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FANTASY FOOTBALL: ANALYZING FANTASY THEMES IN AMERICA'S RHETORICAL PASTIME

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FANTASY FOOTBALL: ANALYZING FANTASY THEMES IN AMERICA'S RHETORICAL PASTIME

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
Professional Communication

by
Francisco E. Christ
August 2010

Accepted by:
Dr. Steven B. Katz, Committee Chair
Dr. Andrew C. Billings
Dr. Sean D. Williams
Fantasy football has emerged as a male-bonding experience of our online age. In understanding the formation of a rich rhetorical community, a close examination of how these fantasy football communities represent the larger culture is required. This thesis uses Ernest Bormann’s theoretical framework of fantasy theme analysis to examine how the sharing of group fantasies creates a symbolic convergence. Once symbolic convergence has occurred, group members are then able to share rhetorical visions that shape their world’s view. In the case of this thesis, Bormann’s methods have been modified to better understand the small group dynamics of fantasy football participants.

This thesis examines the Fantasy Fairies Futbol Club, which consists of 12 managers who all share the same rhetorical vision. Coding of the Fantasy Fairies Futbol Club’s messages revealed the majority of the terms mentioned deal with references to individuals. Dividing messages into their relationship to the fantasy league, the real world, and places in between reveals an overwhelming use of “I” and “me” but nothing noting the plurality of an actual team. The coded message content also shows that the topic is the team manager’s emotional investment and never about the actual NFL players’ emotional investments, showing how each member sees himself as the most important character in this rhetorical vision. This emotional individual involvement helps the members construct a vibrant community that is perpetuated through the group’s characters, dramas, settings, and plots. The results of this study suggest that the competitiveness and camaraderie of the ongoing drama exists in the overarching subculture of fantasy football players.
DEDICATION

In memory of my father who always showed me the importance of hard work, but never forgot how important it is to laugh.

This thesis and its completion are dedicated to Christina, Mom, Elia, Amber, Zoe, Dean, Lucy, Benji, Sarah, IV, Rick, Josh, Ryan, Leslie, and Phillip.
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I would like to extend special thanks to Dr. Katz, my committee chair, for his guidance throughout this process. His patience in helping me sculpt this thesis from a forest full of ideas to a stand of trimmed trees, and his willingness to share his time and energy; I could not have accomplished this thesis without him.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION TO FANTASY FOOTBALL

1.1 Prologue: The Maurice Jones-Drew Phenomenon

On November 15, 2009, in a matchup between the 4-4 Jacksonville Jaguars and the 4-4 New York Jets—a game that saw the lead change five times—fans witnessed an unlikely act from Maurice Jones-Drew, running back for the Jacksonville Jaguars, and the No. 1 overall fantasy running back in most fantasy football leagues for the 2009 season. Jones-Drew saw a clear path to the end zone, but instead of sprinting into the end zone for the 10-yard run that would give the Jaguars the lead, he somehow managed to fight the overwhelming urge to dash across the goal line to score. With 1:48 left in the game, Jones-Drew stopped and “took a knee”\(^1\) at the 1-yard line, keeping the clock moving. After “taking a knee” twice more, the Jags brought out kicker Josh Scobee, who kicked a 21-yard field goal as time expired to give the Jaguars a 24-22 victory over the Jets (ESPN).

Jones-Drew halted right before the end zone because of a clever clock-management strategy directed by head coach Jack Del Rio. Del Rio realized that the Jets had no times out left, and the Jaguars needed to run out the clock to prevent the Jets from receiving the ball with a chance to reclaim the lead and win the game.

\(^1\) “Taking a knee” is a strategy used in football when a player with possession of the football kneels to the ground. This move allows time to expire off of the game clock without the team having to risk running a play and preserves the win by preventing the other team from possessing the football. Typically, the move is executed toward the end of a game when the quarterback kneels to the ground as soon as the ball is snapped to him.
As amazingly methodical as this unselfish act was, what followed in the post-game press conference was equally surprising: "Sorry to my fantasy owners," Jones-Drew deadpanned. "I apologize. I had myself today.\textsuperscript{2} It was a tough call, but whatever it takes to get the victory, that's what counts." Maurice Jones-Drew further explained the strategy: "They said get as close as you can and take a knee. I was looking for someone to tackle me." New York had no timeouts left, so the Jets offense could only watch from the sideline as the time slipped away (ESPN).

Maurice Jones-Drew’s apology is not to be taken lightly; it recognizes fan involvement beyond just rooting for a team by acknowledging that fantasy owners deserve an apology. Jones-Drew’s apology demonstrates the possible variations in players’ loyalties. How has fantasy football become so important that a player mentions it in the same sentence as a “real” victory? What can this event tell us about the subculture of fantasy football and the loyalties of players, coaches, and fans?

Events like this demonstrate the power of fantasy football’s influence on the sport. Fantasy theme analysis provides a method for discovering the ways this passionate subculture of a sport can influence its members to reject reality in favor of their own, socially constructed fantasy.

1.2 What is a Fantasy Theme Analysis?

Fantasy sports are an inseparable component of today’s actively involved and opinionated sports fan. In this realm of fantasy sports, fantasy football assumes a

\textsuperscript{2} This comment references the fact that Maurice Jones-Drew started himself on his fantasy football team for that day's match-up.
commanding lead over sports fans by immersing itself into the media’s football coverage and thriving upon the group interaction that is nurtured in these fantasy football communities. In understanding the formation of a rich rhetorical community, a close examination of how these fantasy football communities represent the larger culture is required. Ernest Bormann, author of *Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality*, developed fantasy theme analysis to study “the small group in order to discover features of larger social structures,” a method previously adapted by psychologists and sociologists to understand group communication (Bormann, *Fantasy* 396). Bormann further explains that “investigations of small group communication provide insight into the nature of public address and mass communication” (Bormann, *Fantasy* 396).

Fantasy theory shows how the sharing of group fantasies creates a symbolic convergence. As Bormann explains, “The basic communicative dynamic of the theory is the sharing of group fantasies which brings about symbolic convergence for the participants” (Bormann, *Force* 4). Once symbolic convergence has occurred, group members are then able to share rhetorical visions that shape their world’s view. “Meaning, emotion and motive are contained in the rhetorical vision, and people caught up in the vision will act it out as their sense or understanding of social reality dictates” (Cragan and Shields 3). The sense of understanding then creates a cohesive reality for the group.

In the case of this thesis, I modify Bormann’s methods to better understand the small group dynamics of fantasy football participants.
1.3 Why Fantasy Football Matters

Fantasy football has emerged as the newest male-bonding experience of our online age. As many online multi-player games have become increasingly popular while allowing members to physically be in the different places, fantasy football has, in its own way, become the frontrunner. Instead of gathering for a weekly poker game, once a popular male-bonding trend, many men today have substituted fantasy football, and other fantasy sports, for this weekly competitive event. Fantasy football has developed into a four-month-long epic battle coinciding with the NFL regular season, and blurring the line between luck and skill—and even the line between real-life games and virtual games.

Fantasy football has been around for much longer than most people realize. The concept of fantasy sports has actually been around for decades as amateur league commissioners used charts and newspaper statistics to manage the points—and bragging rights—for the different teams and their “managers” (Betancourt). During this time, with the intention of the Internet, fantasy sports have also acquired a huge following. According to a recent Harris Poll, approximately 30 million people in the United States play fantasy sports (Lerner), making fantasy sports impossible to ignore and warranted of further examination. Fantasy sports are available for every sports enthusiast as they include football, basketball, baseball, soccer, and even NASCAR.

Fantasy sports even inundate non-participants: Casual sports fans cannot watch without witnessing advertisements, commentary, or fantasy team management strategies during professional sports broadcasts. The NFL has not only embraced the idea, but its popularity has infiltrated every aspect of the league’s media coverage, varying from pre-
game shows dedicated to assisting managers in their decision process by providing them with expert analyses to sports commentators discussing their fantasy team’s successes and failures.

Other entertainment and arts mediums have embraced the pervasiveness of fantasy football: An Off-Broadway musical opened in October 2009, simply titled *Fantasy Football the Musical*. The musical follows the story as “an unemployed stats geek and a small-time bookie realize that their passion for sports is keeping them from maintaining a job or a girlfriend. Combining forces, they set out to create the ultimate sports fan experience…” (NYMF).

Dramatized versions of fantasy football have also started infiltrating pop culture: The FX television network recently developed *The League*, which exploits the male-bonding experience while utilizing fantasy football as the show’s unifying theme. The show’s website explains the show’s premise as “a new original comedy about friendship, marriage, parenting, and growing up…or refusing to grow up” (FX). The site further explains how “fantasy football provides an outlet for good-natured competition and camaraderie between friends and colleagues,” while situations do arise where there is a little less camaraderie and a little more “deception, trickery, one-upmanship, and a win-at-all-costs mentality that are prevalent in the world of fantasy football…” (FX). The series explains this interaction as we see “the emotional tentacles of fantasy football extend to personal relationships, marriages and the workplace, all fertile ground for comedy” (FX).
Just because you are not a football fan does not exclude you from enjoying fantasy mania. Fantasy football’s popularity has even inspired a variety of alternate fantasy leagues that are not based on sports but on other activities, such as fantasy music league, fantasy dog shows, fantasy water skiing, fantasy pro wrestling, fantasy bass fishing, fantasy congress, fantasy eating, and fantasy bowling (Trex). These examples help to illustrate the hold fantasy sports has on its participants and how its popularity has spawned so many varieties to include every interest.

Fantasy sports even affect productivity in the workplace. When outplacement consultants Challenger, Gray, and Christmas conducted research to determine the financial impact fantasy football had on businesses, they discovered that the lack of production over the course of the NFL regular season can cost corporations an estimated $18.7 billion (or roughly $1.1 billion a week) (Lefrancois). The distraction of this game can often have serious consequences.

One surprising fantasy football story revolves around a young, Fidelity Investments employee named Cameron Pettigrew, who was fired in late October of 2009 along with three other fantasy football league commissioners. Pettigrew was a “distinguished employee” at Fidelity Investments and claimed he “never received a single verbal or written warning before his dismissal” (Herrera). Pettigrew claimed that even managers and directors would often talk about fantasy sports in the workplace and that nobody took the policy seriously, even though Fidelity had previously notified employees via e-mail that participation in fantasy sports activities is prohibited during company time (Herrera).
It is apparent that fantasy football requires further examination, not only because of its immense popularity, but also because this online phenomenon has spread into almost every facet of American culture outside of the sports arena, in ways that few other “male bonding” activities have. How is this subculture maintained?

This thesis examines the Fantasy Fairies Futbol Club, which consists of 12 managers who all share the same goals of not only trying to win the league championship, but to also show that they can manage a professional football team just as well as actual NFL general managers. A secondary common goal—in any league—is to foster a high level of competition, which demands everyone’s best effort. The second goal demonstrates how fantasy theme analysis examines worldviews shared by groups and encoded by language, culture, and traditions—three elements that are rich within the confines of the fantasy football community (Waite).

Fantasy football’s increasing popularity with participants and ever expanding market appeal make it unavoidable to even the most casual football fan, but more importantly, its construction of a vibrant community can be examined to demonstrate how participants embrace the opportunity to become a member of such a community.

1.4 What is Fantasy Football?

In one form, fantasy football began “on a rainy November night in Manhattan in 1962…” (Dickey) as the Raiders were out East on a multi-game road trip. “Raiders limited partner Bill Winkenbach, Oakland Tribune beat writer Scotty Stirling, and Raiders public relations man Bill Tunnell sat in a New York hotel room and planned the scheme that would form the basis for fantasy football” (Dickey). They named their league
the Greater Oakland Pigskin Prognosticators League and devised a point system similar to today’s online fantasy football game. In fantasy football’s beginning, points were awarded as money for different events; for example, 25 cents were awarded for a passing touchdown, $2.50 for a kickoff returned for a touchdown, and $5 for a touchdown by a defensive lineman (Dickey).

The pre-Internet days of fantasy football required a much higher level of dedication as all player statistics had to be calculated manually. “Players had to send their rosters to the commissioner—a designated league organizer, statistician, and arbitrator—by Friday afternoon at the latest, usually by fax” (Yost 101). The commissioner was also responsible for organizing all team roster changes before Sunday’s games, calculating all statistics from Monday’s paper, and still having to wait until Tuesday morning to collect the final statistics for the Monday night game (Yost 102). The online game has simplified this process drastically. The commissioner is still responsible for the league’s organization and governance; however, all calculations are easily totaled by the host website.

1.5 How to Play Fantasy Football

“Fantasy football is just the latest example of how the NFL has been an early and adept adopter of new media” (Yost 102). According to Mark Yost, author of Tailgating, Sacks, and Salary Caps, “the NFL was one of the first to master the network television model and has continued to adapt as new technologies have emerged: cable and satellite television, the Internet, and satellite radio” (Yost 102). As the NFL’s embraces these new technologies, it facilitates a new level of fandom. The virtually unlimited access of NFL
information allows football fans to experience a stronger bond within their communities and increase their emotional investment toward their team, especially when these communities revolve around fantasy football. The unlimited information keeps NFL fans more connected to their team and are in most cases “better connected than perhaps any other major league sports fan to their ‘home team’ of choice” (Yost 102).

“Fantasy football players act as president, owner, manager, and coach of their own franchise.” (Yost 101). Assembling a fantasy football team requires a great amount of “statistical analysis” to compete against other teams in this fashion—by using data and its predicted total to win (Yost 101). Fantasy football leagues typically include 10-12 “teams” with one manager controlling each team (Billings 3). League members play the role of manager-owners, researching and drafting NFL players based on their potential on-field performance. The manager is responsible for selecting the starting lineup for each week based on each NFL player’s potential as well as health, with the goal of his team earning the highest statistical value in a matchup against another league member’s team. “Because participation entails the drafting of a team as well as the structuring of a starting roster, fantasy sport leagues offer the vicarious satisfaction of being in control” (Davis and Duncan 251). Varying factors contribute to a manager’s decision, such as that week’s real-life opponent for every NFL player on the roster as well as the manager’s fantasy opponent for that week.

Fantasy football league management is conducted through a variety of free and paid sites, such as Yahoo Sports, CBS Sportsline.com, and ESPN.com; hundreds of other websites, podcasts, and publications provide information and insider analysis to those
managers craving information and constant updates. CBS Sportsline, Yahoo Sports, and ESPN.com are the more popular fantasy football sites and also offer a premium pay service. For example, Yahoo’s Fantasy Football Plus package (the preferred host site of the Fantasy Fairies Futbol Club) provides league communication tools such as live online chats and message boards and a live team tracker (provides live, updated team statistics). Point allocation and league rules are also customizable options to each league. After the championship game, Yahoo Sports will award the league champion either a T-shirt or trophy for their accomplishment; however, the ultimate fantasy prize arrives in the form of unlimited bragging rights, which are accentuated by the potential money pots that are “presented” to the league champion.

League participation is crucial to the success of any league, but this participation helps define each fantasy community and fuels managers to dedicate their time. Managers discover an enhanced enjoyment from the combination of watching a sport they already enjoyed along with the thrill of their own fantasy football-based victories. They embrace the ups and downs that a successful franchise endures as they control their own teams full of superstar-caliber players (a team that would never be able to exist because of NFL team salary caps), and yet these managers are still able to share the camaraderie that their community provides, which in many cases may be a bonding experience that is otherwise lacking in their everyday lives. “Despite the name, fantasy football is a game firmly grounded in reality” (Yost 112)—the reality of male bonding and the needs it meets.
In fantasy football, managers have control over the NFL players drafted to their team, but they will never truly know how each player will perform in any given week, whether a player will become injured, or even which player will emerge as the next superstar. This manager/online team interaction “game” and the interface we encounter are much different than any other community/game that is out there today.

Fantasy football determines a winner by whichever team scores the most points in that week’s matchup. Scoring is determined by the NFL players’ on-field statistical accomplishments. For example, if Tom Brady were to throw for 240 passing yards, 2 touchdowns, and 1 interception, then his fantasy owner will receive 18 points, which is mathematically derived by allotting 1 point for every 30 passing yards, 6 points for every touchdown, and -2 points for interceptions and fumbles. This formula differs slightly with other position players such as wide receivers, running backs, and tight ends by allotting 1 point for every 10 yards of rushing or receiving. Playoff berths are determined by the fantasy teams’ overall record and division ranking, which matter more than the end-of-season point total; however, end-of-season point totals are used as a tiebreaker for inter-division play.

1.6 Draft Format

As with any topic, vast research is required when evaluating the thousands of available players eligible to be drafted. Fantasy-football magazines and subscription websites are readily available to offer insider information and every conceivable advantage amongst competitors to assist throughout all levels of the experience. This “assistance” has turned fantasy participants into information “junkies”: “Over 3 million
fantasy football magazines are sold before each season. Every major sports network has added fantasy football components to their broadcasts: Web sites, newspapers, and television shows” (Yost 101).

Three main formats are used for the player-drafting process. These formats begin with the most common, which is referred to as a serpentine draft (aka snake draft). In this format, teams draft in numerical order for the first round and then reverse the order every round (St. Amant 23). “For example, in a 12-team draft, a team possessing the #1 pick would not have another pick until the draft “snaked” back to them at pick #24; a team with the #12 pick would also possess pick #13” (Billings 4). Another format is a more basic system that simply maintains the same draft order throughout each round. The third format is an auction system, which uses “a standardized, league-wide salary cap/budget” (St. Amant 18) in order to provide a more realistic NFL draft experience. Veteran managers tend to adapt this draft style as it requires managers to use more skill and not rely on the luck of the draft order. This style also allows managers to strategically raise the price of other players, causing managers to spend more than market value. (St. Amant 18). Auction leagues can set the amount of auction rounds as well as how many “fantasy” dollars each team will be allotted. Leagues can hold their drafts online or create a “live” event where everyone has the opportunity to mimic the NFL-style draft process.

All three draft methods become a social event that celebrates the camaraderie of the league and can even go as far as including an impartial moderator to announce each fantasy team’s official selection, further perpetuating the fantasy of being an NFL manager.
Another issue that leagues must consider is how to retain players for future seasons. Leagues have a few options in establishing rules to retain players or start the draft process over. Three major systems are the redraft, keeper, and dynasty leagues. The redraft league is the simplest: every player is available in the draft. The keeper league takes the process one step further by allowing teams to keep a designated amount of players each year; usually one to three players are kept on a roster (St. Amant 21). Each team is still required to draft new players to complete their roster. The dynasty league provides the most fantasy realism as it aligns with the NFL’s process of retaining players by requiring teams to keep all players. This process can be further complicated by adding contractual obligations: “A dynasty league allows owners to retain players based on yearly or multiyear contracts” (St. Amant 20).

Throughout the season, teams are allowed to trade players. In order to keep the league legitimate, other league members can vote on whether the trade is fair in order to prohibit any team that may not make the playoffs to assist a team that does have a chance. A trade deadline is also instituted just as in the NFL. The final method of acquiring players is through the waiver wires. Teams may drop an unwanted player and add a free agent.

1.7 Message Boards

The message boards allow managers to develop into their own fantasy football personas and characters that may deviate from their real-world nature, allowing them to respond more freely in this community than they ever would in person or in the workplace. This opportunity allows every manager to explore this freedom among the
group, which sets up the fantasy football league in the same way that Bormann sees the small group dynamic: “The content consists of characters, real or fictitious, playing out a dramatic situation in a setting removed in time and space from the here-and-now transactions of the group” (Bormann 397).

This study includes the examination of the message boards from the Fantasy Fairies Futbol Club³ in which I also was a participant. These message boards provided league members with the opportunity to communicate and interact with each other in a virtual meeting place. These discussions took place during the 2009 NFL regular season.

