

COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

Super Flex Sex

The Argument for Why Super Flex Formats Should (and Will) Be Implemented in Fantasy Football Leagues.

Fantasy football is stupid.

We play a game where players like Nyheim Hines, J.D. McKissic, Breshad Perriman are all somehow seen as MORE VALUABLE than quality quarterbacks like Kirk Cousins, Baker Mayfield, Matt Ryan, and Derek Carr – some of NFL's most important players in reality.

Most of you who are taking the time to read this know that the reason Hines, McKissic, and Perriman are typically selected before Cousins, Mayfield, Ryan, and Carr in fantasy drafts is a matter of supply and demand.

As fantasy experts throughout the industry will explain: drafting the game's best QBs - Pat Mahomes, Aaron Rodgers, Tom Brady, and Russell Wilson - in Round 1 is a rookie move. They'll tell you it's a smarter strategy to spend early draft picks on more valuable and scarcer positions like running back or wide receiver. And because there are PLENTY of quarterbacks who put up quality numbers, experts advise you to wait before addressing the position.

That's why Myles Gaskin and Mike Davis are all being drafted ahead of Tom Brady and Aaron Rodgers in fantasy drafts this summer.

Now stop what you're doing. Reread that last sentence, and take a moment to think about what you just read. If you're a seasoned fantasy football veteran, taking quarterbacks late probably seems totally normal to you.

Should it, though?

Imagine telling an NFL GM that you would rather focus on acquiring your second and third running back instead of Pat Mahomes in Round 4. That 89 players should go before Tom Brady (currently ranked 90th overall on ESPN). Think about the perplexed look on his face when you tell him, "you see, you can find quality quarterbacks later in the draft or even in free agency. There's a surplus of quality QBs in the league, so the quarterback position doesn't really matter that much."

You'd be laughed out of the room.

Look, there comes a time when you have to put things in perspective. And that perspective comes quickly for anyone who has ever tried to explain fantasy football strategy to someone who has never played fantasy football before. For instance, try explaining to any non-fantasy football playing NFL fan that Myles Gaskin is a MORE VALUABLE ASSETS THAN AARON RODGERS AND TOM BRADY. Their likely immediate reaction would be to think this game of fantasy football is STUPID and makes ZERO sense.

And they would be right.

Mainstream fantasy football roster constructions are currently lagging behind the times.

In real football, the game has become MORE dependent on strong QB play, and running backs have become devalued to role players who split the workload and are largely dependent on their surroundings (scheme, O-Line, game flow, their QB, etc.). But oddly enough, this pass-oriented evolution of the NFL has OPPOSITE EFFECT in fantasy football.

The mass-pass-heavy hysteria has created so many good statistical QBs that they are now a lot LESS valuable in fantasy football due to increased supply of available stats, even though quarterbacks have never been more valuable in REALITY.

Quarterback is without a doubt the most important position in all of sports, but yet quarterback sits right above kicker in terms of fantasy football value.

This is clearly a messed up and backward system that we've just learned to blindly accept as fact.

And don't hear what I'm not saying: it's not the fantasy experts' fault that in their rankings and mock drafts a whopping 54 other players are ranked and selected ahead of Pat Mahomes (currently ranked 55th overall by ESPN), the best and most valuable player in the NFL. The SYSTEM is what's at issue. The SYSTEM IS BROKEN.

In fantasy football, we have backup quarterbacks who throw for 4,000 yards and 25 TDs riding our benches all year or even sitting in free agency because we can only start one QB. Conversely, in our flex spots each week, we are usually HOPING our 3rd or 4th RB, who often sees fewer than 50% of snaps on his own team, is going to get 10 touches in his game. Apparently, we would rather be playing a game that prioritizes valuing this type of role player than legitimate starting quarterbacks in the NFL.

It's idiotic. Quarterbacks are way more entertaining to watch than a team's third receiver or second string running back. What are we doing to have these good QBs

just sit and rot on our benches and in free agency all year? Why would we not want quarterbacks like Kirk Cousins and Derek Carr in starting fantasy lineups each week instead of Nyheim Hines or J.D. McKissic?

