

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FANTASY FOOTBALL:

Connection, Competition, and the Costs of the Side Game

A Discussion Guide

Use this guide to talk about what the game gives you, the friendships it keeps, and the costs it can quietly take, so you can keep the good and limit the cost.

Good Games
Better People

SAME
CONVERSATIONS
A STRONGER
SEASON

PEOPLE
PERSPECTIVE
BALANCE
LONGER SEASONS

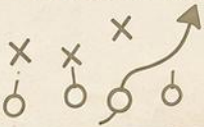


WHY WE PLAY

The needs behind the draft.

- What do you get from your league that you do not get many other places?
- Where does it give you a sense of control, of being skilled, and of belonging?
- Be honest: is the pull the competition, the friends, or a bit of both?

MORE
THAN
A GAME



THE CONNECTION

The friendships it keeps.

- Who are you really staying in touch with through your league?
- How would that group stay close if the league disappeared tomorrow?
- What does the trash talk actually say underneath the jokes?



SAME
PEOPLE
HIGHER
PLACES



THE COSTS

Notice the quiet price.

- When does the phone come out at moments it probably should not?
- Whose mood is your Sunday, yours or your quarterback's?
- Has a partner or friend ever felt like they were competing with a spreadsheet?



THE GAMBLING LINE

Where recreation can shift shape, without shame.

- Has any part of this stopped being fun, or started riding on money?
- Are you ever chasing losses, hiding spending, or feeling your mood swing with the results?
- If yes, treat it as useful information, not failure. Help is available: the National Problem Gambling Helpline is **1-800-GAMBLER**, free and confidential, any time.

DR. Z TAKEAWAY

“Fantasy football is a machine for belonging. Play for the connection first, set your limits before the season starts, and protect the people in the room in front of you.”



REAL CONNECTIONS
OUTLAST THE SEASON



DR. MICHAEL ZAKALIK, PSY.D.
Psychologist for Parenting | Z Psychology

PEOPLE | BALANCE | A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

Connection heals. Conversations help.