

The Ursuline School Model United Nations Conference

NFL Owners

Background Guide

Meet Crisis

Welcome!

Hi, delegates! I am a senior at Ursuline. I have been a part of Model UN since sixth grade and have loved every minute. It has allowed me to develop a strong interest in global affairs and think about things from many different perspectives. I am beyond thrilled to be leading the NFL Owners Committee this year. I am an avid NFL fan and could go on about it for hours on end, from player stats to coaching staff to trades. I hope you are all as enthusiastic about this as I am, and cannot wait to meet you all!

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A Brief History of the NFL

1920 - The National Football League (NFL) is founded as the American Professional Football Association (APFA)

1922 - the APFA renamed to the NFL

1926 - League membership reaches a then-all time high of 22 teams

1927 - Officials decide to eliminate ten financially unstable teams and center itself around rapidly growing eastern cities

1929 - Great Depression hits; many organizations forced to drop out of the league due to bankruptcy; ten teams remained

1940s through 1950s - Development of teams; mergers, franchises, relocations

1960s - American Football League (AFL) established as a competitor of the NFL; AFL v. NFL games played

1970s - AFL and NFL merger

1980s through 1990s - Teams continue to develop (mergers, franchises, etc.)

Present Organization

Today, the NFL is composed of 32 teams. It is governed by an executive committee made up of a representative from each team (owner, general manager, etc.), and a commissioner. The commissioner can be removed by the executive committee; however, he holds a great deal of power in making decisions for the league. The majority of decisions made by the commissioner are in regard to handling player misconduct. One such case was “Deflategate,” in which Roger Goodell decided to suspend Patriots quarterback Tom Brady for tampering with the air pressure of the footballs in order to ensure a crucial victory. Though he faced appeals from within the league, Brady accepted the punishment. Below the commissioner, all team owners have equal power. The League is divided into two conferences, the National Football Conference (NFC) and the American Football Conference (AFC). As the league expanded during the mid 1960s, executives decided to divide it in order to properly manage the growing number of teams - it has stayed the same ever since. These conferences are further divided by region: north, south, east, and west. Each team plays 16 games per 17-week season, and the season culminates in the Super Bowl, in which the best teams in the AFC and the NFC play against each other for the coveted Lombardi trophy.

Committee Tasks

There are a variety of issues that the National Football League and their team owners are currently facing. Two in particular that the public has been most anxious to see an official response towards are gender equality and international expansion. Because football is the most popular sport in America, the actions taken by the NFL Owners can be highly controversial. Solutions to such issues must benefit the league in some way, as well as increase the players' overall well-being, the entertainment value of American football, and the revenue it generates, because above all, the NFL is a business.

There are a few things to keep in mind in order to help you succeed as a member of the NFL Owners Committee at TUSMUNC III. First, do not get hung up on the specifics of the game of football - you don't need to know what a two-point conversion is to accomplish any sort of resolution throughout the conference. Second, keep all loyalties and personal views aside: do not make decisions to harm other team owners simply because *you* don't support his or her team. Your goal is to work together as a cohesive body in order to protect the interests of the NFL. Above all, have fun!

Topic 1: Gender Equality

Since its beginnings in the 1900s, the game of football has been dominated by men and boys. During that time, it was quite uncommon for any women to participate in sports as they were placed in the home sphere, raising families and tending to housework. As women gained more prominence in the public sphere, especially after gaining the right to vote in 1920, they were able to take part in sports. Many women took up soccer and competed alongside one another just as men did. As football became increasingly popular, it remained off-limits, so-to-speak, to women.

For the past few years, the fastest-growing NFL fan base has been women. However, there remains a lack of female presence within the industry. Specifically, there are very few females in executive coaching, and referee positions. Presently, there are a shocking three full-time female coaches, zero general managers, and six owners. The root cause of this can be traced back to the game itself. As said, it is dominated by men. This creates the stigma that it is a man's sport, and football is essentially a "boy's club." There are several instances of women being barred from getting jobs in the NFL, as well as sexual harassment. For example, in a recent investigation of the Washington Football Team (formerly the Washington Redskins), reports of harassment surfaced. This was not surprising to the few women in the industry because of how male-dominated the field is. Because women rarely play football, they are less likely to pursue careers, whether administrative or actually playing, in the field. What many people overlook is women's ability to play football in the same capacity as men. Soccer, lacrosse and even rugby opportunities exist for women. Rugby is just as physical as football, if not more, due to the lack of protective equipment.