1.8 Researching Fantasy Football

Other fantasy players have explored the extreme fanship that they experienced while playing fantasy football. Erik Barmack and Max Handelman discussed their league’s extreme fanaticism, addiction, rituals, and comedic fantasy experiences in their book, Why Fantasy Football Matters (And Our Lives Do Not). Mark St. Amant took this fanaticism a step further by quitting his job so he could focus on winning his league’s fantasy football championship; he cleverly rationalized this life-changing decision by also writing a book titled, COMMITTED: Confessions of a Fantasy Football Junkie.

Even NFL players feel the need to explore this fanaticism, as Washington Redskins’ tight end Chris Cooley documents his excitement for the week’s fantasy matchup and his excitement for actually playing in the game in his blog: The Cooley Zone. Cooley’s blog provides an added layer of insight to the process of selecting his fantasy team’s starting roster because he bases his decisions on personal experience

³ The message-board examination will be conducted in detail in Chapter IV.
competing against players on his fantasy roster. The idea of being a participant observer in fantasy football is fairly common as fantasy football has gained popularity. While these authors have demonstrated the benefit of being a participant observer, my study takes the analysis further by applying the lens of fantasy theme analysis.

My role in the study is ideal as I play the dual role as participant observer in this particular dramatic situation. This role will provide me with a deeper understanding of the league messages and their connotations that may be lost on a pure observer of this league’s community. In providing this understanding, I assume a partial role as an ethnographer where my insight and membership within the community justify more choices in why the fantasy theme analysis is the best method to view the fantasy football league and to analyze the data from the league. The message boards will provide the foundation for the fantasy theme analysis that I will conduct in an attempt to discover meaning within the community, which is deeply based in fantasy.
2.1 The Role of Fantasy

In the context of fantasy theme analysis, “fantasy… is not used in its popular sense—as something imaginary and not grounded in reality. Instead, fantasy is used here to mean ‘the creative and imaginative interpretation of events,’ (Foss 98). Fantasy provides groups and individuals with a way to understand the chaotic experiences of life. Bormann explains that, while “the unfolding of experience is often chaotic and confusing,” “fantasy themes... are organized and artistic” (Bormann, Force 9).

The meanings encrypted in these fantasy themes allow observers to “investigate worldviews shared by groups and encoded in language, culture, and traditions” (Waite 10) and also “reveal how group members see themselves, define group beliefs, and recount mutual experiences” (Waite 10). Even though each group member attempts to create a sense of “individuality,” we see that “groups produce communicative identities by sharing…‘fantasy themes.’” (Eadie 78). In other words, fantasy themes help produce unity and cohesion within a group.

The founder in fantasy theme analysis, Ernest Bormann, discovered that he “could not only construct fantasy types by searching out similarities among narratives but that speakers often use the fantasy type as a rhetorical device in their discourse” (Bormann, Force 7). The rhetorical use of fantasy helps identify groups that share a strong bond. These fantasy types usually show that a group has achieved a common rhetorical vision
that is “clearly formulated and well understood by both speaker and audience” (Bormann, *Force* 7). Groups often use story lines to construct this rhetorical vision: “Rather than dramatizing a fantasy theme with specific characters in a specific setting, they presented the general story line…” (Bormann, *Force* 7).

Although group members do not completely specify characters when they construct a fantasy theme, they do control how participants in the story are portrayed: “When people dramatize an event, they must select certain characters to be the focus of the story and present them in a favorable light while selecting others to be portrayed in a more negative fashion” (Bormann, *Force* 9). These protagonists and antagonists are responsible for creating drama. Participants use these stories to understand their experiences: “Shared fantasies are coherent accounts of experience in the past or envisioned in the future that simplify and form the social reality of the participants” (Bormann, *Force* 9).

Bormann’s approach is to create a “dramatistic method for sorting out and evaluating public discourse” within a group to better understand how social realities are created (Cragan 69). As Cragan explains, “the focus of the approach is not on the speaker, the audience, or the situation, but on the message. The method allows a critic to describe the rhetorical dramas that form a community’s social reality and analyze the meanings, emotions, and motives that are contained in these rhetorical visions” (69).

Because rhetorical visions are often complex and rooted in a group’s collective identity, it is often difficult for an outsider to fully understand the fantasy interactions of a group. Bormann suggests that critics must work from the basic elements to reconstruct a
group’s rhetorical vision. Bormann explains that “the critic must then look for patterns of characterizations…, of dramatic situation and actions…, and of setting…. The critic must then creatively reconstruct the rhetorical vision from the representative fantasy chains…” (Fantasy 401). Foss suggests looking at each of these patterns as a theme: “setting themes, character themes, and action themes” (99). These themes assist in interpreting and categorizing the community’s experience through an examination of the words or phrases that create this shared vision.

“The fantasy theme analysis forces the scholar to search for the boundaries of rhetorical communities and reveals the complex and complicated symbolic terrain…” (Bormann, Force 8). In the fantasy football environment, leagues have a message board that gives each manager the ability to comment on the past; predict future events, and their relevance to that manager’s advantage; and discuss events that are taking place outside of the community. The fantasy football message boards serve as a window to the vast terrain of this fantasy football league.

Surprisingly, the lens of fantasy theme analysis has never been applied to fantasy football, which is rich in its community and interaction amongst characters, dramatic situations and actions, and its setting—or lack thereof. These message boards construct the community’s drama and are the main source that will be interpreted in order to assemble the shared fantasy themes amongst the community.

2.2 Symbolic Convergence

Bormann states that “the power of symbolic convergence theory stems from the human tendency to try to understand the events in terms of people with certain
personality traits and motivations, people who make decisions, take actions, and cause things to happen” (Bormann, Force 9). Bormann further explains that through the shared fantasies of symbolic convergence “we can understand a person making plans in order to achieve goals and succeeding or failing to do so, because we often interpret our own behavior in that way in our personal fantasies” (Bormann, Force 9). It is through this understanding that symbolic convergence also enables us to “reconstruct the consciousness embodied in the sharing of rhetorical fantasies of the past must depend heavily upon traces left in the messages that created those fantasies” (Bormann, Force 5).

In decoding these messages in order to understand the underlying shared fantasies, we also must examine the material that was used to create these messages. Bormann indicates that “rhetorical fantasies may include fanciful and fictitious scripts of imaginary characters, but they often deal with things that have actually happened to members of the community or that are reported in authenticated works of history, in the news, or in the oral history and folklore of the group” (Bormann, Force 5). Bormann describes this significant material as “the dramatizing message that sparks the fantasy chain is called a fantasy theme” (Bormann, Force 5). We use these references to the real world to help associate what is being discussed in the fantasy community because it also helps the members to put the community’s events and proceedings in perspective.

Bormann explains that when members begin to embed their messages with “fantasy types or allusions to types” then there is “further evidence that fantasy themes have been shared” (Bormann, Force 7).
As members contribute to the community’s fantasy themes, everything they say points out how they identify and “buy in” to the community as a whole and its realism. “When a person appropriates a rhetorical vision he gains with the supporting dramas constraining forces which impel him to adopt a lifestyle and to take certain action” (Bormann, Fantasy 406). Adopting these personas or lifestyles cause members to reorganize their priorities and lose track of the time they are dedicating to a hobby, as the hobby becomes an escape. We must examine how the fantasy theme “generates a sense of community and cohesion from the insider” and how the events converge into a consuming undertaking and provides the necessary elements of a symbolic convergence (Bormann, Fantasy 402).

Symbolic convergence theory provides researchers with ways to understand how groups behave. For instance, some groups develop their own language for a specific task that they perform. Surfers and rock climbers, for example, have developed their own terminology that has little meaning to outsiders. Symbolic convergence can be taken in another direction to examine how fans of movie and television can become fanatical (e.g., *Star Wars* fans and Trekkies). The interactions of these fan-based communities can get heated, especially now that everyone’s voice can be heard across various Internet forums.

2.3 Rhetorical Vision

Shared fantasies “not only create reality for individuals but the individuals’ meanings for symbols can converge to create a shared reality or community consciousness” (Foss 97). Community consciousness begins to manifest as the fantasy themes begin to “chain together to form dramas containing characters, settings, and
scenarios. The most general form of these dramas Bormann calls a ‘rhetorical vision’” (Eadie 78). When a group shares a common rhetorical vision, they find common meanings to perpetuate this shared vision, which explains how their sharing of group fantasies created a symbolic convergence. As the rhetorical visions begin to reveal themselves, the group begins to come together and then “grows excited, involved, more dramas chain out to create a common symbolic reality filled with heroes and villains” (Bormann, *Fantasy* 399).

In order to apply these methods to fantasy football, we first need to understand how Bormann decodes the fantasy theme. “A rhetorical vision is a blend of discursive material, ‘here and now’ events, and fantasy themes which are woven together to form a drama that is credible and compelling” (Cragan 69). Although Cragan describes the dramas of fantasy themes as “compelling,” the rhetorical visions they create can have various effects on group members, and are not always permanent or especially vivid. As Bormann explains:

“Rhetorical visions may be more or less compelling and relate to matters of greater or lesser importance to the individuals who share the fantasies. A given individual may share several rhetorical visions providing social realities for such things as hobbies, politics, intimate relationships, and religion. Some of these visions may be shared by only a few people, and the visions may last only for short periods of time. On the other hand, some rhetorical visions are so all-encompassing and impelling that they permeate an individual’s social reality in all aspects of living. I call such
all-encompassing symbolic systems *life-style rhetorical visions.*”

(Bormann, *Force* 8)

Based on this definition, it is obvious that rhetorical visions can take many forms. These forms play a role in shaping a group’s “master analogy.” As Bormann explains, the key dramas and rhetorical visions of a group contain a master analogy that “pulls the various elements together into a more or less elegant and meaningful whole” (Bormann, *Force* 8). This master analogy allows individuals who “share this vision [to] likely become a cohesive unit rooted in a common worldview” (Waite 11), united in a shared vision that allows for a coherent and cohesive interpretation of their community and its significance as a microcosm.

2.4 Subculture

In order to understand the hold fantasy football has on its members, we will examine how it fits into the sports world—particularly the NFL’s fanatical world. To conduct this examination, we must first understand what a subculture is and how a subculture is formed.

“Subculture as a concept has much to offer sociological understanding of human interaction against a cultural and symbolic background” (Brake 9). The same social dynamics that create a group’s rhetorical visions also cement the group’s identity as a subculture. As Brake explains, “culture is mediated to and generated by a collectivity of social actors, and at the existential level it indicates how meanings are taken from a subculture, used to project an image and hence an identity” (Brake 9). This projected identity and image also applies to external messages and influences. As Waite explains,
the concept of subculture perpetuates group’s fantasy “when individuals focus on an element of a message until they fashion mental pictures of it. *Fantasy* does not imply make-believe. Rather, it refers to interpretations of events such as films, speeches, and even Internet messages” (10). Waite provides the example of Nike’s “Just Do It” marketing campaign; the “Just Do It” slogan “is embraced by many Americans and used in a variety of contexts. A local church’s billboard reads, for example, ‘Prayer. Just do it’ and a major fitness center’s newsletter states ‘Exercise. Just do it!’” (Waite 10).

Fantasy allows groups to adapt the themes of other subcultures to fit their own. As Bormann explains, “A pressing rhetorical problem for aggregates of individuals moving towards a sense of community is the creation of a common identity. People create a common consciousness by becoming aware that they are involved in an identifiable group and that their group differs in some important respects from other groups” (*Force* 11). In this way, subcultures are defined through inclusion and exclusion.

Subculture can be used to examine the role of owner/general manager that every participant of fantasy football embraces as a subset of fandom. Subculture also explains how fantasy football incorporates the associated subculture of “hypermasculinity” that traditionally accompanies the many forms of sports fanaticism and spectatorship. This concept will be explained further in Chapter Five, with accompanying examples from the Fantasy Fairies Futbol Club.

2.5 Plotlines

As discussed earlier, plot is a key element in the construction of a group’s rhetorical vision. “Action themes, which also can be called *plotlines*, deal with the actions
in which the characters in the drama engage” (Foss 99). These action themes will construct the shared experiences of the community as it assembles the rhetorical vision (Foss 100).

Themes give groups ways of managing times of conflict by “deal[ing] with anxiety aroused by times of trouble, by the evil within the social reality” (Bormann, *Force* 16). These times of trouble, however, can be resolved through a group synthesis of ideas that can lead to the establishment of new rules. “The sharing of fantasies within a community establishes the assumptive system that is the basis for debate and discussion” (Bormann, *Force* 16). Every community will have its disagreements but through “an organized effort, people sharing an impulse must begin to communicate with one another and create a new consciousness” (Bormann, *Force* 10). The community’s shared consciousness allows members to “begin organizing behaviors and develop their rhetoric of organization, including terms for status and leadership and for formal organizational units such as committees, circuits, and parishes” (Bormann, *Force* 10).

As the community begins to take shape and shares its identity, members will start fitting into the needed roles of the community to unknowingly help further plotlines. Within groups, plotlines develop from the unifying rhetorical vision to create an elaborate foundation for the group. In other words, the groups ultimate shared goal (in this case, “To Become Champion”), leads to a branching structure of interwoven stories and emerging myths. Plotlines will be further examined in Chapter Four as we examine the message boards and the scenarios that unfold.
2.6 Symbolic Cues and Fantasy Types

Plotlines are often strewn with symbolic cues, another clue that a group shares a common fantasy; symbolic cues are defined as “cryptic allusions to symbolic common ground” (Bormann, *Force* 6). These cues often illicit an emotional response: “When a group of people have shared a fantasy theme, they have charged their emotional and memory banks with meanings and emotions that can be set off by a commonly agreed upon cryptic symbolic cue” (Bormann, *Force* 6). Symbolic cues are allusions to shared fantasies that can take many forms and “may arouse tears or evoke anger, hatred, love, and affection, as well as laughter and humor. The symbolic cue can also exist as a code word, phrase, slogan, or nonverbal sign or gesture. It may refer to a geographical or imaginary place or the name of a persona.” (Bormann, *Force* 6).

For instance, an inside joke shared by a group is an example of a symbolic cue. As Bormann explains, “only those who have shared the fantasy theme that the inside joke refers to will respond in an appropriate fashion” (Bormann, *Force* 6). “This accumulated history within the group helps to understand the reference and respond accordingly…” (Bormann, *Force* 6). As a group collects a number of symbolic cues, they begin to form fantasy types, which are “a number of similar scenarios or outlines of the plot of the fantasies, including particulars of the scenes, characters, and situations have been shared by members of a group or larger community” (Bormann, *Force* 7). Fantasy types are created “when a stock scenario is repeated again and again by the same characters or by similar characters” (Bormann, *Force* 7).
Eventually, these fantasy types separate from their contexts and claim their autonomy. The fantasy types become so “ingrained” in the community’s consciousness that members “respond to general statements which allude to the type or to code words that signal the type without the supporting references to specific themes” (Bormann, *Ten* 295). The existence of symbolic cues, fantasy types, and their resulting code words help to make a more colorful experience for group members, and provide hints for the researcher to unravel.

### 2.7 Conclusion

Bormann expresses that “in all communication contexts…there is a connection between rhetorical visions and community consciousness, that sharing fantasies is closely connected with motivation, and is an important means for people to create their social realities” (Bormann, *Ten* 289). The fantasy football league embodies these actions as the sharing of this fantasy of managing a professional football motivates each manager, fueling the competition, and creating a community for each character/manager to thrive, fail, or just accept mediocrity.
3.1 Theoretical Framework

My method for this analysis borrows heavily from Bormann’s methods on how to conduct a fantasy theme analysis, which were previously discussed in Chapter Two. His methods are specific in approach and offer the research a variety of questions to begin the analysis. Bormann’s intent is to provide a starting point and examples, which the researcher then adapts to suit the artifact at hand.

Bormann suggests that the researcher should begin “by collecting evidence related to the manifest content of the communication...” (Bormann, *Fantasy* 401). The manifest content is the core piece of evidence needed to conduct a fantasy theme analysis. Picking the manifest content is critical so that it may provide the necessary material to uncover the fantasy themes and the larger essence of the community. This content is sometimes described as the “artifact” of the study and must represent the core ideals of the group. The critic then “discovers and describes the narrative and dramatic materials that have chained out for those who participate in the rhetorical vision” (*Fantasy* 401). These dramatic materials include “patterns of characterizations…, of dramatic situation and actions…, and of setting…” (*Fantasy* 401). After these elements are gathered, “the critic must then creatively reconstruct the rhetorical vision from the representative fantasy chains…” (*Fantasy* 401). This first component of the research, creates the framework for the study.
After the researcher identifies and constructs the framework, he/she is then able to ask more pertinent questions to better understand the detailed meanings—often hidden or subtle—that the group has intertwined into their fabric of existence. The following questions are examples of the ones Bormann uses to conduct an investigation:

- “Who are the dramatis personae” (characters)?
- “Does some abstraction personified as a character provide the ultimate legitimization of the drama?”
- “Who are the heroes and villains?”
- “Where are the dramas set?”
- “What are the typical scenarios?”
- What acts are performed by “the enemy?”
- “What emotional evocations dominate the dramas?”
- “How does the fantasy theme work to attract the unconverted?”
- How does the fantasy theme “generate a sense of community and cohesion from the insider?” (All questions from Fantasy 401-402)

For a deeper explanation of how I applied these approaches and questions to the artifact I chose, please see the section entitled “Coding” below.

### 3.2 Participant/Observer Role

My immersion within the community provides me with the advantage of knowing these managers outside the confines of fantasy football. My work is similar to ethnography because it allows me to interact with the community and understand the motives behind the community’s actions and discussions. An
outsider may misinterpret the meaning or connotation of certain messages without this insider knowledge. I do recognize that there will be a small amount of bias and that the study will be subjective to my interpretation of the artifact. My abilities to analyze the artifact outweigh the bias.

The advantage of being a participant provided additional information to code each message into its correct category as many of the messages required a greater understanding of each situation’s connotation.

3.3 Source Material

The selected evidence is the message boards from the fantasy football league known as the Fantasy Fairies Futbol Club, of which I am a member. The analysis of the evidence consists of a data collection of the community messages boards. The community’s message boards are the most stable and documented artifact and serve as the perfect artifact to conduct a fantasy theme analysis because as the central point of focus within the community, they act as a virtual town hall forum for the community members to voice their concerns, engage in debate, and witness a diplomatic resolution.

The data collected within the community begins with the first message posted after the 2009 NFL Week 1 games have begun and concludes after the Fantasy Football season is finished at the end of Week 16. (The Appendix contains the messages posted by this community and analyzed in this thesis. The message board, with all of its distinctive errors, is quoted verbatim throughout the thesis, and the messages themselves are presented in their entirety in the Appendix.) Although the NFL season continues for one more week after the fantasy season ends, many NFL teams have already clinched a
playoff spot and are resting their team’s starters; these starters are usually the more popular players in fantasy leagues and could severely hamper a fantasy team. It is important to note that by Week 16 of the NFL season, the corresponding fantasy football season only has four teams remaining. Of those four remaining teams, only two teams truly matter as they are battling for the league championship; the other two teams are playing for third place. The messages posted within the last few weeks of the fantasy football season are still related to league events because the managers who are not competing are still making relevant comments about the continuing events, which contribute to the league’s rhetorical vision. Messages that are posted outside of the fantasy season (prior to NFL Week 1 and after NFL Week 16) are not be examined as they have a tendency to be directed at events unrelated to the community’s focus.

The collected messages are coded (see discussion below) for themes regarding to the language, culture, and traditions of the community. All of this data is then used to define the characteristics of the fantasy football culture and the discovered themes, completing the thesis.

