RESEARCH REPORT FOR THE NFL

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CLIENT ANALYSIS

Consumer Wants and Needs

- The NFL effectively taps into football's cultural tradition and family connection, fostering loyalty and emotional engagement that outperforms other sports franchises (Cornell, 2025).
- 24% of consumers express interest in AI-integrated sports broadcasting, the NFL's use of advanced tools like RFID tracking, Defensive Alerts, and open receiver identification positions it ahead of other sports franchises in fan engagement (Mintel, 2025).
- The NFL outperforms competitors by effectively integrating pop culture with sports, aligning with 46% of consumers who value this connection (Mintel, 2025).
- The NFL's shift from "End Racism" to "Choose Love" in 2020, weakened its stance on social issues, making it less socially engaged compared to other sports franchises to engage young consumers (Mintel, 2025).

Cost

- To access to all games, fans will have to spend $750 in subscriptions (EBSCO, 2025).
- The average family going to an NFL game including all cost factors is $631. (IBIS World, 2025).
- YouTube offers the Sunday Ticket as a seasonal add-on, providing discounts to subscribers and incentivizing fans to access NFL games and insights (Ad Age, 2023).
- Opportunity Cost: The NFL is one of the largest sports franchises in the U.S. with a wide range of cultural engagement opportunities; when consumers choose other leagues, they miss out on unique cultural moments and traditions that only the NFL delivers.

Convenience

- Consumers are switching to highlight reels of games (Mintel, 2025).
- The NFL's focus on Sunday broadcasts make it easier for consumers to engage with games without conflict (NBC, 2025).
- The NFL's global games allow fans worldwide to engage with teams and events (Mintel, 2025).
- The NFL app is football fans "one stop shop" for insider information and game analysis (NFL, 2025). However, many fans complain about the poor functionality of the app (Apple, n.d.).

Communication

- In it's Ad's the NFL surpasses other franchises by using star power, humor, and storytelling, effectively blending football culture with lifestyle to deepen fan engagement (AD AGE, 2025).
- The NFL dominates viewership, averaging 18.58 million viewers per game (TV + Digital) in 2025—demonstrating strong audience engagement and communication reach compared to competitors (New York Times, 2025).
- NFL.com drives strong brand awareness, attracting 45.3 million organic visits with news and game information; however, some competitors achieve higher online traction even outside their season (AHREFS, 2025).
- The NFL's social media drives fan engagement by highlighting game updates and news; however, out of 7.39M mentions in the past 30 days, only 44.99% were positive versus 55.01% negative, lower than other sports franchises, which may limit the NFL's connection with current and prospective audiences (Sprinklr, 2025).

COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

1. **MLS (Major Soccer League):** The MLS is a main competitor because, it is a Sports Franchise that directly connects with a primarily Hispanic fan base, overlapping with the NFL's target growth market. It's focus on live events, community, and cultural representation makes it a strong competitor for audience attention and engagement.
2. **NBA (National Basketball Association):** The NBA directly competes with the NFL offering a similar large-scale entertainment experience, global reach, and strong digital engagement. Both leagues attract broad audiences and compete for fans' time, money, and media attention.
3. **NCCA College Sports**: The NCAA is a main competitor because it captures the college student demographic—another growth segment for the NFL. With high levels of regional loyalty, the NCAA competes with the NFL by offering younger fans accessible and affordable sports experiences.

	MLS	NBA	NCAA
Consumer wants and needs	• Consumers who watch major sports often turn to fathers in their family to shape their views on sports (Mintel, 2025). • Soccer's deep-rooted cultural ties and strong tradition within communities have consumers gravitating toward the sport. (Mintel,2020) • Hispanic consumers are more likely than non-Hispanic consumers to watch soccer with family and friends (Mintel, 2025).	• Consumers enjoy that basketball is a Family-friendly sport (Mintel, 2025). • Games consist of fast-paced, high scoring entertainment for the audience (NBA, 2025). • The NBA focuses on individual star power, sharing players' stories and cultural backgrounds (Mintel, 2025). • The National Basketball Social Justice Coalition is an organization that leads the NBA family's social justice advocacy work (NBSJC, 2025).	• College football fans often have emotional ties their teams, which shape fans identity and team loyalty (Sage, 2023). • Self-esteem, escape, group affiliation, and family needs motivate fans to return to college football (Sage, 2023). • Between 24% and 31% of adults aged 18–55+ attended games, highlighting its broad audience (Mintel, 2025). • College football shapes admissions and campus culture. A successful team attracts applicants (The Wire, 2024).
Cost	• All MLS events are streamable through a single AppleTV subscription (MLSoccer, 2025). • On average, MLS's merchandise has a lower cost compared to other Sports Franchises (MLSoccer, 2025). • Opportunity Cost: Attending an MLS event offers similar high-energy, fast-paced, community experiences for a fraction of the cost. Almost all regular-season tickets cost less than $100 (Seatgeek).	• Average ticket price: $92.98. (Statista, 2016) • The average cost for a family of 4 to attend a game: $444.12 (Statista, 2023). • NBA streaming passes vary from $110 a season to $160 (NBA, 2025). • Opportunity cost: NBA games are often on weekdays, this means consumers may have to sacrifice missing work or school in order to attend games.	• Streaming college football requires different platforms, which cost around $40 to $100 per month, a lower price than other sports franchises (Rolling Stone, 2025). • The average price for two people to attend college games is approximately $184.67, a $5 increase from the previous year (Oddspedia, 2025). • Opportunity Cost: Attending games means students sacrifice time to study, work, and explore extracurriculars

