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Can playing fantasy football make you a better lawyer?

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Monday, September 14, 10:58 AM EDT

By Charles B. Jimerson, JBA Board of Governors member

Everyone has their vices. Everyone also has an inner nerd in them.

We all do different things to pursue our vices and we all do different things to embrace our inner dorkdom. For me, I get to geek out this time of year and gear up for another year of cut-throat fantasy football.

I'm in three leagues (two with mostly other lawyers) and serve as the commissioner of a very exclusive Jacksonville-based league that requires the last-place finisher to record a 12-song professionally produced Christmas Carole CD for league members' consumption and perform an hour of chores at each league member's house at some point in the next off-season.

Last year's biggest loser had to run the Gate River Run — a toilsome, easier-said-than-done punishment for a bunch of middle-age has-beens (read: never weres) with svelte dad-bods.

My leagues are high-stakes competition at its finest, with the primary collateral being pride and dignity.

Fantasy football is a great hobby. You get to interact with friends and colleagues, talk trash, put your knowledge base to a potentially profitable usage and play a form of football competitively without breaking any bones.

If you don't play fantasy football at this point, you must be an alien. Nonetheless, if you are still on the fence, I wanted to assure you the skills you already innately possess as a lawyer translate very well to the virtual gridiron.

Here are some reasons why playing fantasy football will make you a better lawyer:

Research, data analysis, analytical reasoning and prognostication

In dealing with any legal issue, you must have a fundamental foundation of knowledge to work from and an ability to fill in the blanks through research.

Legal research is essentially taking in data through legal precedents or legislative doctrine and applying it to the facts of your case. The extrapolation process typically requires snap judgments to be made upon application of unique facts to the rule of law.

When these analytically reasoned judgments are made, you're able to prognosticate potential outcomes for clients and render legal advice.

Fantasy football utilizes the same ruminative process. In analyzing statistics, injuries, matchups and many other factors, owners are able to empirically discern who puts their team in the best position to win against their opponents.

By intuitively applying concepts such as probability, regression and relative valuation, data-oriented players determine an optimized draft strategy, make weekly roster decisions and even win championships.

Lawyers and fantasy football players are disciplined, instinctual thinkers who balance some analysis of the relevant data with a healthy dose of shooting from the hip.

Deadline management

Mastering the art of documenting, managing and meeting deadlines in a professional environment is integral to success.

Your ability to produce quality work in a timely fashion is a central component to the practice of law, as well as the



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maintenance of a smoothly functioning and prosperous workplace.

Deadline management at work requires you to develop a solid and well-considered plan of action that relies on personal accountability in implementation.

If you are a litigator and you miss a court deadline, the consequences could be catastrophic and may range from loss of a strategic advantage to loss of the case or even sanctions.

Setting lineups, making timely waiver wire claims and complying with league deadlines are keys to success in fantasy football just like they would be in a courtroom.

Being punctual is not an option, it's a requirement.

Front-loaded planning

"If you don't prepare, you're preparing to fail" — a common motto followed by many lawyers and fantasy football owners alike.

Whether failing to prepare is due to limited time or sheer laziness, it always will reveal itself to your opponents. When a case first comes in the door, I try to put together a path to victory and spot every pitfall I may face along that path.

I try to do the same thing in fantasy football by pouring a lot of effort into the draft planning, such that week in, week out maintenance is not laborious.

With proper front-end planning, you'll win trials and fantasy football championships.

Non-legal competitive outlet

Let's face it, the practice of law is a grind. In order to survive and have a sound mind, you've got to have some fun every now and then.

For me, this means competing in most any form.

The welcomed distraction and comedic relief I get from competing against friends in fantasy football is refreshing; particularly the schadenfreude element that comes along with the scads of sordid ways you can break your buddy's heart from one week to the next.

The bottom line is that fantasy football is great high-brow amusement and where there is not distraction in life, there can be no clarity.

Charles B. Jimerson is an A-V Rated business litigator and board-certified construction lawyer who serves as the managing partner at Jimerson & Cobb, P.A.



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