

# 2024 Texas AAU Youth Football League

## Rules of Play

TXAAUYFL's mission is to provide a safe, healthy, and enjoyable environment in which to learn football and cheerleading fundamentals, sportsmanship, self- pride, discipline and team spirit. Coaches will be expected to accomplish this objective with their best efforts in training and maximizing playing time for all team members.

TXAAUYFL bylaws are in place to facilitate the achievement of the leagues mission. They are not intended and do not intend to be a perfectly written legal document. As such, TXAAUYFL reserves the right to overrule any attempt to circumvent the intention of these bylaws, as designed by the TXAAUYFL League Committee, through the use of semantics or any alternative interpretation of the written word of these bylaws.

Texas AAU Youth Football League does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, color, sexual orientation, disability, gender expression, religion, nation of origin, or disability.

TXAAUYFL Rules of Play and Bylaws function in concurrence to govern all league activities.

TXAAUYFL Executive Committee refers to these guidelines for all matters and reserves the right to make any modifications as necessary for the safety of athletes.

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## **Governing Competition Rules**

Please note that the rules included in this rulebook regulate only Texas AAU Youth Football League. The 2024 TXAAUYFL will use the most current rules as published by the NCAA for all tackle division's and TXAAUYFL rules for all flag divisions. except where specifically amended in the sections to follow. It is strongly recommended that coaches have a copy of the current NCAA rules and TXAAUYFL. It is the responsibility of the Head Coach to be knowledgeable of the rules.

## **AAU Membership**

All athletes, coaches, board members, volunteers, and sideline persons (i.e. team moms and medical staff) must hold a current AAU membership. In addition, all teams must hold a current AAU club membership. All coaches listed must be credentialed and maintaining a current USA Youth Football certification, Positive Coaches Alliance Certificate and TXAAUYFL Certification ID.

## **Lightning Policy**

When you first see lightning or hear thunder, suspend activities, and go to shelter. Wait 30 minutes after the last observed lightning or thunder before resuming activities. Each incident will require the 30 minutes to be reinitiated (start over). Please note: Local facility policy may supersede the TXAAUYFL policy. This policy addresses the safety of the participants and spectators and leaves no room for interpretation or noncompliance. Failure to comply with this policy as an

individual, team or organization will result in TXAAUYFL restrictions and/or fines up to \$250.00 and including expulsion from all league and organization sponsored events. All athletes, coaches, and spectators must leave the facility during the suspension of play due to lighting delay. Officials will have final say if a game may be continued canceled or delayed when pertaining to lightning or any kind of bad weather.

The logo for Texas AAU Football and Cheer is a shield-shaped emblem. It features a large blue star in the center. The words "TEXAS AAU" are written in white across the top of the shield, and "FOOTBALL AND CHEER" is written in white across the bottom. The shield is outlined in red and blue.

## **TIEBREAKERS**

NCAA Rules shall apply except for the initial spot of the ball. Overtime play shall begin with the ball spotted on the 20-yard line for tackle and flag. If a second overtime is required, the ball shall be spotted on 10-yard line. Each team must run 4 plays in any overtime game, regardless of positive or negative yardage. At the end of the second overtime the winner will be determined by score or penetration yardage. If no winner has been determined at the end of the second overtime the game will end in a tie. This rule only applies during regular season games. Playoffs and Championship's will follow the second overtime format if additional overtime periods are required.

## **MERCY RULE – TXAAUYFL**

The mercy rule will not go into effect before 2nd quarter. There will be a running clock if a team is winning by 35 points or more. Once the deficit is reduced below 35 points the clock will go back to a regulation clock. If the 35+point differential is maintained, Once Team B reduced the deficit to less than 35 points, normal play would resume until one team is leading by 35+ points.

While the Mercy Rule is in effect, the clock shall run and stop only for the following:

- Injury time out or official time out
- End of quarters
- Immediately after a score which takes the scoring margin back below 35 points
- The losing team during mercy rule play may call any remaining timeouts. The timeout will be allotted, and the clock will stop. The winning team will be allotted any remaining times, but the clock will still run.

