

Corporate structure

The National Football League is an unincorporated nonprofit 501(c)(6) association, meaning its league office is not subject to income tax because it does not make a profit. In contrast, each individual team (except the non-profit Green Bay Packers) is subject to tax because they make a profit. The NFL considers itself a trade association made up of and financed by its 32 member teams.

{corp1.jpg} / NFL commissioner

The league has three defined officers: the commissioner, secretary, and treasurer. Each conference has one officer, the president. The commissioner is elected by affirmative vote of two-thirds or 18 (whichever is greater) of the members of the league, while the president of each conference is elected by an affirmative vote of three-fourths or ten of the conference members. The commissioner appoints the secretary and treasurer and has broad authority in disputes between clubs, players, coaches, and employees. He is the “principal executive officer” of the NFL and also has authority in hiring league employees, negotiating television contracts, disciplining individuals that own part or all of an NFL team, clubs, or employed individuals of an NFL club if they have violated league bylaws or committed “conduct detrimental to the welfare of the League or professional football”. The commissioner can, in the event of misconduct by a party associated with the league, suspend individuals, hand down a fine of up to US\$500,000, cancel contracts with the league, and award or strip teams of draft picks.

In extremely egregious cases, the commissioner can offer recommendations to the NFL’s Executive Committee up to and including the “cancellation or forfeiture” of a club’s franchise or any other action he deems necessary. The commissioner can also issue sanctions up to and including a lifetime ban from the league if an individual connected to the NFL has bet on games or failed to notify the league of conspiracies or plans to bet on or fix games. The current Commissioner of the National Football League is Roger Goodell, who was elected in 2006 after Paul Tagliabue, the previous commissioner, retired.

{SIDEBAR CONTENT}

The Baltimore Ravens are named after Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Raven.”

The name was chosen in 1996 from the results of a poll conducted by the Baltimore Sun. Poe wrote this, one of his most famous poems, while living in Baltimore back in the 1830s. The teams mascots are even named Edgar, Allan, and Poe!