As issues of diversity and inclusion are brought to the forefront, the NFL is forced to re-evaluate gender equality and the provision of equal opportunities for women. There are rules in place to ensure that women have access to the same jobs as their male counterparts, but there is nothing saying that they must be hired (only interviewed or considered). It is extremely important to increase the number of women in the NFL; diverse input can benefit the league in so many ways as well as achieve necessary progress. If more present in league administration, women can bring new perspectives to the table in terms of management, while being able to achieve the same as their male counterparts - they are both equally qualified. This may be difficult because football is considered a “man’s sport,” however as the NFL faces backlash for being discriminatory towards women, executives have no choice but to make changes regarding this issue.

Topic 2: International Expansion

The game of football is native to the United States. Its roots can be traced back to the game of rugby, which is played internationally; however, football itself has been developed in the U.S. alone. In keeping with its goal to expand revenue and its fan base, the National Football League has recently established two international series. Since 2007, the NFL has played an annual game in London. In recent years, the NFL has participated in as many as three to four seasonal games in London. Similarly, in 2007, the NFL instituted an annual game in Mexico. As a result, the number of NFL fans have risen above one million in countries including Brazil, Argentina, Spain, and Germany, to name a few. There have also been developments in international leagues as a result of the NFL's growing popularity across the globe. Canada has its own league, the Canadian Football League (CFL), but it is nowhere near the size of the NFL. There is also an International Federation of American Football, which is a group of over 100 football teams from several countries.

As with anything, there are several positives and negatives to further expanding the NFL to a global scale. It is imperative to note that above all the NFL is a business, and therefore money remains the forefront. In decision making, it is crucial to consider how the NFL will be economically affected - will they gain or lose money and have to make staffing changes accordingly? - as well as that anything to make more money will be welcomed. By expanding the NFL to foreign countries, fan bases grow and more money is earned. More people will spend money on game tickets and team merchandise as they develop interests in the game. However, there is no telling how quickly or even if the league will gain popularity overseas. Most countries

already have several sports enjoyed by their citizens, and thus it is unclear whether people will start following an entirely new sport.

Topic 3: Player Injuries

Football is a very vigorous sport. Players run, jump, tackle, block, collide and crash to the ground. But along with this sport, injuries inevitably occur. This is because of the way the game of football was designed to be played. From sprains, knee injuries (ACL/PCL), shoulder dislocations, and broken bones to more severe injuries such as concussions, back and spinal damage, and heat strokes, these injuries can be life-altering and if experienced, need direct medical care to prevent further damage.

One injury that could very possibly happen is a concussion. A concussion is when after being hit very hard enough in the head, the brain moves back and forth in the skull due to the impact. As the brain hits the inside of the skull, it gets damaged. The most common place a concussion can occur on the football field is when players are tackling and blocking each other. The brain itself is surrounded by something called Cerebrospinal Fluid; this fluid protects the brain when the impact to the head is minor. When impacted, the fluid stops the brain from hitting the skull, like padding. But when the brain does get hit severely, the fluid is not able to stop and protect the brain from hitting the inside of the skull. When the brain does hit the inside of the skull and gets injured, this is what is known as a concussion. What makes this even worse is, when the impact is very intense, the brain doesn't just hit the skull once and stop, but bounces back and forth hitting the skull in multiple parts of the brain. The force of the hit is so strong that the way the brain slows down is by shaking back and forth. For example, let's say a football player got hit from the front: the brain would first go backwards, and if hit hard enough, hit the skull and damage the back of the brain. From there, to slow down the momentum, the brain would move forward and hit the front of the skull, damaging not only the back but also now the

front. This could go on repeatedly, this back-and-forth motion until the momentum stops and the brain slows down. Naturally, this can critically damage the brain.

There are different grades of concussions; mild, moderate, and severe. The harder the hit to the brain is, the worse the concussion can become. In 2002, a neuropathologist named Dr. Bennet Omalu, discovered that a brain condition occurs after a large number of concussions. The disease or condition was named Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) formed. To name a few of the many effects of CTE, there is depression, memory loss, impaired judgement and impulse control problems. CTE can also lead to dementia later in life. In 2017, there was research done on CTE by the Journal of American Medical Association (JAMA). After studying the donated brains of deceased NFL players, they found that 110 out of 111 brains had a form of CTE. Sadly, many of the players whose brains were studied had died by taking their own lives. What must be noted here, though, is that a number of these instances were subsequently linked to the effects of the CTE they were found to have developed. Researchers and doctors are still trying to understand more about this disease, but there is a lot unknown. Even now, the only way to diagnose CTE is through a brain autopsy, so suspected cases can't be confirmed until death. If one thing is very apparent, though, it's that this disease is very serious and can truly affect one's life.