COMPETITIOR ANALYSIS

	MLS	NBA	NCAA
Convienence	• Amazon Prime and Max are expanding their sports streaming options, inviting new users to watch the MSL (Mintel, 2025) • Nearly 50% of consumers engage with social media coverage during an MSL game. (Mintel, 2020) • Users can access streaming the game live, a behind-the-scenes look, and game highlights on TikTok (Hutchinson, 2025).	• There are significantly more games in a season (82-game season) than the NFL (NBA, 2025). • The NBA app was relaunched in 2022 for easier fan engagement (NBA, 2025). • The League Pass allows for streaming of nearly all games (NBA, 2025). • Highlight reels on social media apps like Tiktok and Instagram have increased audience engagement for Gen Z (Statista, 2020).	• Game start times and network streaming for college football are announced 10 to 14 days in advance of each game (ACC, 2025). • ESPN Unlimited allows college football fans to watch all of the games in one centralized place (ESPN, 2025). • The average college football follower who attends at least one game a year will travel close to 1,000 miles to see their team play (New York Post, 2025).
Communication	• In the last month, the MLS sentiment analysis has shown 47.8K mentions, with 82.2% positive , and 17.8% negative. (Sprinklr, 2025). • In the 2025 season, the MLS averages around 120,00 viewers per match. (HuddleUp, 2025). • MLS: Ad strategy centers on community engagement, building stronger fan relationships and loyalty (AD AGE, 2025).	• In the last month, the NBA's sentiment analysis showed 376.16K mentions, with 84.2% positive and 15.8% negative. (Sprinklr, 2025). • In the NBA regular game season, they average 1.53 million viewers per game across streaming platforms. (NBA, 2025). • Ad campaigns uniquely focus on global outreach and social justice. (NBSJC, 2025).	• The NCAA uses a multi-platform advertisement campaigns strategy to engage viewers, making them identify with college football through emotionally charged storytelling (AdAge, 2023). • #CFB reached 100.9K mentions in last month, 78.22% of which are positive mentions and 21.78% negative. (Sprinklr, 2025). • The average viewership for college football games so far in the 2025 season is 2.1 million (Front Office Sports, 2025).

Compared to competitors, the NFL dominates in viewership and cultural relevance. Its website effectively drives brand awareness with 45.3 million organic visits. However, social media reveals a weakness: only 44.99% of mentions are positive, far below the NBA (84.2%), MLS (82.2%), and NCAA (78.22%), suggesting that while the NFL reaches a massive audience, it struggles to foster positive fan interaction online. This contrast highlights a tension between reach and sentiment: high-profile, star-driven campaigns may capture attention but do not resonate as strongly as competitors' messaging. The NBA's global and socially conscious campaigns, MLS's community engagement, and the NCAA's emotionally driven storytelling demonstrate that achieving fan engagement requires more than visibility—it depends on the quality and relevance of the messaging.

CONSUMER ANALYSIS

Current Consumers

Demographics: (MRI Simmons, 2025)

- Gender: 63% Male 37% Female
- Homeowners: 72%
- Have Children: 30%
- Married: 58%
- Race: 78% White
- Average household income: below 75k+ (40%)
- Education: 28% graduated high school with some college

Psychographics and Lifestyle:

- Majority of male sports fans drive their social identity through sports fandom (Pro Quest, 2021).
- Football fans are influenced by fathers, acting as main drivers in connecting their children to these activities and traditions (Mintel, 2025).