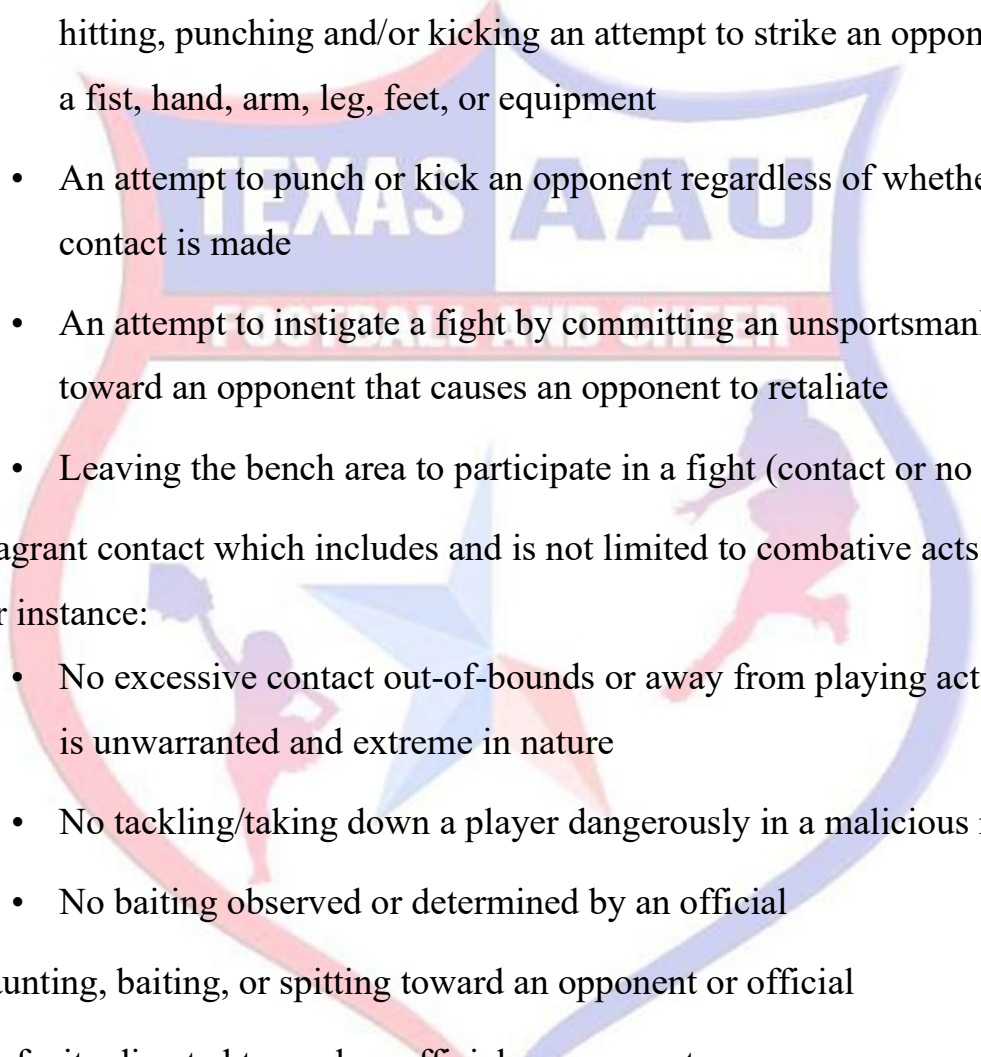
## **CODE OF CONDUCT RULES**

Playing music that is sexually explicit, has any racial overtones/words or contains inappropriate language will not be allowed. This is subject to action by the Executive Committee if deemed to be deliberate in nature. Head coaches will be responsible for the conduct and sportsmanship of their fans, players, and sideline staff. Any misconduct during the game of play, immediately after, or in between games will be reviewed. The executive board, in accordance with **ZERO TOLERANCE**, may impose suspension, forfeiture, fines or expulsion where it sees applicable. If there is an altercation between two players only the head coach will be allowed to come on the field to clear up the situation. Any other players, coaches or side staff that enter the field will be disqualified from the game. League officials will not break up any altercations. Officials will make every effort to stop play and clear the field. **Reference the League Bylaws which contain Code of Conduct Rules for Parents/Guardians ,Spectators, and related fines.**

