

Lights, Kamara, Action

Teachers play in fantasy football league

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41 million people nationwide have a fantasy football team, a number that includes many teachers. There are 12 different teachers in the Johnston teachers' fantasy football league. Many of them have different strategies, and some of them are controversial. It can also get a bit testy throughout the season with some bitter rivalries in the league.

The league consists of 12 teachers in two divisions. In the first division, also known as the "best" division according to history teacher Dale DeJong. DeJong, special education teacher Patrick Mattingly, P.E. teacher Dan Mennan, industrial technology teacher Mitchell Gearhart, business teacher Michael Barta, and english teacher Jeremy Fitzpatrick are all in this division. In the second division there is science teacher Matt Jaschen, social studies teacher Jesse Dowell, history teacher Tyler Miklo, instructional coach Isaac Rodenburg, english teacher Kristoffer Campbell, and instructional coach Tom Griffin.

There were many strategies heading into the draft with it being a fantasy auction draft, but the teachers that were praised by the members of the league for having a good draft were Barta, Miklo, and Dowell. DeJong on the other hand was victim to Barta's draft strategy. During the draft they were both bidding on Joe Mixon and Barta ran the price up, forcing DeJong to use a lot of his fantasy money on Mixon. DeJong still feels like he has not overcome it. "My chances of winning [the championship] were 100% until I drafted Joe Mixon cause Barta got in my head. I hate that guy," DeJong said. "He upped my picks like five times this year. I'm still mad at him."

With the start of their 10th season already under way, the teachers have already started to try to make changes to their team. Barta, given the nickname of the 'trade guru' by Jaschen, has already tried making plenty of

trades even though it is heavily criticized by the other members of the league. "Coach Barta offers trades all the freaking time and he's a trade guru," Jaschen said. "A lot of times he will offer you a trade and I would look at the evaluation and it'll be like screwing me over big time."

This year, however, Barta has decided to offer less trades. "As I was assessing my performance over the last couple of years, even though I finished pretty well, I didn't win the league. And I always seemed to make a couple trades every year that really does me in," Barta said. "So this year I think I'm taking more of a conservative approach."

What may surprise many students is there is a plethora of trash talkers in the league. DeJong, Mattingly, and Gearhart have all been accused of trash talking. DeJong seems to be the biggest trash talker of them all, even though he might not be able to back it up. "DeJong better watch what he says because I haven't seen him win the league yet. He talks a big game," Barta said.

Barta and DeJong have a big rivalry between each other, comparable to that of Iowa vs Iowa State or Ohio State vs Michigan. They faced off during week three and Barta planned on dismantling him.

"I plan on just absolutely destroying him, [I'm] not holding anything back, I'm not pulling my starters early," Barta said.

The tension between the two this year started during the draft with the Joe Mixon incident and DeJong still has not forgotten about it.

"Barta kinda knew some of the guys that I wanted to go [and draft], It's just fishy some of the things that Barta does," DeJong said.

"He is also the commish of the league and sometimes the rules go in his favor."

Barta rebutted, saying, "You see, the thing about DeJong is he doesn't really know what's going on. People just kinda beat up on him, he usually loses," Barta said. "So you know you gotta take everything he says with a grain of salt."

Miklo has been widely thought of as a 'dark horse' this year. Miklo's first year in the league looks to be trending upward. "Watching the draft I really liked his draft. I think he did a good job," Jaschen said.

While Miklo may be the dark horse this year, he is not the favorite. This title seems to be held to Dowell or Barta. "Dowell always drafts the best tight ends," DeJong said.

Unlike Barta, Dowell relies more on a good draft and picking up under the radar players on the waiver wire. "Mr. Dowell is always smart and methodical," Jaschen said.

All talk aside, the teachers do enjoy competing against each other. "We have a really balanced league of people that are competitive and care and it's probably one of the best leagues I've been in with people pretty invested in tracking NFL football," Barta said.

Fantasy Football Facts

According to the Fantasy Sports Trade Association, approximately 32 million Americans spend money on fantasy football.

On average, \$467 is spent per person in the U.S. which comes out to a whopping total of \$15 billion annually.

It is estimated that nearly 60 million people play fantasy sports with nearly 80% playing fantasy football.