



Fantasy Football 101

Presented by





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What is fantasy football?

Fantasy football is a game that allows fans to take an active role in professional football by creating their own team and competing with teams built by others. Fans create their own roster of players by drafting talent from actual NFL teams and compete based on those players' real-life performances in NFL games.

Why play fantasy football?

While only a select few extremely wealthy individuals have the privilege of owning a real NFL team, anyone can enjoy the thrill of owning a team of NFL players by playing fantasy football. Instead of shelling out hundreds of millions of dollars for a real team, fantasy football can be free to play. It helps give the casual NFL fan more of a rooting interest and brings the hardcore fan even deeper into the sport.

Fantasy owners assume roles similar to that of NFL personnel — a combination of a scout, general manager and owner. Draft players and compete against friends and co-workers in a fantasy league for bragging rights as the best team.

How do you compete?

NFL players accumulate statistics in their games by their play. Fantasy football tracks those stats in a competition among owners in a league. Typically, fantasy football tracks the statistics for quarterbacks, running backs, wide receivers, tight ends, kickers and entire defenses and special teams. Each of the statistics is given a point value, and you compete by hoping the total number of points for your team exceeds the total for the team or teams you're competing against. The results are then tabulated in league standings throughout the course of a 17-week NFL season.

How do you create a league?

Owners can join private leagues set up by friends or coworkers. If owners are playing online fantasy football, they can join public leagues set up by others. Most leagues are comprised of eight, 10 or 12 owners.

How do you get players for a team?

Owners will choose the best players in a draft before the start of the NFL regular season in the hope of owning the best team. Only one owner can own the rights to a specific player. For instance, if the team with the first pick chooses San Diego running back LaDainian Tomlinson, then that owner is the only one who accumulates stats for Tomlinson. A typical 10-person league will draft 16 rounds for 160 players (16 players per team). The draft could be conducted via a serpentine draft or an auction. A serpentine draft is one where the order is predetermined. Each owner is given a slot in the draft and the reverse order occurs in the ensuing round. For instance, if the league has 10 owners, the owner with the first pick in the draft will have the first, 20th, 21st, 40th and 41st, 60th, 61st, 80th, 81st, 100th, 101st, 120th, 121st, 140th, 141st and 160th picks. An auction draft is where owners are given a budget (usually \$260). They bid on a player until the last offer is not exceeded.

How are fantasy drafts conducted?

Owners can conduct drafts offline; many use their home, a community area in the workplace or even a restaurant or bar. Another popular option is to set up leagues online and conduct live drafts via cyberspace. The draft tool allows users to gather and select players. Another draft option includes an auto-pick draft, which uses preset, customized rankings list set by the owner. Selections are arranged by the draft order and the owner's own player rankings. The benefit of this type of draft is that it doesn't require all the owners to gather (whether in person or online) at a prearranged time.



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How do you play?

Every week during the NFL season, an owner will select players for their starting lineup. A typical fantasy lineup may include eight players, consisting of one quarterback, two running backs, two wide receivers, one tight end, one kicker and one defense. Each owner competes against another owner in a head-to-head game every week.

How do you win a fantasy game?

League standings track every owner's game result. This is similar to the NFL where wins, losses and ties are tabulated. A league schedule determines the matchups each week. Owners will choose their starting lineup each week, picking players they think are likely to produce the best statistics. Those players' stats will be tracked and added, resulting in a score for the owner's team. Whichever owner has the best score will receive the win, and the foe is given the loss.

How do you compute fantasy players' scores?

Each of the players in the starting lineup will receive a score based upon the stats tracked for his position. For instance, quarterbacks are primarily tracked by passing yards and passing touchdowns. Point values for a quarterback are assigned for the number of passing yards or passing touchdowns gained in an NFL game. The point values are predetermined prior to the beginning of the season, and the game scores are based upon those values. For instance, a quarterback may be awarded four points for a passing touchdown and one point for every 25 passing yards. If Green Bay quarterback Brett Favre throws for 300 yards and three touchdowns against Chicago, he will be assigned 12 points for his yardage total (300 yards/25 yards=12) and 12 points for his TD total (3 TDs X 4 points=12) for a sum of 24 points. Points can also be subtracted for a negative stat, such as interceptions or fumbles lost.