Examining these message boards shows the reaction week after week to specific events that occur within the Fantasy Fairies Futbol Club community. The communication provides insight into the construction of the fantasy theme that unites this group by a shared fantasy. Bormann explains that the social reality contained in this completed rhetorical vision must “examine the social relationships, the motives, and the qualitative impact of the symbolic world as though it were the substance of social reality for those who participated in the vision” (Fantasy 401). This thesis further explains how
the community members “related to each other, how they arranged themselves into social hierarchies, how they acted to achieve their goals, and how they were aroused by the dramatic action…” (401).

3.4 Coding

Coding was conducted in order to find evidence of symbolic convergence. My coding process required me to determine both the tone and the content of each message to answer the questions posed by Bormann. Table 3.1 explains the coded categories of the message boards and a description of each category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Own team positive</td>
<td>Positive remarks about one’s own team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own team negative</td>
<td>Negative remarks about one’s own team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own team neutral/factual</td>
<td>Neutral/factual remarks about one’s own team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another team positive</td>
<td>Positive remarks about another’s team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another team negative</td>
<td>Negative remarks about another’s team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another team neutral/factual</td>
<td>Neutral/factual remarks about another’s team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References to real name/nickname</td>
<td>Remarks about a fantasy manager’s name and nickname used in the real world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References to fantasy football team name</td>
<td>Remarks about a fantasy manager’s team name or altered version of such.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References to division</td>
<td>Remarks about the Fantasy league divisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References to NFL player name</td>
<td>Remarks about NFL players.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References to NFL organization</td>
<td>Remarks about NFL teams or NFL specific terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References to derogatory term</td>
<td>Insulting terms addressed to other managers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References to positive term</td>
<td>Complimentary terms addressed to other managers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References to college football</td>
<td>Remarks about college football and related personnel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References to pop culture/society</td>
<td>Remarks about people or events from popular culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References to money</td>
<td>Remarks about fantasy and real-world financial issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References to significant other</td>
<td>Remarks about a significant other or girlfriend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References to physical place</td>
<td>Remarks about a real-world place.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All messages from the Fantasy Fairies Futbol Club message boards have a format that indicates the message number, message title, author (by team), time, and content.

The following is an example of the message format:

1. One FG away......
 Posted by: Dallas Cowboyds
 Sep 15 10:04am
 One FG away from Division 2 starting the season undefeated. Tough loss Pooper but nice work!

Division 1 eat it.
Division 3 suck it.

Some messages include a title that I consider relevant to the overall meaning, understanding, and, therefore, coding of the message. In these instances, I have included the title into the appropriate category and have placed brackets around the message.

Below is the original message and then the elements to be analyzed:

184. You kept Aaron Rodgers?! 
 Posted by: Locos Monos IX
 Dec 8 5:18am
 I guess Aaron had the last laugh.

[You kept Aaron Rodgers?!]
I guess Aaron had the last laugh.

The approach to coding considered that messages were directed at either a person or group of people and given the competitive nature of fantasy football, these messages would be either positive, negative, or neutral. Positive and negative messages were coded by determining the nature and then direction of the message. The following categories were used:

• Own team positive
• Own team negative
• Own team neutral/factual
• Another team positive
• Another team negative
• Another team neutral/factual

The term *factual* is added to the neutral category as many of the messages simply state an event that has happened and has no further connotation. Many of these factual messages were also considered organizational messages that were used to clarify issues, rules, and commerce within the league.

Messages were also coded to determine whether there were any threats of violence—perceived or comedic—that were categorized as to whether they were emotional or physical threats. Emotional threats were defined as any threats that were psychological, such as taunting; physical threats were defined as any threats that were violent, such as physical abuse, destruction, or vandalism.

Each message was broken down into individual phrases that fit the categories; therefore, one particular message could have phrases that were coded into different categories. For example, the following message demonstrates how multiple elements can more than one category:

**140. Re: Thank You**  
*Posted by: Dallas Cowboyds  
 Nov 20 7:38pm  
 I think we should reconsider the trade veto, Gary has to START J. Lewis now!! Is that fair to anyone?! I'm sorry Gary.  

Signed,  

The guy with a worse team than Gary
The message can be broken down into three categories. The phrases “I think we should reconsider the trade veto” and “I’m sorry Gary” are categorized as Another Team Positive because it deals with sympathy toward another team. The phrase “Gary has to START J. Lewis now!! Is that fair to anyone?!?” is actually classified as Another Team Negative because it is also mocking Gary for starting a player who is viewed as worthless and will probably not provide enough points for Gary’s team to win. This message is closed with “Signed, The guy with a worse team than Gary” indicating self-inflicted ridicule by stating that the message author (Dallas Cowboyds) are also a bad team and is in no position to taunt anyone.

References to real names, nicknames, and fantasy names were coded to examine their relation to the fantasy community. In the same manner, other references to real-world people, events, and settings were also examined as there were references to the NFL’s players and organization, college football, popular culture and society, money, significant others, and any physical places. Finally, derogatory and positive terms were also coded to further investigate the language used within the community and whether the messages reveal any information about how the community relates to each other. The same messages were also coded to quantitatively and qualitatively analyze the references made within the community’s message boards. The following categories were used:

- References to real name/nickname
- References to fantasy football team name
- References to division
- References to NFL player name
- References to NFL organization
- References to derogatory term
- References to positive term
- References to college football
• References to pop culture/society
• References to money
• References to significant other
• References to physical place

Plotlines emerged through the analysis of the message boards. When I examined the messages, certain plotlines continued throughout the season. Some plotlines dominate the discussions, some take a supporting role and preemptively set up other plotlines, and other message strands provide general observations, subplots, comic relief, and league organizational issues. These plotlines will be explored in more depth in Chapter Four.

3.5 Conclusion

Bormann explains that all the methods in fantasy theme analysis are developed to “captured the richness of case studies while allowing generalization” (Fantasy 396). The results sections of this thesis reflect Bormann’s intent: Chapter Four focuses on the group and the messages analyzed, while Chapter Five focuses on the ways the phenomena observed in the group reflect the larger subculture of fantasy football participants.

The results of this analysis are presented in two ways: through the quantitative data of the coded message boards (presented in tables in Chapter Four), and through the more qualitative and analytical aspects of the messages and plotlines as I examine their affect on home life, the workplace, and the marketing strategy that has fueled fantasy football’s emergence and saturation of all sport-related outlets (discussed in Chapter Five).
CHAPTER FOUR

PLOTS, DATA, AND PLOTLINES OF THE FANTASY FAIRIES FUTBOL CLUB

The intricacies of fantasy theme analysis exhibit how the community forms its rhetorical vision and becomes intertwined amongst the evolving plotlines. The community’s interaction is examined through the message boards, which not only provides the stage for the emergence of plotlines but also captures the excitement of the league managers as they attempt to buy, sell, and trade their way to a league championship. The coded messages reveal the community’s verbal interaction and what ties these league managers together while the fantasy football matchups took place every week. The fantasy theme analysis provides us the ability to discover what significant material creates the fantasy chains, which in this case is the message boards. The message boards are often referred to as “smack talk” in the fantasy football world, which is generally defined as telling another person off in the heat of competition (Urban Dictionary). Within this league, smack talk can range from pleasant comments about the weekend’s matchups:

79. Re: Thank You League Members
Posted by: Tomaldinho
Oct 20 4:41pm
Greekie...it was my pleasure watching you destroy me this week. That was freakin ridiculous and I will punch you in the nuts next weekend. Congrats!

The comments can be harsher especially when the subject of a manager’s dedication is called into question. Even the words and phrases used within the league to question each other create dramatizing messages and form a rich rhetorical vision. In this
case, the likelihood of a fine is being discussed because of the accusation that one player is not monitoring his team, which has provided lopsided wins for other players, directly affecting league standings.

155. Re: Question
Posted by: Will's Weenies
Message ID: 230 Nov 25 8:32pm
Hold up computer fags. Just because I was out of town last week and forgot to set my lineup doesn't mean I'm not paying attention. Stank and Fat Legs, didn't I beat both of you? Fine that bitches.

Bormann’s fantasy theme analysis allows us to fully understand the depths of the message boards and the integral part they play in identifying the symbolic cues and fantasy themes that shape the rhetorical vision. The questions used in this framework establish the drama’s individual parts, revealing the woven themes that form the drama that is the shared rhetorical vision of the community. The above messages show examples of the characters’ interaction as the rhetorical vision unfolds. More drama is created with each message, which continually shapes the community and allows the managers to shape their identity. These identities assume the roles of heroes and villains to fit the needs of this ongoing drama and to develop the rhetorical vision through the chaining of fantasy themes and the formation of plotlines.

4.1 Coded Terms Mentioned in Message Boards

The coded terms listed in Table 4.1 display the frequency and percentage of the elements that demonstrate symbolic convergence. These elements represent the specific groupings that were used within the entire set of coded content from the message boards. The terms are listed in descending order and also include their overall percentage of
usage throughout the message boards. Although some terms have a relatively low frequency, their significance is noted later in this chapter.

**Table 4.1: Coded terms mentioned in message boards, organized by prevalence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Number of mentions</th>
<th>Percentage of mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy Teams</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFL Players</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy Managers (Real Names)</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy Divisions</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derogatory Names</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFL Team Names/Divisions</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Groups</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBA</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Football</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLB</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast Food</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicles</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages were rounded to the nearest tenth and may not total 100.

The data in Table 4.1 represents the specific grouping of terms within the community’s message boards as the foundation for the league’s fantasy themes. These groupings show the tendency of topics that the league showed toward certain subject matter and the frequency of symbolic cues. Fantasy Team and NFL player references ranked among the highest frequency with 122 and 120, respectively. Fantasy team references refers to the use of the team’s official league name and only refers to one person (e.g., Greekie
McPitapants); in this ranking, fantasy team references are the highest with 27.4% and NFL player references followed closely with 27%. The next three categories are fantasy managers with 84 references, fantasy divisions with 31 references, and derogatory names also with 31 references. The percentage breakdown equates to 18.9% for fantasy managers, 7% for fantasy divisions, and 7% for derogatory terms. In this table, fantasy managers refer to the players’ real names and their real-world nicknames (these nicknames are used in interaction outside of the league and are distinct from the “nicknames” that act as team names). These references establish the dramatis personae of the league by bringing both primary and secondary characters to the forefront and by answering Bormann’s question: “Who are the dramatis personae?” As discussed earlier, the dramatis personae represent the characters that create the rhetorical vision and keep it rich in fantasy themes as the members experience the symbolic convergence.

The next two highest groups are NFL team names and groups with 13 references and male groups, which also has 13 references. The references for these two groups equates into 3% of the total coded terms for each category. Male groups has been changed from positive terms because after closer examination the terms revealed to only consist of male grouping terms, such as fellas, guys, and homies, which reinforce the male camaraderie aspect of the league.

The remaining groups only had single-digit references in the messages. These coded terms references consisted of the NBA with 7 (1.6%), college football with 6 (1.3%), MLB with 5 (1.1%), locations with 3 (0.7%), music with 3 (0.7%), fast food also
with 3 (0.7%), TV with 2 (0.4%), vehicles with 1 ((0.2%), and significant other with 1 (0.2%). The total mention of coded terms equals 445.

The data shows that the majority of the terms mentioned deal with references to individuals. The top three categories (fantasy teams, NFL players, and fantasy managers) claim 73.3% of the mentions in the data. The individual references dominate the number of mentions and represent the league’s tendency to focus on the individual and forgetting about the team. The league managers all begin to adopt this mindset and open the gateway for the league’s symbolic convergence. No longer are the fantasy managers looking or even concerned about how teams perform, but, instead, on how each individual performs. NFL players had 51 more mentions than NFL teams and groups.

The other 26.7%, however, is still relevant to the understanding of the league’s rhetorical vision by discussing other ancillary fantasy themes. Groupings (fantasy divisions, derogatory names, NFL team names and groups, and male groups) consist of another 20% of the coded terms. These groupings still represent a fifth of the coded terms references and show that the idea of a group dynamic has not been forgotten by the managers, but simply that they have been overshadowed by the league’s focus on the individual and the needs those individuals serve to the overall construct of this rhetorical vision.

The remaining categories represent those topics that link the league to external events that occur outside the league’s rhetorical vision. The NBA, college football, and the MLB further support the need to discuss the sports world; however, the NBA and MLB references are in relation to professional managing styles and how the fantasy
league could be better organized if it followed the examples of professional sports. The college football references deal with a variety of topics but allude to the league managers’ interest in college football especially since 66% of the league graduated from the University of Florida and the other 33% are Florida Gator fans. One of these particular references occurs when one member insults another member by calling him “Lane Kiffin,” which is an example of a symbolic cue. The symbolic cue of Lane Kiffin builds upon the fantasy theme that focuses on college football and chains out through the rhetorical vision because of its shared meaning. This is a disparagement because Lane Kiffin was, at the time the insult was made, the head coach of the Tennessee Volunteers football team—a bitter rival of the Florida Gators. The insult goes beyond a simple dislike because of the enemy team Lane Kiffin coaches—it represents one man’s misguided cockiness and inane comments that would embarrass one’s self, family, and team.

The categories (locations, music, fast food, TV, vehicles, and significant other) that provide links to reality are the ones with the fewest references, but they still provide insight into the groups’ rhetorical vision. Locations only had three references, which were references to physical places: Universal, Disneyworld, and the restaurant T.G.I. Friday’s. These three references show that there are no direct references associated with sports—no mention of stadiums, locker rooms, training facilities, or even anyone’s house. The closest reference that would fit in this category is the reference to T.G.I. Friday’s, which alludes to the location of the league’s fantasy football draft. The diminished presence of location, music, fast food, TV, vehicle, and significant other terms represent their lack of
significance in the league’s rhetorical vision and they reflect the league’s separation from subjects outside of this rhetorical vision. The lack of terms describing significant others provides further insight to the male camaraderie: Only once did a league member reference his significant other on the message boards during this 4-month period, despite the fact that all of the league members have wives or girlfriends.

4.2 Comparison of Fantasy References to Real-World References

Table 4.2 further groups the coded terms of Table 4.1, by dividing them into their relationship to the fantasy league, the real world, and places in between. Symbolic cues that act as bridge references represent those categories that can be used both inside and outside the fantasy league’s rhetorical vision, but do not directly impact the events inside the rhetorical vision. Table 4.2 also displays the number of mentions, total percentage, and aligns each category with its respective domain.
Table 4.2: Comparison of Fantasy References to Real-World References

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Mentions</th>
<th>Percentage of total mentions (n=445)</th>
<th>Mentions Included</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Fantasy References (Internal References) | 281 | 63.1% | Fantasy Teams (122)  
Fantasy Managers (84)  
Fantasy Divisions (31)  
Derogatory Names (31)  
Male Groups (13)  |
| NFL References (“Bridge” References) | 133 | 28.9% | NFL Players (120)  
NFL Team Names (13)  |
| Real-World References (External References) | 31 | 7.0% | Locations (3)  
Music (3)  
Fast Food (3)  
TV (2)  
Vehicles (1)  
Significant Other (1)  |
| Other | 13 | 3.9% | |

Percentages were rounded to the nearest tenth and may not total 100.

The data in Table 4.2 shows that fantasy (internal) references are mentioned 281 times, NFL (bridge) references are mentioned 133 times, and real-world (external) references are mentioned 31 times. This equates to 63.1% of messages referenced topics that dealt directly with the league’s rhetorical vision. Another 28.9% of the references dealt with topics that bridged the external and internal references while demonstrating their relevance to the league’s rhetorical vision. Only 7% of the messages dealt specifically with what were considered external references; however, of those external references, 4% still referenced sports and shared a link to the topics of the fantasy league’s world. The remaining 3.9% dealt with the above-mentioned diminished presence of external references and confirm the rhetorical vision’s domination and demonstrate the members’ symbolic convergence.
4.3 Individuals to Group References

Table 4.3 compares the number of individual references to the number of group references. This table differs from Table 4.1 in that total counts have been regrouped to show specific group and individual relationships in connection to the percentage of group references and percentage of individual references. The “Mentions Included” column redistributes the categories from Table 4.1 into a grouping that clearly shows the individual and group status of each category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>References to Individuals</th>
<th>Number of Mentions</th>
<th>Percentage of total mentions (n=432)</th>
<th>Mentions Included</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>355</td>
<td>82.2%</td>
<td>Fantasy Teams (122)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NFL Players (120)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fantasy Managers (84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Derogatory Names—Singular (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Baseball Players (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Basketball Players (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>College Football Coaches (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fast Food (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Musicians (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Significant Other (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References to Organizations</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>Fantasy Divisions (31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Derogatory Names—Plural (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NFL Team Names (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male Groups (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NBA Teams/Leagues (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MLB Teams/Leagues (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bands (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TV Groups (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages were rounded to the nearest tenth and may not total 100. Mention numbers have been regrouped from other tables into singular and plural mentions where applicable.

The data in Table 4.3 shows that there are 355 references to individuals and 77 references to organizations. This data reveals that individuals are referenced 82.2% of the time and organizations are referenced 17.8% of the time in the league’s message board.
and, therefore, the rhetorical vision. The data supports that the league’s rhetorical vision leads toward a sense of individuality because everyone is acting this way. This individuality has caused each member to view himself as the only important character in this rhetorical vision.

The data reiterates that a larger percentage of the message boards’ content references individuals rather than groups, just as the coded terms also showed us in Table 4.1; Table 4.3 further supports the claim by showing how wide the margin is when we further break down each reference and category.

Often, the message content shows that the topic is the team manager’s emotional investment and never about the actual NFL players’ emotional investments, which again shows how each member sees himself as the most important character in this rhetorical vision. The main characters of this fantasy league are the managers of the fantasy teams. Each manager has the ability to contribute to the message boards and have his voice heard. These contributions assist in the establishment of which characters are considered heroes in this rhetorical vision and which are considered villains. The frequency for such an action, just as in any classroom or workplace, is not the same for all participants. Some members are more vocal than others, but each member of this community contributes to the fantasy themes by providing symbolic cues, establishing a convergence of a shared reality, and becoming a part of the vision.

Even though the NFL players perform the work, they are not seen as characters in the rhetorical vision; in fact, the managers tend to see the NFL players more as props that are manipulated at a manager’s whim. This focus also reinforces the symbolic
convergence that managers’ identities shift within the league because the situation is 
unlike an actual NFL team where the players’ involvement is considered. Examining the 
data reveals an overwhelming use of “I” and “me” but nothing noting the plurality of an 
actual team. The symbolic convergence is further supported because the mangers’ names 
and their teams’ names are used interchangeably as a substitute for “I.” Even the term 
*fantasy team* supports this distinction as the term lends itself to the fact that each team is 
indeed a fantasy and contributes to the league’s symbolic convergence. It is, however, a 
collection of players that are really only mentioned if they did something significant, if 
they underachieved, or if they are being traded. This further explains how the fantasy 
league has very little to do with the actual players of the team and has everything to do 
with the manager—the managers are the characters of the rhetorical vision. The players 
are in the background until they are moved by the managers.

Most managers are on equal footing within the league; however, one manager acts 
as the league’s commissioner, bestowing upon him a perceived governing power. The 
power is mostly just the responsibility to answer everyone’s questions and calm his/her 
concerns. Ultimately, the league’s power rests in the actions of each manager because 
every rule is established and determined by a vote, which is then carried out by the 
commissioner. In Bormann’s terms, the commissioner assumes a god-like role; however, 
in this rhetorical vision, the commissioner is selected from his peers and accepts a role 
equivalent to a president because of the majority rule.

