

Nonprofits to NFL: Stop pushing fantasy sports on kids

BOSTON (AP)—The National Football League should stop offering fantasy sports competitions to children because the games could lead some young sports fans down the path of gambling addiction, two nonprofit groups said in letters sent to Commissioner Roger Goodell.

The two groups — the National Council on Problem Gambling and the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood — said in letters Wednesday that the NFL “aggressively marketed” a fantasy sports game on “NFL Rush,” its website and smartphone app for children, as well as on SIKids.com, Sports Illustrated’s website for children, and through an elementary school curriculum based on the contest.

The weekly “NFL Rush Fantasy” games ran throughout the football season and were open to children ages 6 to 12. Each week, an Xbox One console and Madden NFL 2016 video game was awarded to the contest’s top performer.

The two contest participants with the highest number of points at the end of the 17-week promotion also won a \$5,000 check — which the league called a “scholarship” — plus a four-night trip to Hawaii to attend the Jan. 31 Pro Bowl game with up to two guests.

Like typical fantasy sports contests, the games required the young players to pick teams of real life athletes in order to rack up “fantasy” points based on how well those athletes did in games.

Keith Whyte, executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based National Council on Problem Gambling, wrote in his letter to Goodell that the contests “may encourage children to spend excessive amounts of time trying to win these prizes, thus planting the seeds of addiction.”

Josh Golin, executive director of the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, a Boston-based group that opposes child-targeted marketing, called the league’s fantasy sports-based curriculum “particularly egregious.”

“NFL Rush Fantasy — Learn, Play, Score!” was a math and language arts program that required students to sign up for the NFL’s fantasy football game in order to access lesson materials and complete assignments.

“Educators should not be called upon to assist the NFL in promoting an activity which is potentially harmful and addictive when engaged in by children,” Golin wrote to Goodell.

NFL spokesman Brian McCarthy, in

response to questions from The Associated Press, said the curriculum initiative ended after the 2014 season. He declined to provide further details.

Of concerns about the contest, McCarthy said parents had to provide consent before their children could play the games.

He also maintained that the contest, which just completed its seventh year, is more like the free, season-long fantasy sports games familiar to many Americans than the daily versions that have increasingly come under scrutiny from some policymakers as illegal sports betting operations.

“Whether or not it constitutes daily fantasy sports, there is the bigger issue that it indoctrinates young children into a potentially harmful and addictive behavior,” David Monahan, of the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, responded.

In its five-page letter to Goodell, the campaign also suggested the contest’s parental consent was easy to circumvent.

The NFL asked each child to provide an email address of a parent or guardian so it could send them a form to verify their child’s age and permission to play for prizes.

Coogler, DuVernay to attend Flint event on Oscar night

LOS ANGELES (AP) — “Creed” director Ryan Coogler, Ava DuVernay, Janelle Monae and other Hollywood celebrities have big plans for Oscar night. But they have nothing to do with the Academy Awards. Coogler and company will be 2,300 miles away in Flint, Michigan, participating in a benefit for residents affected by the town’s lead-contaminated water crisis.

DuVernay, Monae and others tweeted Tuesday about their involvement in the Sunday night event, which is being called #JusticeForFlint. Hosted by comedian Hannibal Buress, the free show will serve as both a fundraiser and an awareness campaign, complete with performances and testimonials. Revolt.tv plans to stream it live.

About the same time on Sunday night, Coogler’s

“Creed” is a favorite to win the best supporting actor Oscar for Sylvester Stallone’s reprise of his iconic Rocky character. It was the sole nomination for the critically acclaimed film, which many saw as yet another example of how the film academy is out of step with today’s audiences.

This year’s Academy Awards are again embroiled in a diversity crisis stemming from a second straight year of all-white acting nominees, now symbolized by the Twitter hashtag #OscarsSoWhite. Outrage over the Oscars’ all-white slates has included calls for a boycott of the ceremony from Hollywood notables like Will Smith and wife Jada Pinkett Smith, and it prompted the academy to announce sweeping changes to their membership rules.

Television > Today’s highlights



Viola Davis stars in “How to Get Away With Murder”

The 100 WPIX 6:00 p.m.

