Topic: League Expansion

Committee: National Football League

Delegation: New England Patriots

Delegate: Keerthi Martyn

The NFL is one of the four major professional sports leagues in North America and the richest sports league in the world. Generating a total league revenue of $12 billion, the NFL is always looking to expand its markets both nationally and internationally. (Fox sports, 2016) Top international prospects include London, Toronto, and Mexico City while top prospects within the United States include Las Vegas, San Antonio, Portland, and Oklahoma City.

Various logistical concerns have been raised in regards to placing a team internationally such as in London, the primary concern being of jet lag, which, coupled with player fatigue could have a negative impact on athletic performance, health, and viewership. (ESPN,2014) However, NFL games in London always sell out as there is a significant NFL fan base in the city. Putting a team there would require altering the schedule but could be helpful to television viewership thus generating more money for the league. (Nfl.com,2016) And although there are ever present security concerns and an obvious language barrier of putting a team in Mexico City, the stable economic conditions, and the fact that it has the 7th most NFL fan s of any metropolitan in the world, contribute to the fact that the NFL would benefit from placing a team in Mexico. The new NFL TV deal is by far the greatest contributor to the rising league revenue and viewership, with the 32 teams generating a total of $3 billion dollars in profit. The sustainment and improvement of this deal is a large contributing factor the success of international expansion. (Foxbusinness.com,2016)

The Patriots are eager to expand the NFL internationally as the games that they have played in London have had the largest fan attendances of any international NFL games with 84,254 fans in attendance for a 2009 game played against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and 84,004 fans for a 2012 game against the then Saint Louis Rams. In a recent interview with Patriots President Jonathan Kraft he claimed: “ We are very interested in expanding our fan base overseas, we feel that it is not only important to our team but for the league, to extend the love of the game of football all over the world.” The Patriots in fact opened an office in Beijing in 2007 but was forced to close it down as the NFL strictly restricts teams from going out and aggressively trying to market themselves. They see international expansion as one that the league itself should market and fans around the world should choose who they should support. The Patriots have 80 fan bases around the world, the largest are being Beijing, Israel, and London. (Patriots.com, 2016)

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Topic: Concussions and Head Safety

Committee: National Football League

Delegation: New England Patriots

Delegate: Keerthi Martyn

The Mayo Clinic defines a concussion as: “ A traumatic brain injury that alters the way your brain functions.” (Mayo clinic, 2016) Referred to by the scientific community as mild traumatic brain injury, or mTBI, concussions have played a huge role in the NFL and have caused great medical concerns and has forced the implementation of concussion policies. Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy is a neurodegenerative disease that is a result of repeated head trauma and it causes various health complications such as memory loss, confusion, impaired judgment, impulse control problems, aggression, depression, and dementia. (Concussionfoundation.org)

The NFL recently added new rules to its concussion protocol which includes the possibility of fines of hundreds of thousands of dollars and possibly the loss of draft picks if they fail to take players out of the game after they have sustained a concussion. Under the new rules, the NFL and the players union have agreed that they will each appoint a person to monitor games to ensure that players are tested for concussions. (NFLplayers.com, 2016) They have also established a committee to review the surface of playing fields in order to reduce the impact of injuries. Various players in the players union have stated that they preferred playing on natural grass rather than on turf because turf tends to be too hard. (Washingtonpost.com,2016) The NFL is also expanding its protocol to focus on defenseless players, who are unable to sufficiently defend themselves from being hit. By placing a focus on defenseless players, the NFL hopes to boost its image in an issue that has drawn much scrutiny in recent years. Part of which includes a social media outlet that can be used to raise awareness of the issue.

After losing former Patriot and NFL hall of famer, Junior Seau from CTE induced suicide, the Patriots have worked closely with the NFL to develop its concussion protocol but believes that it is in great need of reform to maintain a proper balance of reducing the amount of injuries without imposing exceedingly harsh punishments on players and teams. The Patriots have their own programs in place already that help deal with education of mTBI and CTE and have worked with the NFL to discuss any legal and medical aspects that can be addressed league wide. (Boston.com, 2016)

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Topic: Players and Criminal Offenses

Committee: National Football League

Delegation: New England Patriots

Delegate: Keerthi Martyn

Recently, the NFL has received much attention over its handling of the NFL players and criminal offenses such as domestic violence and substance abuse. The standard of conduct portion of the NFL Personal Conduct Policy states that “criminal offenses [include], but [are] not limited to, those involving: the use or threat of violence; domestic violence and other forms of partner abuse; theft and other property crimes; sex offenses; obstruction or resisting arrest; disorderly conduct; fraud; racketeering; and money laundering.” (Nfl.com) The league has taken various steps to help mitigate the issue by providing funds for education, treatment and evaluation programs, and proper investigations by law enforcement agencies or other individual investigations. (CNN, 2016) The NFL also has two different policies on substance abuse, the “National Football League Policy and Anabolic Steroids and Related Substances” and the “ National Football League Policy and Program for Substance Abuse. (bleacherreport.com, 2016) In a 2012 settlement with the players union, all drug tests administered by the league are urine tests but the league can randomly test ten players from the start of the season to the end of the postseason and six different times during the preseason. (nflpa.com, 2016)

The Patriots believe that the current NFL substance abuse and domestic violence abuse policies need to be revised and improved upon greatly. Part of this stems from the 2015 ruling of Dallas Cowboys player Greg Hardy, who was originally given a ten-game suspension but eventually this was reduced down to four games. (Yahoo.com, 2015)The fact that Hardy was convicted for threatening and assaulting his ex girlfriend and suspended for only four games and the fact that Patriots quarterback Tom Brady was suspended for four games for “Probably” knowing about deflated footballs is an absolute absurdity that should’ve been addressed. Like with the leagues concussion policies, the Patriots believe that there should be a proper balance in dealing with the issue of criminal violence. The NFL should take a more proactive stance to reduce the amount of domestic violence and substance abuse cases that mar the league’s image but also not take too harsh of a stance, which will also hurt the league’s image.

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