



# FANTASY FOOTBALL FELLOWSHIP

## 2022 League/Commissioner Insider Guide

*Tips, strategies, and ideas for a dynamic Fantasy season filled with meaning and purpose.*

## Summary

### *Bringing Meaning and Purpose to Fantasy Football*

*Fantasy Football Fellowship is a ministry initiative of UNPACKIN' it Ministries that provides content, resources, and strategies to facilitate Fantasy Football leagues to play with meaning and purpose. We want to help commissioners create a deeply connected league, as well as, enhance the spiritual growth of Fantasy managers.*

## The Value of Fantasy Football

- Fantasy Football creates a built-in small group of 8-14 guys.
- Fantasy Football is a natural way to build friendships and relationships while participating in a league.
- Conversations about Fantasy Football can be used as entry points for discussions about life and faith.



## How FFF Works

1. Each manager registers for his own FFF membership access. Even if someone buys the organizational membership that includes 20 individual memberships, each person must log in with their own (free) account.
2. Leagues play regular Fantasy Football through any platform like Yahoo, ESPN, Fantrax, Sleeper, or NFL.com.
3. Host a fun "Draft Day."
4. After the draft, the commissioner (or another leader in the league) takes on the role of a small group leader and leads his league during the season by cultivating relationships.
5. A commissioner turns his league into a dynamic and intentional small group centered around the concepts and strategies of FFF. The league goes beyond Fantasy Football to become more engaged in personal and spiritual growth throughout the season while playing Fantasy Football together.
6. Commissioners are encouraged to have "League Meetings" once a week to discuss the weekly FFF breakouts in a group setting (in person, via conference call, or online video chat).



## What Fantasy Football Fellowship Provides



- Unique faith and Fantasy content, which includes a weekly small group devotional series for 20 weeks. Each week has a Fantasy Football topic and unpacks how it relates to real life from a Biblical perspective. Examples include how we deal with chaos, regret, rejection, injuries, and counting the cost in both Fantasy and life.
- 20 weeks (the entire football season) of faith-filled content taking a league from the preseason (Fantasy drafts) through the end of the regular season. Each week's topic includes a short introductory video to set up the league meeting.
- Content, strategy, plans, and resources to use before the draft and during the season.
- Leagues can decide to combine weekly "breakout" topics or do a limited number of weeks, either starting midway through the season or meeting monthly or bi-monthly. However, the best-case scenario is weekly for the entire season.
- The opportunity to continue meeting as a "PACK" (small group) after the season, while our parent ministry, UNPACKIN' it Ministries, provides additional resources. Visit [unpackinit.com/PACK](http://unpackinit.com/PACK) for more information.

## The Role of Each League's Commissioner

- Set up the league on a Fantasy platform such as *ESPN.com* or *Yahoo.com*.
  - Determine league rules and settings and ask other managers for feedback.
  - Use the default or standard settings to keep it simple.
  - Invite guys to become Fantasy managers in the league.
  - Organize and lead the "League Meetings."
  - Set the tone for the league and create an atmosphere of fellowship.
  - Use the FFF videos as conversation starters.
  - Ask the questions at the end of each week's breakout during league meetings.
  - Get to know and follow up with members of the league to make sure they feel connected and comfortable sharing and responding in the group.
  - Regularly remind and encourage the league about other opportunities for fellowship and growth.
- \*Optional: Send a message to the Fantasy Football Fellowship page on Facebook, so a private group for your individual league can be created.

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## League Meeting Format

- A “League Meeting” operates similarly to a small group or Bible study and is designed for all managers to come together to discuss the weekly breakout, talk about the Fantasy results, and pray.
- All managers can attend a “league meeting,” but depending on how many guys participate, you can break the league in half during the discussion time to maximize the conversation.
- Meet for at least an hour with the following time suggestions:
  - 15 minutes of Fantasy Football talk.
  - 30 minutes discussing that week’s FFF topic and answering discussion questions.
  - 15 minutes or more sharing personal headlines from the week, including personal prayer requests and prayer time.
- Send out the weekly breakout video before the league meeting and encourage the guys to watch and read the correct breakout for the week.
- Managers are encouraged to read the breakout during their personal quiet time, so they are prepared for the meeting. If the league decides to skip a week, then managers are still encouraged to read the breakout.
- Keep the conversation going by being prepared with some follow-up thoughts and questions.
- Open and close the league meeting with prayer - praying specifically for guys who ask for it.