What is the scoring system for a standard league?

Scoring can vary based on the personal preferences of the members of the league.

Offensive Scoring	
Passing TDs	6 points each
Passing Ints	-2 points each
Passing Yds	1 point for every 25 yards
Passing 2pt Convs	2 points each
Rushing TDs	6 points each
Rushing Yards	1 point for every 10 yards
Rushing 2pt Convs	2 points each
Receiving TDs	6 points each
Receiving Yards	1 point for every 10 yards
Receiving 2pt Convs	2 points each
Fumbles Lost	-2 points each
Field Goals	FG 1-19 yds = 3 pts FG 20-29 yds = 3 pts FG 30-39 yds = 3 pts FG 40-49 yds = 4 pts FG 50+ yds = 5 pts
Extra Points	1 point each

Defensive Scoring	
Total Def. and Special Team TDs	6 points each
Sack	1 point each
Safety	2 points each
Interceptions	2 points each
Defensive Fumble Recoveries	2 points each
Points Agst., Total Points Scrd.	0 points= 15 points 2-5 points= 12 points 6-8 points=10 points 9-11 points=8 points 12-15 points=6 points 16-21 points = 5 points 22-26 points = 3 points 27-31 points = 0 points 32-36 points= -3 points 37+ points= -5 points





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Why are quarterbacks given fewer points for yards and touchdowns compared to running backs and receivers?

Generally, quarterbacks gain more yards and touchdowns (through passing) than running backs or receivers (through rushing or receiving), so the scales are usually slanted to help even out the totals.

Can receptions count in fantasy leagues?

Some leagues award one point per reception for running backs, wide receivers and tight ends. Others may award 0.5 points per reception for running backs and one point per reception for wide receivers and tight ends. A few may choose to award zero points for receptions.

What are bye weeks?

Even though the regular season is 17 weeks, each team play only 16 games and gets a one-week break. That rest week is called a bye week. Every team is assigned one bye week between Weeks 3 and 10. If a player is owned on a team with a bye week, then his fantasy owner must replace him with another player who is active that week. Otherwise, the owner will receive zero points for that player on a bye week.

How do the fantasy playoffs work?

Similar to the NFL format, the teams with the best records advance to the playoffs and compete in a bracket. For example, if the league is divided into two divisions of five teams, four teams may advance to the championship bracket. The fantasy playoffs are generally during the last weeks of the NFL season. The winners of the semifinal games advance to the championship game, which will determine the league title.

Are there other ways to set up the fantasy playoffs?

Some leagues set the playoffs for Weeks 14-16 and eliminate Week 17. That's because in the real NFL, playoff-bound teams often rest their starters late in the season to negate the chance of injury in a meaningless game, or losing teams shake up their rosters because their fate has already been sealed. By avoiding Week 17, these late-season quirks won't have a negative effect on your fantasy playoffs.

What is the free-agent pool?

After the draft, all the undrafted players are put in a free-agent pool where owners can then replace players they drafted with available players they think might provide better results. Owners may want to change out players because they're disappointed in their performance or cannot play them because of injuries or suspensions. Generally, leagues do not allow players to be picked up while they are playing.

What is the waiver system for the free-agent pool?

Instead of being able to pick players at any time, leagues can elect to institute a waiver system. Each team is assigned a waiver wire order and can pick up players based upon its waiver position. Owners can begin to claim players (usually on Tuesday) after the games for that week are completed. Fantasy teams make claims and wait for the waivers to clear (usually on Thursdays). If more than one team claims a player, then the player goes to the highest-ranking owner on the waiver list. After a claim is successful, an owner will drop to the last spot until another owner's successful claim. After the waivers clear, owners are free to claim remaining players until their game starts.

What are other ways you can change players?

Trading allows owners to exchange a player from their team for one of their opponent's. Interested owners can go after players they covet and offer to exchange players they are willing to let go. Many times trade conversations start with a proposal. An owner can choose to accept or reject the proposal, or make a counteroffer.