



DYNASTY GAME PLAN





INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THE GAME PLAN?

When the owners of DLF started the site back in 2006, we really had no idea what we were in store for. We knew we were passionate about dynasty leagues and fantasy football in general and found the information available online in regards to dynasty leagues was virtually non-existent.

Over the years, we've compiled hundreds of articles that spoke to strategy, team building, trading tactics and overall league management. While many of our followers have been here from the beginning, a vast majority haven't.

So, we came up with an idea.

In order to maximize the value of your premium content membership, we've taken the liberty of going through our archive and scouring through over 500 articles and compiling and updating our best tips in terms of strategy. We've also added a lot of new information and categorized it to make it easy to navigate.

After all, we recognize many of you are new to the dynasty format and this Game Plan can be used as your first and best reference to help you achieve your goal of building a dynasty.

Oh yeah, it's also free as part of your membership.

The Game Plan is divided into three sections:

League Management

A guide on how to choose the right league and effectively manage your time.

Team Management

Year to year tips and strategies to stay on top of your league.

Trading Tactics

An in-depth look at the theories and skills behind making effective trades.

Good luck in your leagues and we hope you enjoy the Game Plan!

THE GAME PLAN



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DLF
DYNASTY LEAGUE FOOTBALL



LEAGUE MANAGEMENT

DYNASTY LEAGUE FORMATS AND RULE VARIATIONS

When you decide to make the leap from seasonal/redraft leagues to dynasty, there are many ways to set up your league and customize it to make it your own. There are a myriad of ways format your league, but here are some of the basics.

League Formats

Keeper Leagues

A Keeper League is a league in which a set number of players are kept by each owner from year to year. Some leagues require owners to keep that number while others let them choose to “toss players back” for extra draft selections.

A typical wrinkle is that keeping a player costs a draft pick one round earlier each year than where the player was last selected. Example: If AJ Green was selected in the sixth round last year, he’d cost a fifth rounder this year, a fourth next and so on. And he could only be kept a maximum of five years in that case.

Pros: Keeper Leagues let owners who are accustomed to redraft get their feet wet with dynasty while still having a robust annual draft. The two reasons we hear most often that people are hesitant to play dynasty are A) they really enjoy the draft and B) they are fearful that the league will become uncompetitive and therefore boring. Keeper Leagues help allay those concerns.

Cons: Most keeper formats eliminate or severely reduce the importance of the rookie draft. One of the most enjoyable aspects of dynasty is that it encourages owners to take a heightened interest in the NFL Draft and the incoming players. This isn’t as important in Keeper Leagues because the draft and league play is largely similar to redraft.

Dynasty Leagues

A traditional Dynasty League is simply a Keeper League where all the players are kept. An original “start-up” draft is conducted and the entire pool of players is available for selection. Teams then keep those players as long as they wish. Because of the long term nature of a dynasty roster, generally teams hold in excess of 25 players on their squad – much more than a redraft league. This means the waiver wire is usually picked clean and owners need to rely on trades and the annual rookie draft to improve their squad. The annual rookie draft is the primary way of restocking. It’s generally about four rounds and includes the incoming players to the NFL. Typically the draft is in the reverse order of the prior year’s results thus giving the weakest teams the best picks and a chance to become more competitive. Sort of like the Colts getting Andrew Luck.

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Dynasty Leagues (continued from previous page)

Pros: This is the most prevalent dynasty format and therefore has the greatest number of participants, leagues and relevant content. It rewards the savvy trader and students of the NFL draft.

Cons: Bad management can result in a prolonged period of time where a team struggles to compete. While that is especially painful for the owner, it's also less enjoyable for the rest of the league. Choose your league-mates carefully so you have the best chance of a challenging league year-to-year.

Salary Cap Leagues

Salary Cap Leagues are Dynasty Leagues where players are put on contracts with a salary and duration. Just like an NFL team. Players are held by the owner for the length of the contract. Each team has a set salary cap that they cannot exceed and often a limit to the total number of contract years for all their players.

There preferred approach for starting a Salary Cap League is an auction based start-up draft. This sets the initial values for all of the players and owners manage their budgets accordingly. A stud player might get bid up to a salary that eats up as much as 20-25% of a team's cap. Salary Cap Leagues require an annual rookie draft and a separate free agent auction. The rookie draft is just like the rookie draft in a Dynasty League and rookies are on a preset wage scale based on where they are selected (just like the NFL). The free agent auction disperses the players who are coming off contract or who have been cut by their owner. Just like NFL free agency.

Pros: Salary Cap Leagues add many additional complexities to the game and the most engaged owners enjoy the challenges. Salary Cap rosters turn over more quickly than Dynasty rosters (because player contracts expire) and thus it's easier for a struggling team to dig out of a hole. The rookie draft is extremely significant in Salary Cap because the wage scale for rookies can put them on contracts that are far below market value. Adding a stud rookie to your team at a fraction of the price of a similarly productive WR gives you additional funds and therefore leverage in the free agent auction.

Cons: While not absolutely essential, Salary Cap leagues greatly benefit from auction based drafting. Some owners find auctions intimidating and/or cumbersome. Salary Cap leagues also tend to have rather complex rules governing things like restricted free agency, franchise tags, salary escalation etc. and this can be too much for some owners.



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Typical Variations

Now that we have the basic league formats behind us, let's look at the most prevalent variations that commissioners incorporate in their leagues. These variations can be applied to any of the formats above.

Variation: Point per Reception (PPR) vs. Standard Scoring

Probably the first decision a commish will make when setting up the league is the starting lineup requirements followed quickly by the scoring system. The primary scoring decision is whether or not to award points for receptions. In a standard league, receptions do not count – only yardage and touchdowns generate points. In a “PPR League” every catch counts as a point in addition to the yardage and TDs. Some leagues award fractional PPR such as a half point per reception.

In years past, PPR was not the norm but it is quickly overtaking Standard Scoring. The primary advantage to PPR is that it enhances the value of WRs making them closer in value to RBs. Simple math (eliminating QBs because their scoring remains the same in either format): In 2011 in a Standard League of the top-30 scorers 17 were RBs, 11 were WRs and 2 were TEs. In a PPR league it was 11 RBs, 17 WRs and 2 TEs. Clearly WR gets a boost. Remember that this doesn't actually make WRs more valuable than RBs because positional scarcity still helps the RBs. It just serves to even the playing field a good bit.

Probably the biggest disadvantage to PPR is that most mainstream media still focuses on Standard Scoring. People like to be able to visit the major sites like ESPN and CBS for rankings, weekly cheat sheets, etc. and by and large those still cater to the standard format. This will change over time as these sites catch up with the market demand for more PPR coverage.

Variation: Auction vs. Snake Draft

Another critical start-up decision: how do you disperse the players? The process for spreading players around has evolved over time. Most you reading this are probably too young to remember things like ranking 200 plus players and then coming back the next day to see who the computer picked for you or the days of third round reversal. But we digress.



LEAGUE MANAGEMENT

DYNASTY LEAGUE FORMATS AND RULE VARIATIONS

Variation: Auction vs. Snake Draft (continued)

Now the choice is better: do you do a snake draft where each team selects a player and in each subsequent round the selection order is reversed? Or do you do a live auction with a budget? In a live auction, owners take turns “nominating” a player for auction and then owners bid them up just like an art auction or a classic car auction.

Snake draft has the advantage that it’s simple; everyone understands it and it can easily be done slowly overtime on any of the sites that host leagues. The vast majority of drafts are conducted this way including most mocks and expert drafts.

The auction format requires a higher degree of attention and works best when done live (or live, on-line). The primary advantage of an auction is that it eliminates the randomness of the draft order and lets all owners have a higher degree of control over their team composition. Example: If you are awarded the 1.10 pick in a snake start-up, there are players who are basically out of your reach. That’s not the case in auction. If you want, you can get them but you may need to pay handsomely. Moreover, if you want two of them you can do that too. It will cost you dearly in depth, but that’s your decision. It’s all but impossible to make that happen in snake.

Variation: Team Defense (DST) vs. Individual Defensive Players (IDP)

Probably the 64-thousand dollar start-up decision is whether to play with Team DST or IDP. Of these three decisions, this one will have the most profound and lasting impact on your league. In a DST league, each team starts the defense and special teams from an entire NFL team each week – say the Giants DST. Scoring is based on the performance of the squad as a whole. In IDP, teams start individual defensive players are awarded based on their performance.

IDP adds more players to the roster, rookie draft and player pool. Generally IDP leagues have approximately 40 roster spots as opposed to about 25 in a DST league. This means more opportunities to trade, a deeper waiver wire and a deeper rookie draft. All good stuff for the active owner. It also means that owners can’t focus purely on the offensive players in the NFL. While the typical DST dynasty owner probably knows where the backup quarterbacks are on the depth chart, the IDP owner has to know much more.

The potential problem of setting your league up as IDP is that you limit the number of people who will want to participate. IDP is still a niche (like Salary Cap) and there are only so many people who feel confident in taking on the challenge. This can become a problem if and when you need to find a replacement owner for your league.



LEAGUE MANAGEMENT

PARTICIPATING IN A LEAGUE

As many of you know, the founders of DLF live in the great Northwest, so camping and spending time outdoors is simply a way of life. There have been times in the past where some of us have taken week long trips in an effort to “detach” a little and recharge from the work that goes into managing the machine known as DLF. After all, a week in the wilderness should help you detach.

It never works.

You see, we never really detach from DLF or our passion for dynasty leagues. In fact, we find ourselves thinking of articles and comparisons all the time. One particular trip gave one of us enough writing material for a long, long time. This article is all about some tips that are universal in both camping and participating in dynasty leagues. That may seem odd in this publication, but it serves to send some important points.

