

Running a Fantasy Football League

by Ron "Modar" Knight

So you want to have your own Fantasy Football League (FFL). Where do you begin?

Well, the first recommendation we have to offer is this...determine if you want to be a part of a fantasy league or want to RUN a fantasy league. To be a part of the league means to own a team and play...fairly simple and straight-forward, but to run a league means to take on the mantle of being the Commissioner of the League. The job of Commissioner entails being responsible for maintaining the fantasy football league, creating the league constitution (rules) and keep them maintained, determining draft order, running the draft, collecting entrance fees (if any), setting up the game schedule, keeping track of roster transactions, reporting the weekly results of the fantasy games, compiling and notifying owners of team standings and generally keeping things running smoothly. It is important for the commissioner to be unbiased, honest and detail-oriented, as well as having the time to handle all of these details. Patience is a virtue in a commissioner and they should be able to deal with the variety of individuals who are team owners. If you don't fit the mold or don't have the time to spend...then consider finding someone who can take on the role of commissioner.

The second bit of advice is to give yourself time to get everything prepared, particularly if this is your inaugural year. So start early. (Even after twenty years of running a FFL, I still start preparing for the upcoming season in June.) Don't expect to be able to start a league just a couple of days before the season begins. There are many issues to decide upon to create your league. Now comes the first decision...do you want to develop the rules for the league yourself, then find folks interested in playing in that type of Fantasy Football League, or do you want to find folks to play in the league first and have them help develop the rules? Either method is fine, and each has their advantages and disadvantages. Developing the rules with a set of owners cuts down on the work for the commissioner in developing all the regulations, but can take longer to "haggle out" what folks will accept. Having the commissioner developing the rules takes a shorter amount of time, but then you have to find folks willing to be team owners under that system (usually not too difficult if the rules are fair and fun).

Whichever choice you make on whom and how the rules will be developed, the third suggestion is to take a look around. With the popularity of Fantasy Football, there is a wide variety of websites, books and magazines on the subject. And from these resources you can easily find out that there is no **One True Way**TM of running a fantasy league. Depending on the preference of yourself and your fellow players, your league can range from fairly simplistic to extremely elaborate. Explore the various possibilities for developing your league. You can model your league off another league or take bits from several other leagues, if you want. The key is to find a style that you and your team owners will enjoy playing.

There are seven (7) basic areas concerning your league that have to be determined. These are: League Size, League Type, Team Positions, Competition Format, Scoring System, Player Selection and Team Names.

League Size – How many teams do you want in your league? Leagues need to have an even number of teams. Most FFLs range from 6 to 16 teams, with the average being 8 to 12 teams. Once you determine how many teams you want to have, you need to decide if you want to split the teams into divisions. As with all choices, there are advantages and disadvantages. The disadvantage is if you divide the league into divisions, you'll need to devise a play-off system so that the top contenders of each division play each other for a Division Championship, then the Division Champions play each other for the overall League Championship. The advantage is that by having divisions it keeps more teams "in contention" and thus keeps the league more interesting toward the end of the season. (If you have enough teams (16) to develop four divisions, you'll also have to divide the divisions up into 2 conferences.) If you decide to go with divisions, each division should be given a name so that team owners can easily identify who their divisional opponents are, and ease discussion of standings. The names for the divisions can follow any method desired, just as long as the names are distinctive.

Examples of some divisions:

6 Teams – 1 Division

There is a 14 week Regular Season. On week 15 the #4 team plays the #1 team with the winner going to the Fantasy Bowl, and the #3 team plays the #2 team with the winner going to the Fantasy Bowl. On week 16 the two Fantasy Bowl teams play each other with the winner becoming League Champion.

<u>Division One</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>Pct</u>	<u>PF</u>	<u>PA</u>
Akron Ant-Eaters	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Boston Shamrocks	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Canton Bulldogs	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Golden Rangers	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Houston Hawks	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Kansas City Wolves	0	0	0	.000	00	00

8 Teams – 2 Divisions

There is a 14 week Regular Season. On week 15 the top two teams in each division play each other to determine the Division Champion. On week 16 the two Division Champions play each other in the Fantasy Bowl with the winner becoming League Champion.

<u>Division Alpha</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>Pct</u>	<u>PF</u>	<u>PA</u>
Akron Ant-Eaters	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Canton Bulldogs	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Houston Hawks	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Tokyo Godzillas	0	0	0	.000	00	00

<u>Division Omega</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>Pct</u>	<u>PF</u>	<u>PA</u>
Boston Shamrocks	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Golden Rangers	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Kansas City Wolves	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Lynchburg Moonshiners	0	0	0	.000	00	00

10 Teams – 2 Divisions

There is a 14 week Regular Season. On week 15 the top two teams in each division play each other to determine the Division Champion. On week 16 the two Division Champions play each other in the Fantasy Bowl with the winner becoming League Champion.

<u>Division Bear</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>Pct</u>	<u>PF</u>	<u>PA</u>
Akron Ant-Eaters	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Boston Shamrocks	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Houston Hawks	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Kansas City Wolves	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Tokyo Godzillas	0	0	0	.000	00	00

<u>Division Bull</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>Pct</u>	<u>PF</u>	<u>PA</u>
Canton Bulldogs	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Golden Rangers	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Huntsville Hunters	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Lynchburg Moonshiners	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Rome Rebels	0	0	0	.000	00	00

16 Teams – 4 Divisions – 2 Conferences

There is a 14 week Regular Season. On week 15 the top two teams in each division play each other to determine the Division Champion. On week 16 the Division Champions play each other to determine the Conference Champions. On week 17 the two Conference Champions play against each other in the Fantasy Bowl with the winner becoming League Champion.