My initial claim indicated that the fantasy league fosters a strong loyalty towards 
individuals. This claim also shows how the individual attention diverts the attention away
from the teams’ accomplishments and can transfer into the real world as well by altering how fans interact with the sport. The league’s focus has shifted from a team-focused fanship that one might expect from a college football fan who attended the University of Florida and loves Gator football, or an NFL fan who was raised in Boston and follows the New England Patriots. Through fantasy football, we see the team taking second stage to the accomplishments of the individual; however, this absence of strong team loyalty allows for the entrance of a strong individual loyalty and, as a result, an increase in viewers who watch NFL games. Now fans have the desire to watch every game because their fantasy team players are involved instead of just one game a weekend that would include a fan’s home team. The NFL has recognized how this can benefit their marketing strategy; this discussion will be continued in the next chapter.

4.4 Positive, Negative, and Neutral/Factual Responses towards Own Team and Other Teams

In relation to the emotions that control the rhetorical vision, Bormann asks the question: “What emotional evocations dominate the dramas?” (Bormann, Fantasy 402). Bormann uses the terms hate, pity, and indignation to describe possible emotions that can steer the drama in a certain direction. The hate, pity, and overall indignation are prevalent throughout the message boards. To study these written emotions, I created Table 4.4 to simplify the positive, negative, and neutral emotional content created in the message boards.

Table 4.4 analyzes the frequency of coded responses within the positive, neutral/factual, and negative symbolic convergences for both responses directed at a
player’s own team and for those responses directed at another team. The table further illustrates that the percentage of responses were also calculated to show the relationship among the Own Team responses, the relationship among the Other Team Responses, and the relationship among total message board responses (Own Team and Other Team).

Table 4.4: Comparison of positive, negative, and neutral/factual responses towards own team and other teams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage of Responses</th>
<th>Own Team Responses</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Own Team</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral/Factual</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total own team</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Team</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral/Factual</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total other team</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>284</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages were rounded to the nearest tenth and may not total 100.

The frequency of coded responses for Own Team consist of 25 positive responses, 22 neutral/factual responses, and 32 negative responses, which brings the total number of Own Team responses to 79. The percentage breakdown for Own Team coded responses consists of 31.6% positive, 27.8% neutral/factual, and 40.5% negative (percentages were rounded to the nearest tenth and may not total 100%). These percentages help illustrate the relative emotional content of each category.

The frequency of coded responses for Other Team consist of 38 positive responses, 67 neutral/factual responses, and 100 negative responses, which brings the
total to 205. The percentage breakdown for Other Team coded responses consists of 18.5% positive, 32.7% neutral/factual, and 48.8% negative.

The total percentage breakdown of all Own Team and Other Team coded responses consists of the following: 8.8% Own Team positive, 7.7% Own Team neutral/factual, 11.3% Own Team negative, 13.4% Other Team positive, 23.6% Other Team neutral/factual, and 35.2 Other Team negative. The split consists of 27.8% Own Team responses and 72.2 Other Team responses.

The findings reveal a number of interesting results, such as the fact that the Own Team positive, negative, and neutral/factual responses are within such a close range. I expected those three categories to have more discrepancy and for them to represent the inverse of the Other Team response totals. The fact that the Own Team responses are so similar and that they make up slightly more than a quarter of the total responses show how the competition is not necessarily focused on individual team’s success but on other teams’ misfortunes. Misfortunes in this case could range from ridicule surrounding a loss to poor management choices, but these misfortunes yield emotional responses, as mentioned earlier, causing the managers to react and to blame their players, themselves, or turn the emotions outward and mock other managers.

The focus on other teams’ misfortunes is supported by the fact that 48.8% of Other Team responses were negative and 35.2% of total responses were Other Team negative, which was the largest category statistically at more than a third of all responses and by total count (100 responses). The dominance of negative responses directed at other teams was not a surprise because this negative behavior reinforces the league’s
rhetorical vision. In relation to all responses, I am surprised to see that Own Team positive is so low at 8.8% of the total responses and 25 total responses. I expected this category to be higher because the managers in our league thrive on competition, increasing their tendency to mock other teams while boasting of their own teams’ conquests—real or perceived.

Bormann explains that “If a new style becomes popular, partisans of the practice need to instruct more and more newcomers to appreciate and practice the style. They often set up special instructional facilities for that purpose” (Bormann, Force 21). Since the fantasy football world only exists on the Internet, these “instructional facilities,” which are housed in the message boards, are critical to establishing the rhetorical vision and keeping that rhetorical vision moving in the community’s desired direction. These instructional comments often had a neutral tone and were categorized separately, functioning solely in an administrative role.

Neutral responses toward other teams was the second highest statistical category with 23.6% of the total responses and a total count of 67. This is expected because of how much of the league’s discussions were based around factual occurrences or administrative issues in conjunction with newly established rules for the 2009 fantasy season relating to what players could and could not do. These responses will be examined in more depth in the plotlines section below.

4.5 How the Plotlines Build the Rhetorical Vision

The plotlines demonstrate how league managers perceive characters as heroes and villains, but also how managers develop and control the topics and conversations of the
league. The fantasy themes chain out illustrating the mangers’ evolution into fantasy gods. The NFL players who they have drafted have freewill that sometimes favors these gods and sometimes does not (very much like Clash of the Titans). How are we able to move people around like chess pieces or like the gods on Olympus?

4.6 Fire Sale

In this rhetorical vision, managers demonstrate their intense enthusiasm for the trading process. One option is to simply present your players like cattle and see which ones people are interested in.

96. Moving players.......check it out.
 Posted by: Dallas Cowboyds
 Oct 30 11:10am
 V. Jackson
 M. Colston
 M. Sims-Walker
 K. Moreno

Everyone is for sale. I would like to move one of my WRs for a decent RB or someone with upside. If you come after Jackson or Colston bring your "A" game - those guys are good and I know it.

All offers will be considered, send me something.

These “trade happy” managers are constantly looking to realign their personnel every week, which becomes a symbolic cue in itself. It is considered a symbolic cue because certain managers adopt this strategy and are then ridiculed for this behavior within the league. Managers who oppose this view will revisit this symbolic cue and each time this cue is revisited, it reinforces the symbolic convergence.
The approach to trades shows how disposable the NFL players are within the fantasy league’s rhetorical vision—and to some extent in the NFL. The players are purchased, traded, and treated as though they only have one task to perform. They are essentially treated as slaves, are evaluated by how well they can perform the “manual labor” and bear the pain of a football game, and are discarded as soon as they lose that physical prowess. This practice is carried out each off-season as NFL teams realign their roster to assemble a more cost-effective, efficient, and ultimately productive commodity.

This comparison is heightened by the fact that the ownership class in the NFL is overwhelmingly white while the NFL players are predominantly Black: 65% of players are African-American (Rhoden). Although the fact that NFL players receive generous compensation for their efforts diminishes this comparison somewhat, salary is entirely absent from the game of fantasy football. Thus, the players are not treated as employees, but rather as property.

4.7 The Curse of the Bunyip

The Bunyip story is one of the more unusual—and unexpected—plotlines that developed. As plotlines developed throughout the season, the curse of the Bunyip continued to provide comic relief as well as standing in as a scapegoat for a team’s bad luck. More importantly, it created another symbolic cue that produced additional chaining throughout the league. This scapegoat is a dementedly crafted kangaroo with a joey sticking out of its pouch; however, it has evil piercing eyes and bunny-like ears that add to the carving’s overall creepiness and provide the name Bunyip (Figure 4.1).
The Bunyip was purchased before the season began and was originally meant to be a curse that a player could send to an opponent before that week’s matchup. The Bunyip acted in this manner for the first couple matchups; however, when I received it, the opposite happened—it broke my losing streak. My reversal of fortune contributed to the league’s perception of the Bunyip but also prolonged its use as a symbolic cue. As many athletes strongly hold on to any good-luck trinkets, believe in superstitions, and

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4 Photograph taken by B. Ray
religiously reenact any sequence of events that have presented good fortune, then so did I. I kept the Bunyip throughout the rest of the season as it revived me from my 0-2 start and led me to a 6-game winning streak and eventually to the league playoffs where its luck finally hopped off.

The symbolic convergence surrounding the Bunyip began at its introduction and fueled the Bunyip’s plotline throughout the league’s rhetorical vision. The Bunyip took on different roles throughout the season but began as a methodically placed albatross sent from one opponent to the next: “Someone’s getting a kangaroo in the mail…” (Message #6). The league managers all shared this vision of the Bunyip even though its presence diminished for a while as I reaped its good-luck vibes and thanked it for its deliverance to my team. The Bunyip’s legacy began to collectively grow as the drama unfolded and causing league members to be weary of its curse. “It’s a damn good luck charm for everyone else. Go ahead and burn it” (Message #80). The Bunyip continued to strike all who had encountered it as though it was still the reason for a team’s performance, but then its curse started to manifest itself into NFL players. “Hey King—how is that Jamal Lewis pick up treating you—I see that you have still not won a game since picking him up. Jamal Lewis is the Bunyip…” (Message #101). The Bunyip curse has now become certain players who will doom one’s fantasy team.

The curse of the Bunyip evolved naturally into a fantasy type within the league’s rhetorical vision by collecting all the bad luck and transforming it into a league scapegoat—and inside joke as well. Whenever a manager had an occurrence—or never ending string of occurrences—of bad luck, the Bunyip or its reincarnated player form was
to blame for the team’s bad luck. The curse of the Bunyip, however, is more than its emergence as a symbolic cue amongst the league managers; the Bunyip’s importance is realized in the way it connects the community. The Bunyip’s relevance is universal outside the league as these “Bunyips” exist symbolically in a variety of forms in other leagues to further dramas and foster each league’s respective rhetorical vision.

4.8 The Pressures of Economy

The weight of the fantasy season took its toll earlier this season than any other previous seasons. The addition of fantasy money—added to the auction draft portion and for in-season trades—has added a new dimension to the Fantasy Fairies Futbol Club this season. The dimension of commerce, managing a fantasy economy, and creating rules to govern these new elements have caused some unexpected twists that lead to the development of new fantasy themes. Within the rhetorical vision, those who persevere and those who complain about the new circumstances shape the unfolding drama: “I hope you don’t mind, but I will continue talking trash. Fantasy Gods have already punished me greatly with last years team and the 7 injuries this year. So F them and F the Dunkeys” (Message #64).

Along with managers reacting to the unlucky breaks of running a fantasy-football team and needing to react to injuries and a lack of productivity, the league is influenced by multiple fantasy themes that control the drama that is taking shape. There are many fantasy types that perpetuate the drama; for example, many managers feel that the league is still plagued by gross misalignment:
113. Division 3
Posted by: The Midget Nation
Nov 16 2:32pm
Division 3 is representing this week with 3 of the top 4 scoring outputs. Unfortunately for the Midgets, 115+ points will not be enough and will have the Midgets on the outside looking in with respect to the playoffs. And this just in - Division 1 is an abomination to competitive sport everywhere. Going into Monday night, scoring is as follows: King Crush (60), Thick-Thigh (75), Ziege (69) and Dunkey (67). Not good, not good at all.

Followed by friendly disputes in the value of trades…

15. Re: Panic!
Posted by: Tomaldinho
Sep 23 10:23am
I think KT just got punked by Dunkey. Butters just got 2 top tier players for an overrated #1 back (MJD) and a # 3 RB at best in Larry Johnson...who is sure to be injured in the next few weeks.

And allowing for backhanded sarcasm…

74. Re: $45.00
Posted by: Locos Monos IX
Oct 14 12:39pm
Gary, I have to disagree with IV. As your opponent this week, I encourage you to not only keep him [Jamal Lewis], but to start him. After all, you paid $45 for him.

But there is always a little gratitude for when everything goes right.

114. Thank you
Posted by: Den Bezwinger
Nov 17 10:08am
I would like to first thank everyone (fans included) for the opportunity for being apart of the league. Secondly, I would like to thank the players for playing hard and earning a playoff spot this early in the season. Champagne for everyone, the relocation and name change has boosted the Den Bezwinger organization into the playoffs for the first time. YES!!
The fantasy football world fuels so many emotions that make the season and the rhetorical vision compelling. It keeps managers interested in more than just the weekly matchups as their characters evolve and continue to spark new fantasy chains. The witty banter that transpires daily on the message boards shows how these fantasy themes chain and the community interacts within a virtual boardroom for these talks to intensify and allowing every member the opportunity to have their voice heard. The message boards capture the essence of the communication and in that undertaking it also captures the dramatic action that takes place in this fantasy world by continually creating and refining the fantasy themes and by building the symbolic convergence.

Fantasy money was introduced to allow for a more methodical mid-season roster addition. Before this season, managers were allowed to add players to their roster in two possible scenarios: via trade with another manager or by dropping an undesired player and replacing that player with a new player from the waiver wire. If multiple managers attempted to select the same undrafted free agent, the manager with the worse league record was awarded the player off of the waiver wire (this was done to keep the league fair by providing the worse teams with an opportunity to get better). The waiver wire is the home for all the undrafted players of the fantasy football league. These players may be undrafted in the fantasy league because they may not have gained recognition yet, may be recovering from an injury, or may simply be past their prime. With the addition of fantasy money, managers can now bid on these undrafted fantasy free agents; the manager with the highest bid is awarded the player off the waiver wire. This new wrinkle to the game adds the strategy of financial responsibility.
Adding these new wrinkles to the game of fantasy football allows for creative minds to explore further options within these new rules and to delve deeper into their character in this drama. The day before the league’s trade deadline, a trade was proposed between Dunkey Butters and King Crush involving the following: Dunkey Butters would receive Ronnie Brown and $10 in 2010 Auction Budget. King Crush would receive Matt Schaub and Matt Forte. There are two issues here within the league: 1. Ronnie Brown has recently been injured and will be placed on injured reserve for the remainder of the season. 2. There has been no discussion of trading future fantasy dollars—waiver or auction. The drama unfolds as follows:

117. Re: Dunkey  
*Posted by: Dallas Cowboyds*

Nov 19 6:07pm  
$10.00 seems a little low.

Let me guess, you don't have to give him a Christmas present either?

Nerd Alert.

The drama, however, quickly escalates from this taunting jab as discussion of the trade’s fairness and the ethical dilemma surrounding the commissioner’s (Dunkey Butters) involvement in such a groundbreaking trade. Dunkey Butters acknowledges the ethical dilemma within the league and cites precedent to justify the trade.

119. Re: Dunkey  
*Posted by: Dunkey Butters*

Nov 19 7:40pm  
I think vetos should be used for obvious collusion, which is not the case here. None of us know how things are going to turn out, so we shouldn't block a trade, unless it is unethical. Just because you don't think a trade is fair, doesn't make it unethical.
This is no different than a last place MLB team trading away a superstar to a contender before the trade deadline for salary relief and the ability to rebuild. The Reds did that with Ken Griffey Jr. last year. The Red Sox did that with Manny Ramirez last year. It happens all the time.

As the drama builds, tempers flare. A trusted method to show that one’s temper has flared: ALL CAPS! “I DO NOT THINK I AM BEING UNREASONABLE IN THE VETO. RONNIE BROWN IS NOT A TOP 5 RUNNING BACK AND NEITHER IS FORTE THIS YEAR. IT IS CALLED MANAGING YOUR TEAM” (Message #126). Rules are then examined, but Dunkey Butters appeals to the league that this decision must be about whether the trade is a “bad concept” and not because a member just does not like it. Further precedent is cited in support of the trade using the NBA as an example; however, Den Bezwinger feels these real-world examples do not apply, “It is fun to look at this as a REAL time NFL franchise, but don't forget it is Fantasy Football” (Message #131).

The other side of the trade, King Crush, makes his final argument: “Why do we even have keepers if we cannot do this. Way to go at it half ass” (Message #132). The league’s point of view stands firm to prevent any collusion or disadvantage between managers in dealing with trades. Certain members see this as an unbalanced trade where one manager was conspiring to helping another make a more competitive run in the playoffs. Emotions continue to get high within this drama as the relevance to all league rules are called into question. King Crush states that “Making this fantasy league as real as possible is what makes it different and fun. We should just go back to drafting your full team at the start of each season if there are going to be all these restrictions on what you can trade” (Message #132). King Crush also calls out his accusers in this blaze of
But if you guys (Joey) are scared of my shitty team making a run…then that's your problem… I have friends that literally pay real money on trades in their league's just to cut the other guys throat, sometimes you do whatever it takes to rip someone's heart and fantasy dreams out. Clearly $10 of draft cap is too risque for you bitches” [sic] (Message #132).

The drama is compelling because of the conflict amongst the managers. Characters are praised and chastised in regards to their involvement in this plotline. The fantasy themes are chaining out in a way that members are split in regards to what side they are taking, but heroes and villains are clearly defined. This plotline helps to cement the rhetorical vision of the league by creating such strong fantasy chains as we examine the actions and words of each character. In examining the discussions that create this shared vision, the drama creates a sense of community and demonstrates how managers contribute to the fantasy themes through their discussions and “buy in” to the realism of the rhetorical vision.

4.9 The Tribunal Decides

After a heated debate that calls into question the entire fabric of the Fantasy Fairies Futbol Club’s rhetorical vision, a decision had to be made to restore order to a league in disarray. No one person can make such a decision and still expect the community to consider it fair because the fantasy themes have chained out in such a way that everyone has a different view on the matter. Like every judgment, those for it felt triumphant and those against felt wronged. In this situation, the wronged would make the commissioner the scapegoat; however, the commissioner lives up to his role’s
responsibility and decides to create a tribunal. This tribunal assured that the decision is a fair and just ruling for the league so that everyone’s voice may be heard and so that there can be no prejudice.

133. Trade Canceled

*Posted by: Dunkey Butters*

*Nov 20 1:49pm*

Due to popular demand, the trade has been canceled.

To avoid further confusion, I say we make a rule where auction dollars cannot be used in an in-season trade. Waiver-wire money can, but not auction budget.

Also, with respect to trading of players on "Injured Reserve" for the purposes of keepers, we had a meeting at lunch (Joey, Bernie and I) and we came to the conclusion that if a team trades for an IR player, that team must keep the IR player next year. This will eliminate any possibility of mass dumping. So, I could trade Forte for Brown straight up, but then I would have to keep Brown next year.

Also, anytime in the off-season teams can trade auction dollars, but only after the season is over.

A swift and just resolution that concludes the drama and that is mutually beneficial—and considerate—to all league members.

4.10 The Last Word

To understand the rhetorical vision of the Fantasy Fairies Futbol Club, we must reflect upon a community defined by their own confines as they deal with individualism, the “ownership” of property, and the evolution of their respective characters. This compelling drama unfolds and reveals the politics and the power shared by the league that also perpetuate such a drama and set the stage that represents the larger dominant
culture of the NFL. The foundation of the shared vision and the drama that has been created binds the interpretation and categorization of this community’s experience that allows them to be free to create and shape their concept of a rhetorical vision. As the message board transitioned from joking to administrative to confrontational, this last message of the season—directed at the newly crowned Fantasy Fairies Futbol Club champion—brings the season full circle. The message was from Tomaldinho stating, “Suck it Locos.” (Message 198); it wraps up the season and the overall theme of the league exactly as it reverts to the joking tone that defines the league’s rhetorical vision and the enjoyment that all members seek in this compelling drama.
5.1 The Representation of Enthusiasm

The formation of a rich rhetorical vision requires a close examination of how a community represents the larger culture. As the fantasy themes continued to chain out and form the Fantasy Fairies Futbol Club’s rhetorical vision, it was evident how intensely each member had “bought in” to this rhetorical vision. “People caught up in a chain of fantasies may experience moments similar to the creative experience of individuals when they daydream about a creative project or an important problem and suddenly get excited about the direction of their thinking” (Bormann, Force 11).

