



## THE MARKET

In February 2004, Americans gathered around televisions all over the country to watch the New England Patriots play the Carolina Panthers in Super Bowl XXXVIII. Every year, Americans gather with family and friends by the millions for the Super Bowl — 144.4 million in 2004, to be exact, by Nielsen Media Research's count. No other television program in history had a greater number of viewers.

Quite simply, no other sports league bridges generations and has fans with such an intense emotional connection. NFL fans wear their favorite team's apparel year-round. The anticipation builds throughout the nation as Sunday approaches. The excitement climaxes on game day, when fans fill NFL stadiums in record numbers. The NFL, America's passion, is even experiencing a growing presence on the international sports scene.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

By any estimate, the Super Bowl has evolved into an event that transcends the boundaries of sport. The game not only delivers unsurpassed numbers of viewers — the 10 most-watched TV shows in history are Super Bowls — but also delivers coveted demographics not seen anywhere else, especially in a cable-satellite era that has fragmented the viewing audience. Companies launch new products and entire marketing campaigns with the Super Bowl. Publications run reviews of Super Bowl TV commercials, and few people turn away from their sets either during the game or breaks in the action.

The NFL has the nation's largest fan base; no other sport is even close. For the first time since Harris Interactive began asking the question, more than twice as many people now name professional football (29 percent) as their favorite sport as

mention baseball (13 percent). ESPN SportsPoll shows that an astounding two in every three respondents self-identify as an NFL fan. These fans also spend heavily on licensed products, including apparel and video games. In fact, the league's \$3.1 billion in licensing sales ranks fourth among all companies worldwide, only behind Disney, Warner Brothers, and Bonjour, according to *License* magazine.

Fans of all backgrounds have embraced the NFL like no other professional sport. In the fourth quarter of 2002, for instance, ABC's *NFL Monday Night Football* was the lone program to rank among prime-time television's top-10 shows in Hispanic (English language networks only), African-American, and Caucasian households. Not only does the NFL boast passionate fans across all racial lines, but across gender lines as well: Females compose nearly 33 percent of the league's adult television audience, and Super Bowl broadcasts easily top both the Academy Awards and the Olympics among women.

The NFL is number-one among sports fans in cyberspace, too. In January 2003, the peak month of usage, 15.5 million unique users logged on to the NFL Internet Network — far and away tops among all monthly sports league's Web sites, and nearly doubling the traffic of the next-most-visited sports league site (Major League Baseball, with 7.8 million).

## HISTORY

The NFL has definitely come a long way since its founding in Canton, Ohio, by a group of seven individuals representing four clubs. The 1920 season featured 14 teams in cities such as Akron, Ohio, and Rock Island, Illinois, playing before small crowds and receiving little public notice.

Strategically, the early NFL game was hardly distinguishable from college football of the time. There was no attempt to break away from college playbooks or rulebooks, and for several years the NFL followed the NCAA Rules Committee recommendations. In the league's early years, players considered the low-paying NFL a part-time job and held other jobs during the day. Thus, while college coaches could drill their players daily for hours, professional football coaches arranged

practices in the evenings, sometimes only three or four times a week.

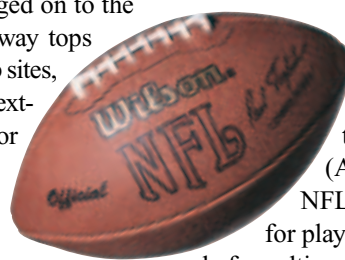
The popularity of the professional game slowly began to equal its college rival after the NFL instituted its first player draft in 1936. As many talented college players opted to play in the NFL, the professional game also drew more fans. However, World War II drained many of the early professional franchises of money and players.

In 1946 the All-America Football Conference (AAFC) was established as a rival to the NFL. The most powerful team in the new league was the Cleveland Browns, coached by football innovator Paul Brown. The AAFC Browns and the NFL Los Angeles Rams integrated pro football in 1946 by signing two African-American players each in the year before Jackie Robinson integrated Major League Baseball.

In 1950 the Cleveland Browns, San Francisco 49ers, and Baltimore Colts joined the NFL in a merger of the two leagues. The move ushered in a period of popularity and prosperity, but things really took off for the NFL with the advent of television. In 1956 the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) began to broadcast select games. The 1958 NFL championship game between the Baltimore Colts and the New York Giants was won by the Colts in overtime, in what many observers still call the greatest game ever played. The marriage of television and football reaped immediate rewards, boosting national interest and overall appreciation for the league and the sport.

