

## Gallup Sports Commission discusses TDFL schedules, soccer

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent  
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## TDFL competing for the Four Corners Youth Football Championships

It's summer and the next leg of Gallup youth sports is about to begin. Kids from across Gallup and neighboring communities like Zuni and Window Rock will soon get to play in local leagues for football and soccer.

The City of Gallup Sports Commission discussed the schedules for the upcoming Gallup Soccer

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League and Tony Dorsett Touchdown Football League seasons during its July 10 regular meeting.

### **TDFL LEAGUE**

Commissioner Theodore “Bobo” Saucedo spoke about the TDFL schedule. Practice will start in August, and the season proper will begin in September.

“We are waiting for the baseball season to end so we can get more registrations [for the league],” Saucedo said.

Saucedo said in addition to Gallup, Grants, and Thoreau, teams from Zuni and Window Rock will be coming into TDFL this year.

Teams in the league will compete to make it to the Tenth Annual Four Corners Youth Football Championships on Oct. 26-27, which Saucedo said is the second biggest football tournament in New Mexico.

“We had 44 teams last year, and we’re hoping to get more this year,” he said.

### **GALLUP SOCCER LEAGUE**

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Commissioner Kurt Spolar said there are currently 430 kids participating in Gallup Soccer League, with up to 540 if Zuni and Window Rock kids are included.

He said Gallup could see up to 700 participants after the baseball season ends.

Spolar said the soccer league could start to lose kids once the basketball season starts, which is why he wants games to start about Aug. 1. He wants players to get in a full 10 weeks of games.

The soccer league will use the four fields at Ford Canyon Park and the three fields at Gallup Sports Complex on Fridays and Saturdays for both practice and games, Spolar said.

He said the soccer league can start practice at Ford Canyon once the baseball season ends.

### **MUTUAL CONCERNS**

Some of the fields used for practice and games have matters that need to be tended to before the kids start to use them, Spolar said.

“There’s some maintenance issues and safety concerns, weeds coming from the runoff,” Spolar said. “We want to get them cleaned up [before the season starts.]”

Vince Alonzo, Gallup Parks Director, said the city has received a lot of complaints within the parks systems, and attributes them to being short-handed.

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“The staff just can’t keep up because there’s too much going on,” he said, citing parks events like summer rodeos. “We’re having a hard time keeping our heads above water. But we have to get through it.”

To that end, Spolar suggested urging people who come to the parks to clean up after themselves, which would in turn allow the parks staff to tend to larger challenges.

In addition, Alonzo said with two leagues operating at the same time they will likely have to share the fields for practice and games. That means they will have to coordinate to make sure both leagues get fair use of the fields.

Both Spolar and Saucedo were open to negotiating.

“We don’t mind sharing the fields,” Spolar said. “We’ll make it work.”

Saucedo said this is an issue that will be brought up during a coaches meeting July 15 at Sammy C’s Rock N’ Sports Pub & Grille.

Another issue to be discussed at the meeting will be how much play time the kids get on the field.

“We will stress this year that all the kids have to participate, because they are paying to play,” Saucedo said.

The third big issue for the coaches meeting is making sure the coaches will accept working under the TDFL label.

“The big thing is always coaching,” Commissioner Ben Chavez said. “We have to make sure

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they all meet the state requirements.”

Saucedo said that in addition to an application to be a coach for the league, the applicant will have to pass two background checks: one from McKinley County Sheriff’s Department, and one from the City of Gallup.

The deadline for the coaching application is July 13, so that coaches can all be registered and attend the July 15 meeting at Sammy C’s, he added.

Another coaching issue to address is putting coaches in line should they be removed from the game as a result of misconduct.

Chavez said issues with coaches first emerge when they get angry with the officials calling the game. This year the league is implementing a rule wherein the coaches will have to act as officials and call the game themselves if they are ejected.

This is so the coaches can see what they are unhappy about, and be able to identify what may be going wrong from the officials’ point of view, he added.

“This rule could help them realize what’s going on,” Chavez said. “We’re hoping it’ll be a good idea.”

In addition, there will be more meetings down the road to ensure certification for the leagues, Saucedo said. The leagues will have to stay certified or else they will not be eligible for playoff games.

“This could be tough, but we’re going to work on that plan,” Saucedo said.

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