Fantasy Sports and Where to Play Them?

- Vaastav
What are Fantasy Sports?

- Participants assemble imaginary or virtual teams of real players of a professional sport.
- These teams compete based on the statistical performance of those players' in actual games.
- Historically, the commissioner was responsible for organizing the league and doing the scoring. Now it's automated.
Real Sports ft. Fantasy
Where to play Fantasy Sports?

- Internet, Duh.
- Most Soccer leagues have their own Fantasy League Websites
  - Fantasy Bundesliga (German League)
  - Fantasy Premier League (English League)
  - Fantasy MLS (MLS)
  - Fantasy Champions League (UCL)
- 2 main websites for American Leagues
  - Yahoo Sports
  - ESPN
Fantasy Sports Popularity

- 2,608,634 in 12/13
- 3,218,998 in 13/14
- 3,502,998 in 14/15
- 3,734,001 in 15/16
- 4,503,345 in 16/17
- 5,190,135 in 17/18
- 6,324,237 in 18/19
- 6,862,948 in 19/20
Fantasy Sports Structure - Budget Style

- Typically, participants select a squad within a price budget
  - Better players have higher prices
- Restrictions on representation from a single team
  - You can only select x number of players from any given team
- Scoring based on player performances
  - Good things (like scoring a goal, scoring a TD) results in players getting points
  - Bad things (Red Card, Fumble) results in players losing points
  - Scoring rules vary from sport to sport, league to league
- Participants compete in leagues
  - Public Leagues - Compete against the world.
  - Private Leagues - Compete against your “friends”
Fantasy Sports Structure - Draft Style

- Typically you play against a limited number of people (8-12)
- Each player can only be part of 1 team
- Snake-Style Draft
  - Draft Order goes from 1 -> N, N -> 1, and so on for some pre-fixed number of rounds
- Auction-Style Draft
  - Start with a budget with each player at a fixed price
  - Can take a couple of days…. Organizing it across TZs is not fun
- Mimics the real drafts
- Player trades allow exchange of players
- Some extra amount of budget is provided to acquire unsold players later on
Types of Fantasy Leagues

- **Points League**
  - Total Points at the end of a fixed time period decide winner
  - Restricted to 1 free change per week; additional changes cost points

- **H2H League**
  - Win-Loss Record decides winner
  - May have playoffs at the end of regular season
  - Wins still decided based on points
Multi-level Fantasy Sports

- Design a new game on an existing game
  - Multiple examples
  - Case Study: QFPL (http://qfpl.xyz)
- Multiple money-making websites based on these
Data-driven Fantasy Sports

- Where there is Data, there is ML
- New ML blog post every week
- From Deep Learning to Bayesian Multi-Level jargon
- Providing data can get you Twitter followers and stars on github
Fantasy Sports in Media

- Fantasy Premier League has its own Show
  - They discuss choices of players, captain picks, differential picks
- Has given rise to a lot of memes
  - I mean a lot.
- Every website
- Some people have used their pets to gain popularity by having their pets choose captains.
  - Eg: Catto for FPL
    - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L2YufXZPbT0
Fantasy Sports in Social Media

- Numerous Blog Posts about Fantasy Choices
- “Must Follow” Twitter Accounts
- Insane number of podcasts
Fantasy Sports Prizes

- **Official League Prizes**
  - Weekly Prizes - Merchandise
  - Monthly Prizes - Video games, merchandise
  - Season Prizes - Playstation, trips to matches
  - [https://fantasy.premierleague.com/prizes](https://fantasy.premierleague.com/prizes)

- **Unofficial Prizes**
  - Money from money leagues
  - Respect between “friends”
  - Rivalry record
    - I am currently 4-2 down against my main rival
2019 r/FantasyPL: The BigLuke debacle

THIS IS A ROBBERY.

YOU GET MONEY!
AND YOU GET MONEY!
AND YOU GET MONEY!
Moderating Fantasy Sports Subreddit

- People on reddit can be racist.
  - Dire NO al razzismo
- People on reddit are whiny
  - Them vs Mods attitude
- Prevent fake news from spreading
- All you had to do was follow the rules CJ
2019 FantasyPL Meme War

FIGHTING IN MEME WARS?
I'M GETTING TOO OLD FOR THIS SHIT

ONE DOES NOT SIMPLY
STOP A MEME WAR
OK GUYS...

WHO'S READY TO PARTY!