

The Phenomena of Fantasy Sports and How it Impacts Real Sports

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Watching sports has always been an exciting pastime, even for those who spend very little time outdoors playing any of these sports. Those who have a favorite team get fully immersed into the games, while others find excitement in watching the best squads playing in high profile matches. Last but definitely not least, there are people who bet on sports and for these guys, the importance of the games, the fame of the teams and athletes don't matter at all. The only thing that matters is the outcome they bet on.

Fantasy Sports emerged as an alternative for many of those who love sports and only need a reason to watch the matches at the edge of their seats. The fact that you can also choose athletes based on your experience and make predictions makes fantasy sports challenging and rewarding. For the first time, players compete against their peers and they enjoy unlimited freedom in spending real cash or only virtual currency. Depending on their expectations and resources, fantasy sports fans enjoy a different experience.

No longer just an American phenomenon

National Football League is still the most popular fantasy sports, but soccer is closing the gap due to the popularity of the sport worldwide. Even though it all started on the other side of the Atlantic, Europeans are every bit as enthusiastic about fantasy sports. Selecting the players is the most important stage and experience places a major role, with veterans emerging victorious far more often than rookies.

The first fantasy sports were offered worldwide by [Yahoo!](#) Back in 1999 and other portals followed suit, with Fox, CBS and ESPN being just a few examples. Millions of people play fantasy sports every year and their growing numbers caught the eye of newsstands and television. There are dozens of fantasy football programs, newspaper columns and TV shows where players and pundits get together to discuss the latest trends and make forecasts.

Mobile apps push fantasy sports into overdrive

Bookmakers were the first to develop mobile apps to meet punters halfway, as the most dedicated ones wanted to watch the games live. These applications allow them to bet in real-time, despite the slight intentional delay used by the bookies to prevent abuses. There are no dedicated mobile apps for fantasy sports and they run smoothly on smartphones and tablets, while allowing players to track their players and teams as the action unfolds.

The advancements of technology are essential for the growth of fantasy sports, since the vast majority of players watch the games online. Millions of dollars are spent annually on fantasy sports media products, so it comes as no surprise that a lot of money is invested in specialized apps as well. They present players with a steady and reliable flux of information aimed at helping professionals and beginners make an educated decision.

Free tournaments and private leagues

In the early stages of fantasy sports, virtually all competitions were free and there are still plenty of tournaments that fans can enter without paying a dime. Those who prefer private leagues will have to pay a buy-in fee and the average amount revolves around €100 for the entire season. Yahoo! was the first to take fantasy sports seriously, so it comes as no surprise that it also has its Pro Leagues where players can sign up for at least \$20.

DraftKings and [FanDuel](#) are the industry leaders and they also present their members with these alternatives to online gambling. Since the latter is illegal on US Internet sites, fantasy sports are a convenient option for those who want to enjoy the thrills without breaking the laws. The competitive nature of these tournaments makes them immensely popular, while the chance of winning real cash is only the icing on the cake.

Both companies were hit hard by the [decision of a New York judge](#) who stated that DraftKings and FanDuel should cease their operations in the state. They can no longer take paid entries, accept bets from New York residents, but both will appeal and hope for a stay of the preliminary injunction. The judge motivated his decision by stating that protecting the public outweighs the potential loss of business and expressed his concerns for those struggling with gambling addiction.

Daily and weekly fantasy sports

Depending on how much free time they've got and how many hours they feel comfortable spending on fantasy sports, players can choose between daily and weekly competitions. The popularity of NFL among fans of the genre is easy to explain, since players only need to prepare the lineups once a week. This is a convenient way of playing if you don't have a lot of time or don't feel comfortable committing too much.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, NBA and MLB fantasy leagues keep players wired every day because there are thousands of games scheduled throughout the year. Participants can promote, trade and demote players every week, but in order to make the right decision they need to watch all the games every week. It's a big commitment and only the most avid fantasy sports fans can dedicate their time and resources to such an extent.

The impact of fantasy sports on real sports

There is no consensus regarding the manner in which fantasy sports impact their real counterparts. Some claim that the former have a negative impact, because they divert the attention of players from what really matters. They can also present a risk in the sense of players developing gambling addiction, since they are required to pay real money to participate in private leagues.

A more neutral analysis highlights the fact that fantasy sports have altered the manner in which players watch the game. What matters to them is no longer the name of the winning team, but rather the spreads, the individual performance of their chosen players and other details. Depending on their forecasts and team structure, their interest can differ greatly and players see the games with different eyes.

There also positive aspects of fantasy sports and the fact that so many people have embraced them actually benefits the real sports industry. These people spend money on tickets, some choose to watch the games from the stands or in front of the TV even if they are not big fans. It is the fantasy competition that motivates them and some end up spending money on branded merchandise and related items.

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