Is fantasy trumping reality? The redefined National Football League experience of novice fantasy football participants

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Understanding a mediated sport consumer’s decision making process within today’s highly-cluttered sport marketplace has become a fundamental requirement for marketers and managers. One growing form of sport consumption is fantasy sports participation, and the activity has emerged as a captivating context for sport consumer inquiry due to the population’s avid, yet atypical consumption behavior (Lomax, 2006). In 2010, researchers Drayer, Shapiro, Dwyer, Morse, and White (2010) proposed a conceptual model for the relationship between fantasy football participation and NFL consumption. The purpose of the current chapter was to extend Drayer et al.’s conceptual framework by more acutely exploring the relationship between novice fantasy football participants’ attitudes and behaviors with respect to televised NFL games. Nineteen novice fantasy football participants were qualitatively investigated through interviews and journaling over a six-week span of three NFL seasons. Six themes emerged from the data that appear to both confirm and add to the framework developed by Drayer et al. In general, the participants indicated several new attitudes gained through the activity and detailed the impact it had on their perception of the NFL and their NFL viewership.

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