



A Playbook for America's Most Popular Sport

What!? There are people who don't participate in fantasy football?

Now that the Chicago Cubs have ended their century-long drought and won the World Series, America's most popular sport, professional football, is poised to take over water cooler conversations everywhere. And with that, so too will the creation and tracking of fantasy football teams where participants serve as general managers of a virtual dream team of players.

So how many people participate, and what's all the fuss about? The results of our October Ipsos Omnibus poll found that one in six Americans are participating in a fantasy football league. And while men make up three-quarters (72%) of participants and are more likely to be in an all-male league, women most often participate in a co-ed group.

Whether its popularity originated in 1993 with Michael Jackson's Super Bowl half-time show that had non-football fans watching what is now considered a major national event, today fantasy football is no longer an exclusive league for jocks. Certainly technology has made participation more accessible with most leagues being hosted online and where statistics are no longer entered by hand.

On the whole, participants spend two and a half hours every week managing their NFL teams. Some of that time may include trash talking during chats with other participants — in fact, 37% say trash talking occurs all or a lot of the time within their league. It's probably safe to assume that is part of the fun, along with the possibly of making some money. Speaking of which, how much cash goes into it? On average, Americans perceive fantasy football participants spend about \$210 each season. It may be less though, since 54% of participants in fantasy football say at least one or more people in their league typically do not pay up each season.

Is fantasy football a skill set or just luck? One third of Americans say it's a skill set and not surprisingly, that number is higher (41%) among those who actually participate.

What else makes fantasy football so appealing? It could be the creative names participants come up with for their teams. When asked which one of the following football teams Americans would choose to manage, Victorious Secrets was most frequently selected. Below is the order of preference selected among current fantasy football participants for which team they'd prefer to manage:

Victorious Secrets
Make America Gronk Again
Swift Kick in the Grass
Backfields and McCoys
I'm with Hurns
Cranium Krushers

When it comes to the football games Americans are watching, weekend games are by far the most popular to watch and home games are four times more popular than away games. Of course, to a diehard football fan, a game is a game. Among fantasy football participants, 54% will watch both home and away games and 46% will watch both weekend and weeknight games. That compares to 31% and 29% respectively for total Americans in general.

How has fantasy football affected the sports industry? With the growing popularity of fantasy football, which has money on the line, the desire to read and watch sports increases as fantasy teams can be comprised of players across the NFL. This fact can change traditional allegiances: it's not always the home team now. Plus, regulations, or a lack thereof, are being debated about sports and what should be considered gambling versus participating in a good old American tradition. Fantasy sports, and particularly football, are growing and poised to expand viewership and participation well beyond the stereotypical sports jock. Doesn't everyone like to live out their fantasy?



Each week Ipsos U.S. eNation omnibus completes five national surveys. Ipsos Omnibus offers a variety of services, including overnight or custom studies. To collect complimentary access to this Fantasy Football study or to learn more about eNation omnibus, please contact:

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