

Effects of Creative Social Media Video Content on XFL Fan Engagement

An Experiment of Arlington Renegades' TikTok

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	3
Introduction	4
Research Question & Hypothesis	5
Methodology	6
Qualitative	7
Secondary Research	7
Overview.....	7
Issues.....	8
Law & Policy	11
Key Voices.....	16
Academic Literature.....	19
SWOT Analysis	23
In-depth Interviews	24
Observation	30
Focus Group	33
Quantitative	39
Convenience Survey	39
Results	43
Discussion	44
Professional Recommendations	46
Limitations and Future Research	48
Conclusion	51

Appendix	52
A. Focus Group Transcript	52
B. Survey Questions	60
C. Survey Crosstabs	66
References	75

Abstract

If you aren't online, do you even exist? As social media increases as a vehicle for information and communication within everyday life, the need for brands and organizations to establish themselves as the media masses grows. This is especially the case in sports, where success relies on the fans and followers.

We conducted research set out to discover strategies for the XFL's Arlington Renegades to adapt and develop their TikTok content, thus generating fan recognition and involvement. Before conducting research, we hypothesized that if the Arlington Renegades were able to build off of TikTok microtrends, interactive capabilities, and extensive consumer base, there would be growth in their fanbase.

This research project began with secondary research and was further extended through primary data collection using qualitative and quantitative methods, including in-depth interviews, a five-person focus group, and an experiment delivered via a survey instrument. Through these means, we found strong correlations between the presence, interaction, and diversity of content posted by football teams on social media to grow and develop a successful fanbase.

Introduction

After COVID-19-related setbacks, the third iteration of the XFL launched after the NFL Super Bowl in 2023. The league's objectives are to bring a more fast-paced and fan-friendly environment to football, and will also explore innovative gameplay rules, policies, and player safety regulations that could potentially be implemented in the NFL (About the XFL, 2023).

TikTok's user-friendly interface and personalized content algorithm have allowed it to become one of the most popular apps in the world. Creating viral content and reaching fanbases has never been easier- and many sports teams have drawn online audiences that easily translate into dedicated in-person fanship and tangible revenue. As the headquarter team, the Arlington Renegades have a unique opportunity to spearhead the XFL's social media presence.

Our research seeks to equip the Arlington Renegades social media team with media knowledge to generate more online fan involvement. In our quantitative and secondary research, we were able to identify favored content types throughout different demographics, as well as opportunities in which the XFL's content can differentiate itself from the NFL's online brand. This data points out specific visual and audio elements and stresses the importance of intentional content production choices to improve fan experiences.

Through focus groups and surveys, we identify the ways that fan involvement fluctuates, identifying trends within demographics, gender identities, age ranges, and income, among other key categories. With our unique research design - a rank system A-B testing technique - we gained valuable fan insight using existing XFL content, which will guide for creating content catered to the public's interests regardless of their allegiance to any team or football in general.

Research Questions & Hypothesis

As our group has been conducting secondary research, we have noticed the importance of branding within the XFL's social media presence. The colors, uniforms, graphics and music all combine to create a unified fanbase and significant attachment to the different teams. In the case of the Arlington Renegades, we believe that the incorporation of all aspects within their TikTok profile will accentuate their prominence amongst XFL teams, as well as build a new and diverse fanbase. In order to accomplish these goals, we must consider the following research questions:

1. How can the Arlington Renegades incorporate music, graphics and graphic design, and video to build a consistent brand across all their media platforms?
2. **What strategies can the Arlington Renegades adapt to their TikTok platform to generate more fan involvement?**
3. How can the Arlington Renegades mold their social media strategies to attract specific target demographics and age groups?
4. Which areas of interest should the team feature in their social media strategies to motivate new and/or established Arlington Renegades fans to interact with the team's social media platforms more so than others?

If the Arlington Renegades can create a relationship between what it means to be a Renegades fan and the connection to Texan culture through their branding and social media presence, they will develop a larger and more devoted following quicker.

Methodology

Throughout the entirety of this project, we used a multitude of qualitative and qualitative research methods. Beginning with in-depth secondary research, followed by individual interviews and observations, and a collaborative focus group composed of five participants. Lastly, in order to retrieve qualitative and percentage data we conducted a 50-participant convenience survey.

Qualitative: Secondary Research

I. Overview

The birth of American football began with a college football match between Rutgers University and Princeton University in 1869. Stemming from rugby and soccer roots, it was not until the late 1800s that the combined rules began to transform into the rules of the sport Americans know and love today. 1892 saw the birth of professional football after the Allegheny Athletic Association defeated the Pittsburgh Athletic Association. (Nov 12)

Although the American Professional Football Association, now known as the NFL (National Football League), was formed in 1920, American football did not begin to surge in popularity until 1966, when “The Merger” formed a larger league in combination with the American Football League. (Gulizia 2019) With the consequential formation of professional teams in Houston and Dallas, football culture became especially prominent within the state of Texas. (Cherry 2022)

Being the second-largest state in the United States, both by area and population, the state of Texas is commonly associated with the phrase, “Everything’s bigger in Texas,” and that includes its football culture. (Popik 2006) Football in Texas brings together communities and people of all ages.