## **SPORTSMANSHIP**



This policy applies to all athletes, cheerleaders, parents, volunteers, and spectators involved in a Texas AAU Youth Football event. The following examples include behavior or conduct which will result in an ejection from a contest:

- 
- a) Fighting which includes and is not limited to combative acts such as:
- An altercation between 2 or more parties that includes swinging, hitting, punching and/or kicking an attempt to strike an opponent with a fist, hand, arm, leg, feet, or equipment
  - An attempt to punch or kick an opponent regardless of whether contact is made
  - An attempt to instigate a fight by committing an unsportsmanlike act toward an opponent that causes an opponent to retaliate
  - Leaving the bench area to participate in a fight (contact or no contact)
- b) Flagrant contact which includes and is not limited to combative acts only, for instance:
- No excessive contact out-of-bounds or away from playing action that is unwarranted and extreme in nature
  - No tackling/taking down a player dangerously in a malicious manner
  - No baiting observed or determined by an official
- c) Taunting, baiting, or spitting toward an opponent or official
- d) Profanity directed toward an official or opponent
- e) Obscene gestures, including gesturing in such a manner as to intimidate or instigate
- f) Disrespectfully addressing (physical contact with an official is subject to automatic expulsion and can result in ineligibility for remainder of career)

## EJECTION POLICY

Any player or sideline staff that is ejected from a game will serve an automatic (1) one game suspension of the next available game played by his/her team. **Please reference bylaws for associated fine fees.** If Coaches/ Staff ejection is deemed flagrant in nature, they may be subject to a (2) two game suspension. The TXAAUYFL Executive Committee will review all game summaries and officials / referee post game reports. If a coach or staff is ejected must exit the field of play and parking lot. **In addition to a coach or staff member being ejected they must immediately hand over there TXAAUYFL credentials to a committee member of TXAAUYFL or of the organization the coach or staff member belongs to.** If an athlete is ejected, the athlete will be identified by the head official and shall immediately remove his/her equipment and remain on the bench. All game summaries and officials / referee post game reports must reference the ejected player/players names. The executive board may impose additional penalties based on review. Any fan or spectator that is asked to leave the premises for misconduct will not be allowed to return to the next TXAAUYFL scheduled event.... No exceptions!!!

## BOOK CHECK

Head coaches will conduct book check prior to each regular season game. Texas AAU Youth Football Executive committee will conduct book check during playoffs and State Championship. **Book check will occur 1 hour prior to start of**

**game/ halftime of game being played.** Please note that if a player arrives during their team's book check that player will be able to check in and play at the start of the game. If a player arrives after their team's book check the player may be checked at half time an opposing head coach will be notified of player being checked in. The team also has the option of using a time out to check in a late arriving player, but they must first notify the head official and the opposing team prior to calling the time out.

## **SIDELINE STAFF**

- 1) **The sideline staff may consist of 10 non-athlete members including Coaches, Team Mom, Board Members, and water boys. Each team will be allowed one (1) additional staff member designated as medical support. Medical staff must be verified during league certification. Each team will be allowed one (1) additional staff member designated as media staff/ photographer on the sideline only. Media Staff must be verified during league certification. League certifications IDs must be always on lanyard and visible.** All members of the sideline staff shall hold a current AAU Non-Athlete Membership, be in proper coaching attire, and have proper league credentials visible for the sideline. All sideline staff must be in proper coaching attire and match the team colors (excludes chain crew, down marker). This staff may include any combination of coaches, trainers, team mom, etc. Please note chain crew **will not be allowed** to use cell phones or make hand signals to the opposing team or talk to the opposing team. If caught with a cell phone or making hand signals an official or a TXAAUYFL Executive board member will remove them. **Home team is required to provide the chain crew.** Chain crew will be positioned on home side of field. All AAU membership rules regarding non-athletes apply and any violation will result in removal from the sidelines up



to and including team forfeiting the game. (NO EXCEPTIONS). **Exceeding the sideline limits will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty of 15 yards and will be charged to the head coach of the team who exceeded personnel limit.**

- 2) Sideline Interference – being outside the team box, but not on field
  - a) 1st Sideline infraction – First time Warning
  - b) 2nd Sideline infraction – 5-yard penalty **and on field coach will be replaced and not allowed back on field during that game**
  - c) 3rd Sideline infraction – 15-yard Unsportsmanlike Conduct