Fantasy football is about statistics, so it's curious why in a league with so few bell cow RBs, where 62% of plays are pass plays, and over 80% of total yardage coming through the air, and at least 24 QBs putting up very respectable passing stats each year, that this game nevertheless continues to require you to start at least 3 RBs, but only 1 QB.

It's absolutely senseless, specially based on the way the NFL is played today.

I mean come on: early Average Draft Positions in expert leagues have guys like Russell Gage, Adam Trautman, Tarik Cohen, Tyrell Williams, and Malcolm Brown being selected before Top-24 real-life QBs like Baker Mayfield, Kirk Cousins, Derek Carr, and potential up-and-coming superstars like Justin Fields, and Trey Lance... I'm not kidding. And it's simply because your 6th string RB is clearly more important in this fake football game than your backup QB, or sometimes even your starting QB.

It sounds so ridiculous when you say it out loud. It's time to stop sitting back and accepting this as normal.

While the NFL has evolved in the last 20 years, fantasy football is still using Dial-Up Internet Connection, wearing Cargo Shorts and listening to Backstreet Boys on their Walk-Mans.

At some point, fantasy football has to grow up. Take a look in the mirror, and stop answering "this is way it's always been done," when someone questions why quarterbacks are so devalued in fantasy football yet so important in reality.

Instead, we should be asking: "How can we improve? How can make fantasy football better?"

SUPER FLEX IS THE ANSWER!

Super Flex formats are fantasy football leagues with an extra flex position (designated as an "offensive player" utility position) that allows managers to start any offensive position, including quarterback. There are several excellent reasons to convert your league to a Super Flex league.

First, the Super Flex format allows for much more lineup FLEXIBILITY and CREATIVITY. If you've already selected Pat Mahomes in Round 2, and Russell Wilson is the best player available when you're on the clock in the next round, you can take him and start two great quarterbacks. League members aren't constrained

in the draft to oblige by one archaic strategy that everyone is robotically following. And to that effect, Super Flex formats make fantasy drafts more INTERESTING AND UNPREDICTABLE.

Second, quarterbacks are more fun to watch and evaluate than most running backs and wide receivers. Even casual fans know quarterbacks, like to root for certain quarterbacks, and focus on quarterbacks because of their value in the real game. Thus, there's a certain increase in the level of entertainment you get from your fantasy league because you are starting 2 QBs and having your opponent start 2 QBs against you. In other words, it's more fun to watch Joe Burrow and Trevor Lawrence play and score meaningful points than a 2nd flex option of Philip Lindsay or Jamaal Williams.

What are the drawbacks of Super Flex lineups? There are two popular criticisms.

“Everyone would want to use a second Quarterback in the Super Flex spot because QBs score the most points. This makes them too valuable.”

My response to that ridiculous critique is... GOOD! Quarterbacks are in fact the most valuable players in the NFL the most important position in all of sports. So yeah, them being more valuable in fantasy football... that's kind of the point.

The second main criticism of Super Flex leagues is that “there aren't enough starting QBs – in other words, if everyone in a 12-team league drafts 3 QBs now (1 starter, 1 possible super flex starter, and 1 backup), then it adds up to 36 QBs... yet there are only 32 starting QBs in the NFL. The Math doesn't seem to add up...”

This of course is not an issue in 10-Team formats, and while there is some validity to this concern in 12-Team formats, it's not as big of an issue as perceived. Consider that this is a Super Flex position, NOT a second quarterback. Teams can still start a RB, WR, or TE in the Super Flex position if they miss out on QBs, their QBs get hurt, or have BYE weeks. All it does is increase the value of quarterbacks, as we should. Furthermore, it's easy to place a ROSTER LIMIT (MAXIMUM) of 3 Quarterbacks per team to prevent teams from hoarding QBs.