1. Have a Fire

In camping terms, this is an absolute must. No real camping trip is complete without roasting marshmallows and some type of animal flesh over an open flame. At one point, one of us overheard some people in a campground saying they didn’t want to have a fire because they were afraid their clothes would smell like smoke. I looked at their car and saw it was a BMW with a license plate frame that said, “I’d rather be shopping at Nordstrom.” I remember thinking they’ll probably be dead or missing in the wilderness by Thursday.

In dynasty leagues, you also must have a fire, but it’s of a whole different variety. In a yearly redraft league, you can afford to make some mistakes and not focus on what you’re doing because there’s always next year. In a dynasty league, you simply can’t afford to do that. You must have a fire to win burning inside you. One that gets stoked every time there’s a rookie draft, a hot free agent acquisition or a trade concept.

Show me a league with a decade or so of history and I’ll bet the owners who have the best winning percentage are the ones who spend the most time perfecting their rosters. Again, they have the fire.

Dynasty leagues are not for the faint of heart and if you don’t have a fire, you simply won’t be able to compete, no less win a title.



LEAGUE MANAGEMENT

PARTICIPATING IN A LEAGUE

2. Kids come first

One of us was camping just outside Bend, Oregon, over the 4th of July. For those of you who have been there, you'll likely agree it's one of the best outdoor cities in America. You can hike, raft, kayak, fish or do just about anything you want until you hit one of the several local breweries at night.

He did none of those things.

You see, his kids are very young. They're just learning how to ride bikes, and in one case, walk. While there were many other things he could have been doing, he and his wife spent their time going around the same loop of the campground pushing a tricycle, balancing a bike with training wheels, or standing in 90 degree weather to watch a pet parade in town.

They wouldn't have traded it for the world.

In dynasty terms, kids have to come first as well. You can't overload your team with veteran talent in the hopes to win an initial championship. No matter how talented you may be at evaluating young talent, there's simply no easy way to keep your team competitive if you have a roster full of players near 30 years old. It's tempting during the draft to go for those veterans and shoot for production over potential, but it's a rookie mistake that happens far too often with owners unfamiliar with the dynasty format.

3. Pay Attention to Details

One night, a couple rolled up to a camp site and started arguing shortly thereafter. It seems they had forgotten their tent stakes at home...five hours away. For anybody who has ever camped in a tent, you'll agree those are just a little bit important. Luckily, we always pack some extra stakes in case we have some that break. We were able to help them out, but we couldn't help thinking about how important it is to pay attention to details.

The same tip applies in dynasty leagues. You have to truly understand your league's rules, player scoring tiers, strengths and weaknesses of all the teams in the league and the waiver wire. If you find yourself saying, "Oh man, I didn't even realize that guy was available," you probably aren't paying attention to details.



LEAGUE MANAGEMENT

PARTICIPATING IN A LEAGUE

4. Prepare for an Emergency

It sounds simplistic in nature, but you honestly never know what can happen. You should always pack road flares, first aid kits and extra drinking water just in case whenever I go camping.

In dynasty league terms, you have to do the same thing. It's sometimes very easy to get complacent with a winning team and think the work is done. However, that one torn ACL to your RB1 on a Sunday morning can quickly get you into scramble mode. Do you have the depth to cover for it? Do you know who may be on the trading block? Do you understand which of your commodities is most attractive to others? Do you have a working relationship with other owners in your league so making a trade isn't so painful?

If you answered no to these questions, you're not prepared for an emergency.

5. Don't be a Moron

One of DLF's favorite camping moments came at 2:37 in the morning on a Tuesday night (or Wednesday morning to be more accurate). A camper in a site a few meters away was playing his guitar pretty loudly. He was attempting some John Denver tunes that simply weren't working out too well after downing a case of Pabst Blue Ribbon.

After he failed to sing the words "West Virginia" multiple times, one of my camping neighbors had enough. She screamed over to him and asked him to stop since people were trying to sleep. I'll keep his response with me for the rest of my life since it was one of the dumbest things I've ever heard anyone say. His response, you ask? "I have my own business." Seriously, what does that mean?

If someone can tell me where you get the license to be a jerk because you own your own business, sign us up. It was truly amazing.

In the land of dynasty leagues, the same idea applies. You can't be a moron. Yes, you're going to make some bad trades and drop some players you wish you hadn't. What I'm talking about is treating other owners like you know more than they do. Don't burn a bridge with someone because they won't take your deal or hold up a draft for a few days. Every league seems to have "that guy." If yours doesn't, take a good look in the mirror and make sure it's not you.



LEAGUE MANAGEMENT

PARTICIPATING IN A LEAGUE

6. Find the Right Combination

One of us was making some s'mores one night (see rule #1), and one of our friends put one together without a marshmallow. What!?! You can't take something OUT of a s'more. If so, it's NOT a s'more! We can be talked into adding a Reese's Peanut Butter cup instead of a chocolate bar, but we draw the line at leaving out the marshmallow.

That's bush league.

Same thing goes in dynasty league. You really need to find the right combination of running backs, quarterbacks, receivers and all other positions to truly be successful. All too often, we see teams who are totally stacked at running back or wide receiver and end up having to bench some truly great players because they're overloaded. Some of these same owners refuse to move their surplus of players at the same position because they feel like they have a competitive advantage by keeping them away from other teams.

They're wrong.

7. Choose the Right People

When you camp with a group, you're likely going to see the best and worst of every individual who you're with. Face it, it can be stressful at first when you're trying to unload everything, set up tents and take care of your family at the same time. If you're with someone who has extreme highs and lows, it's going to be a long trip, especially if they drink!

Choosing the right people for a dynasty league is the biggest decision a league manager makes. If you have a couple of owners who don't take the draft seriously or do other things to make the league not seem like fun, you're doomed. Make the right decision and get committed people to join – this may mean not including the same people you have in a redraft league. While that may be a hard decision for you to make, it's going to best in the long run.

Find the right mix of people and you'll be in good shape.

Those are the seven best tips we have for camping that translate into achieving success in a dynasty league. Follow these rules in both endeavors and you'll find yourself one happy camper.



LEAGUE MANAGEMENT

MANAGING MULTIPLE LEAGUES

Lets face it. Fantasy Football is like crack.

You start off with a little, and you want more. And more. And then still more. Before you know it, what began as an enjoyable little pastime in a free Yahoo league with some buddies soon snowballs into a burdensome commitment to three dynasty leagues, two keeper leagues, a redraft league, a survivor league and a high-stakes Tournament Of Champions league. When you find yourself debating the merits of quitting your job just so you can keep up with it all, then you know it's time to find some balance.

The lure of "just one more league" is often a strong one. A new league might have a different group of coaches (or many of the same, familiar, fun ones), a unique roster or scoring system, a tantalizing reward pot, or some other new or interesting element which makes it intriguing. But as the additional leagues pile up, your ability to focus on each of them diminishes. Before long you find yourself spread so thin that you are unable to excel in any of your leagues. And how much fun are you really having when you are in nine different leagues, and losing in all of them?

But just how many leagues are too many? When is it time to say "no more?"

Unfortunately, there is no magic number. Each person has to find that line on their own. Some coaches start buckling under the pressure when running more than one league. Others can easily handle ten or more leagues without breaking a sweat. If you fall into the latter category, well then, hats off to you. But for everyone else, there are some general guidelines which can help you curb the addiction and find the balance needed to maximize the enjoyment of your leagues... and your life.

1. Prioritize

Identify the league or leagues most important to you, and give them the lion's share of your attention. Leagues which you have been involved in for many years are usually most deserving of your continued commitment and attention. The old 80/20 rule is often a good metric for allocating your time. Give 80% of your time and attention to your favorite league or two, 20% to the remaining league(s).

2. Resistance is not futile

As hard as it may be at times, you must resist the temptation to over-commit. There will always be another league you'd like to join, another game to play. But be cognizant of the commitments you have made to the coaches and commissioners in your existing league(s). If you are asked to join a new league, take some time to consider the implications of joining yet another league, and the impact it will have on existing commitments.



LEAGUE MANAGEMENT

MANAGING MULTIPLE LEAGUES

3. Keep it similar

While it is definitely more fun to play in a variety of league formats, that diversity also increases the team management workload. By sticking to similarly styled leagues (redraft and keeper, or dynasty and keeper, all dynasty, etc) with similar roster and scoring formats, you increase your ability to work from the same set of data and research. The same draft list will work well in pretty much all redraft leagues, as will the same rookie draft cheat sheet in all dynasty leagues. You still have to spend time making management decisions for each team – picking up a player off the wire may make sense for one team, but not for another. But at least your time spent researching and creating lists and sheets and organizing your thoughts is minimized.

4. Share the load

If you really want to get your feet wet in different leagues, consider starting a team jointly with another coach. This will allow you to each share the load of managing a team while still giving you the opportunity to experience something new. Shared coaching arrangements are usually less than ideal – the two coaches have to be very much on the same page and act in concert. Conflict between two owners of a team can destroy a team and adversely affect an entire league. So enter into this arrangement very carefully. But if you know someone who you can work well with, the league is OK with a shared coaching arrangement, and you are both committed to seeing it through, then this just might be an attractive solution.

5. Leave gracefully

If you find that, for whatever reason, you are no longer interested in a league, then do the right thing. Advise the league commissioner you will be resigning, and finish your commitment. If there is not already a waiting list for entry into the league, be sure to give plenty of advance notice so that a thorough search can be performed for a replacement. While you remain in command of your team, continue to field the best possible team each week. The worst thing a lame-duck coach can do is let his team languish, or just walk away in mid-season. You may have lost interest in the league, but odds are the other coaches still take it very seriously. Allowing any team get away with an easy win seriously upsets the balance of a league, and quite frankly, is just plain unprofessional.