East Conference

<u>Division Red</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>Pct</u>	<u>PF</u>	<u>PA</u>
Akron Ant-Eaters	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Boston Shamrocks	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Houston Hawks	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Tokyo Godzillas	0	0	0	.000	00	00

<u>Division Blue</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>Pct</u>	<u>PF</u>	<u>PA</u>
Golden Rangers	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Huntsville Hunters	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Lynchburg Moonshiners	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Rome Rebels	0	0	0	.000	00	00

West Conference

<u>Division Green</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>Pct</u>	<u>PF</u>	<u>PA</u>
Kansas City Wolves	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Los Angeles Tigers	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Pittsburgh Stars	0	0	0	.000	00	00
St. Paul Ideals	0	0	0	.000	00	00

<u>Division Gold</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>Pct</u>	<u>PF</u>	<u>PA</u>
Canton Bulldogs	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Dayton Triangles	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Pottsville Maroons	0	0	0	.000	00	00
Wheeling Ironmen	0	0	0	.000	00	00

League Type – Along with the size of your league, you'll need to decide the type of league you wish to have. There is a variety to choose from. The most popular choice is what is known as the *Standard League*, also called by some a Re-Draft League. With this type of league the team owners select (usually by draft) their team's players for one season only. At the end of the season all players are released from their teams and everyone starts new the next season, drafting again the teams. Hence the term Re-Draft League. This method is especially good for leagues that might have new team owners every year or so. In this kind of FFL, a player can be only on one team. About 80% of all FFLs use this type of league.

Another type of league, similar to a standard league but with a minor variation, is the *Keeper League*. In this type of FFL, the teams are allowed to carry-over a limited number of players from one year to the next. To keep things competitive, the number that can be kept is usually small [1 to 3 players], although some established leagues that don't install new teams very often will go with a larger number of carry-over players [4 to 7+]. In the keeper leagues that keep a small number of players, when a new team is added to the league, the new team is allotted supplemental picks before the regular draft begins, to select a number of players equal to the carry-over number. These are players that are not held by any other team. This allows the new teams to be on a more-or-less even footing with the established teams. For the keeper leagues that carry over a larger number of players, usually the established teams are allowed to protect only 1 or 2 of their carry-over players and the new teams can select their supplemental picks from the unprotected carry-over players (as well as any players not held by any team). This again helps keep things on an even footing by not allowing the established teams for "hogging" or "sewing up" all the top-tier players and keeping the new teams from being competitive. In this kind of FFL, a player can be only on one team. About 10% of all FFLs use this type of league.

A third type of League is the *Dynasty League*. These leagues keep their full roster of player from year to year. Each year (after the initial season) a draft is held for picking up rookies only. A team is not required to draft any rookies, but may do so if desired. For each rookie drafted, a previous season's player is released. Usually the draft order is based on the previous season's finish, with the worst team drafting first, the second worst team drafting second, and so on. Following this rookie draft, teams may make roster transactions (drop players and add players) just as they can through the regular season. This type of league is generally utilized by a group of team owners that plan to play together for many years with few new teams being added (if any). When new teams are added, the established teams get to protect a limited number of their players [usually 1 player per position] and the new teams select players from the established teams that are not protected, up to a certain amount [usually 1 or 2 players per position]. The teams then fill out any empty slots in their roster by selecting from available players that no one has. Again, a player can be only on one team. About 5% of all FFLs use this type of league.

A fourth type of FFL is the *True Fantasy League*. Rather than restricting a player to just one team, a particular player can be on as many teams as want him. There is no draft or auction for players; instead each team owner submits a roster of the players they want on their team. The advantage of this style of league is that each owner gets their ideal (true fantasy) team. The disadvantage is that many people feel it takes the strategy out of developing a team. Additionally, it is possible to have identical teams, thus eliminating some of the competitive fun. Less than 5% of all FFLs use this type of league.

Yet another type of league is called the *Team Position League*. This league is like the Standard League except that instead of drafting a specific player for a roster position, the owner drafts an NFL team for that spot. For example, if an owner drafts St. Louis for a QB position, they get points for any (and all) St. Louis players that played the QB position in a game. The advantage to this style of league is that owners do not have to worry about replacing injured players. The disadvantage is that because of the finite number of NFL teams to fill fantasy rosters, this is only do-able by leagues with a smaller number of teams.

Team Positions – Following the decision on the type of league you want is the choice of what playing positions you want the FFL teams to have and how many players will be allowed at each position (both as starter and as back-up). Amongst existing leagues, there is a wide variety of approaches to this aspect of the game. However, most leagues will have the specialty positions of Quarterback (QB), Running Back (RB), Wide Receiver (WR), Tight End (TE) and Kicker (K) in which individual players will be selected to fill the positions. They also usually have a line position of the Defense/Special Team (D/S) where a NFL team’s entire lineup is selected, rather than an individual player. As to the number of players that are allowed, it is typical to have a set number of positions to make a team’s starting line-up and then have at least an equal number of back-up players. For example, if your starting line-up is composed of 1 QB, 2 RBs, 2 WRs, 1 TE, 1 K and 1 D/S, then the full roster of players that a team drafts would consist of 2 QBs, 4 RBs, 4 WRs, 2 TEs, 2 Ks and 2 D/Ss, a total of 16 players. Then each week the team owner selects from all his players 1 QB, 2 RBs, 2 WRs, 1 TE, 1 Ks and 1 D/S (total of 8 players) to play for that week and submits a list of these starting players to the League Commissioner. Those players (and only those players) can earn points for the owner’s team that week. Any NFL scoring by the players not selected (and while they’re not selected they are called bench players) does not count toward a team's final score. An owner may select a different mix of his players each week, trying to get the best possible score. Thus the challenge of the game...to determine which players will score the best each week and select them to be the starting players.

