



THE CHALLENGES OF FANTASY SPORTS AND ESPORTS BETTING FOR RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING

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DISCLOSURE OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- AGRI paid for my attendance and accommodation at, and my flight to, this conference.

WHAT ARE FANTASY SPORTS?

- Constructing “teams” of real-world athletes
- Winning/losing money from performances
- Everyday play and special competitions
- Can take place over days/weeks instead of seasons
- Feeling of connection to fandom lacking in other “gambling”
- Highly controversial, currently legally contested
- Estimated at a \$2bn industry

The screenshot displays a fantasy baseball management interface. At the top, there are tabs for various MLB teams (Pit, Bal, Atl, NY, CWS, KC, NYM) with weather icons and game times. Below this is a 'Player Search' bar. The main area is divided into two columns: a list of available players and a 'LINEUP' section. The player list has columns for Position (POS), Player Name, Opponent (OPP), Start Probability (SP), Fantasy Points Per Game (FPPG), and Salary. The lineup section has columns for Position, Player, Opponent, FPPG, and Salary. At the bottom, there are buttons for 'CLEAR', 'RESERVE', 'IMPORT', and 'SUBMIT', along with a checkbox for 'ONLY PROBABLE PITCHERS' and an 'EXPORT TO CSV' button.

POS	PLAYER	OPP	SP	FPPG	SALARY
SP	Max Scherzer	Was@Ari	TBD	26.1	\$11,500
SP	Zack Greinke	Mia@LAD	TBD	24.0	\$10,200
SP	Jon Lester	NYM@ChC	TBD	15.9	\$9,700
SP	Gerrit Cole	Pit@Phi	TBD	18.8	\$8,900
SP	Jeff Samardzija	CWS@Mil	TBD	13.9	\$8,500
SP	Shelby Miller	Atl@Cin	TBD	22.0	\$8,300
SP	Jacob deGrom	NYM@ChC	TBD	17.7	\$8,100
SP	Mike Leake	Atl@Cin	TBD	19.3	\$8,000
SP	CC Sabathia	NY@TB	TBD	11.1	\$7,800
SP	Rick Porcello	Bos@Oak	TBD	17.0	\$7,700

LINEUP

POS	PLAYER	OPP	FPPG	SALARY
P				
P				
C				
1B				
2B				
3B				
SS				
OF				
OF				
OF				

FANTASY SPORTS: CHALLENGES

- Legal, but contested and heavily debated
- Blurring of gambling/video games makes policy harder – especially when many video games include gambling elements already
- Appears *strategic*, management-sim-esque
- Fast, responsive, slick, game-like, deliberately blurring boundaries?

Team selection interface for Fantasy Football (FPL). The top bar shows various team logos and their upcoming match times. Below, a table lists available players by position (P, C, 1B, 2B, 3B, SS, OF, Hitters, All) with columns for Player, Opp, Opp SP, FPPG, and Salary. A 'LINEUP' section on the right shows the current team composition. At the bottom, there are buttons for 'CLEAR', 'RESERVE', 'IMPORT', and 'SUBMIT'.

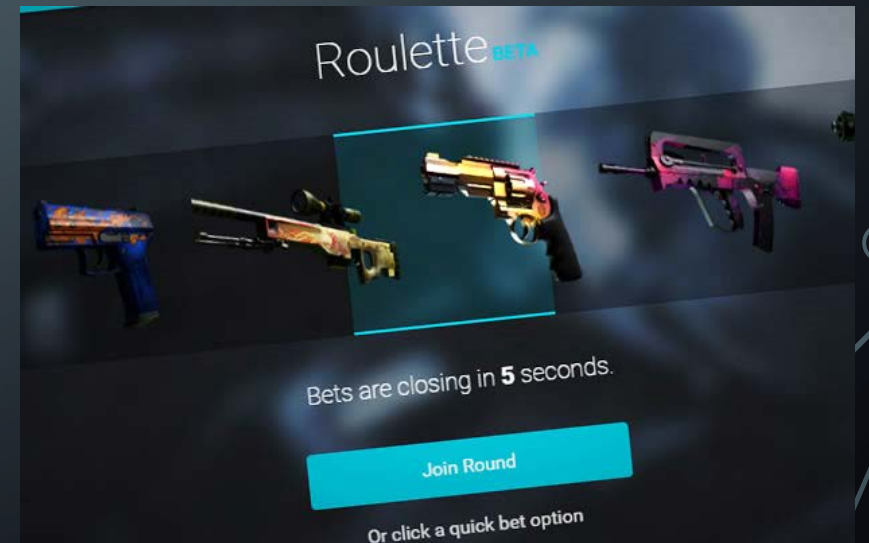
Tactics screen for Football Manager (FM). The left sidebar shows a list of player positions and their corresponding attributes. The main area displays a tactical setup for a match, including a formation diagram on the right and a list of player statistics and instructions on the left. The interface is highly detailed, showing various tactical options and player performance metrics.

FANTASY SPORTS: SOLUTIONS?

- Lengthen the period of a competition?
- “De-gamify” and make increasingly mundane?
- Emphasise stats, figures, numbers...
- De-emphasise players, fandom, teams, the quotidian “we”...
- Yet so much of the appeal, from video games and existing sports betting practices, lies *outside* the remit of possibly policy interventions

WHAT IS ESPORTS GAMBLING?

- Professionalised competitive play of *video games*
- \$95m in prize money given out and *two hundred million* viewers in 2016 alone
- Gambling on virtual items
- Estimated as high as \$3.7bn last year
- Gambling on outcomes of matches, players, tournaments, etc
- Estimated at \$3.3bn last year



ESPORTS GAMBLING: CHALLENGES

- New communities we lack information on – young gamers, many underage?
- Even faster “turnaround” of gambling instances than fantasy sports, and – like FS – already linked to *existing* leisure activities, i.e. video games
- Extremely opaque, rapid emergence, policy lag
- Many esports companies support it – how can we engage with them constructively when ESG makes them profit, extra commitment to game, etc?
- The live broadcast of esports gambling glorifies success – unlike many forms of gambling

ESPORTS GAMBLING: SOLUTIONS?

- Change the culture of distinction and pride around skins
- Unpick the impact of the “sport” discourse in “esports”
- Reach out to this non-traditional gambling community
- More ways to earn in-game items without gambling
- Introduce stronger and more effective age barriers
- Limit or restrict live broadcast of esports gambling

POTENTIAL ENGAGEMENTS

- Responsible gambling: limit possibilities, age checks, slow down the speed of bets and outcomes, research these (comparatively unknown) communities
- Policy: establishing frameworks to manage these gambling forms
- Future research: interdisciplinary intersections between gambling, video games, digital media, sports fandom
 - Relationship between fantasy sports vs sport management video games?
 - “Traditional” vs/and “fantasy” sports betting
 - Who are esports gamblers, how can they be reached?

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of a network of thin, light blue lines and small circles, resembling a circuit board or a stylized tree structure.

THANKS FOR LISTENING!

Any questions?