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## **Fantasy Football, a Quick Introduction**

**By Mark Larsen**

Whether you already know every professional football team and player like the back of your hand, or you just want to learn enough to look less blank when conversing with friends, family or coworkers, fantasy football can enhance your NFL viewing experience.

As a lottery commercial says, "you have to be in it to win it". In order to join the fun, you have to pick a "host", select your preferred NFL players, and join or start a league.

You have a ton of options when considering where to host a fantasy football team. Some of the most commonly played "hosts" include CBS Sportsline.com, SportingNews.com, YahooSports Fantasy Football and CDM Fantasy Sports.

Depending on the host and league, you'll play one of several formats. One requires an upfront payment to enter your league, but doesn't charge you for players you pick up during the season from a free agent or "waiver" pool. Generally, the higher you pay as your upfront fee, the larger your prize if you win your league for the season.

The second format is free to join, but will cost you for most or all players you claim off waivers or as free agents after the initial draft period ends. Generally, trades with other players are free of charge. Be careful, though! Those trades can be costly in another way if you give away too much to get that must-have player.

The most common formats allow you a team made up of one or more quarterbacks, one or more running backs, one or more wide receivers, one or more tight ends and one or more defense/special teams (DST) units. Depending on the league, you may play all of your players at once or pick some players as "starters" and assign others as "reserves". Only your active players (starters) earn you points for that week. You get points for their league-defined accomplishments each week. What and how much your team will score will vary from league to league.

Now you need players on your team, so it is time for you to "draft" some. Using your basic understanding of football, and drawing on your NFL savvy, or some free or paid information sources to

review, you'll rank real NFL players before your league draft. You may also be able to use the players as "pre-ranked" by your host.

You'll also need to decide whether you want the excitement and time commitment of a live draft, or the relative ease and less time offered by an automated draft. If you are a beginner, the automated draft is highly recommended.

During the season, there are "BYE" weeks, during which an NFL team and its players get the week off to recharge. Real players also can be injured, so you lose their productivity. On the other hand, you and your team don't get any time off, so you'll probably have to make trades and waiver wire moves to ensure that you have a full, strong team playing every week.

Those are the basics. Now, it is up to you to apply your special knowledge, instinct or hunches, and "Win one for the Gipper". Before your draft, you might want to challenge friends, family members or

co-workers who have similar skills to yours to join your league. Some healthy competition can make your fantasy football experience even more enjoyable.

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### **The Cool Thing About Fantasy Football**

**By Chris Hinde**

Everyone loves fantasy football and get very excited for the fantasy drafts. But, have you ever really thought about why? I mean, beyond the obvious.

Fantasy football is really the only place or way for you, an average person, to create a football team that you have control over. You choose which football player starts, and who is on the bench. You get to draft whatever players you want to your team based on their real life performance record. The really cool thing? Well, you don't have to worry about anything else. You don't have to deal with any money issues except for salary cap. That's it. You don't have to worry about how much money the fans are pulling in by purchasing tickets to your stadium, nor do you have to worry about purchasing the football equipment, such as football helmets like these:

[http://www.sports-collectibles-store.com/Riddell\\_Deluxe\\_Football\\_Helmets-p-1-c-3.html](http://www.sports-collectibles-store.com/Riddell_Deluxe_Football_Helmets-p-1-c-3.html)

that your team

will be using. Now, that my friends...is very cool indeed.

So you basically have free reign of a team of great football players (if you've done your homework), and now can decide who plays when. Obviously, it is not as in depth as Madden Football, but this is more of a player game. Meaning, you choose your players based on their record in the NFL and create your team and score your points that way instead of making plays, you are making a team.

Now, my question is: What about college football? The enormous fan base across the US would make fantasy college football a huge presence in the sports world. Sure, it would be a lot harder to predict what players to pick because although they are way better than I would ever be at football, they are not always as consistent as most NFL players are. Especially when you are drafting your defense. But, just imagine how much more varied and exciting the world of fantasy football would be if you could create your own college team too.

You could go off of the "experts" top college football picks, starting with the team and working your way down. Just think of the huge potential talent that is stuffed away at big 10 colleges because they've already got their star quarterback or wide receiver. This would give little known players a chance to get their name out there before even completing college. You could help them kick start their career!

Chris Hinde is an aspiring sports column writer. If you would like to read more of his articles, please visit:

<http://www.sports-collectibles-store.com>



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