### Alternative League Meeting

- Managers meet one-on-one for a “matchup meeting” and go through the discussion topics to unpack the weekly breakout. One idea is for guys who have a Fantasy matchup that week to pair off and get together.
- Guys can meet in their homes before Monday Night Football or Thursday Night Football, as well as, over a meal at their favorite sports restaurant.
- League meetings can also take place in-person or via Zoom or on a conference call. Each league can adjust to what works for the most managers.

### Ways to Make Your League More Interesting

- \* Play for a ring or a trophy.
- \* Turn your league into a keeper league.
- \* Have a fun punishment for whoever finishes last.
- \* Determine the last week of the regular Fantasy season as rivalry week and give a benefit to whoever wins each matchup.
- \* Go to games together.
- \* Be active in a group chat or the Facebook group.
- \* Meet not only as the whole league, but break up into smaller groups at times.



# Discipleship/Outreach Strategy and Opportunities/Ideas to Add Meaning to the Season

† Guys are encouraged to weekly contact or meet one-on-one with their Fantasy opponent and also pray for each other. It can be as simple as sending a text or asking for prayer or having more in-depth conversation over a meal.

† The commissioner is encouraged to set up times to meet with interested league members one-on-one for discipleship and also to send out weekly prayer requests to the whole league.



† Commissioners should set up a group chat or use the FFF Facebook group for each league, send an encouraging word during the week, and allow guys the opportunity to share any spiritual lessons they are learning.

† Offer the league a "Give Challenge" where winning Fantasy managers donate to a charity or foundation of the NFL player who helped them win that week.

† Have a "Serve Challenge" where the entire league serves together in the community or at the church.

† Pray for the actual players on your Fantasy team and send them a letter during or after the season.

† The commissioner is encouraged to fill the league with a combination of current followers of Jesus and guys who aren't believers yet.

## Tools to Make Draft Day More

Hang out before or after the draft with a competitive activity such as bowling or putt-putt golf.

Pray before your draft and have one or two guys share their testimony.

Pick one of the preseason breakouts and open the draft with the devotional as a teaser for future league meetings.

After each round, one owner is on the clock to share something about his life. This can be used to introduce guys to the rest of the league or as updates about marriage, work, or kids to share with established friends.

Make a big deal about the draft lottery/draft order.

In the middle of a snake draft, have each owner write down a player's name who they want to draft and a corresponding round to draft him. This is a "blind bid" and whoever bids the earliest round wins that player and loses that draft pick. If nobody else bids on that player, they also win.



# Expected Results/Goals for FFF

## #1

### **CONNECTEDNESS**

In today's fast-paced world and jam-packed schedules, time for friendships get squeezed out. However, being in the same Fantasy league provides an on-going reason to stay in touch with friends. There's always something to talk about during the season, and the momentum to remain involved in each others' lives often carries over throughout the year. We hope FFF creates strong connections with the guys in your league.

## #2

### **ENTRY POINT FOR DEEPER CONVERSATIONS**

Talking to other managers in the league about Fantasy opens the door to have deeper conversations. We already have a common bond and a similar interest because of Fantasy, so we become comfortable sharing about what's going on in our lives.

This, of course, requires genuinely caring for each other while being transparent and intentionally going beyond the surface in conversations. Guys can initiate interaction with other managers regarding a potential Fantasy trade, but then actually ask the managers more meaningful questions.

Fantasy gets the conversation started, but the deeper communication builds lasting friendships and allows us to be there for each other.

## #3

### **TIME TOGETHER/MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY**

For athletes, there's nothing quite like a locker room where conversations are private, you get things off your chest, and encouragement and motivation are given. We long for this and still need this even after our playing days are over.

Fantasy leagues can specifically create this type of environment. FFF leagues engage in meaningful fellowship and cultivating accountability.

## #4

### **STRONGER FAITH AND BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING**

We aren't designed to live life alone or in isolation, so being in a Fantasy Football league can lead us toward a stronger faith when we're surrounded by those who point us toward Jesus and by those we can point toward Him.

If we allow Fantasy Football to only be about winning our matchups each week and drafting the best team, we are wasting our time. We can still compete at a high level, but during this year's Fantasy season, let's choose to play with more meaning and purpose by building Christ-centered relationships and using Fantasy Football conversations to springboard discussions about faith and life.

