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Building a Taxonomy of Player Types and the Effects on the SELF and Interaction between Players

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Purpose
The purpose of this project is to review the literature on fantasy football to provide a theoretical background and propose a future study based on the available literature.

Background
Fantasy baseball is the original fantasy sport, also known as Rotisserie Baseball, created by a New York Times sports writer named Daniel Okrent and his buddies in 1980. As for fantasy football the origination date is unconfirmed, but the original league was named the Greater Oakland Professional Pigskin Prognosticators League created in Oakland, California (Lonnax, 2006). Fantasy Football is played in online leagues such as yahoo.com, espn.com, and nfi.com. There are two types of leagues: pay-to-play; in which one pays an entrance fee for a jackpot that can range into the thousands of dollars (Boudrey, 2012), or the free leagues in which players do not pay a fee but can still enjoy fantasy football. Once a player has joined a league the player becomes a “team owner” in which they draft real National Football League (NFL) players to be on their virtual team. After the draft teams play during the regular NFL in which a team owner may play, drop, add, or trade players. The objective is to win weekly games determined by which NFL players score the most points between each team through statistics such as touchdowns, yards, fumbles, etc. Teams who win the most games advance to the playoffs with the chance to win their fantasy football league.

Significance
Fantasy sports is a relatively new but understudied field that needs more attention. The primary reason fantasy sports should be taken seriously is its economic footprint was estimated at $1 billion in 2010 (Montague). Fantasy sports has shown importance in two areas: million dollar fantasy football leagues such as 5 plus million users on espn.com (Fisher, 2012), and more sports media outlets are covering fantasy football with dedicated time and space to the activity (The Huffington Post, 2012).

Literature Review
Gambling theory provides a framework in which terms adapted from gambling are applicable to fantasy football. An early model on fantasy base ball conducted an iterative approach to provide future theory and research on the subject. The authors connected gambling to fantasy baseball through the broad definition of gambling: something of value, usually monetary, is wagered on a probable outcome. This definition can apply since monetary value may not always be wagered, but the game is the wager itself since players want to make the playoffs and win their league. From the definition two types of players are defined: serious players or people whose lives have been changed significantly by a fantasy sport; and c) casual players or the opposite of serious players. Thus the researchers applied the DSM-IV’s ten diagnostic criteria provided a framework discussed in the results. Results showed positive and negative effects of fantasy baseball; positive showed the cognitive abilities for players to analyze the statistics improved; six negatives were found negative psychological consequences: 1) preoccupation; 2) tolerance; 3) loss of control; 4) restlessness/irritability; 5) escape; and 6) family/work/school problems. Overall they found fantasy baseball to be a positive healthy recreation that also served as an outlet for social interaction and provided some psychological benefits too (Bernhardt & Eade, 2005).

Motivational types provide categories to define players’ participation in fantasy football. A study looked at the relationship between football involvement and traditional NFL fan loyalty by examination of which factors affected fantasy owners’ participation through the fantasy sports phenomenon, fan loyalty, and consumer involvement. The study applied the psychological commitment to a participant’s commitment that defined a person could be: a) loyal to their NFL team, or their fantasy team due to either tendency or unwillingness to change one’s performance towards a particular professional sports team. Thus the study examined the level of fantasy football involvement related to a participant’s loyalty to their favorite NFL team, and any supplementary variables predicting participation of fantasy players using SEM. Results showed both research questions were significant but had juxtaposing results that make the study difficult to validate. Implications described how the NFL and marketers could utilize fantasy football to have participants spend more time and money on fantasy sports related products (Dwyer, 2011).

Another investigation of motivational types looked at fantasy sport users (FSU) and online gaming to explore motivational types of FSUs using the Q-Sort methodology. Both scholars noted the lack of literature review on the topic of fantasy sports in an online environment. Previous research has supported the idea that age and other demographics are most important to fantasy sports users, and from the motivational combination which FSUs emerge. Research suggested FSU fell into two categories: surveillance and arousal motivations in which either an FSU enjoyed outsmarting other players, or had no expertise but sought to win. The three characteristics of the Internet suggested the following about fantasy sports participants: asynchronously as the most important to low skilled players; demassification important to all groups; and interactivity was the most crucial characteristic. The study’s motivations supported past research, but social interaction ranked low in the study by most participants. The authors connected the definitions to their operationalizations well, but should have spent more time on their limitations for a balanced review (Farquhar & Meads, 2007).

Proposal
The paper proposes two research questions: one is the effects of motivational types of fantasy football on the Self and how the Self interacts with other fantasy football participants. To measure this the authors will take data from the previous literature will be applied to the research questions. Some tables from this study are shown below the sections (Dwyer & Kim, 2011).

Research Questions
RQ1: Which taxonomy of motivational types is most important to a casual player? RQ2: Which taxonomy of motivational types is most important to a serious player?

How the Self and interaction with other fantasy football participants are affected by the motivational types.

References