The XFL, initially founded in 2001, was created to allow football fans to continue enjoying the spectacle after the NFL season ended. The league initially failed due to its reliance on professional wrestling-esque gimmicks, loss of funding, and low viewership. (Solomon 2017) With its relocation from Delaware to Arlington, Texas, the XFL and the Arlington Renegades now have an opportunity to capitalize on this “Everything’s Bigger in Texas” idea.

II. Issues

NFL Dominates TikTok's US Sports Entertainment Sector

- I. Academic & Trade Literature
 - Partnership started in 2019 - increase in TikTok content creation during/after Pandemic; i.e., after the XFL shutdown
 - engagement strategy: “having its players and teams reach out to fans directly through comments on people’s posts and videos” (Campaign)
 - Using relevant/viral influencers to bolster brand creative
- II. Client Challenges & Opportunities
 - Cut through the noise: accentuate differences from NFL in creative content
 - e.g., rule changes, Dwayne Johnson, rehabilitation mission statement, local ‘Texas’ culture and community impact, etc.
 - Provide more ‘basic’/popular football TikToks
 - e.g., “Mic’d up,” post-game interview jokes/bloopers, recreating trendy TikTok dances/memes, etc.
- III. Client History & Progress
 - XFL official account (@xfl) has five TikToks posted since the 2023 relaunch
 - XFL official account and individual team accounts total <5% current engagement rate (source: hypeauditor.com)
 - Low-quality production, little-to-no graphics or design

Cheerleader Controversy

- I. Academic and Trade Literature
 - First XFL season 2001- emphasis on cheerleader sex appeal after a decline in viewership
 - Controversial commercials, cheerleaders’ sexual relationships with players, “behind-the-scenes locker room” halftime show, team media guides with detailed physical descriptions, “Who doesn't want sexy cheerleaders?”
- II. Client Challenges & Opportunities
 - Past controversy would not stand well with today’s media climate, could lead to overwhelming press overshadowing season
 - Argued that college and NFL teams do the same to their cheerleaders, could end up in the center of a national conversation
- III. Client History & Progress
 - New owners and rebrand separates past iterations from this one
 - No Cheerleaders (As of 2018 for 2020 relaunch, 2023 Season TBD)

XFL and the COVID-19 Pandemic

- I. Academic & Trade Literature
 - 2020 - After a 5-game season, the XFL suspended all operations due to the

<p>COVID-19 Pandemic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Laid off all employees except for C-Suite <p>II. Client Challenges & Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Widely publicized/funded media coverage - financial loss ○ Lost relevancy among pandemic-related news coverage and impact <p>III. Client History & Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ With no 2021 season, a thoughtful and intentional rebranding was developed ○ Teams changed logos, uniforms; Los Angeles Wildcats franchise was replaced in the league with San Antonio Brahmas, ○ Starting the 2023 season with enough information to spark fan predictions, but still excited for the ‘inaugural’ season 	<p><i>Vince McMahon Misconduct & Legal Trouble</i></p> <p>I. Academic & Trade Literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1992 - Accused of sexual assault by a former WWE Referee - settled for millions of dollars (exact amount unknown) ○ 1993 - Accused of distributing steroids to wrestlers, indicted in federal court, no charges filed ○ 2006 - Accused of sexual harassment 2006 by a Florida tanning bar employee, no charges filed ○ 2022 - Total \$ 12 million of hush settlement paid over alleged affairs and sexual misconduct with former WWE employees, investigated by WWE board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● resulted in McMahon stepping down as CEO whilst staying in content development, then returning to CEO/Chairman position six months later <p>II. Client Challenges & Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ McMahon will always be connected to the XFL brand because of its conception and execution <p>III. Client History & Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2020 McMahon declares he will not buy back the XFL in bankruptcy court filings ○ Dwayne Johnson and Dany Garcia bring new celebrity faces to the brand
<p><i>TikTok and Texas Politics</i></p> <p>I. Academic & Trade Literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Texas has banned TikTok from all government employees' state-issued devices under Governor Greg Abbott ○ National attention to data collection supervised by ByteDance Ltd., TikTok’s parent company headquartered in Beijing, and it's rumored connection to the Chinese Communist Party <p>II. Client Challenges & Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TikTok in America is the fastest-growing social media platform and has catapulted creators and businesses into the public eye by use of creative advertising ○ Reaches younger audiences and audiences that would not have previously 	

known about the league

- ‘Texas’ Pride is marketable: fostering community within the Arlington area, highlighting local businesses, leaning into “renegade”/western landscape, etc.

III. Client History & Progress

- One @xfl video from the 2020 season had 3M views and 540k likes
 - a fan-created “beer snake,” no football/XFL branding at all
- Brand inconsistency and low-quality production
 - No consistency: all varying themes: hype video, player highlight, meme, and two Black History Month features
- No team account/rivalry crossover content

III. Law & Policy

Within recent years, the continuous rise in the cost of advertising can be seen to coincide with the increase in business opportunities and the prevalence of social media. The legal space surrounding advertising and spending, specifically within the media landscape, has also progressed. The protection of consumers against false and misleading advertisements has been pushed into the spotlight. However, the rapid development of social media has also provided an excellent channel for organizations to build community and branding. When considering the NFL, social media branding has shown success in bringing fan bases together and allowing for interaction among spectators.