## **COMMUNICATION DEVICES**

No communication devices will be used to communicate with a player during the game. Communication devices including, but not limited to mobile devices, audio recorder, Local Area Network (LAN) phones and/or headsets, still photograph(s), film, analog or digital video(s) and/or Internet depictions, shall not be used to communicate. No persons on the sideline to include chain crew will be allowed to use any communication device during the game. **Drones will not be allowed during game time.**

## **OFFICIALS**

All Officials must be members (in good standing) of Amateur Athletic Union. Officials should arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the start of scheduled game. No current coach or board member of any TXAAUYFL organization can officiate any TXAAUYFL games. At no time may any organization substitute for the assigned officials.

The minimum number of officials required to begin any game will be two (2). During the regular season flag and tackle require three (3) officials. During playoffs, flag is required to have three (3) officials and tackle is required to have four (4) officials.

Officials will work with the Head coach at each field to ensure the safety of the participants/spectators. Officials have the responsibility and authority to stop any game in case of lightning, thunder, or other events that present an immediate threat to safety.

Officials will have all sideline staff come to center of field to explain field governance and ensure all sideline staff have visible TXAAUYFL identification cards. If sideline staff does not have TXAAUYFL identification cards, they cannot be on the sideline. There are no exceptions.

Multiple complaints against the same official(s) regarding safety related issues and/or game/sideline management will result in corrective actions implemented for the official(s). These actions may include, but are not limited to additional counseling, suspension, and/or termination from officiating in TXAAUYFL. Improper conduct by an Official will be cause for termination from TXAAUYFL. Utilize Appeals section for complaints regarding Officials.

The TXAAUYFL Bylaws specify acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Officials will immediately enforce these rules in a professional manner. It is imperative that Officials remain in control of the conduct on the field but must never allow personal feelings to interfere with the way they enforce the rules or affect their own conduct on the field.

The following are guidelines that TXAAUYFL Executive Officials will follow in all circumstances regarding ejecting athletes, volunteers/coaches/spectators:

The Officials will direct all activities of the chain crew (down maker, timer, etc.) while on the sidelines.

Misconduct by these volunteers will be corrected by the officiating crew.

Misconduct includes, but is not limited to use of profanity, utilizing cellular telephones, inattention to instructions given by officials, interfering with team staff on sidelines, informing opposing team of plays sent in by the coach, any violation of Code of Conduct.

## **ATHLETES**

A team shall consist of a minimum of 16 players and a maximum of 35 players. All athletes must follow the AAU Membership section of this document. Any athlete found to be ineligible will not be allowed to participate. The team will forfeit all games in which an athlete participated illegally and will be seeded accordingly. The head coach will be automatically suspended for two games in addition referred to the board of review for additional sanctions.

Dual participation will not be allowed in TXAAUYFL. Any TXAAUYFL athletes will not be eligible to certify or participate in any other league once certified with TXAAUYFL for the current Fall season. Only exception to this rule will be middle school players who participate in middle school football. Middle school players will be allowed to play in schools sports and TXAAUYFL. Dual participation is not limited to the state of Texas, but also any other leagues nationwide. Once season has started, non-compliances with these rules will be deemed as a violation and the follow actions will be assessed:

- Athlete will be suspended for the remainder of the season.
- Age Division Team will forfeiture all games the athlete participated in during the season.

- Any organization that has allowed the play of an illegal player, will be placed under review by the TXAAUYFL Executive Committee. Organization will be put on probation for the following season. Additional infractions may result in removal for the league.
- Dual Participation will apply to age divisions 6U-12U. The 13U division is in line with middle school football as most of these athletes participate in multiple school sports and other activities. Football Athletes Certified as 13U in the TXAAUYFL fall season will be allowed to participate in other off-field activities without violating the dual participation rule.

## **TXAAUYFL FOOTBALLS AND DIVISIONS**

All game balls will be leather or composite, appropriate size for each division, and will be Wilson or Equivalent.