And if that math STILL concerns you, consider this math:

There are 32 starting QBs, but only 10 or 12 of them matter in your fantasy football league each week. Again, that's absurd, foolish, and it quite frankly goes against everything the NFL stands for nowadays.

Now, if you play in a 14 or 16-team league, then yes, I can admit that implementing Super Flex positions in those leagues would be more of a challenge. But if you're in a 10-team league, or even 12, Super Flex is a no-brainer.

Again, if adding a Super Flex means that everyone in your draft needs to draft quarterbacks higher so they can make sure they get 2-3 viable starters, then GREAT! That makes your league better, not worse. Don't be afraid to change the status quo, especially when the change makes too much sense. Don't be stubborn and stuck in your ways. Evolve with the NFL.

Fantasy Football needs to catch up with the times. It's a pass-first league, and QBs should be more valuable. Super Flex leagues are progressive, and whether you like them or not, they are the future of fantasy football.

The fantasy football industry is rightfully trending toward Super Flex formats (it's about time). Super Flex leagues are becoming more widespread and popular among expert leagues. In fact, I predict Super Flex formats will be mainstream (as in adopted as the DEFAULT setting by big time host sites like ESPN, Yahoo!, NFL.com, etc.) within the next three years. The major platforms could begin shifting as early as next season.

If you're serious about fantasy football like I am, you want to be ahead of the curve, not slow to adapt. You also want the best experience possible in your fantasy football leagues. Super Flex leagues carry both benefits, and so much more.

I STRONGLY urge you to add a Super Flex position to your fantasy football league THIS SEASON! Not only will you never look back, but in a decade, you'll laugh at the very thought of single-quarterback leagues!

Super Flex leagues are the way fantasy football should be played.

- For my best pitch on Super Flex leagues, listen to the first 15 minutes of the *Fantasy Law Guy Podcast, Episode (17): "Matthew Berry's Draft Day Manifesto (Full Breakdown); Super Flex Sex."*

Guarisco Playoff Format (GPF)

Improve Your Fantasy Football Playoffs by Implementing the “Guarisco Playoff Format” (GPF).

- The vast majority of fantasy football playoff formats are garbage. Think about it...
- Single elimination playoffs in fantasy football are terrible.
- Single elimination playoffs that have their Championships decided in Week 18 are even worse.
- Two-week matchups don't fix the problem because often times, the LOSER from the 1 vs. 4 matchup outscores the WINNER of the 2 vs. 3 matchup, meaning the team that scored fewer points than another playoff team over a span of two weeks in the same round is advancing to the Championship nonetheless.
- There's no home field advantage for being a higher seed or better team.
- Fantasy playoff seeding and BYE weeks are determined by final standings and not points (when points are the strongest indicator of the best teams).
- Two-week matchups are also 4 weeks long. If you want to avoid Week 18, you have to start your playoffs in Week 14. But FOUR teams have BYE weeks in Week 14 this year (thanks, NFL)!
- A playoff format that lasts 4 weeks long instead of 3 weeks takes away a week of fun and competition for everyone else.
- Ideally, the fantasy playoffs should be 3 weeks long, either in Weeks 15-17 in order to avoid the pitfalls of Week 14 (BYE weeks) and Week 18 (rest) OR Weeks 15-17, with somehow making it so Championships are not solely decided by Week 17 matchups.
- Moreover, the rigid structures of one and two-week matchups force either 4, 6, or 8 teams to make the postseason. But in 12-team leagues, 4 teams (33% playoff rate) is too few, and 6 teams (50% playoff rate) is too many!

What can we do to fix all of these massive problems?!

Does a fantasy football playoff format that avoids these problems even exist???

Yes! The “Guarisco Playoff Format” (GPF) fixes all of these problems.

- In the GPF, each playoff team accumulates a win/loss result against all other playoff teams for Weeks 15, 16, and 17.
- Every team plays every team each week.
- The team with the best overall win/loss record during the postseason wins the league.

