

EXLTUS

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## “5 Ways to Make Your Fantasy Football League Awesome”



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Fantasy football is back. Thank the heavens! There is nothing like the agony of losing by two points to your annoying friend or beating your lame coworker with a last-minute 38-yard field goal. We all have stories of drafting players who got hurt in week two, trading a loser RB who ends up scoring three touchdowns the following week, or picking up a third string TE on waivers who ends up having a glorious four-week run to get you to the playoffs.

We play fantasy football because it is a perfect mix of competition, research, timing, deal-making, and fun. In the end, we all want to have a good time while crushing our opponents and holding up that glorious trophy, and cash, at the end of the season.

Your fantasy league is probably good, but who wants a good league when you can have a great one? Here are some ways to enhance any league or, at the very least, mix things up a bit.

### 1. Implement rivalry week (with a twist)

If college football has its rivalry week, and NFL teams have their big rivals, why shouldn't your league have the same? This works best if you usually have the same players in your league every year; that way you can have two teams be rivals year after year. So, how does it work? Decide which week will be your league's rivalry week and that week there will be something on the line for the loser.

Or, you can pair up rivals based on personal details. For example, this year my league created rivals between two guys that had a disagreement in the past and also created rivals between a guy that was not invited to another guy's wedding. Genius. But, here's the "twist." The loser has to make an embarrassing video of himself and post it to your league's chat. If they don't post the video they owe the league extra money. It's up to the league to vote on the level of embarrassment in the video and the fine for not posting a video.

### 2. Have a week where side bets are mandatory

I love side bets. So should your league. Just like rivalry week, this week is dedicated to side bets. Side bets can be anything the league decides. They can be bets for cash, a gift card to a restaurant, beers next time you all hang out, etc. The possibilities are endless. Side bet week adds some extra excitement to those weeks and, just like rivalry week, can be moved to later in the season to keep teams with bad records interested.

### 3. Have a ridiculous trophy

This should be a given. Every great league needs a great trophy. Whether it's an actual trophy that stands five feet tall, a horseshoe made of beer cans, or a plaque with a crazy picture, every league needs something beautiful or hideous for the champion to hoist in the air and carry for a year.

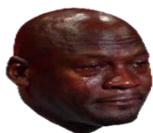


One option, which I found at a local antiques store, is a sword. A big f'n, heavy, metal sword. What says victory more than a trophy that you could actually chop down your opponents with? Plus, if you have a sword, you can make last year's winner "knight" the new winner. It just adds to the mystique of the league.

### 3. Make last place hurt

You're already doing this, right? If not, start immediately. Fantasy football is not only about celebrating first place but also crushing those that lose. Last place deserves no mercy. Chances are you've heard of the league where the first place guy gets to pick a tattoo for the last place guy to get. What a great idea. But, if you don't want to be that extreme, there are plenty of other options.

In my league, the last place person gets the last pick in next year's draft. Plus, they have to pay for the food at the end-of-year awards party. This could mean steaks, if your league throws money around like that, or just some pizzas to feed the guys while money and awards are being passed out. While you're at it, make the last play guy bring some beer, too!



## 5. Keep non-playoff teams interested

If you don't have some strategy in place already, you're probably still dealing with those one, two, or three guys that stop setting their lineups by week six because then know their team has no shot at the playoffs. This is annoying because every victory and loss matters for those still battling for the playoffs.

What to do? Well here is one idea: Give out payments to non-playoff teams for each of their victories. That way, even if they don't make the playoffs, they can earn money until the end of the season. Based on your league, you'll have to work out the math. In my league, where there is a \$50 buy in, every non-playoff team earns \$10 for each victory above five wins. So if they end the season with seven victories they at least earn \$20. This, of course, takes some money out of the winner's pot but, remember, this is only for non-playoff teams and it will keep all teams interested till the last game.

Implement these five suggestions, or come up with your own variations, to make your league go from good to great!