

Gaming

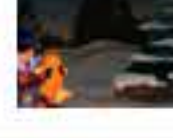
# Tfue vs FaZe Clan lawsuit: why Fortnite player Turner Tenney is suing gaming's biggest esports organisation

"These gamers are artists, entertainers and content creators — they perform, they act, they direct"



Turner "Tfue" Tenney, who is suing FaZe Clan over an alleged 'exploitative' contract (Photo: FaZe Clan)

by **Alex Nelson**  
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Gaming

Popular streamer Turner Tenney, who goes by the name Tfue is suing esports organisation FaZe Clan in what could be a landmark case for online creators.

Tenney, 21, who draws in more than 10 million fans a month to watch him play the hugely popular Battle Royale game **Fortnite**, claims that FaZe Clan has taken financial advantage of him through an exploitative contract.

The lawsuit states that FaZe have deprived Tenney of certain business opportunities, failed to pay him his share of brand deal revenue, and grossly undercut his earnings by taking up to 80 per cent.

## I genuinely feel so bad for him'

Last year, Tenney was invited to join FaZe Clan, an esports group that is home to and creates teams with some of the biggest names in the esports industry.

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Tenney first signed the contract April 2018 when he was 20 years old (the lawsuit also alleges that FaZe encouraged Tenney to gamble and drink underage).

In the complaint, the document was referred to as a "Gamer Agreement", and is said to state that FaZe gets 80 per cent of Tenney's revenue made through means like sponsored videos.

Those terms have caused some raised eyebrows in the gaming community, with top streaming stars like **Tyler "Ninja" Blevins** calling the 80 per cent figure "insane" in his own videos.



(L-R) Pro-gamer Tyler 'Ninja' Blevins and English footballer Harry Kane at the Super Bowl (Picture: Twitter)

Ali 'Myth' Kabbani, another streamer, Tweeted: "I genuinely feel so bad for [Tenney]."

It's also alleged by Tenney that FaZe is operating in violation of Californian law by essentially operating as a talent agency without a proper license or abiding by the necessary regulation.

## There is little to no regulation

The case could be a landmark one, the first of its kind in a fledgling industry that's still finding its feet.

"Because the esports industry is so new, there is little to no regulation or oversight," says attorney Bryan Freedman in the complaint. "There are no real organisations such as unions guilds to help protect the content creators/streamers that drive the industry."

Organisations such as FaZe have such a name in the gaming community, that creators and gamers like Tfue are able to sign contracts with them to boost their own profile.

This then opens them up to more opportunities, similar to the way in which an agent might find work for an actor.

In exchange for their services, these organisations get a cut of any earnings their clients make.

"In no uncertain terms, these gamers are artists, entertainers and content creators — they perform, they act, they direct, they edit and they stream," wrote Freedman in the complaint.

"Most of these content creator/streamers are also very young, and are often unsophisticated, unseasoned and trusting.

"As a result, these young content creator/streamers are susceptible to being taken advantage of and exploited - often by those that are supposed to be looking out for their best interests."

FaZe have rebutted against the claims, saying the organisation has not received even a single dollar from Tenney for prize winnings, Twitch revenue, YouTube revenue, or any other social platform.



"We're shocked and disappointed to see the news of Tfue's press article and lawsuit," they said. "We have only collected a total \$60,000 from our partnership, while Tfue has earned millions as a member of FaZe Clan."

"While contracts are different with each player, all of them — including Tfue's — have a maximum of 20 per cent to FaZe Clan in both tournament winnings as well as content revenue, with 80 per cent to the player.

"In Turner's case, neither of those have been collected by FaZe Clan. We're proud of what we've accomplished together over the past year with Turner and will continue to support him."

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