Leagues soar in popularity

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so much on the line, fantasy owners manage their teams, search the waiver wire, research players, read injury reports — the list of tasks goes on and on.

“An hour-and-a-half to two hours,” Gamble said when asked how many hours per day he spends managing his three different fantasy teams.

“I have four teams so I spend at least 30 minutes every day,” Chan said. “If not, then a whole hour.

With NFL games being played on Monday and Thursday, the waiver period on Tuesday and free agency the other days, fantasy football conflicts with the school schedules of students.

“I can’t check in my psychology class because there’s no (cell) signal, but in my speech class I check my phone and my fantasy team,” Gamble said.

“I used to have a night class on Thursdays and I checked my team at least twice,” Jannu said. “I would rush home after class to check my team.”

The Chicago Tribune estimates that fantasy football has cost employers up to $13 billion due to the lack of productivity.

As much as everybody wants to win their fantasy leagues, the actual participation and interaction, on top of winning, makes the experience memorable for league members.

“I play fantasy football because it’s a great way to bond with friends and family,” said Ariel Leary, who went to Ohlone from 1994 to 1996. “It’s fun competition and I love football.”

Leary has been in the UCLS Legends fantasy football league since its creation during the 1997-98 season, and is a two-time champion.

“The small things like team names, bad trades or draft picks, the memorable games and, in Gamble’s league, the punishments, help keep players involved every year.”

“We make bets every year,” said Gamble, who’s been in his father’s Redzone Rampage fantasy league since he was 12.

Some of the losers had to wear Speedos during drafts or post a humiliating Facebook video — that included a Popsicle.

Fantasy football’s newest types of leagues: the daily or weekly leagues on Draft Kings and Fan Duel have lured more fantasy fanatics with an opportunity to make money every week rather than once a season.

“It’s getting bigger,” said Sahota. “I see commercials all over TV about daily leagues.”

Gamble added, “In five years I think fantasy football will gain in popularity and more sites will make fantasy football-type games such as Draft Kings and Fan Duel.”

Fantasy football is evolving: between all the money and shows like FX’s “The League,” which bridges the game with a mainstream audience.

When it comes down to it, fantasy football isn’t just about the money. “There’s nothing better than bragging rights,” Chan said.

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-Ariel Leary

The top three teams since 2001 in the UCLS Legends fantasy football league. The league started during the 1997-98 season, and was conducted offline before using the Internet.