not necessarily need to employ every official or inspect every proprietary tournament expense. A post-event reconciliation can document the commercial utilization of the public asset.

Recommended fields include final participating teams; games scheduled and completed; officials assignments; average officials per game; documented total officials compensation where available; facility rental paid; gate-rights holder; concession-rights holder; sanctioning organization; and legal entity responsible for the event.

XVIII. Arkansas-Oklahoma Comparative Framework The Arkansas discussion provides a comparative governance perspective rather than proof that every Arkansas municipality follows one uniform model. The strongest contrast is between a direct municipal interface described by the Arkansas director and intermediary user-group structures

documented or described in portions of the Oklahoma research.

The comparison should remain at the state and facility-system level: how public assets are accessed, who contracts with whom, what records exist, where financial visibility ends, and how community benefit is measured.

This approach preserves source anonymity while retaining the analytical value of the Arkansas portal and recorded discussion.

XIX. Policy Framework for Transparent Public-Facility Use A reform-oriented municipal agreement can identify the legal entity conducting the event, responsible operator, sanctioning organization, dates, facilities, registered and final team counts, published entry fee, facility rental obligation, gate-rights holder, concession-rights holder, officials-payment responsibility, insurance coverage, cancellation responsibilities, and post-event reconciliation.

The municipality does not need access to every proprietary business expense. It needs sufficient information to understand the commercial utilization of its taxpayer-supported asset and to measure the public return.

XX. Principal Findings Private tournament entrepreneurship and public accountability can coexist. The case study does not support an anti-business interpretation of youth-sports reform.

The public-facility interface is the critical governance point. Direct municipal contracting can create a clearer record of commercial facility use.

Economic impact and public-facility ROI must remain separate. Visitor spending does not answer what the taxpayer asset received.

The missing ledger remains central. Public event data can reconstruct activity but not necessarily the complete distribution of money.

Officials are human infrastructure. Their labor demand can be reconstructed from games more confidently than their historical compensation can be reconstructed from public portals.

Modeled officials dollars must remain labeled as modeled. Assignment demand and financial expenditure are different evidentiary categories.

Community recreation should remain a defined public mission. Tournament throughput alone is not a sufficient measure of public-facility success.

XXI. Final Finding The significance of the recorded discussion does not depend upon publicly identifying the Arkansas Baseball/Fastpitch director. Removing the individual's identity strengthens the comparative research purpose because the case becomes about systems rather than personalities.

The director's first-person statements provide qualitative evidence of an alternative operational philosophy: private tournament entrepreneurship coupled with direct municipal facility relationships. Compared with additional intermediary layers identified in portions of the Oklahoma research, that perspective raises a fundamental public-policy question.

> **If an independent youth-sports tournament operator can conduct business while maintaining a direct financial and contractual relationship with municipalities, why should taxpayer-supported youth-sports facilities operate under structures in which the public owner may be separated from substantial commercial activity occurring on its property?**

The larger reform objective is not determining who should be allowed to make money from youth sports. It is determining how private economic activity involving taxpayer-supported youth-sports infrastructure can operate with integrity, transparency, accountability, professional labor practices, and measurable community benefit.

Methodology and Source Notes The recorded 2025 discussion is a first-person qualitative source. Statements are attributed to the participant's described experience and business philosophy; they are not treated as proof of every Arkansas transaction or statewide practice.

Arkansas USSSA portal evidence is intentionally aggregated to avoid indirectly identifying the confidential source. The 2001-2026 label defines the comparative research window and should not be interpreted as a claim that every Arkansas event in that period has been fully reconstructed.

The Oklahoma comparison is grounded in the Hidden Valley - Integrity of the Game research architecture. Public tournament activity, modeled financial calculations, facility records, and first-person evidence should remain distinct evidentiary categories.

Illustrative officials calculations in this report are examples of methodology only. They are not findings of actual Arkansas payments unless supported by primary records.

This report is a research and public-policy case study. It does not make a finding of criminal, civil, tax, or regulatory wrongdoing by any individual or organization.