Seeing that a profit could be made from professional football, Texas businessman Lamar Hunt and Bud Adams formed the American Football League (AFL) in 1960 as a rival to the NFL. The two leagues fought bitterly for players, media attention, and profits, before ultimately agreeing on a merger plan in 1966. The first AFL-NFL World Championship Game, later renamed Super Bowl I, featured the AFL-champion Chiefs and the NFL-champion Packers, and was played in January 1967. In 1970 the leagues formed into two 13-team conferences under the NFL name. Today, the NFL has grown to 32 clubs and has become America's biggest and most popular sports league.

The 2004 season is the NFL's 85th, and the health of the game has never been better. The League set a paid-attendance record with 16,913,944 tickets sold during the 2003 regular season, a record 66,329 per game. The NFL's top-five paid-attendance marks for a season have come in the last five years. And according to the



Fantasy Sports Trade Association, over 12 million Americans — including 3.5 million women — played fantasy football in 2003.

## THE PRODUCT

It's easy to see why fans are turning out in droves: the NFL can boast of labor peace, an unprecedented number of close games and comeback victories, and a remarkable level of athletic skill. And the product is more than just football. Teams throughout the league have made it a priority to turn NFL games into events, whether through family fun zones or interactive theme parks. To stay relevant amid constant flux in how Americans like to spend their leisure time, the NFL has assisted teams in renovating or building new stadiums; 22 have been built recently or are on target to open in 2004. The NFL's expansion from 28 to 32 teams in the past decade has reinvigorated an already extraordinarily healthy brand.

For those NFL fans who still need more, the league has found the answer: NFL Network, the first 24-hour television channel dedicated solely to the NFL and the sport of football. NFL Network is the gathering place for everything NFL and the great game that generates so much passion among millions of fans. NFL Network's unique access takes fans inside the game like no network has previously done, and NFL Films' 100 million feet of NFL footage plays an equally integral role in the network's programming.

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The NFL recently kicked off a new public service campaign as part of the league's ongoing commitment to making a difference. Via the Join the Team platform, the league, its sponsors, and its nonprofit partners present programs, events, and public service announcements that encourage people to become involved in communities across America. Whether mentoring a child, helping to build a home for someone in need, or coaching a youth football team, the NFL actively encourages its fans to make a contribution in their neighborhoods.

## PROMOTION

The unwavering fan commitment to the NFL is perhaps exceeded only by the NFL and the United Way's commitment to civic engagement. For 30



seasons, the NFL has provided in-game airtime at no cost to the United Way in the longest-running public-service ad campaign in television history. When the NFL first began airing the spots in 1974, contributions to the United Way totaled about \$800 million annually. Today, that figure has soared to \$3.77 billion. Teams and players also support local United Way organizations

through personal appearances, joint programs, and fund-raising contributions. Each year, the United Way and the NFL partner to support the Hometown Huddle, a nationwide day of giving where local United Way groups, NFL clubs, and players participate in a variety of hands-on volunteer projects.

But the NFL's dedication to giving back to the communities that have helped the brand become one of America's greatest doesn't end there. NFL Charities, formed in 1973 by the NFL's member clubs, has donated more than \$80 million to more than 300 organizations since its inception.

The NFL is also highly involved in youth outreach programs. The NFL Youth Football Fund is a nonprofit foundation run by the NFL and the NFL Players Association to support youth development and ensure the future health of the game.

In addition, the NFL has created several other programs aimed at introducing kids to football while teaching the importance of teamwork, trust, and responsibility.

**join the team**



## BRAND VALUES

By any measure, the NFL is unquestionably America's favorite and most respected sports league. But numbers alone don't tell the story.

In a world in which people are doing more with less time, the NFL builds bridges between generations and serves as a unifying force for friends and families, colleagues and communities. The fans' personal and shared involvement with the brand inspires an emotional and social connection that brings people together.

The NFL brand represents so much more than the game itself. The NFL is about heroes and superhuman feats on the field. The NFL is about tradition and ritual. The NFL is about honor, respect, teamwork, and sportsmanship. America's love of the NFL comes from the fact that the NFL brand reflects and celebrates the deep-seated values that Americans hold dear.

## THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

- NFL Monday Night Football is the longest-running prime-time entertainment series in television history (35 years).
- Super Bowl XXXVIII was telecast in 229 countries and territories, including Djibouti, Guadeloupe, Kosrae, Reunion, and Zambia.
- In a 2004 Harris Poll, Green Bay Packers quarterback Brett Favre was named the most popular active team sport player in America.
- Gatorade terms its location on NFL sidelines as the "most valuable real estate in sports."
- Thirty-six footballs are prepared for each NFL game.

