

## FaZe countersues Tfue, files suit in New York



Turner "Tfue" Tenney competes during the final of the solo division at the 2019 Fortnite World Cup at Arthur Ashe Stadium in Queens, New York. EPA/JASON SZENES



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FaZe Clan countersued professional Fortnite player Turner "Tfue" Tenney on Thursday. According to documents filed with the Southern District of New York, FaZe claims Tfue disparaged the team, stole its confidential information and interfered with the team's other business contracts and relationships.

The suit comes as a response to one that Tfue and his attorney filed against FaZe Clan in May, in which the player accused the team of signing him to an oppressive contract that cost him other lucrative opportunities.

FaZe Clan CEO Lee Trink told Bloomberg on Thursday that it hoped to resolve the matter privately, but that a settlement between the team and the player became impossible.

"We had no choice," Trink told Bloomberg. "It became impossible to move any type of resolution forward through our conversations."

Additionally in the countersuit, FaZe claims that Tfue earned as much as \$20 million since he joined FaZe Clan in April 2018 and that the company is responsible for much of his success. FaZe said it taught Tfue unique methods of creating and promoting content that helped lead to his success. FaZe also said that Tfue violated a non-disparagement clause in his agreement with the team.

Per the suit, FaZe said that they learned that Tfue wished to terminate his agreement so that he could create another esports organization to compete with FaZe, citing a Forbes report published May 25. FaZe claims that Tfue has also sought to have other members of the team reconsider their agreements, including his duo partner Dennis "Cloak" Lepore.

Tfue's attorney, Bryan Freedman of Freedman & Taitelman, responded by saying FaZe is attempting to skirt California law by filing the suit in in New York.

"Faze Clan's lawsuit in New York is a ridiculous and obvious attempt to avoid the consequences of its clear violations of California law," Freedman said. "Filing the lawsuit in New York is actually an admission that Faze Clan has no defense to these violations of California law. Ask yourself, why is Faze Clan is afraid to litigate its wrongful conduct in California? The answer is obvious. Faze Clan will lose."

Freedman continued: "In the New York lawsuit, Faze Clan actually admits to violating California's Talent Agencies Act by procuring employment without a license. Equally egregious is the fact that Faze Clan is suing Turner under its illegal contract for the monies it publically represented that it was not collecting. This is the first time in the history of Esports that an Organization has had the audacity to try and enforce contractual provisions that are so clearly illegal against one its gamers."

In the contract in question between FaZe and Tfue, obtained in May by ESPN, FaZe is entitled to 80 percent of brand deals it negotiated on Tfue's behalf, as well as 20 percent of his prize money, 50 percent of in-game merchandise, 50 percent of brand deals negotiated by Tfue, 50 percent of touring and appearance fees and 80 percent of Tfue-themed team merchandise revenues. In return, FaZe paid Tfue a \$2,000 monthly salary, per that agreement.

FaZe claims it collected just \$60,000 from Tfue and that the player has withheld the other revenue to which the team is entitled. FaZe is seeking that compensation, although it did not note a specific amount within the legal complaint.

The player contract between FaZe and Tfue originally lasted six months but was automatically extended for three years until Oct. 27, 2021. Tfue and his attorney also filed a complaint with the California Labor Commissioner's Office in May.

In the past 18 months, Tfue has become the most popular professional Fortnite player in the world. He has over 11 million subscribers on YouTube, nearly 7 million followers on Twitch and 2 million followers on Twitter.