



Sports

Fantasy Football:

- Increases social connections
- Decision making
- Basic economics
- Casual Vs. Analytical
 - Game knowledge

Script:

Ranjan: While baseball may still be on the books as “America’s favorite pastime” it is very clearly no longer America’s favorite sport. As baseball fans clutch onto pre-war glory days of the previous century, filled with legends like Babe Ruth and Joe DiMaggio, they stay memories. Slowly fading into obscurity with lowered fan attendance and network ratings, the future of sports has pivoted towards more action packed games with more concise seasons - football and basketball. Football - Gridiron football, a game so American almost no one else outside of the hemisphere plays it - has been a shining success in usurping the throne as a cultural mainstay, with games regularly topping viewership records and the cementing of the Super Bowl as a national holiday. With this huge boom in popularity in the information age, both of these sports have experienced the effect of a novel interloper: fantasy leagues.

Yono: If you were to look up Fantasy Football psychology right now, numerous articles having to do with health dangers would come up. Healthline and PsychologyToday ask questions like “Is Fantasy Football good for your health?” and “What are the dangers of Fantasy Football?” in the titles of their articles, while some of the articles that actually support Fantasy Football do so in a passive manner, with titles such as “5 Ways Fantasy Football is actually good for your health”. The word actually, of course, implies that the contrary is the accepted norm. So what actually makes Fantasy Football so, well, dangerous? Do these claims hold true in any way?

Andrew: Let’s start with an explanation of Fantasy Football. Fantasy Football can be played through an app on one’s phone or online - all for free - and the idea is that you draft players at offensive positions, and the way players perform on that given day directly correlates to the amount of points they get. Touchdowns, for example, are worth 6 points while yards are worth 0.1 points, meaning that if a player were to score a 10-yard TD, they would get 7 points on that play. Each player starts a set number of players at each position, and in a matchup, whichever team has more points is the winner. The objective is to win games, which can be done by getting players who score many points - meaning, of course, players who are good.

Im gonna add some stuff herre we can talk about social? Sure

There’s an element of prediction, but is fantasy football luck based gambling?

Yono: For someone looking at the fantasy football culture from an outside perspective, it may seem like it is a lot of people who are very into sports betting - but fantasy football is so much more than the shady bookies and broken kneecaps associated - it is a game!

Ranjan: The game of fantasy football is one that has actual repercussions into the actual game of football and the whole sphere of sports and football entertainment, developing more and more due to the recent boom in popularity gained by the NFL game of football as a whole. As

more fans begin to enter leagues, picking their roster and watching performances as they compete, the NFL and networks notice that more eyes are looking at more games - and as any smart profiteer would know - more eyes watching means more money. Looking at cable television, networks like ESPN, NFL Network, RedZone, dedicated streaming services, and many more have all started in order to meet the demand for more football in the age of fantasy.

Yono: Fantasy players can take the game casually, picking players they personally like, players they have heard are good, their favorite team's roster, or they can play fantasy like they are general managers of a professional team. Players can start going through analytics: looking at performance statistics, analyzing risk of injury, checking one-on-one matchups in upcoming games, and doing cost-benefit analysis of playing vs benching a specific player. Managing your fantasy team can be more than just blind support or sports betting, it can be an analytical task and an exercise in decision making. But apart from this, you might be asking, how does Fantasy Football make us better?

Yono: In a recent observational study taken by the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, the authors, Kyle Collins and Adam Hoffer, were curious about the same thing. The study featured a class of both male and female economics students that learned how to play Fantasy Football while both learning and applying their understanding of economic concepts like opportunity cost, supply and demand, and comparative advantage through trade, and students then capitalized on these skills in their economic 'toolbox' in an attempt to lead their team to success through wins.

Yono: The results of this study showed two particularly fascinating things. Firstly, students can learn a lot from Fantasy Football. There are numerous key tenets of economics in which Fantasy Football can teach important values. Take comparative advantage, an economic

concept that, at the world scale, suggests nations should specialize in the product where they are the strongest. For example, in Yonoland, a fictional island nation in the bountiful Pacific ocean, should specialize in tourism and perhaps fishing, while Ranjanville, an enormous nation with great access to petroleum should specialize in oil and industrialization. Ranjanville's economic minister should not seek to trade fish, as it would be much more profitable for them to make trades involving oil and factory products. The vice versa holds true for Yonoland. Although this is a rather complicated topic, Fantasy Football actually makes it quite simple. Players strong at particular positions are quick to trade players at those positions in exchange for players at positions where they are weaker.

And this is just one example of Fantasy Football demonstrating an aspect of economics; there are many other ways where fantasy team owners learn important economic concepts without realizing it.

Yono: The second fascinating point brought up by the study was that although males typically 'know' more about the NFL than women, they are not necessarily better. The study showed that while males scored more fantasy points than females, females had more wins and understood the economic concepts better, but most importantly, the difference between males and females was not statistically significant, meaning that the results between the two were close enough that one can basically accept that males and females are really quite similar at playing Fantasy. Football may be something enjoyed predominantly by a "football bro", but Fantasy football is a great equalizer as it is for all football fans - no matter your physical size, strength, ability a love for the game is all you need.

Andrew: Playing Fantasy Football as well as other Fantasy sports provides team owners with important life skills in real-world economics, pattern identification, as well as many others.

Although time-consuming, Fantasy Football is a great game to play during quarantine, since it does a great job of connecting people while also developing key skills.

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