- a) Flag Division (6U) - Ages 4-6 K2 WILSON OR EQUAL
- b) Freshman Division (8U) - Ages 7-8 –K2 WILSON OR EQUAL
- c) JV Division (10U) - Ages 9-10 – TDJ WILSON OR EQUAL
- d) Sub-Varsity Division (12U) - Ages 11-12 – TDJ WILSON OR EQUAL
- e) Varsity Division (13U) -Ages 12-13- TDY WILSON OR EQUAL

## **DIVISIONS**

TXAAUYFL shall consist of four age divisions: 6U (Flag), 8U, 10U, 12U, 13U. The age requirement is based on the age of the athlete at 11:59pm on **August 1 of the current year**. Due to safety concerns, no athlete will be allowed to play up more than one age group. The athlete requesting to play up and parent must sign waiver form with their respective team. The athlete requesting to play up must provide a physical evaluation and parent must sign a club/organization waiver



form. Once an athlete plays up, they will not be allowed to play down and must play in the elected division throughout the season to include playoffs.

## **6U DIVISION**

### 1) Timing

- a) 8-minute quarters with a running clock and an 8-minute halftime, with a 35 second play clock.
- b) Only the **last 2-minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters will be regulation clock.**
- c) All 6U Flag players are required to wear padded and soft protective headgear that covers the front and back of their head.
- d) Flag will be 11 vs 11, you will need a minimum of 9 to start a game.
- e) The flag belt must be webbed, have three (3) flags permanently sewn onto it, and attaches with break-resistant polyethylene clip. Each flag must measure 2¼ W x 14 ½ L and be vinyl-coated polyester. This allows for the entire belt to come off, so there will be no loose pieces to attach during the game. Flags cannot match color of shorts or of uniforms worn. It is the responsibility of the Home and Visiting coach to verify equipment prior to the start of each game.



- f) Mouthpieces must be always worn during play.
- g) Coaches - One or Two coaches from each team will be allowed in his/ her respective backfield during the game. Coaches on the field should be at least



10 yards behind their last player at start of cadence. Coaches must also make every effort to not interfere with plays (physically or verbally) once the play is In Progress.

- h) Quarterback must take a 2-step drop to run directly behind center. Quarterback sneaks are not allowed under center. Any violation of this rule will result in 5- yard penalty.
- i) No lining up directly over the Center. Six (6) defensive players are permitted on the line of scrimmage and must not be in a 3-point or 4-point stance. No hands to face or head will be allowed when blocking.
- j) No Kick-Off. The ball will be spotted at the offense's 25-yard line.
- k) All eligible receivers in a 11-man formation flag will follow the same rules as all tackle age divisions.
- l) The only eligible lineman will be the center.
- m) Ineligible lineman downfield on pass plays will not apply for flag football only.
- n) If a player is running and flag falls off inadvertently, the play is dead where flag falls off.
- o) Clock will stop after each score. The clock will start once the ball is set for kickoff.
- p) A 10-yard penalty from the spot of the foul will be assessed for the following:
  - i. Flag Guarding- A runner shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to cause contact between the runner and an opponent that denies the opponent the opportunity to pull or remove the flag belt. Flag guarding will also carry a loss of down.  
Examples of flag guarding include, but are not limited to, the following:
    - Placing or swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt
    - No spinning, jumping, tackling, or diving.
  - ii. Tackling- a player tackles the runner by grasping or encircling with the hand(s) or arm(s) and taking the opponent toward the ground as in tackle football.
- q) Punt will be 30-yard walk off. Walk off will be no deeper than 10 yards.
- r) Clock will only stop for the following:
  - Time outs
  - Injuries
  - End of quarters
  - Inadvertent whistles

## 2) Scoring

- a) Touchdown – 6 points
- b) Run PAT – 1 point
- c) Forward Pass PAT – 2 points

- d) Safety – 2 points

## **8U DIVISION**

### 1) Timing

- a) 10-minute quarters with a running clock and an 8-minute halftime, with a 25 second play clock.
- b) Clock will stop after each score. The clock will start once the ball is set for kickoff.
- c) Only the **last 2-minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters will be regulation clock.**
- d) Clock will only stop for the following:
  - Time outs
  - Injuries
  - End of quarters
  - Inadvertent whistles

### 2) Scoring

- a) Touchdown – 6 points
- b) Kicked PAT – 2 points
- c) Run PAT – 1 point
- d) Pass PAT – 2 points
- e) Safety – 2 points
- f) Field Goal – 3 points

