**Committee: National Football League 2016**

**Team: Denver Broncos**

**Represented by: Jonah Feng, Sir Winston Churchill High School**

**Topic 1: Expansion**

The Denver Broncos have had a place in the hearts of the people of the United States since the times when there were two football leagues; the American Football League (AFL) and the National Football League (NFL). In doing so, it has gained a place in the history of American pastime. As the League is expected to expand from its current 32 teams to 34 within the coming years, the Broncos would look favorably upon the formation of international franchises and less upon expansion in the United States.

Ever since the merger in June 8, 1966 between the NFL and the AFL, football increasingly has grown in popularity. However in this ever-growing age of globalization, staying constrained to U.S. soil is simply doing more harm than good. Therefore, the Broncos believe that London, U.K. and Toronto, Canada should be the NFL’s primary choices when looking for possible locations of expansion. Not only are the markets saturated, they are indeed ripe for the picking. Previous trials in London, such as the NFL International Series, have been extremely successful. With Wembley Stadium as the exclusive venue, every game has been, or has been close to sold out, with the latest being 84,448 tickets sold on October 30th, 2016, when the Washington Redskins faced the Cincinnati Bengals. This single game attendance currently beats all but one team in the NFL: the Dallas Cowboys. Toronto should also be a very viable location for the establishment of a new franchise. This city hosts the highest percentage of NFL fans (16%) in any possible expansion market and has been exposed to football through both the Canadian Football League (CFL) and the Bills Toronto Series in 2006. Previous expansions into Toronto have worked quite well for other' American' Leagues. With both the National Basketball Association (NBA) and Major League Baseball (MLB) expanding into Toronto in 1995 and 1976 respectively, Toronto proves to be a suitable location for the expansion of an NFL franchise.

While not as favorable, the Denver Broncos would suggest Memphis as a local alternative. The city of Memphis has prior experience with the NFL and stands to become a very strong market. Memphis has sent proposals to the NFL twice before: the Southmen in 1975 and the Hound Dogs in 1993. Unfortunately the proposals were rejected and thus they remained without a team until 2001 and the establishment of a NBA franchise; the Memphis Grizzlies. However, the city has yet to have an NFL franchise and their history has left Memphis yearning for a team to call their own.

The Denver Broncos would like to see the establishment of franchises in international locations to reach a broader market. Such locations include Toronto, Canada and London, U.K. These cities both host a large populous and have historically reacted more than positively towards the NFL and can become major cornerstones in their respective countries for future expansions. Such markets are currently untapped by the NFL and have great potential.

**Topic 2: Concussions and Head Safety**

Player safety is a major value that the Denver Broncos hold dear and Denver believes that by not fully accepting the circumstances around the violent state of football, the hard fought image and integrity of both the NFL and the Broncos will become ruined. The NFL cannot become the next tobacco company, which disregarded the health of millions over decades. Denver asks for the NFL to become more stringent with their current rules concerning player health and safety and to increase testing of possible concussions.

In every season, there have been helmet to helmet hits that have been ignored or have gone unnoticed by the referees. Hits pile up and the brains of those players cannot recover. The Broncos ask for an increase in the amount of referees on the field at any given time from 7 to 8, along with an increase of training for said referees to better determine head to head contact along with an increase possible reprimands to the referees for ignoring such calls. Concussion testing should also be routine and done by a third-party to limit possible mental health hazards.

Alternatively, the Broncos ask for the NFL to promote the tackling style adopted by Pete Carroll and the Seattle Seahawks in 2014 from the sport of rugby which focuses on initial contact with the shoulders and not the head. In the period of 3 years, only four Seahawks defensive players have sustained reported concussions. Only three teams have had fewer, with the league average has been 7.03. This style of tackling is safer than the regular way and can prevent further injury to both the NFL's current and future players.

The Denver Broncos believe that the NFL needs to be stricter with their health policies and guidelines. This can be done by an increase in the number of referees on the field to detect possible head to head contact as well as routine concussion testing throughout the league to locate players who are hiding possible concussions. Alternatively, the NFL can support the use of the "rugby-style" form of tackling, which has been proven to safer and lower the risk of cranial injuries.

**Topic 3: Players and Criminal Offences**

While there are cases of substance abuse in the NFL, the most prominent issue that is plaguing the League is domestic abuse and its related incidents. There were 56 instances in the period of 2006-2014. While dealt with by both the team and the NFL as a whole, the results have still been met with much scrutiny. The Broncos believe that is it the League that has been too light with the reprimands rather than the teams within the organization, and calls for a increase in severity for players who are guilty of such acts. Moreover, the Broncos want the NFL to follow the domestic policy set out in 2014.

The NFL has had often given out large suspensions, only to dwindle the suspension down to 2 or 3 games once the player has appealed. This results in the NFL being portrayed as being lenient towards domestic violence and affects how the public views the organization in a negative manner. The Broncos want the NFL to hold players more accountable for their actions by sustaining and following the domestic violence disciplinary policies crafted by Commissioner Goodell in 2014, where first-time offenders are suspended for six games, and a second offense results in a lifetime ban from the NFL. The continual ignorance of this policy by the League creates tension and negative emotions that echo throughout the football community.

The Denver Broncos are no strangers to such cases, as Denver once led the League with 10 domestic violence-related arrests from the period of 2006-2014. While only three total games' worth of suspensions were given out by the NFL, the players that were affiliated with the cases were either dropped or handed severe penalties by the team. Other consequences can include a no tolerance, where any player found guilty of such offences are banned from the NFL for a lifetime, with subject to appeal after one calendar year.

The Broncos believe that domestic violence is a major problem haunting the NFL and calls for a stricter NFL in regards to the players associated with such cases. In regards to the player’s punishment, the domestic violence policies should be followed and sustained in all offenders. Another alternative is to have a "zero-tolerance" rule in the NFL, where any player found guilty of domestic abuse is subject to being banned from the NFL for the player’s lifetime, with being able to appeal after one year of the sentence.

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