The NFL since 2002 has made great efforts to prevent and protect their players. There are rules and protocols in place that have been enforced both on the field and off in the hopes of maintaining and ensuring players' safety. For example, on-site medical teams must take certain precautions in the event that a concussion or any other serious injury has been suspected to have

taken place. Also, there is new technology being put into equipment that would try and stop the greater chances of concussions as well as other types of injuries from occurring.

At the end of the day, no player wants an injury. Unfortunately, for many players, the threat of serious injury in and of itself isn't always enough to keep players safe. There are so many things that the NFL and multiple research foundations are doing to protect their most extraordinary athletes, but is that enough? Are there things the NFL has not thought of that could advance the players' safety? Is there a point of view yet unrecognized that the NFL needs to consider?

Questions to Consider

- Should the NFL sponsor the establishment of a WNFL?
- How can the NFL ensure that women have more access to job opportunities?
- Does the NFL have the power to create football opportunities on the youth, college, and professional levels for women - just as the ones that exist for men?
- How will equipment need to be changed to fit the build of women?
- Do rules need to be modified for a women's game?
- Should the NFL seek to expand to other countries besides Mexico and England?
- Should NFL scouts conduct international talent searches?
- Should NFL games be broadcasted in languages other than Spanish?
- Should NFL games be broadcasted internationally?
- Should children be allowed to play football (if so what age should they start?)
- Are there any rules that the NFL still needs to change to protect the safety of players' that haven't already been changed?
- Should the game of football be changed entirely in a desire to keep the players truly safe?
- Do some of the rules that the NFL has gearing towards keeping players' safe seem specific enough, or do they need to be more precise? If so how would you make them more specific?

Positions

**All owners hold equal power (and voting rights) in this committee. Study your position and the history of your position with the organization rather than focusing on specific powers you have.*

Bidwill Family: Arizona Cardinals Owners, acquired in 2019

Arthur Blank: Atlanta Falcons Owner, acquired in 2004

Steve Bisciotti: Baltimore Ravens Owner, acquired in 2004

Pegula Family: Buffalo Bills Owners, acquired in 2014

David Tepper: Carolina Panthers Owner, acquired in 2018

Virginia Halas McCaskey: Chicago Bears Owner, acquired in 1983

Mike Brown: Cincinnati Bengals Owner, acquired in 1991

Haslam Family: Cleveland Browns Owner, acquired in 2012

Jerry Jones: Dallas Cowboys Owner, acquired in 1989

Joe Ellis (Trustee): Denver Broncos Owner, acquired in 2019

Sheila Ford Hamp: Detroit Lions Owner, acquired in 2020

Green Bay Packers Inc.: Green Bay Packers Owners, acquired in 1923

McNair Family: Houston Texans Owners, acquired in 2018

Jim Irsay: Indianapolis Colts Owner, acquired in 1997

Shahid Khan: Jacksonville Jaguars Owner, acquired in 2012

Clark Hunt: Kansas City Chiefs Owner, acquired in 2006

Davis Family: Las Vegas Raiders Owners, acquired in 2011

Dean Spanos: Los Angeles Chargers Owner, acquired in 2018

Stan Kroenke: Los Angeles Rams Owner, acquired in 2010

Stephen M. Ross: Miami Dolphins Owner, acquired in 2008

Zygi Wilf: Minnesota Vikings Owner, acquired in 2005

Robert Kraft: New England Patriots Owner, acquired in 1994

Gayle Benson: New Orleans Saints Owner, acquired in 2018

John Mara: New York Giants Co-Owner, acquired in 2005

Johnson Family: New York Jets Owners, acquired in 2000

Jeffrey Lurie: Philadelphia Eagles Owner, acquired in 1994

Art Rooney: Pittsburgh Steelers Owner, acquired in 2017

York Family: San Francisco 49ers Owners, acquired in 2009

Jody Allen (trustee): Seattle Seahawks Owner, acquired in 2018

Bryan Glazer: Tampa Bay Buccaneers Owner, acquired in 2014

Amy Adams Strunk: Tennessee Titans Owner, acquired in 2013

Dan Snyder: Washington Football Team Owner, acquired in 1999

Portfolio powers will be given the day of the conference. Make sure to study your position carefully, know who your allies are, and feel free to email the chairs for any questions. Position papers are strongly advised, as delegates will not be eligible for awards without them. Please submit position papers to tusmunc@ursulinenewrochelle.org.