Fantasy football, as we all know, is a blast. But it is also a serious commitment, and as such your fantasy football commitments should be taken seriously. Be careful about adding to your team management workload, and don't take on too many new obligations too quickly. Always strive to find balance between your current commitments and exploring new opportunities. Take your time considering these new opportunities and always be fair to your current league mates. Not only will you maximize the enjoyment of your existing leagues, you'll also be that much closer to striking a balance between your fantasy football life and that bothersome little thing called real life.

TRADING TACTICS

THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

As a coach, you cannot rely on yearly drafts alone to fill your team with players who will bring you a ring. The art of trading is a key skill which you must hone if you are going to build your dynasty. A good coach is always evaluating the parts of their team, continually looking for an edge. One game can be the difference between a championship and second place.

The following tactics, if used well, could help you assemble a true dynasty for years to come and help you avoid being the beer wench during each year's draft. Master these and let the pillaging begin:

#1: Assessment

You should strive to have three components on your team at all times:

- 1) Adequate depth at all positions
- 2) A balance of established fantasy producers and young productive talent
- 3) Developmental talent that will be producing within three years

The key here is in assessing your team with an eye towards identifying areas of extreme depth or value, even if it is in the area of developmental talent. These areas are then leveraged to obtain the objects of your affection. Always remember that if you are too thin in any one position, a single injury can mean disaster. Too old at a position and your run may be over before it starts. Too young and you might as well be playing craps.

So, what is "too thin" and "too old"?

Bye weeks are an inevitable occurrence and we have all had those weeks that cost us a very important game. Injuries are also going to affect your year. The older your roster becomes, the more susceptible you become to injury. When assessing your roster, you **MUST** prepare for these events and realize that there is an inverse relationship between a player's age and his fantasy value. Assume that at any point during the season, you will be without three of your starters during a given week. If you wish to be more aggressive, you may, but be prepared to suffer the consequences.

If your team has very little roster value to offer in trade, realize that in some cases, draft picks may carry more value than rostered players (depending on the coach).



TRADING TACTICS

THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

#2: Identify

After you have assessed your roster, identify the positions you can leverage to build an even stronger one. In a best case scenario, you will have assembled young, productive talent that will allow you to trade one or more aging, productive players in exchange for a young producer who bolsters your foundation without a loss of fantasy points per game (fppg).

If you become successful at this tactic, you can leverage your roster year over year, staying one step ahead of the competition. If you are not in a best case scenario, leverage what you do have. Developmental players, in good situations, can often times be as valuable as aging veterans.

As mentioned previously, future draft consideration often carries substantial weight. Just be very careful when trading away future opportunities for improving your team.

#3: Mining

You must always be sure that, at least in your own mind, you receive more than you give away when making a trade. Note that some other coaches may not evaluate a trade in the same way. They might evaluate it based solely on fppg potential and name recognition.

There are many catalysts that make for a good trade. Building depth and securing handcuffs are often as important as landing another quality starter. If you are able to kill multiple birds with a single stone, all the better. Just don't validate the deal based on how other coaches respond.

In the mining stage, you must perform steps #1 and #2 for each other team in your league, paying special attention to which division a prospective trade partner is in. After you have identified those players that have value upon your roster, you need to locate a team that can offer what you desire, and needs what you have to offer. This is not as difficult as it sounds. Your approach and shtick means everything in this step.

While you may not like the analogy, you are now a salesman. We will help you with this in another section of the Game Plan called, "Trading Tactics: Snakeoil Salesman"



TRADING TACTICS

THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

#4: Timing

Do not underestimate the importance of timing in securing maximum value for your offer. Whether it is pre-draft, preseason or week ten of the regular season, keeping your eyes open for a catalyst is essential. Coaches panic when a primary player is carried off on a cart. Your WR4 can quickly have the gleam of a WR1 if you act quickly enough and capitalize on the emotion and fear of a season potentially lost. The rookie draft can make backups of primary fantasy producers as quick as you can say “With the first pick in the draft...”

Mid or late year trades that fall just before your league’s trade deadline are of particular interest. At this point in time, coaches who are in the hunt may be willing to overpay to add a particular player to their roster. This is also the time to survey the standings and assess other rosters as you may want to push through a trade that will net you a higher selection in the following year’s draft; pay particular attention to those teams that are on the decline within reach of last place . especially if they have had a recent major injury.

Your draft picks and players can increase in value substantially overnight; be ready to take advantage of it. Nothing is more frustrating to a coach than the season-ending injury that occurs in the preseason.

Realize that the ‘game’ of fantasy football is as much about excitement of the upcoming season as it is about assembling a dominant team. Preseason injuries affecting primary producing players create an opportunity for you to maximize the value of your roster. Successfully capitalizing on these situations can shape your team for years to come. Let the morality battle be waged by those coaches who are accustomed to the bottom of your standings.

These simple foundational steps should come as no surprise to a seasoned fantasy football coach. In most cases, these steps alone will not guarantee a trade in your favor but are a means to an end.

Keep reading as we will now give you the ‘ugly’ side of trading that you must master in order to be successful.



TRADING TACTICS

BEING A SNAKE OIL SALESMAN

Successful trading can be a dirty job. It requires a coach to be one part psychic, one part strategist, one part best friend, one part psychologist and two parts snake-oil salesman. You need to be proficient in all of these roles before you can expect to start improving your team consistently over a long period of time. And make no mistake, successful trading is potentially the most important skill a coach must have if they have any hope of building and maintaining a dynasty.

For purposes of simplicity, we will assume that you have already become familiar with the steps from “The Essential Components.” The foundational guidelines must be understood if you expect to complete a successful trade. Let’s define “successful trade” as any trade that improves your team by giving up the least amount of “value.”

Sounds simple doesn’t it?

The problem is each coach is trying to do the same thing. Those who master the components of becoming a successful snake oil salesman will find themselves with the world at their feet. Those that cannot will be wearing a flower-print dress and serving Coronas at the next draft party.

Over the years we have heard variations of the following statement:

“If you are willing to make that trade, then somehow I am going to end up getting screwed. There must be something wrong with it.”

When you are known as a successful trader, then you must be also comfortable with the fact that you will be known, at least to some degree, as a snake oil salesman. How you manage that role is what really matters. Remember the salesman still makes his money.

For those who need a refresher, remember that a snake oil salesman is usually characterized as a man from the Old West who would market a miracle elixir from atop a soapbox or the back of his wagon.

While this elixir’s use would vary widely, in the end it was a miracle cure all for whatever ailed you. The most successful of these salesmen had great charisma and could work an audience like an artist, enticing the public to purchase his elixir based on the belief that it would solve any problem the person was experiencing. In short, the salesman would give the unwitting individuals exactly what they needed to hear in order to close the deal. And it is by no coincidence that visits to each new town were kept very, very short.

TRADING TACTICS

BEING A SNAKE OIL SALESMAN

If you are still struggling to link this concept in terms of our current day and fantasy football, let's see if we can help just a bit: Drew Rosenhaus. Now we have that cleared up.

Understand that while a successful trading coach could/will have many similarities to a snake oil salesman, you must also be aware of the pitfalls. Let's discuss some of the do's and don'ts:

Do: Maximize the value of what you are offering

It is not for you to correctly value a player or even be objective about his past performance - that's the job of the other coach in the trade. Focus on the positives from a player's performance, regardless of when it was. Extrapolate performance into full year numbers when it benefits the player, ignore injury history and team quality. An aging player is "proven" when trying to trade them away, and "diminishing" when trying to receive them in trade. A young player has "tremendous upside" when limited history is available and trying to trade them away, and is "unproven and susceptible" when trying to receive them in trade. Again, it is for the other coach to determine if your assessments are correct or not.

Do Not: Overtly lie or fabricate information

Successful trading is about accentuating the positive and diminishing the negative. But just as important is the fact that successful trading is about creating a relationship with a fellow coach in a way that keeps the lines of communication open and flowing. Overt misrepresentation, lying or insulting behavior will close the door to a trade faster than you can say Rosenhaus. In law it is called "leading the witness," whereby the attorney leads the witness towards agreeing to what is "commonly known." When you can influence a coach to buy into the value proposition of your offer, the advantage has swung to you. If your reputation is such that open lines of communication do not exist with other coaches in your league, whether earned or not, your ability to get deals done is severely limited. For this reason, you must always balance your sales tactics.

Do: State only the obvious and imply all else

Especially if you are known as a trader, then understand your reputation precedes you into the trade. A well-used tactic of successful trading, whether you have a reputation or not, is to state only those things that need to be stated and imply or indirectly turn the conversation into beneficial areas. In this case, less is more. Allow the other coach to take the bait and make the statement that benefits you. The more talking that is done by your trade partner, the more likely a successful outcome for you.



TRADING TACTICS

BEING A SNAKE OIL SALESMAN

Do : Shoot for the stars and hope for the moon

When a deal is close and you can tell that the other coach is excited about the offer, do not be afraid to include other variables in the trade equation. An additional second round pick, that deep developmental quarterback or bench riding handcuff all can be easily included in trades that are nearly complete. The trick in getting “adds” (additional) is to not overplay your hand or jump at any offer. To do so shows excitement which can then reduce the possibility of the additional player. Always stay well grounded during trade discussions and err on the side of pessimism for all deals until the end. If your trade partner is sold on a possible deal, your consternation can be rewarded when you ask “hmmm, that is a bit much, would you be willing to throw in your second round pick this year? Most coaches agree on trades based on the primary players involved. If secondary players or picks do not contain immediate impact or value, you are much more likely to get them included in a deal involving other primary targets. Do not, however, ask for too much additional. Once a coach says “no” to a request, the likelihood that a “yes” for another lesser option to follow is much less.