Because of the nature of the positions, some leagues will decide to have additional back-ups to certain positions. Typical examples are to have 2 back-ups to the QB and TE position. Some leagues instead have 4 back-ups to the RB and WR positions. Other leagues combine the WR and TE position and have 6 WR/TE positions (3 starters and 3 back-ups). Some leagues add an Offensive Line spot (and back-up) to the roster. A few leagues do not utilize either an Offensive Line or a Defensive Line. And in more recent times, several leagues have begun to draft IDPs (Individual Defense Players) rather than a line for their rosters. These include Defensive Linemen (DL), Defensive Backs (DB) and Linebackers (LB).

There is no set format that a league has to use for the number of positions teams have. The only guidelines are: 1) it should be reasonably balanced and 2) it should reflect the interest of the league owners. Some examples of the number of starting positions used, plus the number of back-ups allowed, include:

	Format 1	Format 2	Format 3	Format 4	Format 5	Format 6	Format 7
QB	1+2 backups	1+1 backup	1+2 backups	1+1 backup	1+2 backups	1+2 backups	1+2 backups
RB	2+2 backups	3+2 backups	2+2 backups	2+2 backups	3+3 backups	2+2 backups	2+2 backups
WR	2+2 backups	3+2 backups	4+2 backups	3+3 backups	3+3 backups	2+2 backups	2+2 backups
TE	1+2 backups	1+1 backup	-none-	-none-	1+1 backup	1+2 backups	1+2 backups
K	1+1 backup	1+1 backup	1+1 backup	1+1 backup	1+1 backup	1+1 backup	1+1 backup
OL	1+1 backup	1+1 backup	1+1 backup	-none-	-none-	1+1 backup	-none-
D/S	1+1 backup	1+1 backup	1+1 backup	1+1 backup	1+1 backup	-none-	-none-
IDP - DL	-none-	-none-	-none-	-none-	-none-	1+1 backup	-none-
IDP - DB	-none-	-none-	-none-	-none-	-none-	1+1 backup	-none-
IDP - LB	-none-	-none-	-none-	-none-	-none-	1+1 backup	-none-
Total:	20 players	20 players	19 players	16 players	21 players	24 players	16 players

Competition Format – You will also need to determine what competition format you wish your league to have. The majority of leagues have one-on-one head-to-head competition. This means that each week each team's score is compared to the score of a single opponent's team. The team with the highest score is the winner; the team with the lowest score is the loser. And it is possible for ties to occur. The win, loss or tie is recorded for each team (by the league commissioner) in the weekly standings report. Which team plays against which team each week is determined by the schedule that is created by the commissioner prior to the start of the season. At the end of a 14-15 week regular season (depending on the size and set-up of the league), the top teams play against each other to determine the year's league champion. This format emulates the structure in use by the NFL and is utilized by about 85% of all FFLs.

Another format that several leagues utilize is the Total Points system. In this style of competition, teams are not pitted against one another to determine a win, loss or tie. Instead a running (accumulative) total of points earned by a team is kept and a team's standing rises or falls based on this score total. It is possible for teams to have matching score totals. The focus of this method is to compare the overall effectiveness of teams to gain points rather than how well they compete on a weekly basis. There are two methods for determining the final champion with this format. One is that at the end of a regular 15 week season the top two teams play against each other to determine the year's league champion. About 15% of all FFLs make use of this method.

A third format that a few leagues utilize is a one-vs-all head-to-head system. Similar to the regular one-on-one leagues, each week a team's score is compared to the score of all the other teams to get a series of wins, losses and ties. So if you have an 8-team league, each week each team gets 7 score comparisons added to their standings record; in a 10-team league each team gets 9 comparisons and so forth. The standings position of each team is still based on the number of wins, ties and losses as compared to the other teams...there are simply higher numbers than what is used in a one-on-one head-to-head league. The purpose behind this method is to remove the "chance factor" of a particular team playing in a certain week the only team that could beat them. Less than 5% of all FFLs utilize this competition set-up.

Scoring System – There is an extreme variety of scoring systems for FFLs. And once again it should be stressed that there is no one way that is better than the others...just that whatever system is devised, it should be balanced and reflect the value of the actions in an actual game. (For example, making TDs worth 1 pt each and Field Goals worth 10 points each does not accurately reflect the impact those actions have in a real game and utilizing such a scoring system would make for poor playability in a FFL.)

In basic scoring, points are given on offense only for TDs, FGs and Extra Points (Point After Conversion Kicks) scored. For leagues that use Offensive Lines, two-point conversions also score points. And in a basic scoring format, points are given on defense for defensive TDs, safeties and interceptions.

In an advanced scoring system, additional points can be given on offense for yardage gained (and for teams with Offensive Lines, for overall team rushing yards). Additionally utilizing an advanced scoring format allows for additional points to be given on defense for fumble recoveries, points allowed against the team [the fewer the better], yards allowed against the team [again the fewer the better], tackles made and sacks made. Any or all of these are optional, so which of these you choose to incorporate is up to you. But once you've selected which actions and accomplishments you will give a score for, you need to determine how many points will be given for each action.

Whether utilizing a basic or an advanced point system, note that passing TDs gain points for both the passer (usually the QB) and the receiver, where a rushing TD only gets points for the runner.