### 3) Mercy Rule

- a) See attached

### 4) Other

- a) One coach from each team will be allowed in his/ her respective backfield during the game. Coaches on the field should be at least 10 yards behind their last player at start of cadence. Coaches must also make every effort to not interfere with plays (physically or verbally) once the play is in progress.
- b) Mouthpieces must be worn and attached to the face mask.
- c) On the line of scrimmage within the tackle box an athlete must be in either a 3-point or 4-point stance (**applies to defensive players only**). Any violation of this rule will result in 5-yard penalty. No lining up directly over the center. Face mask must be in the “A” Gap.



- d) No kick-off, the ball will be spotted at the offense's 35-yard line.
- e) No rushing of kicked extra point or field goals.
- f) Punt will be 30-yard walk off. Walk off will be no deeper than 10 yards.

## 10U DIVISION

- 1) Timing
  - a) 10-minute quarters with a running clock and an 8-minute halftime, with a 25 second play clock.
  - b) Clock will stop after each score. The clock will start once the ball is set for kickoff.
  - c) Only the **last 2-minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters will be regulation clock.**
  - d) Clock will only stop for the following:
    - Time outs
    - Injuries
    - End of quarters
    - Inadvertent whistles
- 2) Scoring
  - a) Touchdown – 6 points
  - b) Kicked PAT – 2 points
  - c) Run PAT – 1 point
  - d) Forward Pass PAT – 2 points
  - e) Safety – 2 points
  - f) Field Goal – 3 points
- 3) Mercy Rule
  - a) See attached
- 4) Other
  - a) Mouthpieces must be worn and attached to the face mask.

- b) Kick-off will be from the 40-yard line.
- c) During kicking and punting situations, players are ALLOWED to rush the kicker/punter.

### **12U DIVISION and 13U DIVISION**

#### 1) Timing

- a) 10-minute quarters with a running clock and an 8-minute halftime, with a 25 second play clock.
- b) Clock will stop after each score. The clock will start once the ball is set for kickoff.
- c) Only the **last 2-minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters will be regulation clock.**
- d) Clock will only stop for the following:
  - Time outs
  - Injuries
  - End of quarters
  - Inadvertent whistles

#### 2) Scoring

- a) Touchdown – 6 points
- b) Kicked PAT – 2 points
- c) Run PAT – 1 point
- d) Pass PAT – 2 points
- e) Safety – 2 points
- f) Field Goal – 3 points

#### 3) Mercy Rule

- a) See attached

#### 4) Other

- a) Mouthpieces must be worn and attached to the face mask.
- b) Kick-off will be from the 40-yard line.
- c) During kicking and punting situations, players are ALLOWED to rush the kicker/punter.

### **Abbreviated Penalties List**

#### **6U**

Flag guarding 10 from the spot of the foul and **loss of down**. If the foul occurs behind the line of scrimmage the enforcement spot will be the previous line of scrimmage.

An illegal quarterback sneak 5 yards from the previous spot replays the down.



Offensive coach interference 15 yards from the spot of the foul **loss of down.**

Defensive coach interference 15 yards from the end of the run automatic first down.

Ineligible linemen catching a pass 5 yards from the previous spot replay the down.

Illegal formation on the defense 5 yard replay the down.

**All Tackle (\* applies to 8U only)**

\*Offensive coach interference 15 yards from the spot of the foul **loss of down.**

\*Defensive coach interference 15 yards from the end of the run automatic first down.

Illegal formation on the defense 5 yard replay the down.

Failure to wear proper equipment 5 yards from the previous spot. The coach has an option to take a time out to save the 5 yards.

**Officials Game Fees 2024**

On field official .....\$60.00 per game

Clock operator .....\$45.00 per game

Canceled game with 24 hours' notice no fee.

Canceled game without notice normal fees applies.

Suspend game due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances.

- a. If they only play the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, no game fee.
- b. If they start the second quarter ½ game fee.
- c. If they start the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter full game fee.

Make-up game fee

- a. 1 quarter no game fee (1 per site).
- b. More than 1 quarter ½ game fee.
- c. More than 3 or more quarters full game fee



