

Fantasy Football for TMA FAQ

Who is involved in FF for TMA?

Marv Lauwasser, who has myositis, originally set up the leagues as traditional betting leagues. Marv eventually converted all leagues to charity. When it became physically difficult for Marv to continue as commissioner, the leagues were administered principally by Alan Horowitz (alan.horowitz@att.net), one of Marv's friends. Other people with myositis and their friends, and friends of friends, are involved. Team owners are concentrated in southeast Wisconsin, but there are now team owners in every US time zone. Marv continues as an advisor to the commissioner.

Briefly, FF is a game where the objective is to select the best, exclusive combination of NFL players, who are collectively scored from their individual statistics during actual NFL games. FF is immensely popular, with about 29 million participants in the United States.

How are the leagues hosted?

There are several good hosting sites for fantasy football. The TMA leagues are hosted by ESPN.com, which is the most popular. ESPN is free of charge for its basic service, but it provides extra cost advice and analysis for those wanting it. ESPN runs the player draft at the beginning of the season, arranges matchups, maintains team rosters, and performs all scoring. Owners need an ESPN login, which is free. The login name should be an active email address. ESPN FF can be accessed either through a Web app (ESPN.com) or through a mobile phone app, which is also free.

How much does it cost to participate?

Owners must make a new \$50 donation to TMA for each team they own. More donations are welcome. There are no prizes at the end of the season, except pride in winning.

Does participation require a lot of effort?

The amount of time a team owner spends varies greatly. Some team owners spend a few minutes each week to update their rosters, while other team owners might spend an hour or more reading blogs and studying NFL statistics. ESPN and other sites offer free advice on player moves, so help is readily available. The most active time of the week for a team owner is Tuesday because waiver wire claims are first processed each week by ESPN early Wednesday morning. Most team owners check their rosters early Thursday evening and Sunday morning to assure all starters on their rosters are still healthy and active.

How do I join a league?

To join, you should first contact the league commissioner to express interest. Since leagues must have an even number of teams and there is an ideal range of league sizes (between 8 and 12 teams), some requests may not be accommodated. The commissioner may ask a prospective team owner to take on an extra team to balance the leagues. Typically, several people own multiple teams (but only one team in any league). The prospective owners give their ESPN login (an email address) to the commissioner, who then assigns it to a league through the ESPN site. ESPN sends invitations to prospective owners, who must accept the invitations to complete the process.

What steps should be taken after I join?

Once the invitation is accepted, you should sign on to ESPN and navigate to your team page, then go to “team settings”. Give your team a name and select an interesting logo. ESPN has many stock logos, but it is more fun to create your own. The commissioner may be able to help you upload your own logo, a process that can be complicated at times. Please avoid crude or offensive team names or logos. The default style of a team name is <place><mascot>, although there are lots of variations on this idea. For example, a team name might be “Boston Baked Beans.” Innovative or personally important or whimsical names are the most fun. Teams also have 4-letter abbreviations. The commission can assign that nickname, usually in the form xYYY, where x is the owner’s first initial and YYY an abbreviation of the owner’s last name.

I have never played fantasy football before. Is it difficult?

The management of a team on ESPN is quite simple and intuitive since the user-interface is well designed. The mechanical aspects of the draft can be a bit daunting, even for experienced owners. That is why many owners participate in “mock” drafts offered by ESPN ahead of their own. Mock drafts also allow you to familiarize yourself with those NFL players favored by FF owners across the US. There are hundreds of good NFL players, and it is impossible for most people to remember details of all of them. More experienced team owners will know some of the better players from previous seasons, but many players, especially rookies and recent trades, are a mystery to nearly everyone. The best recommendation for new owners is to muddle through the draft with whatever aids are available from ESPN and then build additional knowledge as the season progresses.

What is the basic structure of the leagues?

Leagues have varied from 10 to 12 teams. They are traditional, with a complete draft at the beginning of each season, as opposed to “dynasty” leagues where teams retain players across NFL seasons. Competition is head-to-head each week between two teams. Teams

with the best records advance to a bracketed playoff taking three weeks at the end of the season. Most teams make the playoffs.

When does the FF season start and end?

The first FF season event is the draft, usually in late August or early September. Competition occurs during the first to seventeenth NFL weeks, finishing in late December or early January.

What is the scoring method?

We strive for consistency in scoring across all leagues since some people own teams in multiple leagues. Scoring is very close to “standard” PPR (point per reception) as explained in the Wikipedia article on the subject. Adhering to standard scoring helps our team owners receive accurate advice from bloggers and analysis sites, since they also base their recommendations on the “standard”. PPR scoring is popular in FF because it tends to weigh the positions of QB, RB and WR about the same. Offensive players receive fantasy points for yards gained and points scored. Kickers receive fantasy points for making field goals. Defenses receive fantasy points for holding opponents to low scores. Players can be penalized for bad plays, such as fumbles, interceptions, and missed kicks.

How are teams composed?

The NFL player positions on a team vary slightly depending upon the number of teams in the league. For a twelve-team league, teams have one quarterback, two running backs, two wide receivers, one tight end, one kicker, one DST (defense, special teams combo), and one FLEX (could be an RB, WR, or TE.) There are up to six bench players, who could be of any position. There are no individual defensive players. Teams do not have extra slots for disabled players.