A. First Amendment Protection of Advertisements

The development of technology has begun to move quicker and quicker in recent years, whereas legal backing and government intervention seem to keep slowing down. The media landscape has proven too large of a task for only the executive branch or Congress to undertake. The introduction of government agencies, like the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), has been paramount to the monitoring of internet and social media activity.

Over time, the United States court has granted advertisers more First Amendment rights and protections. This development can be seen throughout the Supreme Court cases of *Valentine v Christensen*, *New York Times v Sullivan*, and *Virginia State Board of Pharmacy v Virginia Citizens Consumer Council*. Beginning in 1964, the U.S. Supreme Court established that purely commercial speech is not protected by the First Amendment in *Valentine v Christensen*. Then, in 1964, SCOTUS determined in *New York Times v Sullivan* that political and editorial advertisements were protected by the First Amendment. Lastly, the court finally gave commercial speech First Amendment protection, with limitations, in *Virginia State Board of Pharmacy v Virginia Citizens Consumer Council* in 1976.

Some of these limitations have been placed with the development of new technology and the decisions in other Supreme Court Cases. In *Zauderer v Office of Disciplinary Counsel*, SCOTUS announced that the government can legally compel commercial speech and that advertisements must contain “purely factual and uncontroversial information.” Another case that set a precedent in advertising is *Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corp. v Public Service*

Commission, this case introduced the Central Hudson Test. The Central Hudson Test explains that the government can regulate commercial speech under the First Amendment if there is substantial government interest that is directly advanced by the regulation and if the regulation is not broader than necessary to achieve the government's goal.

B. Development of Short-Video Platforms

Short-video social media platforms have been around for a long time, but none have been quite as revolutionary within the business and marketing realm as TikTok. Beginning in 2013, Vine was an American platform owned by Twitter, where users could record and share six-second-long looping videos (McLaughlin, 2013). Vine became incredibly popular, influential trends and creators began to gain followings, and advertisers began to take notice. By the end of 2015, Vine reported over 200 million regular users; however, there began to be a noticeable loss of relevance for the app (Students_Master, 2021). In 2016, Twitter officially announced that they would be deactivating the Vine app.

Within the short succession of the deactivation of Vine, another short-video platform, Musical.ly, was beginning to become popularized. Musical.ly was introduced in July 2014 by a Chinese social media company and gained users quickly (Carson, 2016). While Vine and Musical.ly overlapped in the time that they were in use, they were drastically different apps. Vine focused on short videos with humor and quick trends, whereas Musical.ly had longer videos that focused on lip-syncing and dancing. Musical.ly was very popular for a short time, reaching over 90 million registered users by June 2016 (Jennings, 2019).

After the decline of Musical.ly, the Chinese-based company, ByteDance, released an app called Douyin. The app was quick to gain traction and success within China; ultimately being released outside of mainland China in May of 2017 (ByteDance, 2023). Quickly after TikTok's release, ByteDance acquired the successful Musical.ly app for around \$1 billion, merging the two platforms in August 2018 (Jennings, 2019).

Throughout the development of the many short-video social media platforms, TikTok has grown exponentially. As of 2023, TikTok has over 1.53 billion users, 1 billion of which are active monthly, from across 154 countries (Ruby, 2023). However, due to the fact that TikTok is growing so quickly, the United States government is looking to restrict the usage of the platform amongst Americans, especially minors.

C. Musical.ly vs FTC

The Federal Trade Commission, or FTC, is a U.S. government agency designed to “enforce federal consumer protection laws that prevent fraud, deception and unfair business practices,” (FTC, 2023). The FTC is largely involved in supervising the internet and different social media platforms.

In 2019, the video-sharing social media platform, Musical.ly, which had then been absorbed by TikTok, agreed to pay \$5.7 million to the FTC due to a violation of the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act, or COPPA (FTC, 2019). According to the FTC, the operators of Musical.ly were illegally collecting the personal information of children that were using the app.

“The operators of Musical.ly—now known as TikTok—knew many children were using the app but they still failed to seek parental consent before collecting names, email addresses, and other personal information from users under the age of 13,” said FTC Chairman Joe Simons. “This record penalty should be a reminder to all online services and websites that target children: We take enforcement of COPPA very seriously, and we will not tolerate companies that flagrantly ignore the law.”

The FTC also made the public aware that the Musical.ly operators were knowledgeable of a significant percentage of users that were under the age of 13, which is against the app’s user guidelines. Many parents complained to Musical.ly about their children under 13 creating accounts, and the app failing to notify parents of the data collection of the minors (FTC, 2019).

As of 2019, Musical.ly’s settlement of \$5.7 million is the largest monetary settlement that the FTC has obtained in a COPPA case (FTC, 2019).

D. TikTok vs FTC

The Federal Trade Commission has also looked into the advertising done on TikTok. Within the past years, the FTC has updated its guidelines and added a clause that requires influencers on social media to disclose when they receive any funding in order to promote a brand, company, or organization on their feeds (Sabin, 2019). This disclosure usually comes in the form of hashtags, #ad, or #sponsored. However, due to the fact that TikTok is a short video platform, captions that disclose sponsorships tend to be less visible than on other sites like Instagram and Facebook (Sabin, 2019).