Prospective Consumers

Demographics: (MRI Simmons, 2025)

- Gender: 8% of Gen Z women watch football
- Race: 11% are hispanic who watch football
- Education: 28% some college
- Rent: 50% rents a home
- Average household income: below 75K
- 28% use social media heavily

Psychographics and Lifestyle:

- 33% of women identify as big sports fans, driven by online accessibility (Mintel, 2025).
- 71% of Hispanic Gen Z use social media for information (Mintel, 2025).
- Hispanic Gen Z and Millennials prioritize saving for future financial benchmarks (Mintel, 2025).
- Sports fans aged 18-54, turn to social media for updates and community engagement (Mintel, 2025).

Day In the Life



Mark Smith

Mark is a 45-year-old, married White man who owns his home and works hard to support his family. Sports have been a part of his life since childhood, influenced by his father's love for football, and support for the Kansas City Chiefs. He starts his day early with coffee and the local sports radio while getting ready for work, catching up on scores and analysis from last night's games. During the day, he focuses on work but often shares updates or reactions about games with coworkers who are also fans. Even with a busy work schedule, he rarely misses NFL Monday, Thursday, or Sunday night games on TV, often watching with family or friends. Mark relies on television for live games and sports commentary.



Sofia Rodriguez

Sofia is a 22-year-old Hispanic Gen Z woman living in a rented apartment while finishing college. She starts her day checking her phone over breakfast, scrolling social media for updates, entertainment, and to stay connected with friends. During the day, she attends classes and works part-time as a barasita, balancing her schedule while keeping up with practical financial planning for her future. In breaks or between tasks, she browses affordable products online, exploring new interests or trends that catch her eye. In the evening, she unwinds with online content, messaging friends, or streaming shows for entertainment.

INDUSTRY TRENDS

- Ticket and merchandise sales fluctuate with disposable income and broader economic conditions directly impacting sports franchises revenue (IBIS World, 2025).
- The shift to streaming platforms has limited accessibility for fans unwilling to pay extra (IBIS World, 2025).
- Legalized sports betting is becoming integral to the fan experience, opening new revenue streams and transforming engagement opportunities (IBIS World, 2025).
- Sports Franchises will continue to invest in fan experiences through luxury stadium designs and sustainability efforts (IBIS World, 2025).
- For those seeking live entertainment, concerts offer an alternative to sports franchise events (IBIS World, 2025).

CONSUMER TRENDS

- Digital accessibility has fueled rising sports interest among 18–29-year-olds, who primarily engage through online media (IBIS World, 2025).
- 42% of women 18-34 identify as big sports fans. This group presents strong opportunities for sports franchises to increase female representation (Mintel, 2025).
- Latino fans are highly engaged, with 52% likely to attend live games and 35% purchasing team apparel, making them a key growth and revenue driver for the sports industry (Latinos in Sports, 2025).

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths	Weaknesses
• NFL dominates in per-game viewership compared to competitors. • Engages fans through impactful ads, blending football culture with lifestyle. • The integration of pop culture with sports entertainment has expanded viewership and coverage.	• The NFL's online sentiment falls behind that of competing sports leagues. • Competitors gain higher off-season online traction. • The NFL app receives poor reviews, negatively affecting the fan experience.
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Legalized sports betting is becoming integral to the fan experience. • Digital accessibility has fueled rising sports interest among Gen Z, who primarily engage through social media. • Rising female sports fans offer the NFL opportunities for stronger female representation. • Sports Franchises can continue to invest in fan experiences through luxury stadium designs and sustainability efforts.	• Low engagement from Gen Z and Hispanic audiences limits future fan growth. • Diversified broadcasting channels fragment fan access, making it harder to follow games. • Sports franchise revenue is tied to ticket and merchandise sales which fluctuate with economic conditions. • Concerts and live entertainment directly impact Sports Franchises audiences' offering similar experiences.

PROBLEM STATEMENTS

Channel – Weak Social Media Interaction	Messaging - Fails to reach other demographics
The NFL's social media presence generates lower positive engagement compared to other major sports leagues. Competing franchises not only foster stronger fan interactions but also drive higher sentiment and more frequent conversations—even outside of their active seasons.	The NFL's current messaging strategy is narrowly focused on existing consumers and is not able to effectively reach Gen Z and more diverse demographics. By not incorporating inclusive media tactics, the league misses opportunities to expand its audience and build stronger connections with emerging fan bases.

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