



Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood



NCPG

National Council on Problem Gambling

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE:
12:01 AM FEBRUARY 24, 2016

Contact:

Keith Whyte, (202) 547-9204 x. 23

keithw@ncpgambling.org

Josh Golin, (617) 896-9368

josh@commercialfreechildhood.org

MEDIA RELEASE

**Non-profit groups to NFL:
Stop marketing fantasy football to young kids**

*While states act to prohibit daily fantasy sports as illegal gambling,
NFL offers big prizes to kids aged 6 to 12 for fantasy football game*

BOSTON, MA and WASHINGTON, DC – Today, [Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood](#) (CCFC) and the [National Council on Problem Gambling](#) (NCPG) urged the National Football League (NFL) to stop marketing fantasy football to children aged six to twelve. The NFL aggressively marketed fantasy football to kids on its NFL Rush Fantasy website and app during the 2015-2016 season, and the league even offers an elementary school curriculum that encourages children to play the game.

CCFC and NCPG have sent the NFL letters citing evidence that playing fantasy sports, particularly with the incentive of valuable prizes, can lead to problem gambling and addiction. A 2014 study of college students found that fantasy sports participation was correlated with gambling-related problems, and should not be perceived as a “safe” or “harmless” form of gambling. Twelve states have declared that daily fantasy sports (DFS) games constitute illegal gambling under their laws.

“It’s unconscionable that the NFL is encouraging children as young as six to have a financial stake in the outcome of its games,” said Josh Golin, Executive Director of CCFC. “This type of marketing has no place on a website or app for kids, and it’s particularly egregious that the league enlists teachers and schools in its efforts to get children hooked on fantasy sports.”

NCPG Executive Director Keith Whyte said, “The high value of the prizes may send a message to children that playing fantasy sports is a good way to earn money for education. Even worse, it may encourage children to spend excessive amounts of time trying to win these prizes, thus planting the seeds of addiction.”

The NFL operates and promotes [a game for kids](#) with all the trappings of daily DFS—including frequent contests requiring constant attention to lineups and the incentive of valuable prizes—without requiring the payment of a fee. The NFL dangles Grand Prizes of \$5,000 cash (called a “scholarship”) or a vacation for three in Hawaii, including tickets to the Pro Bowl and an on-field pass, to the two children with the highest point totals for the season. The league awards sought-after Xbox One consoles and Madden NFL 16 games to the child with the highest point total each week. Throughout the 2015-2016 season, including the postseason, the game was prominently advertised on the NFL Rush website for kids, and on the online version of Sports Illustrated intended for children, SIKIDS.com.

The NFL contracts with Young Minds Inspired, an “educational marketing agency,” to promote its fantasy game in schools. [NFL Rush Fantasy—Learn, Play, Score!](#) is a math and language arts curriculum centered entirely on NFL fantasy football, including activity sheets and a teacher’s guide. Students are required to register for the NFL’s fantasy football game in order to access lesson materials and complete assignments. CCFC’s letter to the NFL says, “Educators should not be called upon to assist the NFL in promoting an activity which is potentially harmful and addictive when engaged in by children.”

In addition to calling on the NFL to cease operating and marketing the fantasy game for kids, the groups have offered to meet with the league to discuss their concerns.

Adults concerned that participation in fantasy sports games by themselves or their children is causing negative consequences may seek confidential assistance by contacting the [National Problem Gambling Helpline](#), via voice or text at 1-800-522-4700 and by chat at www.ncpgambling.org/chat.

###