The plotlines discussed in Chapter Four represent the perfect example of the community’s excitement and involvement in regard to their rhetorical vision. Each time a manager responds and provides the beginnings of a new dramatization, the message boards explode with feedback to that original message. As this interaction builds, we witness the continuous chaining of fantasy themes, which then leads to the unfolding drama. Bormann explains this phenomenon as the community being “under the suggestive power of the group fantasy” and this allows the members to break free of any restraints (11). “They feel free to experiment with ideas to play with concepts, wild suggestions, and imaginative notions. Soon a number of people are deeply involved in the discussion, excitedly adding their emotional support and often modifying the ongoing script” (11). Through this emotional support, we are reminded of how a community
collectively builds to create a symbolic convergence and how that community will begin to think alike, identify with the community, but also distinguish themselves with different identities within the shared existence. Although the previous chapter explores how the managers differentiated themselves as characters, this chapter will look at the community as a whole and the enthusiasm that created the ongoing drama.

5.2 Masculinity as Symbolic Convergence

The manager’s enthusiasm and symbolic convergence within the community can be also be traced back to their shared masculinity. Masculinity is a part of the community’s shared existence and allows us to see how the Fantasy Fairies Futbol Club aligns with the larger culture of fantasy sports fans. As the examples from the previous chapter show, masculine posturing plays an important role in the rhetorical vision of the Fantasy Fairies Futbol Club. Traditional tropes such as one-upmanship, implying weakness through homosexuality and femininity, and threats of physical harm are all at play.

This masculinity, as well as the pursuit of control, acts as a fantasy theme that continues to unite the managers through their continued investment in the rhetorical vision of the community; however, it also helps to explain what this shared existence means. “Rhetorical innovation, on occasion, may begin when one creative person fantasizes a powerful personal consciousness and does so with such skill that his or her consciousness is shared by converts and becomes the rhetorical vision that form’s a community’s consciousness” (Bormann, Force 10). The powerful personal consciousness
feeds off of the ideal masculine consciousness that is shared within the community and enables the managers to play with concepts and take chances within the rhetorical vision.

As Davis and Duncan explain, “Studies have proposed that several different media, particularly television, offer the opportunity for men to emphasize masculine ideals in sport by providing viewing pleasures for male spectators…, emphasizing empowerment through sports knowledge…, and reinforcement of masculinity through hypermasculine sport fanship choice…” (245). Men enjoy these empowering masculine experiences because they create “feelings of control” and a chance to demonstrate one’s superior ability in an environment of male bonding (Davis and Duncan 260). The feelings of control entitle the managers to act on these imaginative notions and delve deeper into the rhetorical vision.

The league is provided a perfect arena in which to engage these dramatic actions—“Sports are often considered to be inherently masculine because of the emphasis that is placed on strength, aggression, competition, and winning…” (Davis and Duncan 251). Even when men are not actively engaged in the sports through participation, sports still provide a “means for men to display sports knowledge as well as bond in social settings…” (Davis and Duncan 251), thus substituting their mental prowess for physical prowess to reinforce their masculinity.

The converging fantasy themes create an additional facet to this experience by heightening the existing masculinity of sports spectatorship through the men’s needs for control within the rhetorical vision: “By allowing participants the opportunity to control rosters and trades, fantasy sport allows participants to experience the unique social power
that predominantly White male owners of professional sports teams posses on a daily basis” (Davis and Duncan 260).

Fantasy football participants also reinforce the masculine ideals of their group by setting themselves apart from “the other.” In this case, “the other” represents the opposite of masculinity—femininity. As Davis and Duncan explain,

One mode men use to heighten their masculinities is the use of demeaning language to establish their dominance over other participants. These participants do so by putting fellow fantasy leaguers down, referring to them as women, subordinating them and objectifying women in the process by calling these inferior participants pussies. (Davis and Duncan 256)

As evidenced in the previous chapter, the rhetorical vision also uses the homosexual “other” to create this same division and to assert their dominance. The “other” or outsider plays a role in the ongoing script: “Once a rhetorical community emerges with a coherent rhetorical vision and clear symbolic boundaries to discriminate the insider from the outsider, the members must face more or less severe rhetorical problems of holding the group together” (Bormann, Force 14). Masculinity is one of the key ways that fantasy football groups enforce cohesion. It creates expectations for behavior and reinforces these ideals through the use of an excluded outsider. The next section will explore this outsider’s perspective and how community involvement affects members’ home lives and relationships outside of the rhetorical vision.
5.3 Home Life Outside the Rhetorical Vision

As the community’s rhetorical vision grows, the outsider drifts farther away from understanding the constructs of the ongoing drama and the community’s ever-growing involvement within the rhetorical vision. “Who are the outsiders? Typical personae who can symbolize the outsiders are a useful device for identifying the insiders and drawing boundaries around the community. Fantasies that clearly divide the sympathetic, good people (we) from the unsympathetic or evil people (they) aid the group’s self awareness and are crucial to the emergence of its consciousness” (Bormann, Force 12). Although the issue here is not entirely one of good versus evil, it is an issue of belonging and not belonging to the rhetorical vision—of being understood and misunderstood.

In acting unsympathetic towards others, the claim is made that women don’t understand and are unsympathetic because they expect men to do more than manage their fantasy football teams. “Once a rhetorical community emerges with a coherent rhetorical vision and clear symbolic boundaries to discriminate the insider from the outsider, the members must face more or less severe rhetorical problems of holding the group together” (14). Excluding the spouse is part of the rhetorical vision. The community members may be seen as unsympathetic and feel misunderstood in regards to the emotional support they receive from the rhetorical vision. As Bormann has shown in his discussion of the ongoing script, some real life examples demonstrate how the outsider feels and how the managers descend farther into the rhetorical vision.

In the appropriately titled, Stuck in a Fantasy, Dana Lerner examines how fantasy football impacts the personal relationships of its participants—particularly their
relationships with the women in their lives. As Lerner discovers, “even women who like football think it’s gone too far” (Lerner). For example, “Jackie Guillory, who calls herself a ‘football girl,’ said she would never take it to the extremes of ‘making a fake game.’… she worries this will cut into their regular routines” (Lerner). This example helps illustrate that dedicated fantasy football membership is not just a symptom of fanship, but rather, something that disproportionally affects men. It also demonstrates how someone external to the rhetorical vision does not participate in the symbolic convergence of the community.

As the community members deal with outsiders and create a symbolic boundary, they must simultaneously support the rhetorical vision as it is transformed. “A viable rhetoric must also accommodate the community to the changes that accompany its unfolding history. The rhetoric must deal with anxiety aroused by times of trouble, by the evil within the social reality” (Bormann, Force 16). In this sense, having a home life can be an evil distraction to the needs of the ongoing drama. The time invested into the rhetorical vision is also being attacked by the outsiders, further threatening the drama’s path.

Fantasy football does require a serious time investment to research players, keep track of stats, and prepare rosters, but this commitment is sometimes taken to extremes. Again, an example from Lerner: “‘Chad spends between 25 to 30 hours a week watching football and playing fantasy, which is pretty insane,’ said Jamie Ekern…’I get annoyed because he’s on a Web site all day. I’m like, let it go’” (Lerner).
Sometimes the issue is not the time committed, but rather the focus of the commitment:

Kamilah Priestley…says her husband of two and a half years, Kareem, wouldn’t get up from the computer for anything during a fantasy football draft, much less for her. ‘When they had the draft this season, he was on the computer for four hours straight. He wouldn’t eat dinner. He wouldn’t even go to the bathroom.” (Lerner)

These examples show how fantasy football is not merely a fun game to spend the time away. For some men, it becomes an all-encompassing obsession that creates a sense of community through the rhetorical vision. The fantasy is so real—their belief in the rhetorical vision is so absolute—that their real lives become subjugated to their fantasy ones and they become the characters in the rhetorical vision.

Bormann explains that “dealing with their identity often gets the group to share fantasies about the boundaries of their movement” (Bormann, Force 12). By creating boundaries and excluding the outsiders, the community members are able to further identify with their characters and with the unifying drama. Again, the women Lerner interviewed have ways of rationalizing their men’s participation:

I see it as a control thing that makes him feel like he’s important to the football league, “ Priestly said with a half laugh. “It’s a self-esteem booster. (Lerner)

And…
For him I guess it’s part of an intellectual pursuit...as it’s a strategic game because it’s very shaped by who you pick, who you draft and who you play. You are taking part in the game and getting to pretend to be a coach. It seems less passive that way. (Lerner)

It is interesting to note how these women’s casual observations mirror the observations ventured by researchers who have studied this phenomenon in depth. These examples again illustrate that fantasy football is not just a harmless pastime, but rather, a serious game that can have serious consequences.

Mark St. Amant took this serious game to its extreme by quitting his job to focus on fantasy football and rationalizing this decision by writing a book; however, he still captures the essence of the excitement of fantasy football and the draft as he experiences the same anxiety of a child on Christmas Eve. St. Amant explains: “Draft Day Eve, I sleep a total of about forty-five minutes. I’m all over the bed, tossing, turning, muttering incoherently. I kick Celia [wife] at one point; she kicks back” (53). Even men recognize how the submersion into a fantasy may be a problem, but their adherence to the rhetorical vision is so strong that they continue to participate anyway.

5.4 Workplaces as Boundaries

As boundaries are created to protect the rhetorical vision, managers are enthusiastic because the ongoing drama implies that they can still be a part of the rhetorical vision at work. People are expected to engage in fantasy at work because of how boring it can be. “The point relating to the way fantasy themes help people transcend the everyday and provide meaning for an audience…” (Bormann, Fantasy 402). When
considering the time fantasy players devote to fantasy football at home, some of that time is going to have to bleed over into work—the opposite of taking your work home with you. Because of today’s influx of information, fantasy football managers can react to news seconds after it breaks and, sometimes, critical news breaks while fantasy managers are at work.

This discussion transcends fantasy football’s financial impact on corporations. It is important to remember, as discussed in Chapter One, that this impact is an estimated loss of $18.7 billion each NFL season. The league managers have bought in to the rhetorical vision in such a way that the fantasy themes are beginning to expose themselves external to the rhetorical vision. The inability to refrain from “symbolically converging” at work may create problems.

Some companies have attempted to limit employee distractions by investing in monitoring software that give businesses the ability to “[peer] in and invisibly [control] and [record] all activities over the Internet, including e-mail, instant messaging, keystrokes, Web sites visited, and even searches” (Lefrancois). These products are advertised as having a great “return on investment” because the cost of the software is minimal compared to the money lost (Lefrancois). Although this electronic monitoring can discourage employees from pursuing many types of Internet distractions, not just fantasy football, these drastic measures could be seen as short sighted.

For an extreme example of how fantasy football can impact work productivity, we look to the NFL and how fantasy affects those players while they are at work:
The NFL may already be heading down that precarious path. June and Cooley went on the record about their fantasy football passion, with June boasting about his fantasy "Juneimus D" team featuring starting QB Tom Brady. "Playing New England, I can't be happy with him throwing a TD pass, but in the back of my mind, I'm like, “Yeah, I just got six points in my fantasy league,” June told ESPN a couple of weeks ago. (Red)

Just as we discussed earlier, it is interesting to note that fantasy football can even divide players’ loyalties. Colts linebacker Cato June is unable to “un-converge” from the rhetorical vision in his fantasy football league and converge into his NFL team’s rhetorical vision of winning. It would be interesting to discover how their fantasy teams may impact their on-field “productivity” as fantasy football becomes more and more a part of NFL football—a part that the NFL is feeding and turning into a subculture of fandom.

While fantasy football can be seen as a financial loss to corporations (or bring questionable loyalties into play, as seen above), fantasy sports can provide a bonding experience for league members, leading to new friends or in some cases business contacts. This is supported by research conducted by Dr. Kim Beason at the University of Mississippi and commissioned by the FSTA. Beason found the following:

• “54% say fantasy sport participation increases the camaraderie among employees in their workplace.”

• “37% say fantasy sports participation is a positive influence in their workplace.”
• “16% say fantasy sports participation has allowed them to make valuable business contacts.” (“Fantasy Sports Industry”)

These findings could work in opposition to what happened at Fidelity with the termination of Cameron Pettigrew and three other Fidelity employees. Corporations may easily overlook the benefits of fantasy football as it is initially classified as a meaningless waste of time.

Fantasy Sports Trade Association president Paul Charchian disclaims this mindset by indicating how “Fantasy sports offers virtually-free workplace team-building, providing myriad benefits, including cross-functional communication,” “Restricting fantasy sports play chisels into workplace morale at a time when many companies are challenged by that very issue” (“Fantasy Sports Industry”). This discussion of similar rhetorical visions encourages dialogues amongst coworkers and strengthens bonds while they discuss similar experiences and dramas. “The sharing of fantasies within a community established the assumptive system that is the basis for debate and discussion” (Bormann, Force 16). These examples highlight how the enthusiasm that fuels the male camaraderie comes from a shared rhetorical vision can be channeled into useful pursuits. The immersive nature of the fantasy football game allows members from different groups to share a common rhetorical vision through the drama, adopt a new lifestyle, and thus a common bond.

5.5 Marketing Fantasy Football as Religious Impulse

Capitalizing upon this revolutionary form of bonding is the goal of the NFL. In a sense, they are the dominant rhetorical vision of fantasy football and have been feeding
the imaginative notions of the community members. Bormann explains this formation as “a new religious cult or denomination or a new revolutionary or reform movement begins with a diffuse and unfocused impulse on the part of some people. To become an unorganized effort, people sharing an impulse must begin to communicate with one another and create a new consciousness” (10). The new consciousness joins forces with the ideal masculine consciousness that is shared throughout so many rhetorical visions and repeatedly chains to create this dominant culture. It feeds the desire to experiment with new ideas and form new dramas while marketing to those who are captivated by the “suggestive power of the group fantasy” (Bormann, Force 11). At first this communication was done at home, in private, and in smaller groups, but now this deep involvement has become a critical part of the NFL broadcasts that affects the outcomes of the ongoing dramas. They have taken a successful model such as the immensely popular March Madness basketball tournament and capitalized upon the untapped fanaticism involved in the game-within-a-game concept.

“Games within games” are critical to understanding fantasy sports’ impact on society as a whole and their view of reality within reality. People compete in “games” such as dead pools where people bet on which celebrities will be the next to die. Involvement in March Madness pools share similarities with fantasy football and the dead pools as all of these phenomena have their own set of internal rules. The facts surrounding these games have been “repurposed” in order to establish a system of play surrounding these manufactured concepts and energize people’s thinking. People are always discovering a second layer to understand and create something new, such as
Easter eggs in DVDs and TV shows that are a secret second layer hidden within the larger production. These “games within games” demonstrate the creative moments people experience when they get excited about how these events chain out into fantasies, leaving people hungry for more information about the ongoing drama.

Fantasy football’s presence is impossible to miss when watching any televised NFL game or even when watching a sports news show. “Without a doubt, fantasy football is the most perfect example of integrated marketing in existence today. It marries the best of online marketing and social media with real-world events and that most basic of human traits: pure, unbridled competitiveness” (Treffiletti). When fantasy football was created back in Oakland, “the only players were members of the Tribune staff and people connected with the Raiders” (Dickey). Oakland Tribune sports editor George Ross stated that he liked this aspect of the league because “it forced the reporters who were involved to follow the whole league, not just the Raiders, so they wrote better stories” (Dickey).

This concept not only applies to writers being more objective in their coverage of the NFL, but it translates to reshaping their fan base and creating a subculture amongst their fanbase. No longer are NFL fans only paying attention to their respective city’s team, but because of fantasy football they are more attuned to the entire league. The fans are compelled to be a part of a specific group that exists in this subculture. As a manager in a fantasy football league, one now watches games he normally wouldn’t because of his fantasy football team and viewership increases for the NFL and the networks. The concept also pays dividends in regards to the added viewership of those who never cared about the NFL before they started playing fantasy football. Now fantasy managers are
also watching every game that includes one of their players, which again increases viewership and as a result, networks increase their profits from advertising.

Once advertising revenue increases, the NFL and the networks must try to conceive a way to continue this exponential increase. The NFL realizes that “there is a unique culture surrounding fantasy sport that exists separately from even the regular sporting world” (Billings 9). Individual statistics and game scores are now unavoidable while watching sports. The evolution of the scrolling sports ticker has gone from an occasional update of scores to a scrolling bar of information that will not give us the opportunity to be out of touch with everything else that is going on in the sports world. “The graphics of a televised football game are now a clear example: coverage of the actual game is being shown on the majority of the screen, but the statistics from other games impacting the fantasy sport world scroll below” (Billings 9).

5.6 Areas for Future Study

The first area for future study would include the ability to compare the analyzed message boards from this season to previous seasons’ message boards. These additional statistics and data from the message boards would allow me to assemble a larger pattern in the fantasy theme analysis as the league grows, the rhetorical visions shifts, and the drama continues.

Another interesting aspect worthy of further study, inspired from the Dana Lerner article, would be to interview the wives and significant others of the Fantasy Fairies Futbol Club to correlate with Lerner’s interviews. These may be able to provide further insight on the effect of the game of fantasy football at home by providing a perspective
outside the fantasy league’s rhetorical vision. It would be interesting to also examine how these significant-other interviews would compare to interviews of league members. How much would the perspectives differ in relation to invested time and resources? How would the views of investment compare to Bormann’s idea of the “suggestive power of the group fantasy”?

One final aspect that may provide insight into fantasy football would be to study management strategies during the season. By establishing heuristics, management data can be streamlined and then the data can be analyzed for consistent results amongst the teams. Since not all league members treat their players as property, these different management approaches could provide interesting insight into the tactics and their respective results of the plotlines. Do fantasy management strategies produce consistent results? Consistent winners? Consistent dramas?

5.7 Conclusion

What do we learn from this? Do we realize that we all have the need to control and be the king even though that aspect or skill may not come out in our real-world jobs? Do we have the tools to be a successful and efficient manager? Would those tools translate when managing actual people and demanding their best every week? Does it help or hurt our team building ability? Does this provide an escape that lets us do everything that we see in the business world yet when it happens in real life we hesitate when making those decisions (trades, cutting players, etc.)

Just as Mark St. Amant took the year off to focus on fantasy football, I too have been consumed by my community’s competitive rhetorical vision because I have not
been able to take an “off season” and have only continued to feed my need for fantasy football by writing a thesis about it.

I can’t escape…help me.
APPENDIX

The appendix includes the entire message board collection for the Fantasy Fairies Futbol Club. This period begins with the first game of the fantasy football season and ends with the season’s conclusion. The message board collection is presented in its entirety and is quoted verbatim with all of its distinctive errors.

1. One FG away.......  
*Posted by: Boyd (Dallas Cowboyds)*  
Sep 15 10:04am  
One FG away from Division 2 starting the season undefeated. Tough loss Pooper but nice work!  
Division 1 eat it.  
Division 3 suck it.

2. Re: One FG away.......  
*Posted by: Jerry (Panic at the Pooper)*  
Sep 15 10:48am  
Thanks Cowboyds....I won't let my Div 2 homies down again...oh, hold on...I play T-cubed this week, I might let you down one more time, but that will be it!

3. Re: One FG away.......  
*Posted by: twcbulldog8 (Den Bezwinger)*  
Sep 15 2:09pm  
D-II taking it home .... nice work fellas!!

4. Re: One FG away.......  
*Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)*  
Sep 15 3:27pm  
Division 1 = Pac 10  
-which makes me Oregon State  
Division 2 = SEC  
Division 3 = Big 12

5. Re: Have fun!  
*Posted by: frank_e_christ (Greekie McPitapants)*  
Sep 15 9:49pm
TTT, however do you find the time to become such a superior fantasy player?

6. **96.70**

*Posted by: Locos Monos VIII (Locos Monos IX)*

Sep 21 8:21am

I've scored 96.70 both weeks.