Do: Assess the tendencies of your fellow coaches

One of the most successful strategies to utilize in the dynasty league is to obtain future draft picks for players currently on your roster, characterized as excess depth or aging veterans. You must understand that each coach views and values draft picks and players differently. Being a successful trader involves not only understanding this concept, but also understanding the tendencies of the other coaches in your league. Which coaches covet draft picks highly when compared to current players? Which coaches value their players so ridiculously high, that discussing any trade is a waste of your time? Which coaches jump at the rookie that has just had a big game? Which coaches are not at all objective about the position of a draft pick compared to the talent available? Which coaches freely move players/picks almost without regard to their team needs? Assessment of the coaches allows you to be a chameleon when it comes to the trade discussions, giving a coach exactly what they need to hear in order to increase the chance of a successful trade. Remember, it is not up to you to be objective about your offer.

Do Not: Assume that coaches do not change their behavior(s)

While assessment of your fellow coaches is important, many factors can change their behavior. Tendencies often remain constant, but behaviors can and do change. Often times this will be due to the time of season, injuries, non-football related events, etc. Stay nimble and recognize the tendencies of the coaches you are dealing with, but allow for a certain amount of variation.



TRADING TACTICS

BEING A SNAKE OIL SALESMAN

Do: Analyze the amount of patience needed

This can be the most difficult task for any coach. Patience, or lack thereof, can determine whether a deal gets done or whether it dies on the vine. Whether the architect of a trade or the receiver of an offer, differing levels of patience is needed to increase the odds that a deal in your favor is done. Use what you know about your counterpart to your advantage. Every coach loves a good deal. And when a coach believes he/she is the recipient of a good deal, and that deal is to your benefit, then it would serve you well to get it done as quickly as possible. Terms such as “why wait?,” “Slam Dunk,” “No Brainer” and “win/win” all imply that deal makes sense and to not think so proves some level of ignorance. By not closing the sale early, you risk the coach receiving other offers or getting cold feet. On the other hand, if you are the recipient of a trade offer or are making an offer to a coach that is more of an analyzer, recognize that patience is most likely your best friend. Research the claims of the offering coach as it relates to stats, age and player situation. As the offering coach, be patient if your trade partner is one to analyze a situation. Be confident in the fact that you have capitalized on a situation, given good information and that your seed has been planted. Give it time to bare fruit.

Do Not: Force a trade

While pillaging another team can elicit great feelings for many coaches, doing so does not raise their stock within the league, or their trade partner. While it is your main goal to improve your team by giving up the least amount of value, success will be determined over many years. There are a finite number of coaches in your league and you need to maintain good relations with as many as possible so that you can keep going back to the well. Forcing a coach into a trade that they later regret, and in which the league feels was terribly unbalanced to begin with (even though it served your needs), decreases the chances of you pulling off a successful trade on your next attempt. Do so more than once and you will quickly get a negative reputation that will significantly impact your future trade opportunities. Rely on the subtle use of your skills from this article, make the trade and keep your yap shut. If you know you got the better end of the deal, and the other coach is confident in the deal he/she made, then you could not have a better scenario.

Do: Focus on coaches who are willing trade partners

This goes back to assessing the coaches within your league. Every coach has different tendencies and those tendencies can be used to your advantage. Every coach has tradable assets, whether they exist in the form of rostered players or future draft picks. In most cases, coaches without significant rostered assets will have better draft picks in upcoming drafts; do not fail to recognize these situations. Identify those coaches that have immediate gratification personalities and trade your excess for future draft picks in the upcoming draft.



TRADING TACTICS

BEING A SNAKE OIL SALESMAN

Do Not: Try to get blood from a rock

Many coaches take an inordinate amount of effort to trade with, even if the trade involves secondary players. In most cases, this is due to the coach either overvaluing their players, undervaluing yours or due to the fear of the unknown.

We all make trades that eventually don't pan out. For an active trader, it is going to happen, get over it. But, as long as your league contains a number of willing coaches, there is no need to focus on those that are unwilling or unable. While you always want to give them an opportunity to make an offer, do not expect the zebra to change its stripes. Move along, nothing to see here.

Do: Establish allies, especially in the other division

If you have a divisional format for your league, do not underestimate the power of alliances against a common 'foe' (those usually being the divisional champion the year before).

By creating an air of teamwork towards a common enemy, you increase your chances of getting a deal done. Excessive enthusiasm and positive energy can go a long way in swaying the trade offer to your side. For example, in a trade scenario that you wish to move along with an inter-divisional coach, an overly cheerful phone call in which you state "Lets get this deal done, get them off the top of the standings, and we'll be meeting in the championship" can be all that is needed to secure the deal.

Your goal is to get final approval from the coach and get the deal to the commissioner for immediate approval. Do you care if you meet the other coach in the championship game next year? Of course not, but you are trying to increase your odds of being one of the participants.

It is always a good idea to trade outside your division whenever possible, unless you are certain that your team is getting the better end of the bargain. Making a divisional rival better via trade is never a recommended practice.



TRADING TACTICS

BEING A SNAKE OIL SALESMAN

Do Not: Burn bridges or sell-out

We have all had situations where information has been used against us. It happens in the NFL draft, and it happens in fantasy football drafts as well. It is always in your best interest to know who is going to be drafted ahead of you in the draft. It is also extremely helpful to know the players which coaches are targeting below you in the draft, though this information is usually difficult to get as coaches are very secretive about their draft selections, for obvious reasons. If you elect to share information with those above you, even if a coach has told you who he is taking, do so at your own risk. Even the slightest bit of logic as to your selection can make a coach change his mind. Ultimately, you become the loser in that situation. When establishing relationships with other coaches for the purpose of obtaining information, do not, do not, do not sell them out by sharing that info with coaches ahead of them in the draft.

As a successful snake-oil salesman, you do have to abide by some unwritten rules of engagement. Quite simply put, if you sell out a fellow coach that has shared information that benefits you, expect to never be trusted with information again. Or, if a coach below you has given you his direction based on your "selection," and you change direction and take their player, expect the same result. Coaches do not like to be burned and regardless of the reasoning, it won't float.

SUMMARY

As you can see, the seemingly simple task of completing a trade can be made very difficult. Know that none of this is required for working a deal. However, the name of the game is success over a long period of time. In order to be successful, you need to consistently get more than you give. Those coaches who pay special attention to the intricacies of psychology, communication and relationship building are the ones who will be able to stack the deck in their favor.

As one final reminder, always remember to downplay your trades and your role as a trader. While we all want to be successful traders, gaining that perception erodes your ability to continue engaging in successful trades. As your fellow coaches become familiar with your volume and success, the bar is raised. Do not under, any circumstances, allow your ego or joy from a successful trade to dictate your course of action in your rumor mill or distribution list to other coaches. Again, keep your yap shut and your enthusiasm to yourself.

Trade well.

TRADING TACTICS

BEING FUTURISTIC IN NATURE

It's important to use the future to your advantage. We've said many times that fantasy football is a little bit of math and a little bit of science. When looking at your team, there are three ways to use some math and science to get a step ahead. They are as follows:

- 1.) Avoid the big end of the two or three for one
- 2.) Use your roster limitations to your advantage
- 3.) Use generalized draft pick mindsets

Avoid the Big End of the Two or Three for one

This is one of the biggest areas of avoidance. Successful teams rarely sign off a two or three for one trade where they are getting multiple players in return. Some coaches will attempt to convince you their package of players is equal to or greater than the value you're giving up. While that may be true on paper, there are two things to consider.

- 1.) You're likely not going to play all the players you get in return regularly
- 2.) This doesn't take into consideration players you'll have to drop

In essence, every trade involving players is always a "2 for 2" or "3 for 3" when you consider your roster limitations. It may be great to acquire three players, but keep in mind you'll have to drop two players to make room...at the same time, the other coach gets to ACQUIRE two players off the wire for free, making it a "3 for 3." It's rare to see the recipient of multiple players make out better in this type of a deal. The only exception would be if you're getting back bona fide starters and #1 doesn't apply. Even then, you should prefer to get future commodities instead of players. See the next tip to understand why.

Use Your Roster Limitations to Your Advantage

This is one area we NEVER avoid when building or rebuilding a franchise!

In a dynasty league, you have roster limitations. It's a way of life you have to accept. However, most dynasty leagues don't have commodity restrictions. If you're forward thinking enough, you can strategically position yourself for the future well with this strategy. For example, I spend a lot of effort to acquire the 2nd and 3rd round picks in my league as part of bigger trades. These don't cost me any roster spots at the time of acquisition and I can always parlay them into better or future picks later if I choose not to use them. With no trades, every team would have a full roster and one pick for each round. If you use this wisely, you could have a full roster and massive picks for the future, setting your franchise up with a ton of flexibility. Many will say it poses a problem because you have to cut players

TRADING TACTICS

BEING FUTURISTIC IN NATURE

(continued from previous page)

when you draft, but if you plan properly, you can move excess players and/or trade those picks out into the future to acquire even more commodities. When used with tip #1, you can actually pull off a trade like this:

Player A
Player B

For

#1 in 2010
#1 in 2011
#2 in 2012

Take advantage of the roster limits to add two other prospects off the wire. For you, using the lack of a commodity restriction allows you to add two players to your roster as projects. This creates a trade where you not only get two #1s and a #2, but also two prospects for free. Knowledge of this basic fantasy math is essential for a rebuilding dynasty team.

Use Generalized Draft Pick Mindsets

If you're really good at team analysis, this can be a really good asset. If you're bad at it, avoid it like the plague. In many leagues, there are a group of coaches who view picks as equal by round. For example, some owners view a first round pick as something around #5, a second round pick as something around #15, etc. If you can uncover these owners, you can really use this to your advantage.