In a basic scoring system, the points are fairly easy to determine:

<u>Position & Action</u>	<u>Points Earned</u>	<u>Notes</u>
<u>Offense (Any Player)</u>		
TD Rush or Receiving	6 pts	(This is in addition to TD points gotten by Receiver)
TD Pass	4 pts	
Field Goal	3 pts	
Extra Point Kicked (Point After Conversion)	1 pt	
Two-Point Conversion Scored (ran or thrown)	2 pts	
<u>Defense (Any Player)</u>		
TD Rush or Receiving	6 pts	(This is in addition to TD points gotten by Receiver)
TD Pass	4 pts	
Safety	2 pts	
Interception	1 pt	

If your league is using an advanced scoring system that takes yardage into account (often referred to as *Performance Scoring League*), there are further decisions to make on how the yardage will be scored. Some leagues prefer to break scoring for yardage into ranges, some will allot points based on increments of yardage and some just tack on points for going over one set total.

An example of a scoring system using a range method is:

<u>Position & Action</u>	<u>Points Earned</u>	<u>Notes</u>
<u>Quarterbacks</u>		
Touchdown Pass Thrown	4 pts	(This is in addition to TD points gotten by Receiver)
Touchdown Run	6 pts	
100 – 199 Yards Total Passed in Game	1 pt	(Yardage points are added once the range the player's stats falls into is determined. Add points only for one range, the highest achieved.)
200 – 249 Yards Total Passed in Game	2 pts	
250 – 299 Yards Total Passed in Game	3 pts	
300 – 400 Yards Total Passed in Game	4 pts	
401 + Yards Total Passed in Game	6 pts	
<u>Running Backs, Wide Receivers & Tight Ends</u>		
Touchdown (rushing or receiving)	6 pts	
100 – 149 Yards Total (Running & Receiving) in Game	2 pts	(Yardage points are added once the range the player's stats falls into is determined. Add points only for one range, the highest achieved.)
150 – 199 Yards Total (Running & Receiving) in Game	3 pts	
200 – 300 Yards Total (Running & Receiving) in Game	4 pts	
301 + Yards Total/Game	6 pts	
<u>Offensive Line</u>		
Two-Point Conversion Scored (ran or thrown)	2 pts	
Team Rushing 100 – 149 Yards Total in Game	1 pt	(Yardage points are added once the range the line's stats falls into is determined. Add points only for one range, the highest achieved.)
Team Rushing 150 – 199 Yards Total in Game	3 pts	
Team Rushing 200 + Yards Total in Game	5 pts	

Defensive Line-Special Team

Touchdown (rushing or receiving)	6 pts	
Touchdown Pass	4 pts	
Safety	2 pts	
Interception	1 pt	
Allowed Yardage 350 + Yards/Game	0 pts	(Yardage Allowed by Opponent points are added once the range the line's stats falls into is determined. Add points only for one range, the lowest qualified for.)
Allowed Yardage 300 – 349 Yards/Game	1 pt	
Allowed Yardage 250 – 299 Yards/Game	2 pts	
Allowed Yardage 200 – 249 Yards/Game	3 pts	
Allowed Yardage 150 – 199 Yards/Game	4 pts	
Allowed Yardage 149 – 0 Yards/Game	6 pts	
Allowed Points/Game 21+ points	0 pts	(Points Allowed by Opponent points are added once the range the line's stats falls into is determined. Add points only for one range, the lowest qualified for.)
Allowed Points/Game 11 - 20 points	1 pt	
Allowed Points/Game 1 - 10 points	3 pts	
Allowed Points/Game 0 points	5 pts	

Kickers

Field Goals	3 pts
Extra Point Kicked (Point After Conversion)	1 pt
Touchdown Pass (in addition to TD points)	4 pts
Touchdown Run	6 pts

An example of a scoring system using an increment method is:

<u>Position & Action</u>	<u>Points Earned</u>	<u>Notes</u>
<u>Quarterbacks</u>		
Touchdown Pass Thrown	4 pts	(This is in addition to TD points gotten by Receiver)
Touchdown Run	6 pts	
For every 10 yards passed in game	0.1 pts	(i.e. 212 yds equals 2.12 points added to score)
<u>Running Backs, Wide Receivers & Tight Ends</u>		
Touchdown (rushing or receiving)	6 pts	
For every 10 yards total (Running & Receiving) in Game	0.1 pts	
<u>Offensive Line</u>		
Two-Point Conversion Scored (ran or thrown)	2 pts	
For every 10 yards of Team rushing in game	0.1 pts	
<u>Defensive Line-Special Team</u>		
Touchdown (rushing or receiving)	6 pts	
Touchdown Pass	4 pts	
Safety	2 pts	
Interception	1 pt	
For every 10 yards Allowed by Opponent	- 0.1 pts	(i.e. 331 yards gained by the line's opponent would have 3.31 pts subtracted from the FFL Team's Score.)
For every 1 point Allowed by Opponent	- 0.1 pts	(i.e. 28 points scored by the line's opponent would have 2.8 pts subtracted from the FFL Team's Score.)
<u>Kickers</u>		
Field Goals	3 pts	
Extra Point Kicked (Point After Conversion)	1 pt	
Touchdown Pass (in addition to TD points)	4 pts	
Touchdown Run	6 pts	

An example of a “tack-on total” scoring system where a single goal is met to get bonus points is:

<u>Position & Action</u>	<u>Points Earned</u>	<u>Notes</u>
<u>Quarterbacks</u>		
Touchdown Pass Thrown	4 pts	(This is in addition to TD points gotten by Receiver)
Touchdown Run	6 pts	
If QB gains 300 or more yards passing in game	2 pts	
<u>Running Backs, Wide Receivers & Tight Ends</u>		
Touchdown (rushing or receiving)	6 pts	
If RB gains 100 or more yards rushing in game	2 pts	
If WR gains 100 or more yards receiving in game	2 pts	
If TE gains 100 or more yards receiving in game	2 pts	
<u>Offensive Line</u>		
Two-Point Conversion Scored (ran or thrown)	2 pts	
If Team rushes for 200 or more yards in game	2 pts	
<u>Defensive Line-Special Team</u>		
Touchdown (rushing or receiving)	6 pts	
Touchdown Pass	4 pts	
Safety	2 pts	
Interception	1 pt	
If team prevents fewer than 200 opponent yards rushing in game	2 pts	
If team prevents fewer than 200 opponent yards receiving in game	2 pts	
If team prevents fewer than 300 opponent yards total (rushing or receiving) in game	2 pts	
If team allows fewer than 10 opponent points in game	2 pts	
<u>Kickers</u>		
Field Goals	3 pts	
Extra Point Kicked (Point After Conversion)	1 pt	
Touchdown Pass (in addition to TD points)	4 pts	
Touchdown Run	6 pts	