It wasn't enough against Mr. Ziege, but next week is a BIG divisional mathcup for Locos!

Someone's getting a kangaroo in the mail....

7. **Re: 96.70**

*Posted by: benjiray1977 (Ziege-Kugeln)*

Sep 21 10:59am

At least you know your team is strong and consistent. I don't know what the hell I am going to get each week.

8. **Fire sale....**

*Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)*

Sep 22 7:42am

...the Butters are in disarray.

All trade offers will be accepted.

MJD is now on the block.

9. **Re: Fire sale....**

*Posted by: ymca_gators (Tomaldinho)*

Sep 22 3:19pm

I sent you a trade proposal....it's a start. Send a counter trade.

10. **Re: Fire sale....**

*Posted by: brycethedog (Thick-Thigh Thumpers)*

Sep 22 4:50pm

What if he wanted to accept your offer as-is? Is that allowed?

11. **Panic!**

*Posted by: brycethedog (Thick-Thigh Thumpers)*

Sep 22 11:30pm

Looks like we've got a couple of managers already panicking after just the 2nd game.

12. **Re: Panic!**

*Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)*

Sep 23 8:53am
I am one of them.

13. **Joey =**
*Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)*
*Sep 23 8:53am*
Lane Kiffin

All talk and no results.

Aren't you 1-1 dickface?

14. **Re: Joey =**
*Posted by: brycethedog (Thick-Thigh Thumpers)*
*Sep 23 10:13am*
Last time I checked, 1-1 was better than 0-2. Or, in the mathematical terms you seem to prefer: Joey IV.

15. **Re: Panic!**
*Posted by: ymca_gators (Tomaldinho)*
*Sep 23 10:23am*
I think KT just got punked by Dunkey. Butters just got 2 top tier players for an overrated #1 back (MJD) and a # 3 RB at best in Larry Johnson...who is sure to be injured in the next few weeks.

I don't know.

16. **Re: Panic!**
*Posted by: twcbulldog8 (Den Bezwinger)*
*Sep 23 10:26am*
boys, boys, boys ..... let the end of the season sort things out ....... signing out ...... KT

17. **Re: Panic!**
*Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)*
*Sep 23 11:19am*
Yahoo Point projections for remaining games:

To Den Bezwinger:
MJD = 235
LJ = 125
Total = 360

To Dunkey Butters:
LF = 204
RG = 146
Total = 350

Looks pretty fair to me.
18. Suicide Pool Help
Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Sep 23 11:37am
...who would you guys take (no spread) in this week's NFL games. I need one winner. Can't pick Washington or Baltimore.

19. Re: Suicide Pool Help
Posted by: twcbulldog8 (Den Bezwinger)
Sep 23 11:39am
detroit

20. Re: Suicide Pool Help
Posted by: Jerry (Panic at the Pooper)
Sep 23 12:46pm
Panic is a lock this week, especially after you stole Den's best players.

I like the Giants & Cowboys this week.

21. Re: Panic!
Posted by: ymca_gators (Tomaldinho)
Sep 23 1:28pm
Whatever you say

22. Re: Panic!
Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Sep 23 2:53pm
I didn't say it, Yahoo did.

23. Re: Panic!
Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Sep 23 3:32pm
So does this trade analyzer....

http://www.fantasysp.com/fantasy_trade/1blq

You may not buy the results, but this website is actually pretty cool. They update their stats every day, so the trade analyzer is relevant in that respect.

Could be useful for others down the line.

24. For Jayson and Jason...
Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
This shows that I am an idiot for complaining about your Bell/Morgan for Jackson trade.

http://www.fantasyspy.com/fantasy_trade/1bls

Boyd wins 44 to 13.

25. Re: Panic!

Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Sep 23 4:37pm
Last one...

the GMC trade analyzer on the ESPN site has Kenneth getting 1 extra point per game from the trade.

That doesn't take into account the fact that KT has 3 other solid WRs, so that gives him even more of an advantage.

Moral to the Story:
Kenneth and IV = Awesome
Rest of League = Dillweeds

Tom, how does it feel to have your own derogatory term used against you? Booyah.

26. Re: Panic!

Posted by: Boyd (Dallas Cowboyds)
Sep 23 4:55pm
Another website I follow (which will remain nameless) says the following:

If the trade was approved -

Team Kenneth - Average points per week scored for Jones-Drew and L. Johnson for the rest of the season; 23.9

Team IV - Average points per week scored for L. Fitz and Grant for the rest of the season; 26.9

Team IV has a 5.91% advantage in terms of total fantasy points expected for the 2009 season.

Not as bad as I thought, I still think IV got the way better of the deal. Sorry, Kenneth maybe we're all wrong.

P.S. - This website also stated today that Larry Johnson is a great "sell-high" candidate. Just one websites' opinion.

Good luck dill-weeds.

27. Re: Panic!

Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Sep 23 10:13pm
Thanks for the unbiased input Boyd.

I obviously think I got a good deal, or I wouldn't have done it, but the bottom line is that the trade was well within the realm of fairness and either one of us could easily end up winning the trade when all is said and done.

28. Trade Happy

*Posted by: Locos Monos VIII (Locos Monos IX)*
*Sep 25 12:16pm*
I'm not sure if we're looking to add a little excitement to the league or what - but this is the most trade-action I've ever seen. I can't say I understand all of the trades, but it should make for an interesting season.

My kicker is up for grabs if anyone wants to send a trade offer my way.

29. FYI...

*Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)*
*Sep 28 1:00am*
MJD = 30 points
Fitz and Grant = 17 points
MJD does not equal Grant.

30. Re: FYI...

*Posted by: graketich01 (King Crush)*
*Sep 28 7:10am*
So are you selling yourself out?

31. Re: Have fun!

*Posted by: brycethedog (Thick-Thigh Thumpers)*
*Sep 28 8:50am*
My team is officially terrible. So, the fantasy football karma police caught up with me.

32. Re: Have fun!

*Posted by: twcbulldog8 (Den Bezwinger)*
*Sep 28 1:06pm*
It's just one week ... but I'll take 30 pts from MJD every week!!

33. Ziege-Kugeln Theme Song

*Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)*
*Sep 30 1:24pm*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81LsOV3ITno&feature=player_embedded

34. Crap - Mistake
IV, I somehow accidentally dropped Santonio Holmes. I don't even have a clue how I did this as I haven't even been messing around with adds/drops. I seriously had no thoughts of dropping him. Is there a way to reverse the drop? Sorry.

35. Re: Crap - Mistake
Posted by: Boyd (Dallas Cowboyds)
Oct 2 2:39am
Fire sale on Holmes!! I'm in for $25.

36. Re: Crap - Mistake
Posted by: Locos Monos VIII (Locos Monos IX)
Oct 2 8:17am
I thought something was amiss. I already put in a bid to claim him off waivers.

Do we all need to have a gentleman's agreement to allow Joey to pick him back up?

If not, I'm in for $99.

37. Re: Crap - Mistake
Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Oct 2 9:22am
I fixed it.

How in the hell do you drop someone by accident? It asks you like five times if your sure that's what you want to do.

I'm also docking you $50 waiver dollars.

38. Re: Crap - Mistake
Posted by: brycethedog (Thick-Thigh Thumpers)
Oct 2 9:29am
Fair enough.

39. Re: Crap - Mistake
Posted by: brycethedog (Thick-Thigh Thumpers)
Oct 2 2:24pm
I was drunk and had nacho cheese all over my fingers, which made it difficult to use the keyboard.

40. Re: Crap - Mistake
Posted by: Locos Monos VIII (Locos Monos IX)
Oct 2 3:52pm
I think it was a good decision to reduce Joey's waiver cash, but we all know he'll only use $5 of it.

He usually likes to keep an extra $18 or 19 around "just in case" (circa 2008 auction draft)

41. Division 1...

Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Oct 4 7:41pm
...is horrendous. Seriously.

42. The Trade...

Posted by: Boyd (Dallas Cowboyds)
Oct 6 11:11am
I don't think the trade is crazy lopsided, actually it probably works out really nice for both teams it just scares me to think Ken is going to be starting two RBs that on average were drafted in the first five picks of most drafts.

What a crazy season so far!

43. Re: The Trade...

Posted by: Locos Monos VIII (Locos Monos IX)
Oct 6 11:26am
If it makes you feel better, I started two RB's in the top 5 this season and I'm 2-2 so far. Cutler has replaced Forte as "The Man" in Chicago...at least to date.

44. Re: The Trade...

Posted by: Boyd (Dallas Cowboyds)
Oct 6 12:45pm
Very true, lots of things have changed this season and who knows what else will happen; injuries, rookies stepping up and then just plan luck.

But...Den Bezwinger now has two stud RBs AND a top 3 WR......long season still to go but I wish he wasn't in my division.

45. Re: The Trade...

Posted by: twcbulldog8 (Den Bezwinger)
Oct 6 1:19pm
I agree with you both ... who knows what forte will bring?? 20pts or 5pts ..... All I know is this streak won't last all season, but I am going to enjoy the ride while it lasts.

46. This is crazy....everyone is trading.

Posted by: Boyd (Dallas Cowboyds)
Oct 6 2:29pm
I love it.

I want in.....who wants to trade?
47. I hate my dog and I hate fantasy

Posted by: benjiray1977 (Ziege-Kugeln)
Oct 6 9:04pm

Ok, so Sunday morning before Sarah and I went to the Jags games, I signed on to change my lineup. As I logged on, my dog grabbed some food off the counter, so I had to chase him. Then I forgot to fix my lineup. I was going to put in Garrard for Rodgers and put Barber back in the starting lineup. All I needed was Barber!

Also, Chambers has averaged about .01 points a game this year, so I dropped him. This week 17 yards and a TD. Dick!

48. Re: I hate my dog and I hate fantasy

Posted by: Locos Monos VIII (Locos Monos IX)
Message ID: 114 Oct 6 9:41pm | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >

It's funny you mention that. At First Row Fridays i was going to draft Antonio Bryant, but my Jack Daniel's burger arrived and you stole him from me.

Damn you goat-boy

49. King Crush...

Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Message ID: 115 Oct 7 9:17am | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >

...is 11th in points but 3-1 and leading our division. That's some bullshit.

50. Re: I hate my dog and I hate fantasy

Posted by: brycethedog (Thick-Thigh Thumpers)
Message ID: 116 Oct 7 9:29am | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >

I was at Universal on Sunday but was able to remove Betts and start Portis via my iphone fantasy football application. Benji, if you want some lessons on how to use technology to your advantage in fantasy football, let me know - it'll just cost you $100 for a one-hour lesson. As a bonus, I'll throw in a free session on how to be a graceful loser.

51. Re: I hate my dog and I hate fantasy

Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Message ID: 117 Oct 7 10:10am | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >

Benji is getting owned.

52. Re: I hate my dog and I hate fantasy

Posted by: benjiray1977 (Ziege-Kugeln)
Message ID: 118 Oct 7 7:31pm | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >

Seriously Joey, you scored the 2nd lowest total all week. You just happen to be playing me, that admits he is an idiot for not at least putting Barber back in.
And I may have been owned for this little moment, but at least I'm not owned by everyone in the league MR. 0-4. Get a real team before you try to talk trash with the big boys.

53. Re: I hate my dog and I hate fantasy

Posted by: benjiray1977 (Ziege-Kugeln)
Message ID: 119 Oct 7 7:35pm | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
Do you know what's sad?

I was going to try to piss you off by offering you Aaron Rodgers in a trade for 3 of your best players, but then I looked at your team. No matter what 3 I chose, you would be an idiot for not accepting it. Then I would be screwed without Rodgers.

Seriously, Dunkey may have the worst team in history.

54. Just so we're clear...

Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Message ID: 122 Oct 7 9:39pm | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
...where is the line between worst of all time and "Big Boys?"

Since only 8 points separate us, I'd be worried if I was you. The Fighting Zieges are only one in-game injury from assuming the worst of all time title.

I wish you and the other "Big Boys" nothing but success for the remainder of the season.

55. Re: I hate my dog and I hate fantasy

Posted by: brycethedog (Thick-Thigh Thumpers)
Message ID: 123 Oct 7 10:01pm | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
Benji, I know what you're writing probably forms real sentences but all I hear in my head when I read your posts is "wah wah wah".

56. Re: King Crush...

Posted by: graketich01 (King Crush)
Message ID: 124 Oct 8 9:25am | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
Don't hate the player...hate the game! 0-4 does not equal playoffs.

57. Re: Just so we're clear...

Posted by: benjiray1977 (Ziege-Kugeln)
Message ID: 125 Oct 8 9:26am | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
The line is actually only 4.5 points ahead of you.

58. Re: I hate my dog and I hate fantasy

Posted by: benjiray1977 (Ziege-Kugeln)
Message ID: 126 Oct 8 9:28am | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
So do you and IV just sit around all day at work and come up with these killer come backs? Seriously, the 7 year olds from my day camp 8 years ago called and they want there joke back.
59. Re: I hate my dog and I hate fantasy

Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Message ID: 127 Oct 8 11:43am | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >

Nice work, I love the irony of using a "somebody called and wants something back" joke in reference to others using old jokes. Classic.

You keep on making excuses for why your team sucks and I'll keep on making bad jokes. Should be fun.

Robert Out.

60. PS

Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Message ID: 128 Oct 8 11:48am | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >

In an effort to not punch Benji in the face next time I see him, I will be refraining from any future shit-talking on this site.

And to show my new found benevolence, the Lord's Prayer:

May the lord bless the Butters and keep the Butters. As the Butters will not forgive our debtors, for we have trespassed against other debtors. For the Butters are thine kingdom, they glory, and thy light of fantasy.

61. trade wait period

Posted by: twcbulldog8 (Den Bezwinger)
Message ID: 129 Oct 8 2:00pm | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >

How long does it take for these trades to go through? Locos and I are on day 3!

62. Re: trade wait period

Posted by: Will (Will's Weenies)
Message ID: 130 Oct 8 7:34pm | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >

I accidentally voted against your trade. I have no problem with it.

63. Re: I hate my dog and I hate fantasy

Posted by: benji1977 (Ziege-Kugeln)
Message ID: 131 Oct 9 2:23pm | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >

I don't care what you say, the somebody called and wants something back joke will never go out of syle.

And it is funny how fantasy plays with your mind. 2 weeks ago I knew my team was great and that I had this thing locked up. (With help from KT dismantling his team piece by piece each week, so that he projects out at 17 points by week 16) Now, I can't figure out who I am and am hoping for a great week from Jenkins.

64. Re: PS

Posted by: benji1977 (Ziege-Kugeln)
I hope you don't mind, but I will continue talking trash. Fantasy Gods have already punished me greatly with last years team and the 7 injuries this year. So F them and F the Dunkeys.

65. Re: I hate my dog and I hate fantasy

Posted by: twcbulldog8 (Den Bezwinger)
Message ID: 133 Oct 9 2:25pm | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
Why you hatin' on the Den Bezwinger front office?? Here I am minding my own business and BAM in my face from the Zs! May your team never win again this season!!

66. I like my dog, but i hate fantasy

Posted by: Locos Monos VIII (Locos Monos IX)
Message ID: 134 Oct 11 4:47pm | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
I had a choice late last night. Bobby Wade or Mike Austin?

Guess which one i chose...DAMNIT!

67. Panic's Points Production!

Posted by: brycethedog (Thick-Thigh Thumpers)
Message ID: 135 Oct 12 11:50am | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
Did you guys see that Jerry scored over 120 points this week? That's amazing. As a point of reference, that's more than Benji's scored in the last two weeks COMBINED. When you add Benji's 52.77 points to the 62.9 he scored last week, you get 115.67 points.

Maybe we could ask yahoo to add a mercy rule where the match automatically ends if a manager doesn't score more than 60 points? And the final scores wouldn't be revealed to save that manager from embarrassment?

Or we could just replace Benji with Bobo the chimpanzee, who would likely score more points than Benji (and make the league more competitive) by drafting and setting his lineup by throwing peanuts at his keyboard?

68. Re: Panic's Points Production!

Posted by: Locos Monos VIII (Locos Monos IX)
Message ID: 136 Oct 12 9:12am | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
interesting points Joey. Didn't you score 59 points a few weeks ago?

69. Re: Panic's Points Production!

Posted by: brycethedog (Thick-Thigh Thumpers)
Message ID: 137 Oct 12 3:23pm | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
Thanks Jason - good point - the mercy rule should kick in at 58 points. 59 points has clearly been demonstrated to be the lowest total a competent manager can randomly and unluckily score during a week. So, 59 points is nothing to be embarrassed about. However, I'd rather walk around bare-assed with a bag on my head for a week than score 52.77 points.

70. Re: Panic's Points Production!
Wow...Is that one of the lowest point totals in Fairies Football history? Ziege is stepping into Tomaldinho territory.

71. $45.00

Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Message ID: 139 Oct 14 9:23am | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
for Jamal Lewis. Wow!

72. Re: $45.00

Posted by: graketich01 (King Crush)
Message ID: 140 Oct 14 9:27am | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
Thanks for pointing out the obvious. I forgot that you ran out of money, so I thought I had to go in strong.
Jamal is the key to a strong mid-late season push!

73. Re: $45.00

Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Message ID: 141 Oct 14 11:09am | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
I have had Jamal on my team the last 2 years and I have never hated a player as much as I hate him. He will ruin you and ruin your team. As your brother-in-law, I am pleading that you drop him or else your team may never win another game. Seriously.

74. Re: $45.00

Posted by: Locos Monos VIII (Locos Monos IX)
Message ID: 142 Oct 14 12:39pm | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
Gary, I have to disagree with IV. As your opponent this week, I encourage you to not only keep him, but to start him. After all, you paid $45 for him.

75. Re: $45.00

Posted by: brycethedog (Thick-Thigh Thumpers)
Message ID: 143 Oct 14 3:07pm | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
I bid $21 for him, so there was some competition.

63.03 points this week? $100 in waiver funds left? Do you even care any more?

77. Thank You...

Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Message ID: 152 Oct 19 5:04pm | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
...to Division 3 for taking out two of my adversaries.

In a week when the Butters needed a win badly to avoid complete implosion, we found a way and some how find ourselves only 2 games out of first in the Division.

78. Thank You League Members

Posted by: frank_e_christ (Greekie McPitapants)
Message ID: 153 Oct 20 2:50pm | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
I would like to thank Kevin for sending me the bunnyip as it has been nothing but good luck since it arrived. I would also like to thank Tom for letting me double his score. That was very thoughtful and more than generous.

79. Re: Thank You League Members

Posted by: ymca_gators (Tomaldinho)
Message ID: 154 Oct 20 4:41pm | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
Greekie...it was my pleasure watching you destroy me this week. That was freakin ridiculous and I will punch you in the nuts next weekend. Congrats!

80. Re: Thank You League Members

Posted by: Locos Monos IX (Locos Monos IX)
Message ID: 155 Oct 20 5:01pm | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
So far the only person who's been infected with the curse of the Bunyip is me. It's a damn good luck charm for everyone else. Go ahead and burn it.

81. Average Points Per Game through 6 Games..

Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Message ID: 156 Oct 21 1:06pm | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
1 Panic at the Pooper 101.99
2 Midget Nation 99.86
3 Den Bezwinger 99.61
4 Locos Monos 99.26
5 Greekie McPitapants 98.37
6 Dunkey Butters 96.16
7 Dallas Cowboyds 89.69
8 Will's Weenies 89.53
9 King Crush 88.48
10 Thick-Thigh Thumpers 86.16
11 Tomaldinho 83.94
12 Ziege-Kugeln 82.45

82. Average Points Per Game Last 3 Games...

Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Oct 21 1:07pm
1 Greekie McPitapants 112.84
2 Dunkey Butters 108.50
3 Locos Monos 105.92  
4 King Crush 98.44  
5 Panic at the Pooper 96.99  
6 Will's Weenies 94.28  
7 Midget Nation 92.20  
8 Den Bezwinger 85.11  
9 Dallas Cowboyds 84.79  
10 Tomaldinho 84.78  
11 Thick-Thigh Thumpers 83.41  
12 Ziege-Kugeln 68.37

83. **Locos Greenos**  
*Posted by: [frank_e_christ](Greekie McPitapants)*  
Oct 21 4:02pm  
The Packers just picked up Ahman Green. I heard he is supposed to have a breakout year this year. Like 9 touchdowns a game.