“While TikTok might be a new platform, it suffers from the same old problems that we see on other social media platforms,” [Bonnie] Patten [executive director of Truth in Advertising] said, namely the presence of influencers “who are marketing products without appropriately disclosing that they have a material connection with the company that they’re endorsing.”

E. President Trump/Congress vs TikTok

TikTok is currently under fire from the United States government. The ties with China and potential national security threats are pushing bills proposing the ban of TikTok through state and federal courts. Previously, in 2019, former president Donald Trump invoked his executive authority and declared a national emergency revolving around the “extraordinary threat” that foreign technology companies pose to American national security (Nichols, 2020). While Donald Trump’s attempted ban of TikTok and other companies similar did not follow through, it did spark doubt and concern over the practices and intent of these organizations.

The concern about TikTok as a national security threat has recently resurfaced again. Currently, TikTok is prohibited to be downloaded on federal-owned state or government devices. Many Republican governors, including Ohio, Maryland, and South Dakota, have also issued downloading bans on government devices (Kagubare, 2023). There have also been regulations on the accessibility of TikTok within government locations, and more recently on educational properties such as public middle and high schools. More than 30 states have issued TikTok bans of varying degrees (Kagubare, 2023).

• Information Security and Data Protection

All information created, obtained, or stored by ByteDance is a valuable asset. We are responsible for not only the security of our own network and information but also the privacy and security of our global users' and all Partners' data. Likewise, Partners are expected to take responsibility to protect the privacy and security of our global users' and ByteDancers' data.

ByteDancers and Partners must maintain a high standard for the security of data in the countries in which we operate by complying with applicable data protection laws and regulations at all times.

All non-public information disclosed by ByteDance in the course of business must be treated by Partners as confidential, including but not limited to the Company's business information, intellectual property rights, product strategy, proprietary data, financial status, strategic plans, organizational structure, technical or management rules, negotiation information, user/ customer information, employee information, as well as third-party confidential information that ByteDance is under any statutory or contractual obligation not to disclose to the public. Partners must use confidential information only as authorized and only for ByteDance business.

We not only attach importance to the protection of confidential information of ourselves, but also attach equal importance to the protection of confidential information of our Partners. We respect the legitimate rights and interests of Partners and we are committed to fulfilling our obligation to protect all confidential information of our Partners in accordance with the confidentiality agreement or applicable laws and regulations.

Excerpt from ByteDance Code of Conduct

F. Texas vs TikTok

Specifically within Texas, TikTok is not being well received by the state. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott (R) is currently proposing a plan to ban TikTok on all state government-issued devices and networks (Kagubare, 2023).

“Owned by a Chinese company that employs Chinese Communist Party members, TikTok harvests significant amounts of data from a user’s device, including details about a user’s internet activity,” [Gov. Abbott] added.

Many Texas colleges and universities have already taken the initiative and banned TikTok on campus Wifi. The list of colleges includes the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Texas at Dallas, Texas A&M, Lamar University, West Texas A&M University, the University of Houston System, and the Texas Tech University System (Silva, 2023).

IV. Key Voices

Vince McMahon: XFL's First Owner

- I. Mission
 - To create a professional football league with the spectacle appeal of World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE)
- II. Geographic Focus
 - Eastern Division: Birmingham, AL (Thunderbolts); Chicago, IL (Enforcers); Greater New York/New Jersey area (Hitmen); Orlando, FL (Rage).
 - Western Division: Las Vegas, NV (Outlaws); Los Angeles, CA (Xtreme); Memphis, TN (Maniax); San Francisco, CA (Demons).
- III. Target Audience
 - 2022: Median Age 28
 - Favorability (Somewhat to Very Favorable)
 - Ethnicity: White 20%, Hispanic 24%, African American 21%, Other 18%
 - Sex: Male 28%, Female 13%
 - Age: 18-29 17%, 30-44 30%, 45-54 23%, 55-64 14%, 65+ 13%
 - Predominantly Straight Men (See: Cheerleader controversies)
- IV. Strategic Messaging
 - See Cheerleader Controversies (Section III)
- V. Marketing Strategy Successes & Failures
 - Viewership ratings dropped 70% after week 1
 - 2020 Parent company filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy

United States Football League (USFL)

- I. Mission
 - A secondary professional football league
- II. Geographic Focus
 - North Division: Michigan (Panthers), New Jersey (Generals), Philadelphia (Stars), Pittsburgh (Maulers)
 - South Division: Birmingham, AL (Stallions); Houston, TX (Gamblers); New Orleans, LA (Breakers); Tampa Bay, FL (Bandits).
- III. Target Audience
 - Mainly NFL-Bound players attract NFL Spring Training / NFL Draft Audience
- IV. Strategic Messaging
 - Advertising cheap tickets, brand-new stadiums
- V. Marketing Strategy Successes & Failures
 - 2022 championship game averaged 1.25 million viewers
 - @usfl Tiktok: 287.8K Followers, 6.3M Likes

Canadian Football League (CFL)