- Allow me to demonstrate: let's say I make the postseason with three other teams. And in Week 15, I score 120 points and outscore the other three playoff teams. Well, that means I go 3-0 in Week 15. Now, Week 16 rolls around and my team doesn't play as well. I outscore only one team, but two teams score more points than I do in Week 16. That means I went 1-2 in Week 16, and now my record stands at 4-2 overall. Finally, in Week 17, let's pretend my team totally lays an egg. Every playoff team scores more points than my sorry team in Week 17, so I'm 0-3 for that week, which makes me 4-5 overall. Now let's assume that the other three playoff teams went 7-2, 5-4, and 2-7 in their respective "9-game mini-series" against each other and myself. That means my 4-5 overall record is good enough for 3rd place. The team that went 7-2 in Weeks 15-17 wins the league and is declared the League Champion.
- In the GPF, if multiple teams end with the same postseason record (two teams finish 6-3, for example), the tie-breaker goes to the team with the most total points in the regular season + playoffs. This allows the best teams throughout the year to have a tie-breaking "home field advantage" of sorts.
- The Guarisco Style Playoff System helps ensure that a good team throughout the season that also finishes strongly will win your league as opposed to fluky luck-centered outcomes of single-elimination matchups.
- The GPF also ensures that your playoff fate is not determined by matchup "seeding," where you can get screwed by playing the highest scoring team, while you outscored the both teams, including the winner, in the other matchup in the same round but still get eliminated.
- If you're one of those people who argues that including Week 18 is a good idea (perhaps because it adds an extra week of fun and competition, and that Week 18 requires new challenges like any other week, and adjusting to what's happening in the NFL is the name of the game), the GPF gives you the option of still involving Week 18 in order to maximize the weeks in the regular season for everyone to play while decreasing the importance of that final week. When other leagues that play through Week 18 would have their championship solely determined by Week 18, the GPF would minimize the impact of Week 18 because it's just 1/3 of playoffs for all teams. Weeks 16 and 17 are more important than Week 18 in the GPF, as they should be. But by not eliminating Week 18 completely, the GPF strikes a fair balance, again, if you're one of those rare commissioners who likes playing through Week 18.
- You can even further decrease the impact of Week 18, while keeping it somewhat relevant, by starting your playoffs in Week 15. This would make it a 4-week playoff (Weeks 15, 16, 17, and 18) instead of a 3-week playoff (Weeks 16-18).
- Of course, the GPF is flexible enough to where if you want to exclude Week 18 completely because some teams rest starters, then you can use the GPF for Weeks 15-17 and still avoid Week 14 (when two teams have BYE weeks).
- The GPF also allows you the flexibility to put an odd-number of teams in your playoffs. If you think 4/12 playoff teams is too few and 6/12 is too many... why

not have 5? The only difference between 4 teams, or 5 teams, or even 6 teams, in the GPF is the number of games each team plays each week. Instead of a “mini-series” that consists of 9 total games like does in the 4-team GPF example above, there’s a “12-game mini-series” for a 5-team GPF.

- The GPF allows you to put as many playoff teams as you want for as many weeks as you want without altering the system!
- Make a 5th playoff team a wildcard team solely determined by points, and now we’re starting to cook with gas. The GPF gives you the flexibility to do great things like this.
- Most importantly, in the GPF, NO ONE complains that the League Champ got “lucky,” and no one claims that the playoffs were a “fluke,” because in the GPF, each team had 9 or more matchups against every other team spanning over three or four weeks to determine the winner.
- All things considered, the GPF is far and away the best fantasy football playoff system.
- I’ve been using this system in all leagues I commission for the last 11 years and we have NEVER had a single complaint.
- In fact, people say the GPF is the best thing about my fantasy leagues.
- People say the GPF is the best thing about ME. As a person.
- So get rid of your inherently unfair and outdated playoff system and implement the Guarisco Playoff Format in your league TODAY!
- *Listen to the [Fantasy Law Guy Podcast, Episode \(12\): “Best FFB Playoff Format”](#) for more details on the [Guarisco Playoff Format](#).*