For example, if you believe your team will contend, another will not AND you're confident in your analysis, you can approach another owner with an offer of your first round pick for a solid player and their second round pick. Some owners will look at that as #5 for a player and #15 by using generalized draft pick mindsets. You know better. In fact, your expectation is this trade is something like pick #9 or #10 for a significant player asset and pick #11 or #12. This can be an easy way to get real value for perceived value. It can certainly be applied for #2s, #3s, etc.

Use this tip wisely, though. If you're in a league with some serious parity, I'd avoid it. While the difference in choices for a 10-team league could be as little as 1 (#10 vs. #11), it could be as great as 19 (#1 vs. #20) That's a huge swing, so you better be confident in your analysis of both squads. The more teams in your league, the more risk is associated as well.



TRADING TACTICS

THE ART OF THE DEAL

“It is a matter of life and death, a road to either safety or to ruin. Hence it is a subject to inquiry which can on no account be neglected” -Sun Tzu

For those of you not familiar with the infamous fifth century BC Chinese military strategist, Sun Tzu, we urge you to read the translated strategy and tactic treatise, *The Art of War*. Even today, this timeless piece is extremely relevant. While it has never been suggested, could it be that the great Sun Tzu was concerned with some other type of dynasty? We'll leave you to ponder the similarities and the potential of such a thought.

Whether conquering a continent or your league, research and prudent soldier (player) selections alone cannot be your only sources of strategic focus. You must also focus on the art of the deal. More simply put, you must master and practice the art of successful trading.

The key here is in understanding four very important elements of each trade:

1. What you have
2. What you want
3. Variables
4. Psychology

1) What you have – This is not a subjective assessment of the player(s) involved, but the “what-is” of the situation. Note that this does not mean that you have to publicly disclaim the what-is, but you do need to understand, objectively, what the strengths, weaknesses and tangibles are of the player(s) you are attempting to move are. Without this, you are leaving yourself open to being wooed, surprised or otherwise stricken with accepting out of emotion and not from a position of sound reason. Understand fully what the player offers YOU first, before engaging in any negotiations.

2) What you want – We don't know how many times we've come across coaches who are offering trades, but don't know what they are really looking for. I personally love this situation because it allows me to “sell” assets that I don't need for potentially whatever it is they are offering. These types of coaches are easy marks in my book. Obviously, the players being sold must be assets that you want, but in many cases you can use these players as the gateway to a bigger, more impactful, deal. In many cases, just the response and resulting dialog to a trade offer is enough to open the door well beyond what was desired in the first place by the offering coach. You must take off the blinders when being approached and not see just a single player in an offer, but an entire team of low hanging fruit. Once a coach is in a selling mood, he can be taken advantage of in many cases. Remember that “no” is the only answer that has no retort. Even then, it doesn't close the door to further discussions.

TRADING TACTICS

THE ART OF THE DEAL

3) Variables – These tiny, and sometimes not-so-tiny, tidbits of information are extremely important to understand. What is the situation of the other team? What does his depth chart look like? Is his team aging, young ... rebuilding? Are other coaches targeting the team in question already? Has he finished second in his division three years running? Every detail that you can uncover can be woven into an elaborate sales pitch that paints a favorable and convincing picture. These are the pawns in your game that will need to be managed to setup and ultimately close the deal.

4) Psychology – Arguably, this is THE most important factor. None of the other items in this list matter if you approach a fellow coach in a manner that doesn't setup the trade properly ahead of time, offends him or otherwise shuts him down before you have a chance to get to the details. You cannot use a one style fits all mentality when designing a trade. Is the other coach one that will buckle under pressure and give you an "ok, let's do it"? Is he one that, when pressured, defaults to "no"? Is he one that if given time to sleep on it, will always back out the next morning? Is he the type that is susceptible to subjective phrases about value ... or how his team is "much better" after the deal? Understanding the psychological behaviors of your trading partner is an absolute must in getting a trade done quickly and efficiently.

By doing a little bit of homework on these four items before approaching a fellow coach, you will significantly increase your chances of closing the deal and making your team better.

"Fair" does not mean "equal."

Whether you have a day job, follow politics or simply have children, something that you must realize is that being fair does not necessarily mean being equal. Better put, in *The Art of the Deal*, nowhere does it mandate that a trade needs to be equal for it to be proposed or accepted. In fact, we offer to you that if you are looking for equality before accepting or proposing possible trades, you are doing yourself a disservice. Let us be much more explicit by giving you these two rules that you must internally believe:

- 1) If you are an offering coach, it is NOT your responsibility to be concerned with equality of a deal
- 2) If you are a receiving coach, it is NOT your responsibility to give back equal value in any deal

Notice we used the term "internally believe?" We say this because to verbally express this prior to any communication(s) will only serve to shut down discussion or otherwise damage the potential trade relationship going forward. Understanding these two rules are tenets of successful (not in getting deals done, but deals benefitting your team) trading is all that is required ... verbalizing them is something that is needed.



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THE ART OF THE DEAL

Let's talk a little bit about value. Every coach will have their own valuation system. Some will place more value on position, some may place more value on wide receivers in a PPR system, many prefer age over production while others may only look at fantasy points per game (fppg). Whatever the metric, value is a subjective argument as it relates to equality. If you only view value from a pure fppg perspective, that is one way to establish equality but it is also unrealistic as it is far too one dimensional.

Another very important fact about value is that the term immediately takes on another dimension when a player is applied to a different roster. A 13 fppg receiver on a roster full of good receivers will not nearly hold the same value as that same player on WR-needy team. Understanding the specifics of the team in trade with you is vital. That same 13 ppg WR could be highly valued, to a degree much greater than his positional ranking, to that same needy team ... and therefore will command more value in return. Making these teams your target is an exceptional way to trade off your depth for younger players, draft picks or a combination of both.

When looking at, and accepting, the two tenets above, you are ready to engage another coach. Once you have identified what you are looking for and what you are willing to move to get it, it's time to choose, in order, your targets. Your first step is to assess the strength and position of your target's team and coach. Where is he weak? Is he competitive within his division? Is he rebuilding or trying to get over the top? This assessment should ultimately yield your approach to him. There are a thousand ways to open a dialog for a trade ... but your attitude can make all the difference.

If you've done a thorough assessment of his team, and yours, you understand what dry powder you have available to get a deal done. By staying positive, complimentary and through using reinforcing statements such as "let's help each other" or "I'd like to see you win your division" may sound cliché but are statements the opposing coach can buy into and will keep the lines of communication open. Personally, we don't much care for deals where we're giving up the same fppg as I am receiving. Unless your team is an opposite match of my trade partner in areas of need, there just isn't enough catalyst for a trade in most situations.

We like to find true opportunities in teams that are loaded in a particular area of need for my team. Note that this isn't always a starting roster need, it could just as easily be for purposes of pairing with other players/positions to later trade. Regardless, coaches that have substantial depth, young performing talent or have other areas of need are more likely to trade for less in return due to the fact that the player may never see their starting lineup. Additionally, if the team isn't competitive but has an aging stud, there exists enormous potential to land this play due to the fact that he will "not be in the league by the time you're competitive. This trade helps you." Do not be afraid to make statements like that. Just like it isn't your responsibility to give up equal value, as a subjective statement, you don't have to be correct when you say it ... you just have to be convincing, but tread lightly.

TRADING TACTICS

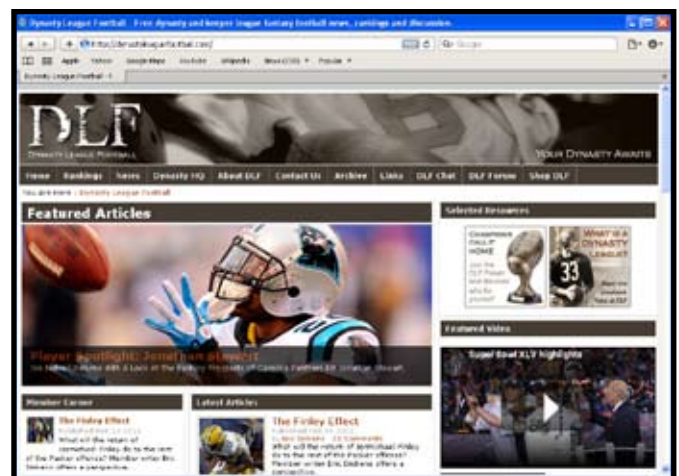
THE ART OF THE DEAL

We firmly believe that you do not want to be overly aggressive with your value assessments or statements. Yes, you want to be convincing and, yes, you want to maintain a positive approach in your dealings, but avoid belittling a coach, his team or otherwise coming off as superior. To do so is a no-win situation. You must keep your assessments and statements positive and reassert the value that the trade has for HIS team.

If you are being approached for trade, much of the same preliminary due diligence must be performed. With any luck, you already know everything important about the offering coach's team. In most situations, this is the ideal scenario in that when another team comes calling, you are in a position of strength. This is why it is extremely important that when you are the offering coach, that you enter into negotiations in a very low-key and neutral way ... in order to retain the strength; you're not an offering coach, you're a strategist working for the benefit of both teams.

Near the top of your to-do list when approached, is to immediately assess the value of the trade for the offering coach in order to determine his desire for the deal. Your goal, just like at any other time, is to give up as little as possible while returning greater value (to you). From this point, a trade may take only moments or days. And unlike when you are the offering coach, this is the only situation where you can carefully insert a statement such as "if you want him you're going to need to make it worthwhile for me". This is just your way of saying "you've come to me for this trade and I expect greater value in return" or "I'm not interested in an equal trade solely to benefit you". Realize that in most situations, these previous two statements can be often implied so limited use is suggested, lest you come off as caustic and unapproachable, or worse, a coach that constantly overvalues his players.