What is the role of the commissioner?

Commissioners have absolute authority over their leagues. They set all rules and resolve disputes. Leagues mostly run automatically through the software, so little intervention is necessary. Problems can occur during proposed trades or when team owners are busy and cannot attend to their teams. A vigilant commissioner can prevent collusion or badly neglected teams from messing up the competition. Commissioners can also appoint co-owners to attend to team business should an owner find themselves indisposed or disconnected from the Internet. Anybody wanting a rule change can ask the commissioner, who may seek the advice of all team owners. The commission must also be a team owner.

How are player trades done?

Trades are permitted up to the trading deadline, late in the season. However, most team owners tend to fix problems on their teams by using the waiver wire, instead. Trades are encouraged, to the extent that they are Pareto Optimal. That is, both teams involved in the trade must benefit from it. If the trade is clearly lopsided, it will be rejected. Trades are subject to a vote by other owners in the league. Trades are initiated by one team owner, who asks a second team owner for permission to swap two specific players. This is done formally on the ESPN site. Usually, an owner interested in making a trade will contact the other owner first by email to judge acceptability and work out details. Trades can take a few days, so owners are cautioned to start the process early in a week.

Note: it is theoretically possible for a team to drop a good player in the hopes that a friend might be able to pick this player up from the waiver wire. This would be considered bad sportsmanship and is discouraged. In addition, the league subscribes to ESPN's undroppable player list, which is comprised of all the most productive NFL players. So a team cannot drop a player who would have a huge positive effect on another team, by rule.

How can a team improve through the waiver wire?

The waiver wire is a list of all NFL players who are fantasy eligible and not on anybody's roster. The waiver wire is frozen for any player whose team has already played in that week. The waiver wire is unfrozen early Wednesday morning for anybody whose team played the previous week. ESPN clears all pending waiver claims on Wednesday. A player who is subsequently dropped (except immediately) from a team before playing in any given week is frozen for at least 24 hours. So, frivolously adding and dropping players is not good manners and is discouraged. The waiting period helps fairness and reduces the possibility of collusion. Waiver claims are processed by ESPN in order of the team's priority. Priorities are reset each week to the reverse order of the league standings. Less successful teams get the highest priority to help maintain parity in the leagues. As soon as a waiver claim is processed, the team is moved to the last priority. There are no limits to the number of waiver claims a single team may make during any week or across the whole season.

What is the role of a co-owner?

Some team owners simply want to share their experiences with a friend or family member through co-ownership. But most co-owners are temporary to solve a particular problem, such as overcoming computer issues or maintaining the team while the original owner is away. The commissioner can add or remove co-owners. A co-owner should not be an owner from any other team in the same league. The commissioner can also be a co-owner, as an exception, to execute specific actions on behalf of the original owner when the

original owner cannot do so themselves. Good sources of temporary co-owners are the participants in other leagues. Co-owners can be especially valuable during the draft, since picks happen very quickly, and extra help is beneficial. A co-owner has equal rights to an owner when it comes to roster moves and other actions. Should someone need computer assistance throughout the FF season, a co-owner is a viable option. Co-owners are not required to make a separate donation to TMA.

When is the draft?

The ideal time for a draft is between the last preseason game (August 29 for 2026) and the first NFL game (September 9 for 2026). Sometimes it is necessary to schedule the draft ahead of the last preseason game, if there are time conflicts among team owners. Evenings are usually most convenient, between 6 PM and 9 PM central time. A league draft usually takes about one hour to complete. The first round is in random order – thereafter it follows a “snake” pattern. A snake draft assures that every team’s average pick position is equivalent.

What aids are available when doing a draft?

ESPN provides so much help that it is possible to run the draft almost automatically using something called “autopick”. During the draft ESPN presents NFL players to owners in the exact order of the players’ “average draft position” (ADP) from previous drafts in other leagues. Therefore, the player listed at the top of the board is always the best player available by consensus. If you do not want that player, you can scroll down the list to find someone more satisfactory. Many other web sites also provide advice on which players to draft early. Should an owner want to draft a player especially early, then it is possible for the owner to edit ESPN’s default ADP list a few hours ahead of the draft. Unfortunately, the editing process is clumsy, so moving more than just a few players can be time consuming. Of course, you can recruit a co-owner to help, so long as the co-owner is not involved in the same draft.

How is the cultural climate of the leagues?

Since there is no financial gain by winning, good sportsmanship is the norm. Most owners are aggressive in taking opportunities to improve their teams, so play is quite competitive. Some owners are more casual in their approach. Owners have always been friendly and welcoming. There has never been a major dispute between owners during the history of the leagues.

How do I make a donation?

The easiest way to donate to TMA is by credit card through the FF for TMA campaign page on the TMA web site. Use this link: [Fundraise for TMA - Alan Horowitz's Fundraiser on Donorbox](#)

If you are paying by check through your financial manager, say from your IRA, then have the check sent directly to The Myositis Association and send verification to the commish.

If you are paying by personal check, send the check (payable to The Myositis Association), and the commish will forward the check to TMA.

What else do the leagues do for TMA besides fundraising?

Nothing. The two purposes of the leagues are to raise funds for TMA and have fun.