

It's a Fantastic Game

Are you ready for some football?
The inside scoop on fantasy football

BY NATHAN YOUNG

It's late in the fourth quarter of an NFL football game between the Dallas Cowboys and the New York Giants, a classic match-up. The Cowboy offense is backed up to their own 20-yard line and their quarterback, Tony Romo, drops back to pass. He throws a bomb down the field to Dez Bryant, his favorite receiver. Bryant makes a quick move on his defender and breaks free! The 40, the 30, the 20, the 10, Touchdown! You look up from your iPhone and smile at your frustrated friend across the table. You have just won your Fantasy Football match-up.

Fantasy Football is not, as some at Geneva might think, a game where wizards, elves, and orcs run around with a mythical object called a football and attempt to deliver it into Mount Doom. Fantasy Football is a game that requires some luck and some skill, where the players pretend to be owners of imaginary football teams on the Internet. So, why does this simple game draw more than 33 million American men and women, including many Geneva students, to participate every year?

Especially over the past few years, Fantasy Football has seen tremendous growth and is promoted on many apps, websites, news articles, advertisements and television programs. There are even Fantasy Football professionals on the TV and radio who give advice and support for this frenzy. This \$70 billion market has impacted more than just adult men, as some might assume. In fact, out of the 33 million that play, women make up approximately 20 percent of Fantasy football players, with teens (its fastest growing demographic) making up 20 percent of the overall number. This trend has manifested

itself at Geneva, too.

Walking down the Geneva Rhetoric School boardwalk during football season, you are sure to hear conversations between students about what they did over the weekend, what grade they got on a test or what cool new clothes they added to their wardrobe. But you are just as sure to hear conversations about who won the Fantasy Football match-ups over the weekend, how many fantasy points Tom Brady scored, or what players they added to their Fantasy teams.

Junior Arianna Flores lists some of her favorite things about Fantasy Football. "I like sitting with my homework and tracking the games on Sunday afternoon," she says. Because it's the same game for everyone who plays it, it is a really fun thing to talk about with all sorts of people. This is yet another perk of Fantasy Football—it is a really fun and easy topic to talk about with old friends, new friends, or even strangers.

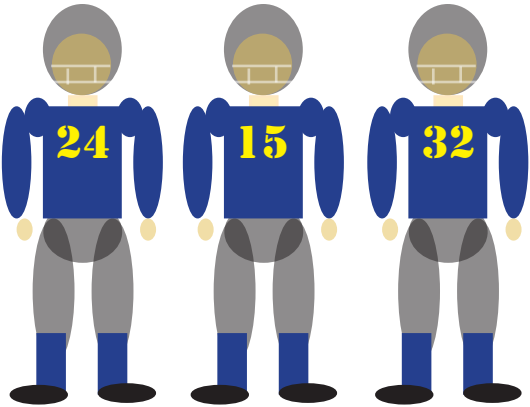
Competition is a very popular aspect of Fantasy Football. Freshman William Cone says, "Honestly, I just like the satisfaction of beating my friends." Sophomore Zach Akin answers from the heart. "Owning a team really motivates me to try to get as many wins as possible. But crushing people has its advantages, too." There's no feeling like going to school Tuesday morning and grinning at the friend you beat in Monday night's game, while he avoids eye contact with you at all costs.

All these factors give an explanation for what makes Fantasy Football so fantastic. Because of Fantasy Football, people care more about the "gridiron pastime" than ever before, which has the NFL smiling all the way to the bank.

TACKLING THE RULES OF FANTASY FOOTBALL


THE SETUP: Before the NFL season begins, members organize their league by picking or randomly being grouped with other members on one of the many Fantasy Football websites. Then, everyone in the league gathers together or simultaneously logs on to the website to participate in the most sacred of rituals.

17 Weeks




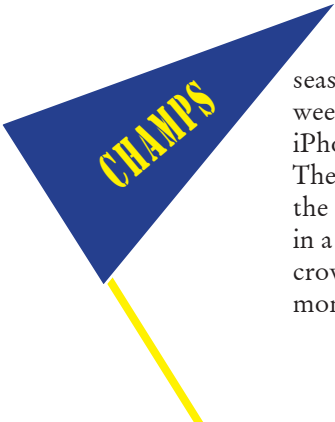
THE DRAFT: The league members take turns picking players from any NFL team until every member obtains 18 players. The positions of these players can vary, but usually consist of one quarterback, two running backs, two wide receivers, one tight end, one “flex” player (running back, receiver, or tight end), one kicker and one defensive team as a whole.





THE SEASON: At the beginning of every week, all members select which nine players they want to represent them in their individual match-up against another league member. These players earn fantasy points by gaining yards, scoring touchdowns, kicking field goals, etc. At the end of each week, after all the NFL games are over, the scores of each fantasy team are added up. The Fantasy team with the most points is the winner of the match-up. Then, the next week, new match-ups are set and players can be dropped, added, or traded. This vicious cycle continues throughout the NFL season.





THE PLAYOFFS: In the last few weekends of the season, the league championship tournament begins. These stressful weekends cause the typical participant to retreat to his man-cave, iPhone and laptop in hand, and adopt a diet of mostly chips and soda. These final games are the same as the season games, except that now, the members with the best win-loss records compete with each other in a week-to-week bracket. The winner of this playoff bracket is crowned league champion, given bragging rights and, in some cases, money.