Additionally, besides these point allotments, many leagues will add the proviso that states that scores for TDs and FGs over 50 yards will be at double points (TD run/reception equals 12 points, TD pass equals 8 points and Field Goals will be 6 points). Other leagues will not add a bonus for long passes or receptions, but will make long field goals worth 4 points.

The points from these scoring systems are applied to the weekly starting line-up for each team.

However, there are different types of leagues that handle scoring and/or the results of the scoring differently than the standard format. These include the *Full Potential League* in which the team owners do not submit a weekly line-up of starting players, but instead every player on the team is scored and the top performers are utilized for that week's scoring (i.e. Top 1 QB, Top 2 RBs, Top 2 WRs, Top 1 TE, Top 1 K, Top 1 OL, Top 1 DL). Thus each week the teams score the full potential of points possible from their players.

There is also the *Total Points League* which does score points like the standard format (from a weekly submitted starting line-up) but utilizes the results differently. They do not track wins and losses but rather the teams accumulate points on an ongoing basis with the standings being determined by the teams' total points. The teams that build the highest total points at the end of the regular season advance to the playoffs.

Additionally, there is the *Survivor League*. Again, points are scored just as with the standard format (from a weekly submitted starting line-up) but the results for this league are VERY different. In this system, each week the team scoring the least amount of points in a particular week is eliminated for the remainder of the season. These leagues usually utilize a higher number of teams (16) in the league. The last surviving team is crowned as league champion.

Player Selection – The next topic to address is the manner in which your FFL teams will select their players. There are three main methods of doing this...a Standard Draft, an Auction Draft or Salary Cap Selection.

With either of the draft methods, a Draft Order will need to be determined. This lets teams know when it is their turn to select players for their teams (in a Standard Draft League) or turn to introduce players up for bid (in an Auction Draft League). This order is randomly determined by the league commissioner, usually by drawing team names from a hat.

In the *Standard Draft* there are several rounds for team owners to choose players to add to their team. There are as many rounds as there are spots on the roster. The first round begins with the first owner in the draft order. In their turn an owner announces (selects) a player they are adding to their team. When that player is selected, that team gets them automatically and no other team may have that player.

Every other round (even rounds), the order will be reversed. Thus the draft order with eight teams would be:

Round One - Team A, Team B, Team C, Team D, Team E, Team F, Team G, Team H

Round Two - Team H, Team G, Team F, Team E, Team D, Team C, Team B, Team A

This mode then repeats throughout all the rounds.

Because this method “undulates” back and forth (like a snake or a serpent moves), this is sometimes called a Serpentine Draft or Snake Draft. The effect of utilizing this system is that it averages the chances for quality players out equally amongst the teams. For example:

Team A gets selections 1 & 16 (total 17 - average 8.5)

Team B gets selections 2 & 15 (total 17 - average 8.5)

Team C gets selections 3 & 14 (total 17 - average 8.5)

Team D gets selections 4 & 13 (total 17 - average 8.5)

Team E gets selections 5 & 12 (total 17 - average 8.5)

Team F gets selections 6 & 11 (total 17 - average 8.5)

Team G gets selections 7 & 10 (total 17 - average 8.5)

Team H gets selections 8 & 9 (total 17 - average 8.5)

When it is their turn, owners are typically given five minutes to make their choice. If an owner does not make a choice within the five minutes, their draft pick is moved to the end of the draft, and they will pick after all the other drafting is completed. Having a firm time limit and sticking to it will keep the draft running smoothly.

If you don't keep to time limits, it's easy for things to get out of hand because one or two people who aren't organized or prepared and spend a lot of time trying to look through football magazines to help them decide who to take. Meanwhile everyone else is having to wait and those waiting are nervous about their upcoming

picks (or possibly frustrated because they were unable to secure their favorite player) and emotions are high...so tempers could flare if extra time is granted and it feels like others are being given special treatment. Keep the trouble from ever starting and stick to the time limits that are set.

The *Auction Draft* is a type of fantasy draft in which owners are allotted a certain amount of fantasy cash to fill their roster spots by bidding on NFL players. Bids must be in whole dollar amounts, and the minimum bid is \$1. The same amount of fantasy cash is given to each team, and a typical amount to fill out a 20 person roster is \$100 (although some leagues will use \$200). Owners take turns introducing a NFL player up for bid. Each owner may bid on any player he likes, or choose not to bid on a specific player. There is one exception to this rule...if an owner introduces a player they are required to bid on them, even if it is the minimum \$1 bid. The highest bidder obtains rights to that player and adds them to his roster. But if an owner overspends on one player, the rest of his roster might suffer because he does not have enough remaining cash to fill other positions with quality players. Most leagues that use this style of draft will require that owners must keep at least 1 dollar per spot on the team open, to be able to afford to fill their roster out. If someone accidentally overspends and has no money left, they cannot bid on any more players and at the end of the auction draft when everyone else has finished, can fill out their rosters from the players not selected by any other team. Auctions can be handled either in a regular "out loud" format or via a silent written bid method. In the "out loud" method, the owner bringing the player up makes the first bid, stating the amount they are willing to pay. In draft order, each owner is given the opportunity to either pass on the player or offer a higher amount than the previous bid. This continues around until no one wants to top the last bid. Owners that previously passed can NOT join back into the bidding. Once an owner has passed, they are out of the running for that player. In the silent written method, once a player is brought up every owner writes on a piece of paper (called a bid sheet), their team name and either the amount they are bidding or the word "pass". The League Commissioner then collects the bid sheets and determines who the winning bidder is. The highest bidder gets the player at the price they offered on their bid sheet, even if it's much higher than the other bids. Again, the owner bringing up a player must make at least the minimum bid on the player. In the case of a tie for highest bid, those owners in the tie repeat the process and must increase their bid by at least a dollar. If there is a tie three times in a row, that player is taken "off the auction block" and the next owner in the draft order presents a player to be bid on (except for the one just taken off the block).