- I. Mission
 - A professional football league based in Canada
- II. Geographic Focus
 - Teams: Hamilton, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Saskatchewan, Calgary, and British Columbia
- III. Target Audience
 - 84 Players have transferred from the XFL to CFL - 11 Former Renegades
 - Well-established CFL - NFL connection
- IV. Strategic Messaging
 - 2020 Rumored partnership and/or merger with XFL
 - Shut down by CFL, XFL announced 2023 comeback shortly after
- V. Marketing Strategy Successes & Failures
 - Attracting XFL Players with the NFL Pipeline
 - Both are considered and marketed as NFL 'minor leagues'

World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) and the XFL

- I. Mission
 - Owned by Vince McMahon at the time of XFL's conception
 - Translate WWE Fanbase/Viewership to XFL
- II. Geographic Focus
 - WWE Fanbase: Nationally and Internationally
- III. Target Audience
 - Favorability (Somewhat to Very Favorable)
 - Ethnicity: White 26%, Hispanic 38%, African American 36%, Other 31%
 - Sex: Male 33%, Female 22%
 - Age: 18-29 33%, 30-44 40%, 45-54 26%, 55-64 19%, 65+ 14%
- IV. Strategic Messaging
 - Fanfare, spectacle, performance
 - McMahon's statement: XFL will not involve any politics, purely entertainment and fan experience.
 - See Cheerleader Controversy (Section III)
 - Various marketing cross-references (e.g. Randy Orton, WWE's "The Viper," and XFL team, the Tampa Bay Vipers)
- V. Marketing Strategy Successes & Failures
 - "McMahon "gifted" stock to Alpha Entertainment, a separate company owned by McMahon and that owned the XFL, to get XFL naming rights and copyrights in return" (Rivera).
 - During Pandemic- the State of Florida deemed WWE an "essential business"

The NFL and the XFL

- I. Mission

- Player development and rehabilitation
- Professional non-NFL exposure opportunities
- Rule differences for player safety and increased fast-paced gameplay
- “Sharing insights and practices between the XFL and NFL will do a tremendous amount of good for the game of football and support the player ecosystem overall” - Dany Garcia, XFL Co-Owner & Chairwoman (via Harrison).
- “The XFL has shown us that innovation is one of its core principles. We are hopeful that this relationship will support further development and improvements in the game of football at all levels,” Troy Vincent, NFL Executive Vice President of Football Operations (via Harrison).

II. Geographic Focus

- 16 of 32 NFL Teams with Former XFL Players:
 - Atlanta Falcons (3), Baltimore Ravens, Carolina Panthers (5), Cincinnati Bengals, Cleveland Browns (3), Dallas Cowboys (2), Kansas City Chiefs (2), Las Vegas Raiders, Los Angeles Chargers/Rams (3), Minnesota Vikings, New Orleans Saints, New York Giants, New York Jets, Pittsburgh Steelers (10), Seattle Seahawks, Tennessee Titans (2)
- *Note:* Two Dallas Cowboys recruits, one from Arlington Renegades, one from Houston Roughnecks
- *Note:* Former Arlington Renegades players at Los Angeles Chargers, Los Angeles Rams, Atlanta Falcons, Pittsburgh Steelers, and (aforementioned) Dallas Cowboys

III. Target Audience

- NFL Spring Training / NFL Draft Audience
- Level of interest in NFL in the United States (January 2023):
 - Ethnicity: White 35% Casual fan, 37% Avid fan; Hispanic 31% Casual fan, 43% Avid fan; Black 31% Casual fan, 45% Avid fan; Other 41% Casual fan, 27% Avid fan;
 - Sex: Male 31% Casual fan, 52% Avid fan; Female 38% Casual fan, 24% Avid fan
 - 32.6 million Twitter followers
 - 10.6 million TikTok followers
- 6.69 million viewers of the NFL 2022 Pro Bowl (down from 8.2 million in 2019 and 7.97 million in 2020, no 2021 data)

IV. Strategic Messaging

- All XFL Games will stream on ESPN, ESPN+, and other Disney affiliates.
- XFL season begins directly after Superbowl
 - Was not advertised during the Superbowl game (Source: observation)

V. Marketing Strategy Successes & Failures

- April 2022 Partnership with NFL Alumni Academy
- “Beginning in 2022, each player who graduates from The Academy that does not sign with an NFL team will be guaranteed a contract for the 2023 XFL season” (About Us - NFL Academy)

V. Academic Literature

Title:

***Follower Segments Within and Across the Social Media
Networks of Major Professional Sport Organizations***

The study aimed to discover which people follow professional sports organizations' social media pages and segment these viewers into certain categories. The study's purpose was to determine how sports organizations can stand out on social media platforms to create fan engagement. The study's focus was to identify how professional sports teams' social media pages can subgroup their follower base to target specific users and engage more critically with them. The researcher included the following variables in his study to determine the nature of each subgroup: demographics (i.e., age, location, sex) and social media activity. To detect patterns within each subgroup, the researcher used cluster analysis as his research methodology. The study participants were social media followers of the sports organizations, and they were divided into subgroups based on the variables of the study (demographics and social media activity). Through his research, the study was able to find the following fan segments: location, subjects' interests, occupation, and fandom of sports leagues and teams. In addition, the study found that different subgroups interact with the teams' media differently. This study differs from preceding studies because it looks at how teams can form relationships with people of different subgroups through social media platforms (Naraine, 2023). This informs our research this semester because it shows us that a social media following cannot be seen as one, but as multiple subgroups that require different types of content to maintain fan engagement among all the different types of followers.