Other Ways to Improve Your Fantasy Football League

Increase Your Starting Lineup by Adding an Extra Flex Position

- In general, your fantasy football league probably has too many bench spots.
- Having 6-7 bench spots in a standard league with 9 starters is pointless.
- Convert one of those bench spots into an extra flex position in the starting lineup.
- Ideally, in 10-12 team leagues, you should have **two** Flex positions and one Super Flex position in your starting lineup, as followed: [QB RB RB WR WR TE FLEX FLEX SUPER FLEX K DST].
- The more players on the field, the more fun it is to play and watch.
- More players in your starting lineup also decreases variance i.e. the impact of a first quarter injury is lessened because more starters are scored.

Use Decimal Scoring

- Every yard matters. It's a game of inches.
- Decimal scoring helps prevent ties, and nobody likes ties.

Move to a Free Agent Auction Bidding (FAAB) Waiver System

- This allows teams to bid fake ("FAAB") money out of a \$100-\$200 team salary cap each year to acquire players.
- FAAB is the most fair and fun waiver system by far.
- I recommend one weekly auction on Wednesday morning of each week, and then having free agency be open (free-for-all, first-come-first-serve) for the rest of the week.
- Although valid arguments can be made for the fairness of "Continuous" FAAB systems (having an auction every morning), I believe continuous, daily auctions limit roster flexibility on game days. And as a commissioner, this problem heavily outweighs the "virtual race to the player" when breaking news occurs.
- There are differing opinions on which style of FAAB to incorporate, but one thing is clear: any FAAB system is better than the alternative waiver systems.
- The classic inverse order of standings or rolling waivers is some real stone age stuff.
- Make sure you set the **MINIMUM BID at \$0**, and NOT \$1.
- If the minimum bid is \$1, then people who have run out of FAAB money cannot make free agent acquisitions. As a commissioner, you want to encourage free agency activity from every team all season long.

Eliminate League-Vote Trades.

- Evaluating trades should be the commissioner’s job.
- League votes during the season are riddled with bias and ruin leagues.
- Trades should be accepted and pushed through by commissioners unless there are signs of collusion or the proposed trade is patently unfair and obviously cripples the competitive balance of the league (for instance, an extremely one-sided, shocking “what the heck!?” give-up trade from a non-playoff team to a playoff team right before the postseason).
- Do not be the commissioner that rejects trades from two accepting league members simply because a trade advantages one side. That’s overstepping your boundaries.

Incorporate Double Matchups in Competitive (\$\$\$) Leagues

- If you are in a competitive league with a decent amount of money on the line, consider adopting a concept called Double Matchups (or “Double Headers”), where one game each week will be determined by your head-to-head result against your scheduled opponent as usual, and the other game will depend on whether you’re a Top-Half scorer or Bottom-Half scorer that week (if you outscore half of your league that week, you get a win, and if not, you get a loss).
- In this system, teams go 2-0, 1-1, or 0-2 each week, resulting in 28 games (not 14) by regular season’s end.
- Double Matchups decrease the impact of random scheduling luck (something fantasy players have absolutely no control over) and rewards teams that are consistently scoring well each week (and not just benefiting from easy matchups), all the while preserving the fun of head-to-head matchups.
- Basically, if you score 130 points one week but happen to play the one team that scores 150 points, you won’t be completely S.O.L. Instead, you’ll go 1-1 in this scenario under a Double Matchups system because you’ll get a loss for losing your head-to-head matchup but a win for out-scoring half the other teams in your league.
- Double Matchups are a great way to balance fairness and fun, and I strongly recommend this system for any non-casual league with a buy-in, especially high stakes (\$\$\$) leagues.

Last Place Pays Double Buy-In for Competitive (\$\$\$) Leagues

- The best way to make sure eliminated teams at the bottom of the standings are setting their lineup each week is to give them an incentive to keep trying to maximize their point totals each week.
- Positive reinforcements such as weekly high-scoring bonuses or awarding the consolation tournament winner with an early draft pick next season are largely ineffective for a number of reasons.
- In my experience, a stick is more appropriate than a carrot for this particular circumstance. Nothing makes league members respond more than a rule that threatens to take their money.