To summarize, your goal in either situation, buyer or seller, is to create an environment and/or setting of team-work and success in the trade discussion. The work involved up to this point can be significant in both time and results. Understand the differences between "fair" and "equal" and use them to your advantage to complete a transaction. We all like to be the benefactor of a great trade, but your approach before and your actions following the trade will largely determine whether your level of success and possible future transactions.





TRADING TACTICS

LEAGUE POWER RANKING

There are as many styles and strategies to building a successful dynasty team as there are players in the NFL. Finding a style that YOU are comfortable with is key to building a successful approach over the long term.

Regardless of which tactics you use and to what degree you use them, trading must be near the top of your list if you are to maximize your efforts. Without successful trading, a coach is relegated to bettering his or her team only through either the rookie draft or via your league's waiver wire system. Both these strategies are important on their own, but the rookie draft carries a high bust rate and you will only be one of many combing your waiver wire for talent. Successful trading, on the other hand, is the primary method towards addressing specifically identified needs of your team. The beauty about trading is that it doesn't require the risks attached with the rookie draft (unless a draft pick is what you are seeking) or the mosh-pit that is your free agent pool.

In this exercise, we are focusing on identifying teams that are likely to have far better draft picks NEXT year than they did this year due to any number of reasons that we will discuss later.

My favorite part of trading has always been the psychological component required to do it well and pull off deals that benefit my team. There isn't just one approach that works, you must be a chameleon – being what the other coach needs in order to get a deal through. Is your approach one of a used car salesman, the unassuming coach with a soft-sell approach or perhaps the stats-driven logic nut? The best traders that I've seen use whatever is needed at the time to get a trade through. If you aren't able to change your style or tactics to fit the situation at hand, you will remain one dimensional and your results will suffer.

Let's talk about your league power ranking.

Some sites actually have a power ranking while others simply rely on a first-to-last approach toward determining who the best and worst teams are, respectively. But what I'm talking about here is nothing formal that you need be concerned with. In the minds of most fantasy coaches, their teams are better-off than their most recent record or roster would suggest, regardless of whether this is true or not. Within this belief is an opportunity that too few other coaches take advantage of, the ability to specifically target teams that will likely be holding very high draft picks at the end of the following year.

Contending or deep teams in the dynasty format are usually there for a reason, their owners do the work necessary to objectively assess and procure talent, are always monitoring their depth chart, do their homework on players to maximize draft pick success and are effective traders. Let me also state that one of the most important attributes to being a successful dynasty coach is having a healthy level of paranoia. I don't know many fantasy champions that aren't and it's the paranoia that is the gateway to the other "work" previously noted. Paranoia is an amazingly motivating feeling.

TRADING TACTICS

LEAGUE POWER RANKING

As it relates to the power ranking in your league, it's imperative that you understand the haves and the have-nots at the end of each year. Ignore the conjecture and posturing about luck, the fantasy gods or under-performance. See instead, age, injury and the team dynamic. We call this looking at the "what is." Your goal here is to find the team that finished higher than they should have or a team whose future prospects are far more dire than their record suggests due to aging players, possible retirement or other team dynamic. Specifically identify teams that have not identified or addressed depth issues such that a single key injury would render them largely uncompetitive.

There are, quite honestly, a vast number of variables in the equation that you can use towards ascertaining next year's final standings and draft order. Sure, it's a lot of logical guess work, but the alternative is to do nothing at all and you'll be surprised at your ability to forecast future standings when you put the work in. When you are moving for a future second round selection, you should immediately know whether that selection is likely to be 18-20 (ten team league) or 12-14. If you have your eye on a would-be rookie in next year's draft, your goal is to target a team that finished just out of the playoffs or as the lowest seed in the playoffs that is likely to take a significant drop next year. Here are just some of the questions to ask yourself when surveying your league towards identifying these teams:

- Is there a team that won low-scoring affairs because of "off" weeks by stronger opponents?
- Is there a team that benefited from players that aren't likely to reproduce last year's results?
- Is there a team that was fortunate and had no injuries and has less than ideal depth?
- Is there a team that defied all logic in multiple weeks in winning their games?
- Is there a team that is relying on aging veterans that are at the end of their road?

Once you've done the work, you now break out your crystal ball towards building next year's finish order. Look for the biggest disparity between last year's finish and next year's finish. This team is your target for draft pick acquisition. Remember, it's not just about the first round in the rookie draft, either.

One last piece of advice when it comes to actively discussing and bartering with your targeted coach. Use the "what is" of LAST year as your basis for the trade. This simply means that you are free to ignore all the reasons that you have come up with for targeting the coach in the first place and, instead, concentrate on all the reasons why this coach is going to repeat or even exceed his last year's performance again next year. Your goal in these discussions is to minimize the value of the draft pick that you are seeking. You want your target coach to believe he has one hand on the league trophy next year and that his picks aren't nearly as valuable as you believe they are. Of course, you know different. If this all seems dirty and underhanded, it's not. It's the "what is" of the situation and trading in general. The quicker you can come to grips with it, the the quicker you'll have a grip on the league trophy.



TRADING TACTICS

MASS TRADE OFFERS

When you first start playing in dynasty leagues, you may have loved the feeling of negotiating a trade, but found it hard to find a partner. Part of the problem may not be understanding player values in dynasty, but another part of the problem may be playing it safe too often. It's easy to sit back and wait for trades to come to you, or maybe send out an offer or two hoping someone will bite. You may even go out of your way to make a post to your league's trade block, but that's often not enough.

When you really want to move a player, it's time to start sending out offers in bulk. Everyone has their players they want to target (if you're like us, there are dozens of them) and you can always find multiple players in the same tier you wish you could target. The good thing is you can target as many of them as you want while shopping guys you want to move. Instead of sitting around waiting for something to happen, begin sending out as many offers at once as you're comfortable with.

This strategy works on multiple fronts. By sending out trade offers to multiple teams in your league, everyone knows who you're looking to move, and you're much more likely to get someone to pull the trigger on a trade or to receive a counter that opens the door to negotiations. You'll be surprised how much easier it is to find trade partners if everyone knows what you're seeking from them in exchange for your players.

In fantasy football, just like anything else, most owners want to achieve as much success as possible with the least amount of work needed. While you may never receive an offer if you say you're looking to trade a top running back for a top receiver in a package, sending offers to all the teams with comparable wide receivers you're looking for takes most of the work out of your trading partner's hands, often leading to swift negotiations.

Sending out trade offers in mass will result in many more rejections than accepted trades, but this strategy leads to progress much quicker than targeting one or two teams and trying to work something out. Instead of an email or two, if you're in a 12-team league, send hard trade offers to 6-8 teams.

It's up to you what sort of trade offers you send. You can send out the fairest offer possible on your first attempt, or leave yourself a little wiggle room to make a compromise. Both ways have been tried, and leave yourself just a little room to pull back if an offer is rejected. If you send out your absolute best offer and the other owner comes back to negotiate, it can feel like pulling hairs to try to work something out.



TRADING TACTICS

MASS TRADE OFFERS

(continued from the previous page)

If there's a 4th round rookie pick coming back to you that you just threw into your original offer, you don't even have to hesitate in asking the other owner, "Would it make any difference if I took that 4th round pick out of the offer?" To the other owner it looks like you're doing a little to level with them, which you are. What they don't know is you weren't necessarily expecting them to pull the trigger on the deal in the first place. You shouldn't expect to make a trade on the first round of offers. Things usually heat up after your offer is rejected.

When an owner rejects your offer, send them a short email saying you're interested in working something out if they are, and are willing to negotiate if you can get a little insight into what they're looking for. Most owners will reply to your emails, and your follow-up is a sign that you're willing to work with them to make a trade that benefits their team.

This follow-up email often leads to nice dialogue about your offer, and can pave the road to a trade. If the other owner still isn't open to a trade, that's okay, too. Sending follow-up emails will help improve your relationships with other owners in the league, leading to further negotiations down the road. Always remember that just because you didn't make the deal today doesn't mean it won't lead anywhere in the future. A good impression can go a long way.

If an owner makes it known they're not interested in any sort of package involving those players, just cross them off the list of teams you've targeted, but don't stop making offers until you've crossed all possible partners off the list. With a little work, you shouldn't have trouble finding a partner in your league. It only takes 5-10 minutes to pump out quite a few offers, and then you can sit and wait for the rejections/accepted trades to come back to you before taking your next steps.

Sending out mass trade offers can speed up a rebuild quickly. Instead of planning the traditional "fire sale" that many owners attempt, you'll find yourself flipping players for others, and increasing the value on your team. Always remember the goal is to improve the value of your team. If you manage to swap a player for another with better value, don't be afraid to pull the trigger just because you don't like the player. Instead, make the trade and start all over, sending out multiple offers and flipping the player you received for one that you are higher on.

Everyone should have some sort of method they use for making dynasty trades. Without a plan, you'll have trouble making anything happen, but if you have an attack plan it'll be easier for you to make the deals you're looking for. All you need is a list of the teams in your league and a commitment to putting in the work needed to get a deal done. As long as you can handle the multiple rejections and be devoted to sending follow-up emails, you'll see an increase in the number of successful trades you make.



TRADING TACTICS

TRADE AND CONSOLIDATE

So, you hit the fantasy wall. Fantasy playoffs are over and it's time for the off-season. You're thinking that there's not much action to expect over the next few months leading up to the draft. Bummed? Well, you shouldn't be because that's the wrong mentality, my friend, especially if you want a successful dynasty team.