Title:

***Fan Engagement in 15 Seconds:
Athletes' Relationship Marketing During a Pandemic via TikTok***

This study initially focused on the beginning stages of the pandemic and looked into the advantages that the short-form video-sharing social media platform, TikTok, holds within the self-branding of athletes. According to the journal, the goal was to find ways for individual athletes and teams to create novelty content that extends beyond just game highlights and interviews to attract new audiences (Su et al., 2020). Since this study was in the beginning stages of TikTok's rise to popularity within the U.S., researchers decided to take Douyin, the Chinese predecessor of TikTok, into account. During this study, researchers began a focus group of ten athletes that were active on TikTok, five based in the United States and five based in China (Su et al., 2020). These athletes purposefully sought to cover multiple different sports, genders, locations and backgrounds to expand diversity.

Below is the table of chosen athletes:

Table 1
General Information on the Selected Athletes From TikTok and Douyin

Platform	Athlete	Handle	Gender	Sport	Followers
TikTok	Giannis Antetokounmo	@giannis_an34	Male	Basketball	960,100
	Alex Bregman	@abreg_1	Male	Baseball	352,300
	Julie Ertz and Zach Ertz	@teamertz ^a	Female and male	Soccer and football	62,600
	Laurie Hernandez	@lauriehernandez	Female	Gymnastics	514,200
	LeBron James	@bryce23james ^b	Male	Basketball	549,900
Douyin	Ruoqi Hui	@huigelivable	Female	Volleyball	478,000
	Jeremy Lin	@625721948	Male	Basketball	6,907,000
	Stephen Marbury	@Starbury	Male	Basketball	1,402,000
	Minxia Wu	@wuminxia1110	Female	Diving	763,000
	Jike Zhang	@Zhangjike999	Male	Table tennis	2,627,000

Note. Number of followers as of May 9, 2020.

^aJulie Ertz and Zach Ertz jointly manage their TikTok account named Team Ertz. ^bLeBron and Savannah James manage the TikTok account of their son Bryce; the James family collaborate on content.

This study uncovered that the athlete's increased presence on TikTok, as well as the increase in supporter interaction, presents new opportunities to further relationships, and branded content, and to appeal to new fanbases (Su et al., 2020). It was also determined that when athletes combined content from their personal lives along with athletic performance, interviews and game highlights, their account grew quicker and more videos had the opportunity to go viral. The researchers presented the idea that the most important aspects of the athlete's profiles were authenticity, playfulness and performance (Su et al., 2020).

Future Directions of the Researchers:

“As TikTok begins to allow shoppable video posts, teams and athletes can create a new source of revenue in the era of social distancing. With many athletes and sports entities new to TikTok and experimenting with ways to leverage this emerging social media platform, it opens up a channel for sports media and marketing researchers to verify the existing theory and generate new insight.”

Title:

How TikTok Has Impacted Generation Z's Buying Behaviour and Their Relationship With Brands?

This research intends to analyze and understand the ways that TikTok is being used and how Generation Z, people born approximately between 1995 to 2010, have been impacted as consumers (Ngangom, 2020). This study looks to identify the ways that the digital age, specifically within the lens of short-form video-sharing apps, like TikTok, has on the market economy, brand attitudes and purchasing power of the new generation. Since TikTok users have grown exponentially over the past years, this study's data was collected through “semi-structured interviews” with participants between the ages of 18 to 23 (Ngangom, 2020). These interviews used projective techniques in order to “unlock participants' deep motivation and attitudes,” (Ngangom, 2020). Then, once data was collected from participants, researchers used thematic coding by Braun and Clarke, which consists of a six-phase that works to reveal patterns and themes amongst the data. Since word-of-mouth is such a powerful tool in today's marketplace, the immediate access that Generation Z has to product reviews and sponsorships has emphasized their buying power. The researchers found that if a company is looking to promote products or

services to a younger audience, then the allocation of money and/or resources to TikTok promotions and influencer sponsorships should be emphasized (Ngangom, 2020).

Below is an excerpt from a participant's interview:

P6: It's just again like I keep reiterating. Same thing when you see a bunch of like people that you could be friends with trying a product. This makes it seem more approachable and like, okay, it's not a waste of money because this person tried it and their views seem 1,000% more honest...

And I think with TikTok again, it's a bunch of people who bought the products themselves and are trying it instead of people just writing it online. Easier to watch a lot more palatable. And I think a little bit more trustworthy for the consumer.

Ngangom's Opinion on Findings:

“The findings and insights could offer academic researchers and practitioners to implement marketing strategies to engage with these younger consumers.”