The *Salary Cap Selection* method utilizes a system where team owners pick players from a pool of players available and each player has a dollar value pre-assigned to them. Each team is allotted so much fantasy money that it can spend to build a team. (Each team gets the same amount of money.) Players are not restricted to just one team, but can be on as many teams as want them. Each week up until a specified deadline, owners can change players by selling them first, to get their value put back onto their salary cap, then go and pick (and pay for) another player to add to their team. The limit to how many times this is allowed per season is up to the individual league. If a team runs out of money to fill all of their roster spots, they must either sell a player to get money to more less-expensive players or do without those player spots being filled. Many folks feel this is one of the most difficult leagues to participate in due to limitations of the salary cap. The pool of players and their accompanying costs can either be created by the League Commissioner or taken from any of a number of Fantasy Football magazines and/or websites. Some leagues utilize only whole numbers, with the minimum a player is valued is \$1; other leagues will utilize cent amounts as well (i.e. a player might cost \$5.38). In this method of selection a team owner might get \$300 to buy all of the different player spots (20 of them), with the most sought after player being valued at \$80 and the cost tapering down from there to \$1. Other leagues use a \$200 or even a \$100 amount of fantasy purchasing money and scale the prices for players to be in ratio to the money available to spend. Many times this style of league is called a *Salary Cap League*.

Team Names – This topic may be one of the least major aspects to running a FFL, yet can cause great strife if not properly addressed. Most times the owner of a fantasy football team wants to name their team something they find fun and imaginative. However, as each person's sense of humor and propriety is different, it's possible for some names to be considered insensitive, rude or derogatory by others. Therefore, it is wise to require that

all team names be approved via the League Commissioner. It is typical to require team names to be composed of two parts: 1) an actual city or town and 2) a plausible mascot. See the team names used in the section on League Size for examples.

Now that you've handled the decisions on the seven basic areas, you're getting close to being ready to start the season...there's just a couple more things to completed. First is to write up the League's Constitution (set of rules). Use the decisions made to develop it. Simply place each decision/rule as a separate article [paragraph]. An example of this is:

Ed's Midwest Fantasy Football League Constitution 2007-2008 Season

ARTICLE I

All FFL franchise owners shall assemble at an agreed upon time and place for the player draft meeting.

ARTICLE II

The draft order shall be randomly determined. Each franchise owner shall select 20 players. These players will consist of: three quarterbacks (QB), four running backs (RB), four wide receivers (WR), three tight ends (TE), two kickers (K), two offensive lines (OL) and two defensive line-special teams (DL-S).

ARTICLE III

FFL Teams score points when their players score in NFL games. The points are determined by the scores of: one quarterback, two running backs, two wide receivers, one tight end, one kicker, one offensive line and one defensive line-special team, which will be referred to as a lineup.

Continue listing articles until all areas are mentioned and rules decided upon have been written down.

Second, if you've developed a league doing head-to-head competition, you now need to set the schedule of who plays who for each week of the season. There are different means of setting up schedules, and any fair method is fine. Following are some sample charts that can be used for creating schedules. Use either a "by alphabetical name order" or "random hat draw" method to determine a team to be Team A, Team B, and so on. Then use the charts below to see who plays who on a given week:

Eight Team League (with two 4-team divisions)

WEEK ONE

Team A at Team E
Team B at Team F
Team C at Team G
Team D at Team H

WEEK FIVE

Team A at Team B
Team E at Team F
Team C at Team D
Team G at Team H

WEEK NINE

Team A at Team G
Team B at Team H
Team C at Team E
Team D at Team F

WEEK THIRTEEN

Team A at Team D
Team E at Team H
Team C at Team B
Team G at Team F

WEEK TWO

Team G at Team A
Team H at Team B
Team E at Team C
Team F at Team D

WEEK SIX

Team D at Team A
Team H at Team E
Team B at Team C
Team F at Team G

WEEK TEN

Team F at Team A
Team E at Team B
Team H at Team C
Team G at Team D

WEEK FOURTEEN

Team C at Team A
Team G at Team E
Team D at Team B
Team H at Team F

WEEK THREE

Team A at Team F
Team B at Team E
Team C at Team H
Team D at Team G

WEEK SEVEN

Team A at Team C
Team E at Team G
Team B at Team D
Team F at Team H

WEEK ELEVEN

Team A at Team H
Team B at Team G
Team C at Team F
Team D at Team E

WEEK FIFTEEN

Top two teams of each division play for Divisional Championship

WEEK FOUR

Team H at Team A
Team G at Team B
Team F at Team C
Team E at Team D

WEEK EIGHT

Team E at Team A
Team F at Team B
Team G at Team C
Team H at Team D

WEEK TWELVE

Team B at Team A
Team F at Team E
Team D at Team C
Team H at Team G

WEEK SIXTEEN

Divisional Champs play for League Championship

Ten Team League (with two 5-team divisions)

