Divided loyalty? An analysis of fantasy football involvement and fan loyalty to individual National Football League (NFL) teams.

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Fantasy football participation is an extremely-popular, yet unique online activity that combines traditional sport fandom with interactive components to enhance a fan’s overall sport experience. The player-specific concentration of the game, however, has the potential to alter traditional team-focused loyalties that have driven sport consumer behavior inquiry for decades. Due to this intriguing circumstance, this study investigated the relationship between fantasy football involvement and traditional NFL fan loyalty. Also, given the varying levels of fantasy participation, this study examined factors that predict differing levels of involvement among fantasy owners. The results suggest a positive relationship between involvement and attitudinal loyalty and a nonstandard relationship between a highly-involved fantasy football participant’s attitudes and behaviors, especially with regard to team loyalty. Discussed are the theoretical repercussions of this conceptual disconnect, the potential for future research, and practical implications for the future marketing of individual teams, leagues, and fantasy-related applications.

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