VI. SWOT Analysis

Strength	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dwayne Johnson as an owner and face of the brand brings in various different audiences - Large football fan presence in the Dallas-Fort Worth area - inaugural home opening game drew 17,000 fans (2019) - 2023 fan fest brought many fans to an open practice, many seeming to be from multiple ethnic backgrounds - Relatively large social media following on all platforms (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Tik Tok) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - upon searching “XFL DEI,” the only semi-relevant result is the page for the XFL’s chief legal & business officer, which briefly mentions that she served on the DEI Council for the NBC Sports Women's Network - In 2021, the median household income of Arlington households was \$65,481 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is less than the US average of above \$70K - Social media content is duplicated across the different platforms; Tik Tok content is not updated
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The largest Arlington racial/ethnic groups are White (37.6%) followed by Hispanic (29.9%) and Black (22.4%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very diverse demographics in Arlington. Compare to almost 60% of non-white Hispanic people in the US as a whole - The median age for Arlington residents is 33.1 years young - Texas has a strong culture that can be integrated into the branding and promotional content to build stronger fan connections. This opportunity can be exploited through the team’s media platforms - Arlington is “The American Dream City,” how can we connect that to the branding of the Renegades? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How will the Arlington Renegades stand out in comparison to the two other Texas XFL teams? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can the Renegades stand out on social media? - Will the dominant presence of the Cowboys threaten or uplift the Renegades (could be an opportunity or threat)? - Will people lose interest in minor league football once other sports in the Dallas/Ft Worth area are in season?

Qualitative: In-depth Interviews

Interviewee 1: Brandon Atwood

Participant Background:

Brandon Atwood is a 21-year-old male. Born and raised in Gentry, Arkansas, Atwood began playing football at age 6. Atwood currently plays as starting quarterback on the Division I Sprint Football team at the United States Naval Academy.

Sprint Football is a full-contact, intercollegiate, varsity sport and has the same rules as regular college football, except that all players must weigh 178.0 pounds or less.

Atwood qualifies within this study because he identified himself as a football fan and is active on TikTok, mainly within the realm of sports content.

Key Interview Testimony:

Figure 1

Interviewer

I agree. Do you believe that advertising sports, such as football, increases the prominence or size of a fanbase?

Atwood

Yeah, I mean especially with kids getting phones younger and younger. So, like if a kid is growing up without parents that are passionate about certain fanbases, I'm sure whatever pops up on their TikTok would be the team that they want to win. So, I would say that it definitely increases prominence.

Interviewer

Do you believe that social media is successful in marketing sports the way that traditional commercial advertising has been? So, when you watched TV when you were younger and you saw sports things and thought, "wow that is so cool," do you think that social media has been that for adolescents or young adults?

Atwood

Personally, no. Just because as soon as you see an ad on social media you tend to just swipe straight through it. So, usually before an ad even gets the chance to appeal to me, I usually just swipe right through it. You know watching something on TV you have no other option, you are just going to watch it because you can't skip it.

*Figure 2**Interviewer*

What would you personally like to see from the XFL, or similar sports teams, in terms of social media advertising?

Atwood

I guess just like more highlights. I feel like I never actually see highlights on the team's social medias unless I got to YouTube and look them up. Which I think is kind of crazy. Definitely less random posts about scheduling and stuff, but yeah, more hype videos. That's what the people want.

*Figure 3**Interviewer*

What would you personally like to see from the XFL, or similar sports teams, in terms of fan interaction? When considering a team that you look up to, how would you most like to be acknowledged as a fan in their eyes? Would you like to do giveaways or different fan events, such as meet and greets?

Atwood

I never sign up for giveaways, so I don't think that is that effective. Most the time people aren't even fans, they just want free stuff. One thing that I think is very effective is like Stetson Bennett, for example, when he would go to like Chickfila, or Raising Cains, or somewhere and run the window for a couple of hours. I think it is hilarious and pretty cool when players go out to surprise people, and just do random stuff. I think that's really funny and a good way to interact too.

Interview Findings:

In the interview with Brandon Atwood, we discussed many aspects of effective and interesting advertisements. I asked in depth about his knowledge and considerations of football fans, TikTok, and the XFL. Throughout talking to him, I began to understand the outside perspective of someone being exposed to unwanted advertisements. In my own life, I see advertisements as something interesting to look at and learn from; however, that is because my major is in advertising.

Atwood pointed out that most people skip advertisements that pop up as soon as possible. This is especially prominent on TikTok because advertisements have a small square at the bottom that labels them as such. When looking to grow TikTok pages, Atwood stated that if something pops out to him that he finds entertaining, he will like it. He also says that if that thing is a company or product, he would consider following or buying from them.

Atwood also discussed a lot regarding catchy phrases or jingles. While I understand that the XFL is not going to incorporate a Burger King-style “Whopper” jingle, there are many possibilities of songs that the XFL, or specifically the Arlington Renegades, can use as team hype music. When considering the music choices that may become most recognizable, think of “Jump” at the beginning of all the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill basketball games.

The last thing that Atwood discussed was incorporating players out in the community. It is shown that when more people can recognize and resonate with the people that they are rooting for, their bond as a fan becomes stronger. Atwood proposes either community service events or surprising public spectacles in order to promote time with fans, rather than holding a more transactional feeling meet-and-greet.

Interviewee 2: Cameron White

Participant Information: Cameron White is a 26-year-old male currently living in Columbus, Ohio. In addition to playing football in high school, White served as head football coach for Bulloch Academy in Statesboro, GA for three years. Under his leadership, the team earned several yearly All-Region and All-State player awards.

White qualifies within this study because he identified himself as an avid XFL fan, as well as NFL and NCAA football. He is also active on both TikTok and Instagram (Reels), mainly within the realm of NFL content.

Key Interview Testimony:

Figure 1

Interviewer: Are you familiar with the XFL, where did you first learn about it?