84. **Re: Average Points Per Game Last 3 Games...**  
*Posted by: [brycethedog](Thick-Thigh Thumpers)*  
Oct 21 4:04pm  
Benji, you can actually use your waiver budget to add better players to your team to help increase your weekly scores. Just an FYI.

85. **Re: Average Points Per Game Last 3 Games...**  
*Posted by: [rochandler](Dunkey Butters)*  
Oct 21 4:05pm  
PS - yes, I double checked, that score for Benji is correct.

68.37 points per game over the last three games.

86. **Re: Locos Greenos**  
*Posted by: [Locos Monos VIII](Locos Monos IX)*  
Oct 21 9:00pm  
Frank,  
What makes you think I won't cut you?

In truth, I'm a little upset because I wanted to surprise you all by adding him. He's not an available player yet.

Soon, we'll be reunited!

87. **Re: Average Points Per Game Last 3 Games...**  
*Posted by: [Locos Monos VIII](Locos Monos IX)*  
Oct 21 9:03pm  
You'd think a team rated 3rd and 4th in the aforementioned "Average Points" lists would have a better record than 3-3.
I guess I got a little Bunyip juice on my hand. Shit!

88. Vernon Davis

Posted by: frank_e_christ (Greekie McPitapants)
Message ID: 163 Oct 25 4:28pm | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >

Vernon just had 3 TDs for a tight end. Has a TE ever had that kind of day? According to my calculations, that must be something like 27.3 points. Who ever has him has to be killing their opponent.

89. Re: Vernon Davis

Posted by: brycethedog (Thick-Thigh Thumpers)
Oct 26 12:59pm

Yeah, I didn't start him. For some reason, I have 3 tight ends on my roster. Good management!

90. Re: Vernon Davis

Posted by: frank_e_christ (Greekie McPitapants)
Oct 26 5:24pm

Actually, Professor Thumpers, I don't know if you looked at your bench, but it did quite well. I heard that the objective was to use your better players for the matchup each week.

91. Thanks Commish

Posted by: graketich01 (King Crush)
Oct 27 7:49am

For creating possibly the worst 4 team division in the history of Fantasy Football. I am glad I still have the opportunity for 4 more division games this season. None of us would even be in the top two in any other. I appreciate you setting us up with some teams and managers that are as bad as I am.

Crush

92. Re: Thanks Commish

Posted by: brycethedog (Thick-Thigh Thumpers)
Oct 27 4:00pm

10th, 11th, and 12th in the same division. Nice. It will be fun to see Dunkey and Ziege battle it out the rest of the season to try to avoid being the "losingest" manager.

93. Re: Thanks Commish

Posted by: benjiray1977 (Ziege-Kugeln)
Oct 28 1:38pm

Seriously, what the heck is going on? Our whole division is crappy. We're the NFC West of fantasy. I am starting to believe in the 2012 prophecy now, because when Ziege and Dunkey are at the bottom of the league bad things are about to go down.

I'm just glad I only have to win 2 more games for a shot at $100 and a playoff spot.

94. Re: Thanks Commish
I've got this division wrapped up. I just spent my last waiver wire funds on Jamaal Charles. He was the final piece of the puzzle.

95. Re: Thanks Commish

Posted by: graketich01 (King Crush)
Oct 29 7:21am
Good work...I should be fined by the league for some recent moves...Yet as bad as that move was, and how it cost me a great young player I had been scouting for weeks..I still am in the driver seat in this division. All you need to do is get in and you have a chance, how great would it be if the D1 winner made a run for the championship, kind of like the Cardinals last season, see Benji NFC West reference, more like Big East Football. Looking to go 3-0 against the division.
KC

96. Moving players.......check it out.

Posted by: Boyd (Dallas Cowboyds)
Oct 30 11:10am
V. Jackson
M. Colston
M. Sims-Walker
K. Moreno

Everyone is for sale. I would like to move one of my WRs for a decent RB or someone with upside. If you come after Jackson or Colston bring your "A" game - those guys are good and I know it.

All offers will be considered, send my something.

97. Re: Moving players.......check it out.

Posted by: graketich01 (King Crush)
Nov 1 11:29am
Was P Thomas considered "A" game????

98. Re: Moving players.......check it out.

Posted by: Boyd (Dallas Cowboyds)
Nov 1 4:55pm
Yes, especially when you compare him to McFadden.

99. Cry me a river...

Posted by: ymca_gators (Tomaldinho)
Nov 2 8:11am
I beat at least 8 of the teams this week, but instead I play KT who has the highest point total of all managers and is #1 in the league. I know we have all gone through this...but shit!

100. It's official..
I now have the lowest 1 week score of all time.

Didn't even break 50.

**101. Jamal Lewis is The Bunyip**

*Posted by: kevinplenzler (The Midget Nation)*

Nov 2 4:51pm

Hey King - how is that Jamal Lewis pick up treating you - I see that you have still not won a game since picking him up. Jamal Lewis is the bunyip or at the very least the human reincarnation of that tiki doll from the Brady Bunch.

**102. Re: It's official..**

*Posted by: benjiray1977 (Ziege-Kugeln)*

Nov 3 7:21am

I am done with Fantasy.

**103. Re: Jamal Lewis is The Bunyip**

*Posted by: graketch01 (King Crush)*

Nov 3 7:29am

Check that Duech Bag...Roddy, Roddy, Roddy, Roddy, Roddy, Roddy, Roddy....

**104. Re: Moving players.......check it out.**

*Posted by: Locos Monos VIII (Locos Monos IX)*

Nov 3 8:11am

P. Thomas looked pretty A-game last night. Dammit!

**105. Re: Cry me a river...**

*Posted by: brycethedog (Thick-Thigh Thumpers)*

Nov 3 9:18am

Yeah, if you look at the "points against" column - you are getting screwed.

**106. Re: Cry me a river...**

*Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)*

Nov 3 10:12am

Tom only has 2 more points than me for the season. Yet, I only have 1 win, so I think I'm the one getting screwed.

Oh wait, my team only scored 48 points this week.

Nevermind.

PS - even with my 48 point week, I'm still leading the division in points. That is terrible.
107. Re: Cry me a river...

Posted by: graketich01 (King Crush)
Nov 3 12:52pm
Yes..Please repeat that performance in week 9.

108. One point

Posted by: Locos Monos VIII (Locos Monos IX)
Nov 10 7:19am
wow...that was close. Sorry Wilbur.

Moreno and Stewart suck.

109. Re: One point

Posted by: frank_e_christ (Greekie McPitapants)
Nov 10 1:46pm
Had Will put in any other player from his bench except for the inactive Brian Westbrook, then he would have won and I would be at the top of the division.

110. Re: One point

Posted by: Locos Monos VIII (Locos Monos IX)
Nov 10 2:48pm
Hey Frank, if "ifs" and "butts" were candy and nuts, we'd all have a real nice Christmas.

From grandpa's mouth to your ears.

111. Rookies

Posted by: Locos Monos VIII (Locos Monos IX)
Nov 15 2:53pm
I was talking to a guy in another Fantasy league and they have a rule that i thought was pretty cool. Each team has an extra offense flex position - but they must play a rookie in that position (QB, RB, WR, or TE).

It adds a new element to the game and draft. I thought i'd throw it our there and see what you guys thought.

112. Re: Rookies

Posted by: Jerry (Panic at the Pooper)
Nov 16 12:53pm
I like it, but it seems to me that you guys have a fondness for a more mature man...maybe an extra slot for 10 year veterans

Hey Commish, does Yahoo allow the rookie flex position?

113. Division 3

Posted by: kevinplenzler (The Midget Nation)
Nov 16 2:32pm
Division 3 is representing this week with 3 of the top 4 scoring outputs. Unfortunately for the Midgets, 115+ points will not be enough and will have the Midgets on the outside looking in with respect to the playoffs. And this just in - Division 1 is an abomination to competitive sport everywhere. Going into Monday night, scoring is as follows: King Crush (60), Thick-Thigh (75), Ziege (69) and Dunkey (67). Not good, not good at all.

### 114. Thank you

*Posted by:* twcbulldog (Den Bezwinger)  
Nov 17 10:08am

I would like to first thank everyone (fans included) for the opportunity for being apart of the league. Secondly, I would like to thank the players for playing hard and earning a playoff spot this early in the season. Champagne for everyone, the relocation and name change has boosted the Den Bezwinger organization into the playoffs for the first time. YES!!

### 115. Re: Thank you

*Posted by:* ymca_gators (Tomaldinho)  
Nov 19 2:33pm

Well Done! Don't get ahead of yourself though...you saw what happened to Thumpers after a great regular season last year.

### 116. Dunkey & Crush Trade

*Posted by:* rochandler (Dunkey Butters)  
Nov 19 5:10pm

Just so everyone knows, the trade Crush and I just made also involves $10.00 in 2010 Auction Budget, so:

- Dunkey Butters gets:
  - $10.00 in 2010 Auction Budget
  - Ronnie Brown

- King Crush gets:
  - Matt Schaub
  - Matt Forte

Thank you.

### 117. Re: Dunkey

*Posted by:* Boyd (Dallas Cowboyds)  
Nov 19 6:07pm

$10.00 seems a little low.

Let me guess, you don't have to give him a Christmas present either?

Nerd Alert.

### 118. Re: Dunkey

*Posted by:* Locos Monos VIII (Locos Monos IX)  
Nov 19 6:18pm
Just so you know, I voted against the trade before reading Dunkey's post. I thought I'd get the option of stating my opinion within my trade veto. I did not.

With that said, the trade seems a little lopsided due to the timing and since it involves a team in last place and a team in 3rd place (with a division lead).

I'm not sure if my veto blocks the trade - and that's not my intent, I think it should go through - but I wanted to state my opinion.

119. Re: Dunkey

Posted by: Rochandler (Dunkey Butters) Nov 19 7:40pm
I think vetos should be used for obvious collusion, which is not the case here. None of us know how things are going to turn out, so we shouldn't block a trade, unless it is unethical. Just because you don't think a trade is fair, doesn't make it unethical.

This is no different than a last place MLB team trading away a superstar to a contender before the trade deadline for salary relief and the ability to rebuild. The Reds did that with Ken Griffey Jr. last year. The Red Sox did that with Manny Ramirez last year. It happens all the time.

120. Re: Dunkey

Posted by: Rochandler (Dunkey Butters) Nov 19 7:42pm
It may be a little low, but I'm not sure anyone else would have made a deal for more, so in that sense, it wasn't low.

Plus, I'm getting a top 5 back in next year's draft for $19. That's a great deal for two average players this year, when I suck anyway.

121. Re: Dunkey

Posted by: Rochandler (Dunkey Butters) Nov 19 7:51pm
Sorry, Jason, didn't read your whole post. Point noted.

I still think it's fair and very in-line with what happens in real professional leagues.

Gary is mortgaging his 2010 season for the chance to make a run this year.

Another unethical thing would be if I was completely tanking the season and jeopardizing future matchups. That is not the case though, because I have Carson Palmer and Beanie Wells to replace the departed players.

122. Re: Dunkey

Posted by: graketch01 (King Crush) Nov 19 7:52pm
Exactly...Ronnie Brown for $19 next year is what makes this work. There have been plenty of suspect trades this season in this league, and this is not one of them.
123. Re: Dunkey

Posted by: Boyd (Dallas Cowboys)
Nov 19 9:50pm
Wait, I can't find my spreadsheet from the draft. What did Crush pay for Ronnie?

124. DUNKEY AND CRUSH

Posted by: twcbulldog8 (Den Bezwinger)
Nov 19 11:51pm | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next>
I do not agree with the trade no matter how you look at it. Why would you not keep Forte for a keeper??
Did I miss the fine print of including next years draft money as part of trades in-season?? Just a question ....
I offered Crush Ricky Williams at the beginning of the season for McFadden and he did not take the offer.
Sounds to me that he wasn't looking out for the best interest of his team and now he gets a top 6 QB and top 15 RB???
VETO!!!!!!!!

125. Re: DUNKEY AND CRUSH

Posted by: graketich01 (King Crush)
Nov 20 7:27am
Ronnie Brown would have cost me $29 to keep...now Dunkey will keep one of the premier RB’s for $19.

First of all Den, you offered me that trade early in the season, as you said, and at that time I had no idea
Run DMC was going to suck as bad as he does. So that is no way relevant at this point. I also had Ronnie
Brown and they were sharing carries, so was I going to start them both? I had planned on McFadden being
a regular starter.
Second, read the rules in the draft packet, it clearly states that cap money can be traded.
Third, why do you care sooo much. YOur not in the division, you have the best team in the league, and
have the #1 seed locked up.
If I chose too keep Matt Forte he will cost me $21 instead of $11
If you guys veto this trade...Your a bigger group of pussies than I had ever thought.

126. Re: DUNKEY AND CRUSH

Posted by: twcbulldog8 (Den Bezwinger)
Nov 20 8:47am
I DO NOT THINK I AM BEING UNREASONABLE IN THE VETO. RONNIE BROWN IS NOT A TOP
5 RUNNING BACK AND NEITHER IS FORTE THIS YEAR. IT IS CALLED MANAGING YOUR
TEAM. TELL ME IN THE LAST THREE TO FOUR YEARS HOW MANY GAMES HAS R. BROWN
BEEN OUT DUE TO INJURIES?? IF I HAD R. BROWN I WOULD HAVE MADE SURE I GRABBED
HIS BACK UP. AGAIN, SCHAUB IS A TOP 7 QB AND FORTE IS TOP 20. EVERYONE DO WHAT
YOU WANT FOR THE TRADE, I AM NOT SCARED OF THE TRADE, I JUST DON'T THINK IT IS A
FAIR TRADE. WOULD YOU BE MAKING THE SAME TRADE IF R. BROWN WAS HEALTHY?
NO. AND DUNKEY YOU KNOW I LOVE YA MAN, BUT KEEPING AN INJURY PRONED RB FOR
A KEEPER, MAKE SURE YOU GRAB R. WILLIAMS.ANYWAY, HAVE A GREAT DAY AND
WEEKEND!!

127. Re: DUNKEY AND CRUSH

Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Nov 20 10:26am
The existing rule book does not address the trading of future auction dollars post draft. It is silent on the issue. However, I don't see a reason why it should be illegal. It is no different than trading future draft picks, which happens in every league, every year. Since this is a keeper league, I think it adds more intrigue and excitement if people are allowed to manage their teams with a long-term outlook rather than simply one year at a time.

I'm not trying to cause any controversy, so if the general consensus is that this is a bad concept, then I will cancel the trade, but let's only go there for the right reasons, not because you just don't like it.

As for the trade itself, KT your starting to sound like Benji with your rambling about stuff not being fair.

1. Just because you think its dumb to keep an injury prone player as a keeper, doesn't make it wrong. People thought you were dumb for trading Grant and Fitz for MJD. How'd that turn out? Plus, Brown hadn't missed a game since 2007, until this injury.

2. I don't consider it a gamble, because I'm getting what I consider to be a top 5 RB next year for $19.00. He's a top 10 RB this year, but will be better next year when Ricky Williams dies.

3. I traded Matt Forte and Matt Schaub. Forte is decent, but Chicago is going down the tubes and I'd rather take my chances with RonnieB healing for next year, than hope that Forte and the Bears miraculously get better next year. Also, Schaub was on fire, but has only thrown 1 TD in the last 3 games. Not exactly all-star material.

Finally, of course he wouldn't be making the trade if Brown was healthy. He just gave me 10% of next year's budget plus a cheap Top 10 (maybe Top 5) RB, because he's got a chance to make a run at the Championship this year.

It's no different than the Memphis Grizzlies giving Pau Gasol to the Lakers for cap relief or the Timberwolves trading Garnett to the Celtics for expiring contracts. Some teams want to win today, some know they can't so they are preparing to win tomorrow.

128. Re: DUNKEY AND CRUSH

*Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)*

Nov 20 10:32am
I want to make it clear again, that if people don't like this concept, we can outlaw it. I'm firmly against that, but league opinion should win-out.

Also, I think we should be very diligent to make sure that teams don't dump players and become uncompetitive. That has far-reaching implications and I am firmly against that. Keeping the integrity of the game should be goal number 1

Should we make a rule that defines what "uncompetitive" is?

Thoughts?

129. Re: DUNKEY AND CRUSH

*Posted by: brycethedog (Thick-Thigh Thumpers)*

Nov 20 10:59am
After thinking about it, I'm against the trade. As in my mind Gary will now win the division that I had been competitive in due to this trade, I thought about trying to trade Brees for $30 or something similar.
However, it just seems like a lot of the fun of the league will be removed if the losing teams move in to a "dump my good players for draft money mode" (which would logically happen every year from here on out for the teams eliminated from playoff contention). I think a simple fix is to only allow draft dollars to be traded in the off-season.

130. Re: DUNKEY AND CRUSH

Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Nov 20 11:29am
I think its just the opposite Joey. I think it makes it more fun. Since this is a keeper league, it is more than just about this season. You have to think year-to-year.

If bad teams are selling players, then good teams are buying those players, which means the good teams are hurting themselves for the next year.

I understand what your saying, but in reality, not every bad team will sell their players, and even if they do, every good team has an equal shot at getting them, it just depends on how much of their future they want to jeopardize.

Do you think its unfair when NBA teams unload superstars at the deadline for cap relief?

131. Re: DUNKEY AND CRUSH

Posted by: twcbulldog8 (Den Bezwinger)
Nov 20 11:36am
Like I said you do what you want to do on the trade. Trading of 2010 dollars was not specified when the season started.

It is fun to look at this as a REAL time NFL franchise, but don't forget it is Fantasy Football. Injuries happen and that's the GREAT thing about fantasy football. I feel if you add more to the league that it will take away from what fantasy football is about. Again it goes to show you that you have to manage your team throughout the season. Do you have a backup for your stud running back? Those are strategies you have to think about before, during, and after the draft into the season.

I am just happy that my players happen to have me in a good position. But that could change this Sunday and I could lose the rest of the season. It's Fantasy Football. That's what is so GREAT!

132. Re: DUNKEY AND CRUSH

Posted by: graketich01 (King Crush)
Nov 20 1:46pm
Why do we even have keepers if we cannot do this. Way to go at it half ass.

There is also a trade deadline in place for this reason, so that teams dont bail out too early and want to stay in that seasons fight, but when they clearly dont have a chance, they can set themselves up to be more competitive next season.

Making this fantasy league as real as possible is what makes it different and fun. We should just go back to drafting your full team at the start of each season if there are going to be all these restrictions on what you can trade. Do other leagues let the league veto trades? But if you guys (Joey) are scared of my shitty team making a run..then thats your problem.

Joey,Stop acting like your team had locked up the division like you tried to do weeks ago. Your team sucks
just like mine. I have friends that literally pay real money on trades in their league's just to cut the other
guys throat, sometimes you do whatever it takes to rip someones heart and fantasy dreams out. Clearly $10
of draft cap is too risque for you bitches.

Also, I think we should set up a steel cage after the season, and put all the rule disagreements out on the
table, and if your that passionate about them then you should be willing to step into the cage, and settle it
that way.