This is the time of the year where your dynasty team is made. There are certain things that will happen throughout the playoffs, as well up until the draft where you can take advantage of favorable value via trades and the waiver wire. Always try to do two things:

- 1) Trade; and
- 2) Consolidate

Trade

Having a consistent strong and competitive dynasty team is all about value plays. Each of us has the opportunity to take some serious advantage of NFL players whose value balloon in the offseason due to fluff pieces or solid statistical performances throughout the playoffs. You must take advantage and sell high.

Now, clearly that's easier than it sounds because the ideal move in this hobby (and what many of us try to do) is to sell at the peak and buy at the trough. However, too many of us fall in love with players, won't budge and don't selling high. There's always that second guess moment of, "I think this guy is at his peak value, but what if I sell now and he continues to produce?" You can't let that moment keep you from obtaining value. More likely than not, the guy will produce and end up rotting away on your roster after a few solid seasons and you'll have nothing to show for it.

We see too many dominant teams inactive in the offseason year after year and we routinely find them falling behind until one day they're middle of the pack with little trade value on their team and they go through a long struggle for a few seasons in an effort to rebuild. You've got to make the call to deal a high value player who may be a solid contributor to your team the following season or make the decision to sell a player who is losing value, even though you don't want to sell short. Sell him to get a lower valued guy who you think is undervalued plus a little bit more value in a prospect or rookie picks. There are very few players who are going to produce at a peak level for a number of years and carry your team to a championship and we've got to understand that to be successful.



TRADING TACTICS

TRADE AND CONSOLIDATE

Rarely is it wise to keep your team consistent, regardless of how well you did in the previous season. You should typically find one or two core players or cornerstone guys to center your squad around. Even if you win the championship in a league, you should still be wheeling and dealing in the offseason by trading players, even if they helped you win the trophy. We generally hold the view that it's highly unlikely that the same team that brought you to the championship will help you get there again.

You must continuously realign your team otherwise it goes stale, loses value and your forced into rebuild mode after a few seasons. Some may say that this may prevent you from winning a championship or that you're a trade addict, but look at it as an opportunity to annually make the playoffs and get a shot at the crown on an annual basis. Otherwise you're playing for a few years and that's not a solid dynasty game plan.

Consolidate

This goes right along with one of the tips you'll find in this Play Book - avoid the big end of the "2 for 1" or "3 for 1" trade, but this is from the opposite end of the trade.

This goes along with trading (strategy #1), but it's a different philosophy as compared to value plays since you may need to sacrifice a little bit more value to trade up a tier. What you do is package two or three players who are decent prospects or productive players and pair them with a higher tier player to trade up in value. You then grab your favorite lower tier rookie or sleeper off the waiver wire and sit him on your bench. This now upgrades your lineup and adds some potential to the team. Now some guys may knock this philosophy, but quite a number of these "long-shots" will eventually hold solid value in the dynasty format. It seems like every year there's a player or two that steps up and becomes a fantasy starter, so it's wise always try to trade up in value and get long-shots on my roster.

One side note is that many owners are reluctant to give up the best player in the deal, so often you need to overpay as added incentive to make the trade.

Right now in your league, there are players on the waiver wire that will eventually become fantasy starters. You hear some owners saying, "You win championships on the waiver wire," and this is how you do it. You need to open roster spots while upgrading your lineup. Roster flexibility is key in dynasty leagues.

So, trade and consolidate, rinse and repeat.

TEAM MANAGEMENT

DO THE MATH

Math. Some of us at DLF simply hate it. We really do.

Ken Kelly used to sit in his High School and College classes and think, “When am I ever going to use this?” His teachers used to feed him a line about it being useful if he was ever going to be an astronaut or a carpenter. They had never seen him attempt to build a box or fly, however. Ironically, there is a use for math in our adult life. Math can be used as an incredibly valuable research and planning tool for fantasy football, especially in dynasty leagues. This section will show you one way it can be used to diminish personal opinions and create a clear, strategic trading advantage.

You should always use the offseason to be evaluating your team and determining if you have a realistic chance at contending for this year’s Dynasty League Championship. This is the most important decision you may have all season, and it’s only Summer.

Take a good look at your team, the competition, and your schedule. Clearly define your goal for the year. If you can’t win, you’re rebuilding. We hate to tell you this, but you HAVE to or you will be stuck in the land of 8-8 for all eternity. Trust us, we’ve seen it happen.

Once that choice is made, you have to decide who to acquire or who to look to unload now or in the not too distant future (your league’s trading deadline). There are essentially three groups of players in a dynasty league:

- 1.) Players who have much more value THIS year than they do in the future
- 2.) Players whose value is essentially flat, in relation to dynasty value vs. re-draft league value
- 3.) Players who have much more value IN THE FUTURE than they do this upcoming season

So, you certainly have some good guesses as to who fit in each category, however, you need to back up your hypothesis. Break out your friends known as the Slide Rule and the Calculator to come up with an unbiased formula. Take the “Dynasty Rankings” you have compiled from a mix of fantasy football experts and sites across the globe or simply use ours, and compare them to the “Redraft” or “Yearly” rankings from sites. From that, it will be very clear to define who does, in reality fit within each group.



TEAM MANAGEMENT

DO THE MATH

GROUP ONE - THE ONE YEAR WONDERS

These players have a significantly higher value this upcoming season in relation to their dynasty status. This means one of two things, depending on what type of team you have.

Dynasty Contenders – Target these players via trade. You likely won't have to give up nearly as much value for similar players of the same ability. Getting these players can ensure you maximize your team's ability this season in your effort to win or repeat. There is one BIG caveat, though. You can't, under any circumstances, trade what you consider to be core players or draft choices to acquire them. If you do, you're simply looking at winning one single championship and not building towards a true dynasty.

Non-Dynasty Contenders – You must rid yourself of players like these if you're not a contending team. While the value you can get for them may not be seen for a few years, these players have a chance of simply retiring off your roster or having little to no value with you getting nothing in return. That's a really bad habit to get into, especially if you're a non-contender. By shipping these players away, you can get some significant future value, while likely improving your draft status for next year.

Create a target list of prime candidates and react accordingly - these are players with a redraft value at least 10 spots higher than their dynasty value.

GROUP TWO - WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET

These players have a relatively flat value when you compare their upcoming season in relation to their dynasty status. They have the best chance of being stable over a lengthy period. If you want to create a safe team, these are guys to get. Just remember, there's a relatively low risk of short-term diminishment (barring injury), but the same low chance of significant improvement.

Dynasty Contenders and Non-Contenders – It's going to be a difficult task to attempt to convince other teams that these players have either diminishing or rising values. This list is going to be self-explanatory when you compile it, but you must do the work to prove who these players are year after year.



TEAM MANAGEMENT

DO THE MATH

THE DIAPER DANDIES

These players have a significantly higher value in relation to their dynasty status compared to this upcoming season. This also means one of two things, depending on what type of team you have.

Dynasty Contenders – These could be pawns for you to move. Non-contending teams typically look for these types of players when they are in rebuilding mode. Sending these players away can ensure you maximize your team’s ability this season in your effort to win or repeat. There is the same BIG caveat, though. You can’t, under any circumstances, trade what you consider to be future core players or draft choices to acquire them. If you do, you’re simply looking at winning one single championship and not building towards a true dynasty.

Non-Dynasty Contenders – These are players you want if you’re not a contending team. These players typically aren’t helping the contenders and you could create a “win-win” situation by sending away a veteran (like one on our ONE YEAR WONDERS list) in exchange for some youth. While the value of these players may not be seen for a few years, you eliminate the chance of veterans simply retiring off your roster or having little to no value with you getting nothing in return. By acquiring players like these, you can get some significant future value, while likely improving your draft status for next year.

For the sake of stating the obvious, leave the rookies off this list. These players certainly have a higher dynasty ceiling than a yearly rating. Make a prime list of non-rookies (veteran players with a dynasty value at least 10 spots higher than their yearly or redraft value) and respond accordingly.

SUMMARY

In closing, I hate math. I really do. However, doing research like this helps me in making sound decisions based on the long-term health of my team. If you look at your team and can’t clearly define yourself as a contender or non-contender, you’re probably not doing a good enough job of creating a strategy. Pick a direction, then use math as your unbiased weapon.

TEAM MANAGEMENT

REBUILDING A ROSTER

We at DLF are always a sucker for a challenge. Many of us are in a few different leagues out there personally, but not too many.

For those of you who know us or have contacted us through this site, you know that we take Dynasty Leagues (and Fantasy Football in general) very seriously. We never get into a league just for fun. If we decide to enter, we're in it 100% and you should be, too. As a Dynasty League Commissioner, you should expect that from all your participants.

Inevitably, you're going to find yourself taking over a team at some point and it's easy to just start making trades blindly, but there are some simple rules you need to follow to be successful.

Step #1 – Evaluate your rules

After you've dedicated yourself to the process, you need to understand the rules of your existing league. Do you understand the playoff system? The waiver system? The player pool? The starting requirements? The previous year's scoring leaders? You get the idea.

Step #2 – Evaluate your roster

This is extremely important. You have to really understand what you have before deciding what you want. Take a look at your roster, as well as the others in the league. Are you in a position of power? Should you be rebuilding? What players fit in the categories we've described in this play book?

Step #3 – Make your goal and complete your trades

This is where the bulk of your work needs to come in. When you're a new owner, be prepared to get multiple offers right off the bat from owners attempting to see if you know what you're doing. Make sure you respond to them COURTEOUSLY (remember the snake oil, people). Even though they may be trying to rip you off, don't burn a bridge.

Creating a goal seems obvious, but it's shocking how often it's not taken under consideration. Every move you make should be part of a long list of action items that get you to your long term goal. Deviation from this plan could be a disaster.

Step #4 – Re-evaluate your roster

Start back at step #2 every chance you get. Dynasty leagues never end, so you shouldn't, either. Reshaping a roster takes a lot of work, but it's also a lot of fun.

