

Computer Quarterbacks

Fantasy football blitzes the Internet and satisfies NFL fanatics

By Denise Schoppe
THE BATTALION

There is high school football. There is college football. There is the NFL. And then ... there is fantasy football.

"I basically started playing fantasy football as a way to make NFL football more interesting," said Matt Fleener, Class of 1997. "I stopped having a favorite team when the Cowboys fired Tom Landry. I always had favorite players."

Fantasy football is an online game that allows gamers to assemble their own "fantasy" teams from active National Football League players. Teams are organized into leagues. A team's success is based on the performance of its NFL players during real-life games.

Gamers and their fictitious teams play against each other for prizes and bragging rights.

"Fantasy Football allows you to have an interest in almost all the games played each week," Fleener said.

Once participants are set up against each other, there is a draft where the teams are built by picking players and putting them on each participant's team.

Dan Mulka, a senior management major at Ferris State University in Michigan, plays in two leagues, but only spends about half an hour a week playing the game. His league is run by

the Web site www.yahoo.com, one of several fantasy football providers.

"I'm in a league with my supervisor at work and then one with about 10 of my friends from home," Mulka said. "Yahoo keeps it pretty organized with each league on its own (Web) page."

Yahoo is not the only site that offers fantasy football, but it's one of the few that offers it for free. This helped draw Mulka into the game in the first place.

Some players are brought in by friends that are already involved.

Chris Camacho, a senior electrical engineering technology major, was brought into the game by his brother.

"At NFL.com you have to have 12 teams to make a league and he needed a few more teams,

so he actually signed me up," Camacho said.

Since then he said some of the people in his dorm tried to put together a league as well.

"We tried to make a league in Hotard (Hall), but somehow we couldn't put it together," Camacho said. "I don't think that we ever got 12 people to

so the league was never formed."

Despite Hotard Hall's experience, fantasy football is growing in popularity across the nation, but some gamers are more involved with their teams than others.

"Sometimes I don't think about it," Camacho said. "I really don't put much time into it."

Camacho said he spends around half an hour a week playing the game. However, the lack of time and attention to the game hasn't hurt his team, he said.

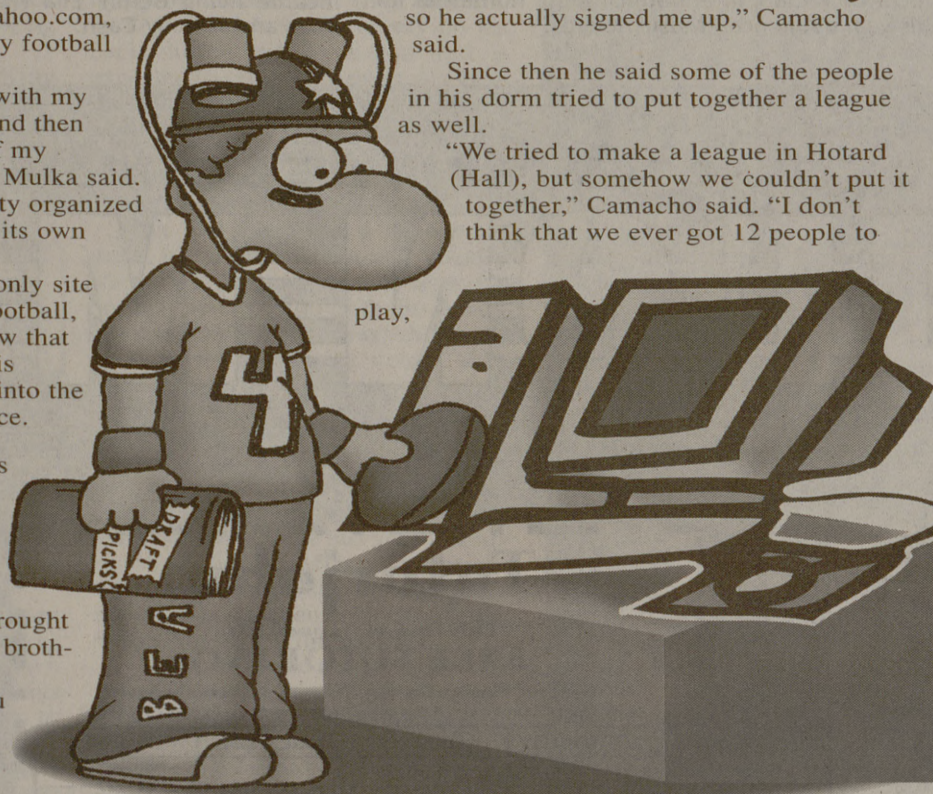
"I am undefeated when I set my team up," Camacho said. "So I like to give others a chance by not even looking at my team for that week. Or, at least that's how I excuse it."

Camacho said he's never talked about the game with the people he is playing against, but occasionally he will talk with other people in his dorm who are playing in other leagues.

"I will talk about it when we see highlights of games," Camacho said. "They ask me for tips and I tell them that would be cheating, because if I give them tips then they will never lose."

For some players, the teasing and competition is something that keeps the game lively.

"I've played with roughly the same guys for the last five years," Fleener said. "For us it is a way to make every game more interesting and a chance for competition and trash-talking



JON FULLRICH • THE BATTALION

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Defendants in Russell Crowe case file law suit

SYDNEY, Australia (AP) — Three men accused of blackmailing Russell Crowe over his role in a brawl said Monday they're suing police and prosecutors for malicious prosecution and wrongful arrest.

Police accused Philip Cropper and Malcolm Mercer, both 38, and Mark

Potts, 45, of trying to extort money from the actor after he was allegedly captured on a videotape in a brawl outside a nightclub in Coffs Harbor on Nov. 18, 1999.

Crowe, the Oscar-winning "Gladiator" star, has a ranch in the hills behind Coffs Harbor, a seaside town halfway between Sydney and Brisbane.

Charges against Potts were withdrawn shortly before he was to go to

trial earlier this year. A jury cleared Cropper and Mercer in June of demanding money from Crowe in return for not publicizing the video.

Ex-gardener sues TLC singer Tionne, 'T-Boz'

MOORPARK, Calif. (AP) — A gardener is suing Tionne "T-Boz" Watkins of the R&B group TLC and her rapper hus-

band, Mack 10, for allegedly stiffing him on a bill for snapdragons.

A hearing is scheduled for next month in the lawsuit, filed in Ventura County Superior Court in July.

The lawsuit contends that the singer and her husband, Detrick Rolison, ordered landscaping last year for their gated Moorpark home but never paid their gardening firm, Kevin Persons Inc. Persons alleges the couple owes him

nearly \$15,000 for providing 50 flats of mixed snapdragons, four 15-gallon plants, sod, sprinklers, tree lighting and 10 square yards of walk-on bark.

The Thousand Oaks gardener claims he had an oral agreement with Mack 10.

"He's got more money in cars than what I make in a year," Persons said Friday.

The couple did not have an immediate comment Monday.

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