As a mysterious threat brews, Clarke (Eliza Taylor) is torn between revenge and mercy in this new episode. Elsewhere, Kane (Henry Ian Cusick) and Octavia (Marie Avgeropoulos) struggle to prevent a disaster.

You, Me and the Apocalypse KNDU KGW 8:00 p.m.

Layla’s (Karla Crome) past comes back to haunt Jamie (Mathew Baynton), who’s forced to confront a disturbing truth about his wife in this new episode. Elsewhere, a potential messiah unearths Celine (Gaia Scodellaro) and Jude’s (Rob Lowe) true feelings.

Grey’s Anatomy KVEW KATU 8:00 p.m.

In this new episode, a series of flashbacks trace the evolution of April (Sarah Drew) and Jackson’s (Jesse Williams) relationship from their very first meeting. At the same time, one of Jackson’s patients is followed for several years.

Life in Pieces KEPR KOIN 8:30 p.m.

Family members share beautiful, hilarious and sometimes awkward moments in this ensemble comedy. Dianne Wiest and James Brolin lead the cast as adoring matriarch Joan and gregarious patriarch John. Colin Hanks and Betsy Brandt also star.

The Blacklist KNDU KGW 9:00 p.m.

Red (James Spader) and Liz (Megan Boone) investigate the murder of a State Department official whose body was found in Beijing in this new episode. They trace the evidence to an individual known as “The Caretaker.”

Project Runway: All Stars LIFE 9:00 p.m.

Country music super group Little Big Town make a special appearance in this new episode. They team up with the designers to come up with “opposites attract” red carpet gowns for the Academy of Country Music Awards.

How to Get Away With Murder KVEW KATU 10:00 p.m.

SAG Award winner Viola Davis stars as Annalise Keating, a top-notch criminal defense attorney who also teaches law at Middleton University. The critically acclaimed drama also stars Alfred Enoch, Matt McGorry, Jack Falahee, Aja Naomi King and Karla Souza.

Talk shows

- 6:00 a.m. KVEW Good Morning Northwest
6:30 a.m. KVEW Good Morning Northwest
7:00 a.m. KEPR KOIN CBS This Morning
7:30 a.m. LIFE The Balancing Act
8:00 a.m. WPIX The Jerry Springer Show
9:00 a.m. KEPR The Meredith Vieira Show
9:30 a.m. KNDU KGW Today Show II
10:00 a.m. KNDU KGW Today Show III
11:00 a.m. KNDU The Wendy Williams Show
11:30 a.m. KGW The Dr. Oz Show
12:30 a.m. KATU Live! With Kelly and Michael
Noon KPTV The Rachael Ray Show
KTNW Charlie Rose State leaders

- and others reflect on African American accomplishments in the nation.
KVEW KATU The Chew
WPIX The Steve Wilkos Show
KPTV The Wendy Williams Show
KEPR KOIN The Talk
OPB Charlie Rose State leaders
WPIX Maury
KPTV The Real KGW
KVEW The Doctors
KATU The Meredith Vieira Show
KEPR KOIN Dr. Phil
KATU The Ellen DeGeneres Show
KVEW The Rachael Ray Show
KATU Steve Harvey
KNDU The Ellen DeGeneres Show
KVEW FABLife
HBO Last Week Tonight With John Oliver
KTNW Charlie Rose
TBS Conan Conan’s guests are Kate Hudson, Robert Patrick and Lake Street Dive.
KVEW Jimmy Kimmel Live
KEPR KOIN The Late Show With Stephen Colbert
KNDU KGW The Tonight Show
TBS Full Frontal With Samantha Bee
TBS Conan Conan’s guests are Kate Hudson, Robert Patrick and Lake Street Dive.

Thursday Morning

Table with columns for Station, Time, and Program. Includes programs like Friends, Animals, Paid, The Office, Mother, Law & Order: C.I., etc.

AFTERNOON

Table with columns for Station, Time, and Program. Includes programs like Pat. Court, Divorce, Judge Mathis, The People’s Court, etc.

EVENING

Table with columns for Station, Time, and Program. Includes programs like Modern Family, 2 Broke Girls, American Idol, etc.

Table with columns for Station, Time, and Program. Includes programs like The First 48, The Patriot, Party Down South, etc.

NIGHT OWL

Table with columns for Station, Time, and Program. Includes programs like AngerM., TMZ, Dish, etc.