TEAM MANAGEMENT

RISK TOLERANCE AND THE RULE OF 1.5

char•ac•ter [kar-ik-ter]

–noun

1. *The aggregate of features and traits that form the individual nature of some person*
2. *One such feature or trait; characteristic.*
3. *Moral or ethical quality: a man of fine, honorable character.*
4. *Qualities of honesty, courage, or the like; integrity: It takes character to face up to a bully.*

There are many things you can measure with athletes. The scouting combine, along some simple statistical analysis of current players show us that every year. You can easily get a 40 time, a broad jump distance, the number of catches/carries or the number of TDs scored for someone pretty easily. However, that's not the only thing needed to accurately rank a player. Character is a big factor you need to use when building a team at the dynasty level. It's one of the biggest factors to use when evaluating players and prospects. This article is designed to give you an idea of just how important character should be to you and also give you a simple rule of thumb on how to use character as an evaluation tool.

First, let's start with the importance of character. To many, this is answered on an individual basis with one single question:

How important is it to you to have players with perceived high moral standards?

The answer to this is going to be different for everyone. You're a premium content subscriber, so you're obviously a die-hard dynasty league player. When a player you own goes haywire and gets in trouble with the law, it's easy to take it personally. You may be in the minority on that one, but spending so much time on this, then waking up to see strategic advantages you've worked hard to create disappear in one night with a drug charge, a dog killing spree or a pistol going off in someone's sweat pants is pretty frustrating. It could rip your guts out to see players you've invested so much time and effort in go in the tank. Some would rather lose with good guys than win with the Michael Vicks of the world. Some have no fun on Sundays rooting for guys who are looked upon as "bad apples" as well. It just doesn't feel right to some. Many stay pretty far away from these guys just to ensure (as much as they can) so you won't have any surprises.

If you don't feel a personal connection to your players and are only in it for financial gain or the thrill of victory, this likely doesn't come into play as much. It's not bad, either. In the end, FFB and especially Dynasty leagues are about competitive advantages and strategic maneuvering. If you can remove human emotion, it's likely a tool you can use to your advantage. However, you still need to be very smart about how much risk you take on.



TEAM MANAGEMENT

RISK TOLERANCE AND THE RULE OF 1.5

Before we introduce our own character risk-based ranking formula, let's assume two things. One, that you don't completely remove these players from your list and don't have a deep emotional connection to them. Two, you've categorized your team effectively. It's VERY important to categorize your team. There are two categories – the “ins” and the “outs.” The “ins” are the teams who are competitive now and trying to win a title this season or next. The “outs” are the ones who aren't. The “ins” are more likely to take on more risk than the “outs.” As one general rule, we suggest never having more than 1/10th of your roster filled with red flags.

The rule of thumb we use is something we call “the rule of 1.5.” Here's how it works:

First, you take your existing positional dynasty rankings and number each player from #1 and beyond. These rankings need to be unbiased and as complete and current as possible. If you don't have these made, shame has come down on you from us. You should ALWAYS have this ready to use for trades and evaluations. Do that, then come back and read the rest of this play book.

For players you mark with character concerns, take your existing positional ranking and multiply them by 1.5. For example, if I have Brandon Marshall at #5, you use the formula and multiply 5×1.5 for a total of 7.5. Marshall is now somewhere between #7 and #8 on my WR list. If you could trade him straight up for a player at #7 or #8, you do it.

From your list, it's up to you on who you want to indicate as “character concern.” There are lots of different things to factor in when making that decision. At times, we've even tiered my severity of rankings punishment based on the amount of risk. For example, you might use “2” as the multiplier on a player because of the criminal nature of his offenses. You could also likely use “1.25” on a player with simple maturity issues. How you use it is up to you, but the idea is that you use it in some way, shape or form. The simple “rule of 1.5” is a great start for a rookie coach.

In addition, the higher the ranking, the more extreme the difference is between players, thus a smaller gap in ranking number. The difference between #1 and #10 is big. The difference between #20 and #20 isn't quite as big. If you feel that your team isn't deep enough to handle suspensions, steer clear. This is also especially important if you're a team considered one of the “outs.” If that fits, you likely don't have enough in the cupboard to survive a player going in the tank. Move quickly BEFORE a pattern of behavior emerges. Failure to accurately account in some way for character can be a death sentence for your team.

Character is one of the biggest factors to use when evaluating players. Ask yourself the simple question of, “How important is it to me have players with perceived high moral standards?” Evaluate your team effectively and use the “rule of 1.5” as a general measuring stick, you'll find success in coming up with an accurate risk tolerance formula.



TEAM MANAGEMENT

DLF'S SEVEN STEP PROGRAM

Much of this play book is pretty heavy with content and thought provoking material. Let's end it with a little fun. After all, dynasty leagues are meant to be just that.

You're going to hit other sites to see their tips for fantasy success every season and frankly, they're ridiculous. Anyone who has read this far in the play book is smart enough to know their league's rules, roster requirements, and waiver systems. If you're just now finding that out, you're already behind the eight ball.

At DLF, we cater to the professional fantasy football player. After all, dynasty leagues are simply not for the faint of heart. To truly enjoy any fantasy season, there are seven things you must do in order to set yourself up for success.

1. Make Sure Everything in Your Freezer is Buffalo Flavored

Food is a huge part of Fantasy Football Sundays across the land. Don't be the guy who opens their freezer to find veggie nuggets and tofu. Your friends will say it's no problem and eat whatever you have. After they drink their Diet Tab and Gardenburger brand hot dogs, they'll say they're happy. Inside, they'll hate you. Beef, chicken, ice cream, whatever. Everything just needs to be buffalo flavored.

2. Place a Desperation Call to your Satellite or Cable Provider

If you have Sunday Ticket or Red Zone, you have to make this call. You tell them it's too expensive to afford this year and you want out of it because of the tough economic times.

They may offer you a discounted rate for the season. They may not.

Either way, you treat it like a kidnapping. There's no price you won't pay. In fact, if you place this call and they tell you they made a billing mistake and that it's actually more, you pay it.

In the end, they have your Son. Pay the ransom.

Note: These rules do not apply in actual kidnappings. I think you pretty much do what the FBI tells you in these situations. If someone from your provider has actually kidnapped your child, there's probably some type of middle ground. Not sure on that one.

TEAM MANAGEMENT

DLF'S SEVEN STEP PROGRAM

3. Complete Your "HoneyDo" list*

* = If you are not married, you can skip to #5.

This is as basic as it gets.

You make sure to get a list of all the things your Wife needs done before Fall and you do them all in the Summer. This may create a situation where you don't sleep for two weeks, but it could free up your Sundays. The list itself is inconsequential. Change light bulbs, sweep porches, build a new garage, create a new Government in Iraq. Whatever. Do it all. Now.

4. Buy the Pets

If one of the things on that "HoneyDo" list is breaking down and getting pets for your kids, just do it. My suggestion would be to get two puppies. You should name one "Red Zone" and the other "Andrew Siciliano." The names are NOT a requirement to fulfill this step, however.

5. Manage your Dating Life

If you're not married and have a steady girlfriend, you have to manage things the right way.

First, you avoid Sunday afternoon dates. They're obviously a bad idea. However, if your significant other knows how much you love fantasy football, *there's a way to earn some points here.*

It involves a lot of Mountain Dew, an Iphone and a carefully planned strategy.

My suggestion is to choose two or three Sundays and offer to go shopping with your girlfriend. She'll be amazed at your sacrifice, but won't realize what's really going on.

You begin drinking Mountain Dew around 12PM EDT. You MUST make sure she sees you doing this. I prefer the 24 ounce bottle, but anything will do.

At 12:50 EDT, you will have to go the bathroom. She'll obviously understand since she saw you working that Mountain Dew.

You enter the bathroom with 10 minutes to set your final lineup. You do it on your Iphone and get out of there.

TEAM MANAGEMENT

DLF'S SEVEN STEP PROGRAM

(continued from previous page)

Do NOT forget to actually go to the bathroom, though. That's a rookie mistake.

Continue this process throughout the day, making sure you're in the bathroom or a dressing room at 3:50 EDT as well to make any afternoon lineup adjustments. You should also encourage to have her shop away from you from time to time while you "rest" on the bench. This will give you the ability to check scores while she's gone. It's a sound strategy that allows you to be the nice guy, but still not be disconnected.

If you're married, forget about it. You DO NOT try this. Bad things will happen to you. Terrible, horrible and unspeakable things - wives are too savvy to fall for it.

6. Calculate Your Sick Days

Sick days are seldom used, yet they're incredibly valuable. We're not talking about work here, either. You should factor at least three sick days for the season. These are the Sundays where you wake up feeling terrible and have to spend the entire day on the couch.

Watch Ferris Bueller for sound strategies to fake the illness.

This should get you three free Sundays throughout the year. Don't get greedy, though. Anything after three will make your family very suspicious. You must also throw in a random Wednesday cold and a Saturday and Sunday flu combination day in there to throw off the scent of anyone who may be suspicious of your actions.

7. Check your Health

Early September is always a good time for a health screening. Get your cholesterol checked for peace of mind. Consider this a time to stop smoking as well. Nobody wants to die, especially during fantasy football season. You may have a will, but you likely don't have someone in place to manage your team - that may be the biggest tragedy of all. One caveat, though. If you currently have Tim Tebow as your No. 1 quarterback, this is not the right time to stop smoking. In fact, pick up the habit.

Many sites out there will give you 1,000 tips for dummies on how to run your team. If you're here at DLF, you already know. We provide you with the good stuff. Consider this your seven step survival guide to successful dynasty league enjoyment.

DLF

DYNASTY LEAGUE FOOTBALL