

SPORTSJUDGE.COM
COURT OF FANTASY FOOTBALL

-----	X	Index No. 4111-T
COMMISSIONER RICH R.	:	Date: September 3, 2009
	:	League Type: FOOTBALL – H2H
Petitioner,	:	Dispute: TRADE DISPUTE
	:	Chief Justice: MARC EDELMAN
- against -	:	Deputy Justices: JOE ROMANO,
	:	BRETT SMILEY
STORM & SOUV PARM	:	
	:	COURT PARTIALLY REVERSES
Respondent	:	TRADE, AND ORDERS A BIDDING
-----	X	PROCESS FOR DEANGELO
		WILLIAMS’S SERVICES

Edelman, C.J.

BACKGROUND

The SportsJudge.com Court of Fantasy Football was asked to issue a preliminary injunction, enjoining the trade of DeAngelo Williams from Team Storm to Souv Parm in exchange for what the league refers to as “Souv Parm’s second-round draft pick.”¹

This court spent substantial time analyzing this trade, and we are not altogether comfortable with it, in light of the evidence available. Indeed, this trade lies right on the fringe of acceptance and rejection.²

Therefore, the court partially reverses the trade, ordering a bidding process for DeAngelo Williams’s services as set forth below.

THE LAW ON REVIEWING A TRADE

The general rule of the SportsJudge.com Court of Fantasy Football is to uphold any trade that could reasonably benefit both teams. *See Big Red Rockers v. Big City Bombers, Index No. 101* (August 14, 2004). In examining whether a team derives some benefit from a trade, the standard requires the Court to consider not only the quality of the players, but also the context of the trade. *See generally Team Anadrol v. Vegas Baby & Flathead Yankees, Index No. 955-C* (Nov. 4, 2007)

¹ As explained later in this opinion, the league’s keeper format slightly deflates the value of this pick.

² The court is merely making objective evaluations of a trade of this nature based on past experience, and is not making any assessing of the actual subjective intent of the parties.

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The reason for this standard is not to take away team's rights to make independent decisions, but rather to ensure the sanctity of the game itself. Indeed, on various occasions, the SportsJudge.com Courts of Fantasy Sports has explained as follows:

It is the overarching principle of fantasy sports that each contestant's objective is to maximize his own performance. If this principle were rejected, fantasy sports—which involves sophisticated games of negotiation, prognostication and statistics—would deteriorate into nothing more than near-Ponzi schemes of side-dealing, trickery and deceit. This transformation would be a death-blow to the game of fantasy baseball, because few contestants would ever want to compete in a game where a seemingly hard-earned victory could be stripped away by a last-minute side arrangement.

See, e.g., Mike D. v. Sweaty Balls & Jew Daddys, Index No. 3184-T (June 2, 2009).

TRADE ANALYSIS

According to most fantasy football websites, DeAngelo Williams is either the No. 4 or No. 5 ranked player on the draft board. From the hundreds of leagues we have observed, we have seen Williams selected as early as No. 3 and as late as No. 9. Nevertheless, each league has different rules, and it is really the rules, more than anything else, that affect a player's value.

In this particular league, teams earn 1 point for every 10 yards rushing or receiving, as well as 1 point per reception. This makes the particular league very highly skewed toward receptions. In other words, a player that rushes for 100 yards and 0 touchdowns is of equal value to a player that catches 5 passes for 50 yards and 0 touchdowns.

Last season, DeAngelo Williams only caught 22 passes. Without running the numbers of every particular player, the heavy reception focus in this league seems to deflate Williams's value in this particular league as compared to other more traditional leagues, where receptions are valued at 0, .25, or .50.

Souv Parm's second round pick meanwhile is the no. 14 pick in the draft. Based on the way keepers work in this particular league, four players are already off the board that would normally go in this pick range (Michael Turner, Matt Forte, Steve Slaton & Deangelo Williams). Thus, what this league is calling a No. 14 pick is really the caliber of a No. 18 pick for a league starting from scratch.

Based on the views of our entire SportsJudge team, the prospect of Williams lasting until a No. 18 pick in a from-scratch draft, even in a league that values receptions as highly as this league, would be highly surprising. On the other hand, however, nobody would have cried foul play had Storm not protected Williams. By protecting Williams and then trading him, the Storm converted Williams from a third-round pick (the penalty price for keeping him) into a second. In addition, it would not be fair to force the Storm to keep Williams on their roster. A big part of the run of fantasy sports is allowing teams to develop their own strategy. Many legitimate reasons, short of collusion, may exist for the Storm wanting to rid themselves of Williams, such

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as, for example, the Storm may want to try to draft a running back in late rounds again so that the team will have a keeper.

While this court has no problem allowing Storm to rid itself of Williams, given the amount of money this league entails (\$500 entry fee), this league is hesitant to allow Souv Parm to acquire Williams at the current price, presuming there are teams out there willing to pay significantly more.

While it is generally not the view of the court to require a team to accept the best possible offer because two offers of players are not directly comparable, when all teams are trading draft picks, the lay of the land is different. Indeed, no team acquired draft picks through any special form of ingenuity or selection talent. Draft picks are fungible (other than their order number). And, at this stage of the season, giving a player to a substantially higher bidder would prevent even the appearances of impropriety.

RULING

Thus, below is the ruling of the court:

(1) Upon rendering this opinion, any club wishing to acquire DeAngelo Williams for a first round draft pick (and only a first round draft pick) has 24 hours to post a BID of their first round draft pick on the league website.

(2) The club that makes the highest BID for Williams (meaning has the highest first round pick) will tentatively acquire DeAngelo Williams for their first round draft pick.

(3) At the conclusion of the bidding process, the following will happen:

(A) If no first round bids for Williams are made, Souv Parm acquires Williams in exchange for his second round pick (meaning the trade stands in its original form).

(B) If any team offers a first round pick, Souv Parm will have 24 hours to choose among the following two options:

(1) Acquire Williams from Storm in exchange for his first round pick (rather than his second); OR

(2) Allow Williams to pass to the team that made the highest bid in the auction.