I copied the info below straight from the 2009 Auction Draft Rules. Have a nice day I'm going on vacation.

Pre-Season Trades:

- Trading is allowed both before and during the Live Draft;
  however, there can be no-inter trading of draft formats types.
- Auction dollars can only be traded for Auction Keepers and
  vice versa.
  o For instance, Locos Monos can trade either auction dollars
    and/or his Auction Keepers to Midget Nation for Peyton
    Manning (an Auction Keeper); however, he cannot trade any
    of those assets for Chris Johnson (a Snake Keeper).
- Snake draft positions and/or snake draft players can only be
  traded for other snake draft positions and/or snake draft
  players.
  o For instance, Locos Monos can trade his 6th round pick to
    Midget Nation for Chris Johnson. Or his Den Bezwinger
    can trade Philip Rivers (a Snake Keeper) to Midget Nation
    for Chris Johnson.

133. Trade Canceled

*Posted by:* 🌟 rochandler *(Dunkey Butters)*  
Nov 20 1:49pm
Due to popular demand, the trade has been canceled.

To avoid further confusion, I say we make a rule where auction dollars cannot be used in an in-season
trade. Waiver-wire money can, but not auction budget.

Also, with respect to trading of players on "Injured Reserve" for the purposes of keepers, we had a meeting
at lunch (Joey, Kevin and I) and we came to the conclusion that if a team trades for an IR player, that team
must keep the IR player next year. This will eliminate any possibility of mass dumping. So, I could trade
Forte for Brown straight up, but then I would have to keep Brown next year.

Also, anytime in the off-season teams can trade auction dollars, but only after the season is over.

134. Re: DUNKEY AND CRUSH

*Posted by:* 🌟 rochandler *(Dunkey Butters)*  
Nov 20 1:52pm
Gary, I feel your pain. I think its too big of a jump at this point though. We'll have to ease everyone into it.
Remember, half of this league is made up of clinical retards, so they don't understand this stuff.

At the very least it wasn't clearly stated in the rules whether in-season trading of budget was allowed, and
since we are so close to the deadline, I do tend to think it could be deemed unfair.
We will revisit this in the off-season.

135. Re: DUNKEY AND CRUSH

Posted by: twebulldog8 (Den Bezwinger)
Nov 20 2:06pm
First of all ... You can stop crying about the issue, manage your team better throughout the season.

Second of all ... If you don't like the Fantasy Fairy league ... Well then, Good bye MR POTTY MOUTH!!

136. Re: DUNKEY AND CRUSH

Posted by: brycethedog (Thick-Thigh Thumpers)
Nov 20 3:35pm
Gary, wish I could join your ghetto-ass league where you probably play dice on the corner to decide draft position and beat the losers with brass knuckles. Sound fun (NOT! ha haa - got ya).

I wish I would have known you were open to trading, I would have tried to get Ronnie Brown from you for a live chicken and 5 pesos.

And, if you can find a steel cage (actually, it wouldn't surprise me if you had one in your house), I'm down with deciding rules in that manner.

137. Re: DUNKEY AND CRUSH

Posted by: Locos Monos VIII (Locos Monos IX)
Nov 20 3:36pm
wow. i think we all need a drink.

138. Re: DUNKEY AND CRUSH

Posted by: graketich01 (King Crush)
Nov 20 4:04pm
I didn't say it was my league...It was a friend's...wink wink. I would have taken the chicken deal by the way. There will be many drinks had. Especially after this debacle. Way to go Dunkey, he's the one that started the whole thing, lets all get mad at him, which is usually not this hard to do.

139. Thank You

Posted by: graketich01 (King Crush)
Nov 20 6:56pm
I just want too say thank you to those who participated in today's shit talking session. Even though the trade got veto'd and still dissapointed about that. The banter between the group today was excellent. It made a afternoon of peddling forklifts much more enjoyable. I will see you in the playoffs, as I ride Jamal Lewis to the promise land.

regards,
Crush
140. Re: Thank You

Posted by:  

Boyd (Dallas Cowboyds)

Nov 20 7:38pm

I think we should reconsider the trade veto, Gary has to START J. Lewis now!! Is that fair to anyone?! I'm sorry Gary.

Signed,

The guy with a worse team than Gary

141. Should we kick..

Posted by:  

rochandler (Dunkey Butters)

Nov 24 9:01am

...Benji out of the league for not even trying.

Lost 8 in a row.

$100.00 in waiver budget.

142. Re: Should we kick..

Posted by:  

Jerry (Panic at the Pooper)

Nov 24 9:12am

If he's really not trying, then yes, let's get someone else in here...I know Luke would love to get in...but Ziege has had a tough go on the schedule, losing multiple weeks by less than 10. So I'm not sure if he's not trying or if he just isn't that good...and in all honesty I only joined these league because it's chock full on mediocre managers!

143. Re: Should we kick..

Posted by:  

gaketich01 (King Crush)

Nov 24 10:57am

If we do get someone new, and I hope we dont. It should be someone who is not as myopic as the rest of the players in this league. Benji needs to man up, put up a fight, exept wait until next week to do so. Crush

144. Re: Should we kick..

Posted by:  

Locos Monos VIII (Locos Monos IX)

Nov 24 12:43pm

I think Gary should change his team name to the "Myopics"

145. Re: Should we kick..

Posted by:  

frank_e_christ (Greekie McPitapants)

Nov 24 1:49pm

As Zeige's attorney, I feel that he is still remaining competitive in the league and, as Pooper mentioned, has been close in most games. Although there has been a reduction in fantasy involvement--most likely associated with the shame of consistently losing--this is a rebuilding year for Zeige and has warranted a
restructuring of the front office as they decipher the nuances of running a successful fantasy football team versus a successful fantasy bowling team.

**146. Re: Should we kick..**

*Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)*

Nov 24 4:20pm  
I didn't know attorney was another word for "dude who's cock I suck and who's ass I plunge in order to get free room and board?"

Anywho, I was kidding about kicking him out of the league. Just thought it was interesting that it appears he's not even trying anymore.

He's got a built in excuse for sucking now though..."of course my team sucked, I was too busy to try."

**147. Fun Fact...**

*Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)*

Nov 24 8:18pm  
King Crush has scored fewer points than any other team IN THE ENTIRE LEAGUE, yet resides in 1st place of our division with 6 wins.

Fantasy is a cruel mistress.

**148. Re: Should we kick..?.scrumb=58vs9.H9Y9 3**

*Posted by: frank_e_christ (Greekie McPitapants)*

Nov 25 11:29am  
No problem. I would have gone with the same joke if I were 3-8 and in the worst division in Fantasy Football history. Stevie Wonder called and said that he has to resign as your co-manager, stating that he is tired of you second guessing him--resulting in team management that is almost as bad as Thick Thigh Thumpers.

**149. Question**

*Posted by: frank_e_christ (Greekie McPitapants)*

Nov 25 12:33pm  
I saw this under lineup changes and was wondering if there was any explanation behind it.

Nov 25 9:05am  
Lineup changed for team 'Will's Weenies' for week 12 by rochandler

Just curious more than anything.

**150. Re: Should we kick..?**

*Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)*

Nov 25 1:00pm  
Frank, making fun of my record is like the high school QB making fun of the retarded kid in ESE.

It just makes you look foolish.
151. Re: Question
Posted by: 🌐rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Nov 25 1:02pm
Will doesn't ever call me back and I don't think its fair to allow him to continue to start B. Westbrook, when he isn't even playing, so I went ahead and replaced him with a player who is actually going to play.

Someone needs to get on his ass and get him to start paying attention.

152. Re: Question
Posted by: frank_e_christ (Greekie McPitapants)
Nov 25 3:49pm
I agree and have left a message on Will's voicemail each week commenting on his stupidity especially when it cost me the lead of my division because he only lost to Locos Monos XVIII by 1 point. I know you were joking about removing Zeige from the league, but I think we could vote on a penalty for lack of involvement.

153. Re: Should we kick..
Posted by: frank_e_christ (Greekie McPitapants)
Nov 25 3:50pm
No worries. I'd say the same thing if I were 3-8 and then secretly go cry in the bathroom stall at work.

154. Re: Question
Posted by: twebulldog8 (Den Bezwinger)
Nov 25 7:42pm
I agree with Greekie, there should be some penalty for lack of involvement. Maybe losing money for the following years draft? Something to make sure everyone is participating each week. Obviously we know Mr Weenie has not due to the fact that the Commish had to make a change that should have been made weeks ago.

155. Re: Question
Posted by: 🌐Will (Will's Weenies)
Nov 25 8:32pm
Hold up computer fags. Just because I was out of town last week and forgot to set my lineup doesn't mean I'm not paying attention. Stank and Fat Legs, didn't I beat both of you? Fine that bitches.

156. Re: Question
Posted by: 🌐Will (Will's Weenies)
Nov 25 9:22pm
Sorry about the fat legs comment Ken. I thought you were Joey.

157. Re: Question
Posted by: frank_e_christ (Greekie McPitapants)
Nov 25 9:59pm
That is a shitty excuse. You don't hear me bitching because I don't understand your American culture or American sports or Tom complain because he didn't know that you are supposed to get more points than your opponent. Brian Westbrooke has been useless for weeks.

158. Re: Question

Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Nov 26 9:49am
Will doesn't bring it often, but nice work buddy. He just owned KT and Stank (and Joey for that matter).

159. Re: Question

Posted by: twcbulldog8 (Den Bezwinger)
Nov 26 10:41am
look at the scoreboard 9 - 1, that's all I have to comment.

160. Re: Question

Posted by: twcbulldog8 (Den Bezwinger)
Nov 26 10:41am
Excuse me, that is 10 - 1 after smacking my weenie around!!

161. Happy Thanksgiving Fellas!!

Posted by: twcbulldog8 (Den Bezwinger)
Nov 26 10:42am
Enjoy the feasts!

162. Playoff Picture...

Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Dec 1 8:50am
Division 1:

Winner of King Crush vs. TTT wins division and gets #3 seed in playoffs (overall and division records will be identical, points scored is 3rd tiebreaker).

Wild Card:

Loser of King Crush and TTT, plus Panic and Midget are all vying for 2 wild card spots. Best record is 1st tiebreaker followed by points scored as 2nd tiebreaker.

163. Re: Playoff Picture...

Posted by: brycethedog (Thick-Thigh Thumpers)
Dec 1 2:41pm
Thanks IV. WHEN I get into the playoffs, I'm going to cause some damage. I'm predicting first or second place in the league. Brees is rolling and Turner and Portis should be healthy by that time. Watch out.

164. Re: Playoff Picture...
165. Re: Playoff Picture...

Posted by: twbulldog8 (Den Bezwinger)
Dec 1 5:57pm
I agree with TTT, he will be a force to reckon with!!

166. Re: Playoff Picture...

Posted by: graketich01 (Myopics)
Dec 2 2:00pm
TTT you had better stick with the McDonalds double cheeseburger, the KING's double cheese is too much for your tiny hands to handle. Biotch!

167. Re: Playoff Picture...

Posted by: frank_e_christ (Greekie McPitapants)
Dec 3 4:24pm
Does Gary know that he changed his name so that the "King" reference doesn't really make sense anymore? Division 1 is not that bright.

168. Make TEs Eligible for Flex Spot?

Posted by: brycethedog (Thick-Thigh Thumpers)
Dec 3 9:23am
I notice in most of the weekly "flex rankings" online, the ranker includes TEs. Will yahoo allow us to make TEs eligible for the flex spot? If so I would be in favor of this, if only to watch Tom start 2 TEs each week. Thoughts?

169. Re: Make TEs Eligible for Flex Spot?

Posted by: Locos Monos IX (Locos Monos IX)
Dec 3 10:57am
I'd be ok with a TE flex.

In some leagues, they allow a QB to serve as a flex too. I'm not so sure I'm in favor of that...

170. Re: Make TEs Eligible for Flex Spot?

Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Dec 3 2:22pm
I'm okay with the TE, but definitely not the QB.

I'm not sure if Yahoo allows it though.

171. frankie the dog

Posted by: Gary (Myopics)
Message ID: 246 Dec 3 7:44pm | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
coincidence...probably not
http://www.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%253A%252F%252Fwww.youtube.com%252Fwatch%253Fv%253D1xPfgCW9tE&h=76fc8a9b8be360fa320c538ba93fe0a&ref=nf

172. Re: frankie the dog

Posted by: Gary (Myoptics)
Message ID: 247 Dec 3 7:47pm | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
that didn't even work and was stupid. sorry for wasting your time.

173. Re: frankie the dog

Posted by: ymca_gators (Tomaldinho)
Message ID: 248 Dec 6 9:16am | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
We are all now dumber for that post...thanks.

174. Tiebreakers

Posted by: Locos Monos IX (Locos Monos IX)
Message ID: 249 Dec 7 5:16am | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
Mr. Commish,

What are the tiebreakers for the division title and for playoff seeding?

175. Re: Tiebreakers

Posted by: Locos Monos IX (Locos Monos IX)
Message ID: 250 Dec 7 5:19am | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
Never mind, I think i found it under "rules". Is this it?

If, at the end of the season, two or more teams in a division finish with the same overall record, the
following system will be used to decide the division winner:

1. Overall winning percentage.
2. Division winning percentage.
3. Fantasy points scored.

176. Re: Tiebreakers

Posted by: rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Message ID: 251 Dec 7 6:08am | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
That's right.

177. Re: Tiebreakers

Posted by: Locos Monos IX (Locos Monos IX)
Message ID: 253 Dec 7 7:53am | Reply | Post | < Previous | Next >
How did I play myself out of money? Frank and I will have the same record, but my divisional record is better.

178. Re: Tiebreakers
Hey Gary, way to play yourself out of $100.00 in the last weekend. Loser.

(PS - you may not refer to my 0-6 division record or 12th place finish in the league in any rebuttal)

179. Re: Tiebreakers

Posted by: Rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Dec 7 10:09am
Jason is stupid.

180. Re: Tiebreakers

Posted by: Locos Monos IX (Locos Monos IX)
Dec 7 10:58am
Robert is stupider.

181. Re: Tiebreakers

Posted by: Gary (Myopics)
Dec 7 1:30pm
I am not really sure what is going on, but I am offended by the loser comment, and when I come over this week, I am going to first, egg the shit out of Joey's house and cars, the take 4 back to the woodshed for rubbing in the fact that I lost $100. Which I am not quite sure of how I did that???

182. Re: Tiebreakers

Posted by: Rochandler (Dunkey Butters)
Dec 7 3:05pm
Division winner gets $100.

183. Re: Tiebreakers

Posted by: Brycethedog (Thick-Thigh Thumpers)
Dec 7 8:58pm
Don't hate the player. Hate the game. Peace.

184. You kept Aaron Rodgers?!

Posted by: Locos Monos IX (Locos Monos IX)
Dec 8 5:18am
I guess Aaron had the last laugh.

185. Re: Tiebreakers?.scrumb=9m0oM LiO1Oj

Posted by: Twcbulldog8 (Den Bezwinger)
Dec 8 7:00am
Send it my way ... I have mouths to feed, butts to cover, and Christmas to buy!!
186. Re: Tiebreakers?.scrumb=9m0oM LiOlOj

Posted by: ymca_gators (Tomaldinho)
Dec 8 7:56am
A nice finish for Tomaldinho....5-8 and 8th place. 7th in overall scoring...not bad for a guy predicted to be 11th or 12th. I'm going to Disney World!

187. Re: Tiebreakers?.scrumb=9m0oM LiOlOj

Posted by: brycethedog (Thick-Thigh Thumpers)
Dec 9 11:16am
Tom, if you check out the "league" "record book" tab, you'll see that you had the hardest strength of schedule.

188. High Scoring

Posted by: Locos Monos IX (Locos Monos IX)
Dec 14 5:39am
I've never seen so much scoring. The teams have really stepped it up this weekend. thank God i had a bye.

189. BYE WEEK SCORING OPTIONS

Posted by: twcbulldog8 (Den Bezwinger)
Dec 14 9:07am
I say I keep this week's score for next week, regardless of what I score next week. This should be an option for BYE week teams ... Well, at least it was a good try ... 157 for Den ... Amazing boys, let's ride this thing until Week 17!!

190. DIVISION II

Posted by: twcbulldog8 (Den Bezwinger)
Dec 14 9:09am
Let's see if we can't see TWO from the same division in the championship. GOOOO POOPER!!

191. Re: DIVISION II

Posted by: Jerry (Panic at the Pooper)
Dec 14 11:20am
Thanks for the love Den...I'll plan on seeing you in TWO weeks. Division 3 smells bad...like someone forgot to wipe bad!

192. RIP Chris Henry

Posted by: Locos Monos IX (Locos Monos IX)
Dec 17 7:53am
The Locos Monos Organization is saddened to hear of Chris Henry's death. As a draft choice in the 2009 fantasy draft, Henry did not quite pan out. Nonetheless, he will be missed.

What a terrible way to die. I fell of the back of a car once - and then played a soccer game against Seabreeze later that night.

Part of my brain fell out.
193. SO HERE WE ARE LOCOS .......

Posted by: twcbulldog8 (Den Bezwinger)
Dec 21 6:36am
Don't think Den Bezwinger has forgotten the name calling of our new franchise name for 2009. We remember the slander and have had it posted in the locker room all season! We promised to see you in the Championship before the season ... Now we are to Conquer!!!! Den Bezwinger forever!!!

194. Read the "League Notes"

Posted by: Locos Monos IX (Locos Monos IX)
Dec 24 10:19am
The stats were updated to change Kurt Warner's TD to a lateral, thus a rush attempt for the WR. That could have very easily knocked me out of the playoffs. I just barely skidded past the Poop Squad. I hope my luck continues....

195. Congratulations

Posted by: kevinplenzler (The Midget Nation)
Dec 29 8:36am
Congrats to Locos on its 2009 championship.
Also, it is interesting to note that the 6 teams in the playoffs were the top 6 in regular season pts and the championship game included 2 of the top 3 in pts. All and all, a solid playoffs and a solid 2009 season. Looking forward to 2010.

Midget Out.

196. Re: Congratulations

Posted by: Jerry (Panic at the Pooper)
Dec 29 12:47pm
Yes, congrats to Locos (you owe me one)! It was a fun year with lots of trades and dramatic action! I like the 3 divisions and the $100 waiver budget. You did good commish!

Since I did not win and will not be immortalized for all time on the Faries trophy, I would like to take the opportunity to lobby for a team name change. I know we were to keep our names, and I like what you guys have done, I would like to change mine for the following reasons:

1. Panic at the Disco, like Panic at the Pooper, really hasn't maintained the fire and intensity that it stated out with. Are they still around?

2. My poop jokes are even starting to bore me.

3. A team name with the word poop, or any derivitive of the word poop, doesn't really convey the professionalism this organization brings week in and week out.

For these reasons I am proposing "Panic at the Pooper" becomes "Fart Ninja".

I feel that this name more accurately portrays the ownership of this organization, since I rarely panic while defecating or while near such facilities and I frequently pass gas without anyone knowing! It really makes
I actually don't know what name I will go with, I'm just interested in making a change to a name more in line with the rest of the league.

197. Re: Congratulations

*Posted by: Locos Monos IX (Locos Monos IX)*

Dec 29 6:06pm

Dear Ninja Farts, et. al....

I'd like to thank everyone for a great season. I love fantasy football and am sad to see the season end.

Congratulations to Ken's team for a great season. I got lucky in the last game. Ken's problem now is to decide who he's going to keep from his all-star team.

Thanks commish for organizing everything.

Good luck to everyone in their off season research. See you next year!

198. Re: Congratulations

*Posted by: ymca_gators (Tomaldinho)*

Dec 30 8:15am

Suck it Locos
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