WEEK ONE

Team A at Team B
Team C at Team D
Team E at Team F
Team G at Team H
Team I at Team J

WEEK FIVE

Team B at Team F
Team C at Team A
Team G at Team E
Team I at Team D
Team J at Team H

WEEK NINE

Team A at Team H
Team B at Team E
Team C at Team F
Team I at Team G
Team J at Team D

WEEK THIRTEEN

Team E at Team B
Team F at Team A
Team G at Team I
Team H at Team D
Team J at Team C

WEEK TWO

Team D at Team A
Team G at Team B
Team I at Team C
Team H at Team E
Team J at Team F

WEEK SIX

Team C at Team B
Team F at Team E
Team D at Team H
Team G at Team J
Team I at Team A

WEEK TEN

Team B at Team A
Team C at Team E
Team D at Team I
Team H at Team F
Team J at Team G

WEEK FOURTEEN

Top two teams of each division play for Divisional Championship

WEEK THREE

Team D at Team F
Team G at Team A
Team I at Team B
Team H at Team C
Team J at Team E

WEEK SEVEN

Team A at Team F
Team E at Team C
Team D at Team B
Team H at Team G
Team J at Team I

WEEK ELEVEN

Team A at Team C
Team E at Team I
Team F at Team B
Team G at Team D
Team H at Team J

WEEK FIFTEEN

Divisional Champs play for League Championship

WEEK FOUR

Team A at Team E
Team B at Team J
Team F at Team C
Team D at Team G
Team H at Team I

WEEK EIGHT

Team A at Team J
Team B at Team H
Team C at Team G
Team E at Team D
Team F at Team I

WEEK TWELVE

Team B at Team C
Team E at Team A
Team F at Team G
Team D at Team J
Team I at Team H

Twelve Team League (with two 6-Team divisions)

WEEK ONE

Team A at Team G
Team E at Team K
Team I at Team C
Team B at Team H
Team F at Team L
Team J at Team D

WEEK FIVE

Team C at Team A
Team D at Team B
Team G at Team E
Team H at Team F
Team K at Team I
Team L at Team J

WEEK NINE

Team A at Team I
Team F at Team B
Team J at Team E
Team C at Team K
Team D at Team H
Team G at Team L

WEEK THIRTEEN

Team A at Team F
Team B at Team J
Team E at Team I
Team H at Team C
Team G at Team K
Team D at Team L

WEEK TWO

Team L at Team B
Team C at Team E
Team D at Team F
Team G at Team I
Team H at Team J
Team K at Team A

WEEK SIX

Team A at Team J
Team B at Team E
Team F at Team I
Team C at Team L
Team D at Team G
Team H at Team K

WEEK TEN

Team F at Team C
Team I at Team H
Team J at Team G
Team L at Team A
Team K at Team B
Team E at Team D

WEEK FOURTEEN

Team B at Team A
Team D at Team C
Team J at Team I
Team L at Team K
Team F at Team E
Team H at Team G

WEEK THREE

Team J at Team F
Team G at Team C
Team K at Team D
Team L at Team H
Team E at Team A
Team I at Team B

WEEK SEVEN

Team B at Team G
Team C at Team J
Team I at Team D
Team K at Team F
Team H at Team A
Team L at Team E

WEEK ELEVEN

Team H at Team E
Team G at Team F
Team D at Team A
Team C at Team B
Team L at Team I
Team K at Team J

WEEK FIFTEEN

Top two Teams of each division play for Divisional Championship

WEEK FOUR

Team I at Team L
Team J at Team K
Team E at Team H
Team F at Team G
Team A at Team D
Team B at Team C

WEEK EIGHT

Team K at Team L
Team I at Team J
Team G at Team H
Team E at Team F
Team C at Team D
Team A at Team B

WEEK TWELVE

Team A at Team C
Team B at Team D
Team E at Team G
Team F at Team H
Team I at Team K
Team J at Team L

WEEK SIXTEEN

Divisional Champs play for League Championship

Fourteen Team League (with two 7-team divisions)

WEEK ONE

Team A at Team B
Team H at Team I
Team C at Team D
Team J at Team K
Team E at Team F
Team L at Team M
Team N at Team G

WEEK TWO

Team C at Team A
Team J at Team H
Team D at Team B
Team K at Team I
Team G at Team E
Team N at Team L
Team M at Team F

WEEK THREE

Team A at Team D
Team H at Team K
Team B at Team C
Team I at Team J
Team F at Team G
Team M at Team N
Team L at Team E

WEEK FOUR

Team E at Team A
Team L at Team H
Team F at Team B
Team M at Team I
Team G at Team C
Team N at Team J
Team K at Team D

WEEK FIVE

Team F at Team A
Team M at Team H
Team B at Team E
Team I at Team L
Team G at Team D
Team N at Team K
Team J at Team C

WEEK SIX

Team A at Team G
Team H at Team N
Team C at Team F
Team J at Team M
Team D at Team E
Team K at Team L
Team I at Team B

WEEK SEVEN

Team B at Team G
Team I at Team N
Team E at Team C
Team L at Team J
Team D at Team F
Team K at Team M
Team H at Team A

WEEK EIGHT

Team A at Team I
Team E at Team M
Team B at Team J
Team F at Team N
Team C at Team K
Team G at Team H
Team D at Team L

WEEK NINE

Team J at Team A
Team N at Team E
Team K at Team B
Team H at Team F
Team L at Team C
Team I at Team G
Team M at Team D

WEEK TEN

Team A at Team K
Team E at Team H
Team B at Team L
Team F at Team I
Team C at Team M
Team G at Team J
Team D at Team N