- Create a league policy where the team that finishes last in points and the team that finishes last in standings has to pay half of the buy-in again at the end of the season.
- If a team finishes last in BOTH points and standings, that manager has to pay double the buy-in (i.e. pay the buy-in again if it's already been distributed).
- Not only does this rule prevent inactivity, it also adds extra money to the pot.
- The added money can be used to pay the winner in points for the regular season, or it can go to whoever had the strongest second half as compared to their first half of the season (i.e. the greatest positive difference between Weeks 1-7 and Weeks 8-14). This is another creative way to prevent inactivity.

Lock All Non-Playoff Teams' Rosters During the Playoffs

- There's no need for a consolation tournament in fantasy football.
- Teams have 14 weeks to qualify for the fantasy playoffs.
- Allowing activity from non-playoff teams once the postseason begins only serves to disrupt the postseason and cause unneeded controversies.
- Make a rule preventing non-playoff teams from making moves during the fantasy postseason to ensure a fair competition among the teams that matter.

My Recommended Roster Settings and Scoring

10-12 TEAM LEAGUES

ROSTER:

Starting Lineup:

QB (3 max per roster)
RB
RB
WR
WR
WR
TE
FLEX (any Running Back or Wide Receiver or Tight End)
FLEX (any Running Back or Wide Receiver or Tight End)
OP (Super Flex / Any Offensive Player, including QB)
Kicker
DST

6 Bench Spots

3 I.R. Spots

SCORING:

Passing:

1 PAYD = 0.04 (Decimal Scoring!)

PATD = 4

INT = -2

2pt PA Conv = 1

Rushing/Receiving:

1 RUYD/REYD YD = .1

RUTD/RETD = 6

2 pt RU/RE Conv = 2

100+ RUYD/REYD Bonus = +2.5

200+ RUYD/REYD Bonus = +5

Non-PPR, but...

Every 5 Catches Bonus = +2.5

Kicking:

PAT Made = 1

PAT Missed = -1

FG 30-39 = 3

FG 40-49 = 4

FG 50+ = 5

FG 60+ = 5

DST:

Sack = 1

All Return & Defensive TDs = 4

Blocked Kick/Punt = 2

FR = 2

Safety = 2

1-pt Safety = 1

2pt Return = 2

INT = 2

0 PA = 7

1-6 PA = 5

7-13 PA = 4

14-17 PA = 2

18-21 PA = 0

22-27 PA = -1

28-34 PA = -2

35+ PA = -4

46+ PA = -4

YA<100 = 7

YA100-199 = 5

YA200-299 = 3

YA300-349 = 1

YA350-399 = 0

YA400-449 = -1

YA450-499 = -2

YA>500 = -4

YA>550+ = -4

All Misc. TDs = 4

All FL = -2

TEAMS & DIVISION:

- NO Divisions (divisions only cause controversy, no reason for them in FF)

TRANSACTIONS:

- NO Season Acquisition Limit
- Waiver Period for Cut Players = 1 Day
- **Free Agent Auction Bidding (FAAB) Waiver System (Non-Continuous)**
 - One weekly auction on Wednesday morning each week
 - \$150 FAAB Budget
 - Minimum Bid = \$0
- Trade Limit = 10
- **Trade Deadline = November 23, 2020**
- Trade Review Period = 3 Days
- **League Manager Only Veto (NO Trade Voting!)**

SCHEDULE:

- Regular Season Matchups = 14
- Matchup Tie-Breaker = Bench Points (Decimal Scoring Helps Prevent Ties!)
- Playoffs = Weeks 15-17
- **Playoff System = “Guarisco Playoff Format”**
 - See above and/or listen to the *Fantasy Law Guy Podcast, Episode (12): “Best FFB Playoff Format”* for details!