WEEK ELEVEN

Team L at Team A
Team I at Team E
Team M at Team B
Team J at Team F
Team N at Team C
Team K at Team G
Team H at Team D

WEEK TWELVE

Team A at Team M
Team E at Team J
Team B at Team N
Team F at Team K
Team C at Team H
Team G at Team L
Team D at Team I

WEEK THIRTEEN

Team N at Team A
Team K at Team E
Team H at Team B
Team L at Team F
Team I at Team C
Team M at Team G
Team J at Team D

WEEK FOURTEEN

Top two teams of each
division play for Divisional
Championship

WEEK FIFTEEN

Divisional Champs play for
League Championship

Sixteen Team League (with two Team 8-Team conferences, each with two 4-Team divisions)

WEEK ONE

Team A at Team B
Team C at Team D
Team E at Team F
Team G at Team H
Team I at Team J
Team K at Team L
Team M at Team N
Team O at Team P

WEEK FIVE

Team M at Team A
Team N at Team B
Team O at Team C
Team P at Team D
Team E at Team I
Team F at Team J
Team G at Team K
Team H at Team L

WEEK NINE

Team O at Team A
Team P at Team B
Team M at Team C
Team N at Team D
Team G at Team I
Team H at Team J
Team E at Team K
Team F at Team L

WEEK THIRTEEN

Team J at Team A
Team K at Team B
Team L at Team C
Team I at Team D
Team N at Team E
Team O at Team F
Team P at Team G
Team M at Team H

WEEK SEVENTEEN

Conference Champs play
for League Championship

WEEK TWO

Team C at Team A
Team D at Team B
Team G at Team E
Team H at Team F
Team K at Team I
Team L at Team J
Team O at Team M
Team P at Team N

WEEK SIX

Team A at Team F
Team B at Team G
Team C at Team H
Team D at Team E
Team I at Team N
Team J at Team O
Team K at Team P
Team L at Team M

WEEK TEN

Team A at Team I
Team B at Team J
Team C at Team K
Team D at Team L
Team E at Team M
Team F at Team N
Team G at Team O
Team H at Team P

WEEK FOURTEEN

Team A at Team K
Team B at Team L
Team C at Team I
Team D at Team J
Team E at Team O
Team F at Team P
Team G at Team M
Team H at Team N

WEEK THREE

Team D at Team A
Team B at Team C
Team H at Team E
Team F at Team G
Team L at Team I
Team J at Team K
Team P at Team M
Team N at Team O

WEEK SEVEN

Team N at Team A
Team O at Team B
Team P at Team C
Team M at Team D
Team F at Team I
Team G at Team J
Team H at Team K
Team E at Team L

WEEK ELEVEN

Team A at Team H
Team B at Team E
Team C at Team F
Team D at Team G
Team I at Team P
Team J at Team M
Team K at Team N
Team L at Team O

WEEK FIFTEEN

Team L at Team A
Team I at Team B
Team J at Team C
Team K at Team D
Team P at Team E
Team M at Team F
Team N at Team G
Team O at Team H

WEEK FOUR

Team A at Team E
Team B at Team F
Team C at Team G
Team D at Team H
Team I at Team M
Team J at Team N
Team K at Team O
Team L at Team P

WEEK EIGHT

Team A at Team G
Team B at Team H
Team C at Team E
Team D at Team F
Team I at Team O
Team J at Team P
Team K at Team M
Team L at Team N

WEEK TWELVE

Team P at Team A
Team M at Team B
Team N at Team C
Team O at Team D
Team H at Team I
Team E at Team J
Team F at Team K
Team G at Team L

WEEK SIXTEEN

Top Teams of each division
play for their respective
Conference Championship

Other Considerations – There are also some non-rule aspects to think about when developing a fantasy football league. For example, there is the quote “To the victor go the spoils”. And while there are some leagues that charge a fee and play for money, many leagues are like my own...simply a group of friends playing for fun and bragging rights. Yet there should be some reward for the person skilled enough to defeat their (friendly) opponents in a season of hard decision-making fantasy football. If you think along the same lines, your league might consider getting a traveling trophy. The winner of the season gets to keep the trophy until the draft of the following year, where it is turned over to the League Commissioner to hold until the end of the season, at which time it is presented to the new winner. The trophy can be a metal cup of some sort, a plaque, a special football or any of a number of other awards. (Our own league has a small statue of a football on a base.) The trophy gives the league's winner not only bragging rights but something to show off as well.

Another thing to possibly promote is team gear. Consider having everyone create a logo for their fantasy team. The owners can then put their team designs on the notebooks they use for their draft notes. They can even possibly have shirts or caps with the logos made up to wear. With the prevalence of on-line cafepress-style shops it's even easier to get such items as shirts, hats, cups, pins, etc. There can be great enjoyment in showing up to the fantasy football draft wearing apparel with your team's name and/or logo on it. Or drinking your favorite beverage from a mug with your team's symbol on it as you make those important draft decisions. It adds to the ambiance of the setting and can inspire owners to “trash-talk” (in a friendly way) their honorable opponents, which in turn can increase the comradery of the participants.

Such “extras” like a trophy or team gear helps to heighten the fun of the league...and that's why we're doing this. To have fun, share our enjoyment of football and make friends.

Finally – remember that the first year you run a fantasy league; it will be a bit of a learning process. Expect some glitches. (Which is why the commissioner's rulings should be final. Some decisions may not be popular, but someone needs to have the final word if a controversy arises.) Use the experience to discover what changes you want to make for the following year. Rules can be added, dropped and changed with each new season to make the league more enjoyable and competition more exciting. And no matter what else you do, take the time to enjoy the “esprit de corps” being a part of fantasy league brings. It's a hobby that becomes a way of life!