White: I've been watching the XFL, this is their third instance of it, so I watched the second one. Obviously, I didn't really watch the first one because I was too young, and I think it was just- the NFL was all I cared about. So this new instance, I have been watching it, for the most part, whenever I see it on TV.

Interviewer: What do you know about the XFL?

White: What I know about the XFL is: it's basically a league run by Dwayne "the Rock" Johnson now. And their goal is to... basically to create a feeder program for the NFL. So, it's a lot of athletes that are football players that didn't make the NFL that are trying to get back on the NFL rosters. And the XFL has different rules from my standpoint, but it's still kinda the same, but they do different takes on stuff. So yeah, that is my understanding of the XFL.

Figure 2

Interviewer: What kinds of accounts do you follow or interact with most? Are they mostly compilations accounts? Are they mostly team accounts?

White: Like through the Reels and Instagram, TikTok and stuff, it's mostly team accounts. I know specifically on TikTok, I do follow the Chargers team account. Same with Instagram. And then really the Instagram is just the stuff that's on my 'Explore' page. So I don't really follow stuff per se, but it still shows up because it's a nice floor page.

Figure 3

Interviewer: Another thing- Music! What would you consider hype music? What do you think would pull fans into a social media platform?

White: I think what's important, when it comes to music on social media platforms, is just really just following the trends. I know a lot of my TikToks, I'll get football stuff, and then I get a lot of Call of Duty stuff, and then I get a lot of car stuff. When they play music on all of those videos, it's the most recent songs that everybody's playing. So, at least for me, I get a lot of Yeat stuff because I listen to a lot of Yeat, so I guess my algorithm listens to me!...It really just depends on... I think what's important when it comes to running a social media page is making sure you know your audience and what music they typically listen to. So, I know the Chargers will play common music stuff, just whatever's popular at the time of the post.

Interview Findings:

Avid football fans are already familiar with the XFL. But, the public's basic understanding of the XFL is a "feeder league" for the NFL owned by Dwayne Johnson. This presents an opportunity to highlight unique traits of the XFL to differentiate these two leagues: For example, the XFL's unique gameplay rules are marketable- both as exciting entertainment and player safety. Fans are more interested in sharing and interacting with player highlights, interviews, and humorous trends, as opposed to philanthropic endeavors such as social justice or charity.

Features such as Instagram's 'explore' page, and TikTok's 'for you' page are crucial for reaching fans, regardless of their viewership level. Fan engagement comes largely from virality rather than existing followers. Virality is directly correlated with the video's song of choice. Fans who listen to the song/artist will receive content using that respective sound. Therefore - videos should use popular music listened to by a specific target demographic. Virality is also dictated by trends. Accounts should post creative content using trending sounds, challenges, and comedic sketches that are timely and not out-of-touch.

Interviewee 3: Priyanshu Saxena

Participant Information: Priyanshu Saxena is a 19-year-old male currently living in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Saxena is of male of Indian descent and has grown up with American culture through the lens of his immigrant parents. Saxena spent years of his childhood living in Arlington, Texas, and currently attends UNC-Chapel Hill as a business major. He has always been a sports fan. He watches many sports, including football, regularly, and keeps up with the latest sports news, including the XFL.

Saxena qualifies for this study because of his connection to Arlington and his experience as a football fan. He sees the XFL as something he wants to become more involved with, and Arlington is the team he leans toward because of his time living in central Texas.

Key Interview Testimony:

Figure 1

Interviewer: You mentioned your connection to the just the Texan culture and how that are you into the Arlington Renegades and their team, and I was just wondering like you said that they have they incorporate some of the elements of Texas and Texan culture into their image, what are ways that they grabbed your attention in terms of how they present themselves and how they market themselves as Texans?

Priyanshu: Yes, I mean the big thing about how these teams really professional sports teams market themselves are their logos actually and you know the Arlington Renegades of course have that cowboy logo, and I think that's very representative of that Texas culture. Kind of like how I mentioned that really American southern cowboy Texas culture and I think that's a great way for a lot of sports teams in every league market themselves is through their logo and so that would be the main way the main draw or the immediate draw that I had.

Figure 2

Interviewer: So would you say that people from different ethnicities, do they see Texas even though they have different cultures at home being more centered on their cultures of origin but outside to the public do they do more Texan and American activities.

Priyanshu: Sure I mean yeah it's great for everyone to have their own original background but I think for people to connect, especially at first they have to find kind of similarities and you know an even ground and I think that culture, the music, the southern vibe really in Texas gives people that that opportunity to kind of come together and then they're able to share those differences that they may have at home. But they're unique cultures and it's just something that's able to bring people together.

Figure 3

Interviewer: They did have some things like preseason and offseason practices where people came, and they did post that are those types of things. Is there anything specifically that you would be interested in seeing, especially in the months where they lack the activity and in the regular season how would you really like capture that fan engagement and being different than the NFL.

Priyanshu: So I think something they have going for them right now is that they they play very strategically when the NFL is off season and so that gives people who enjoy football a chance to watch football when maybe the NFL is not on season. Another thing is I mean they have The Rock who's a very big prominent public figure and so I think those two things on its own are two big reasons why the XFL are seeing even the success that it's seeing now because to be completely fair with you I wouldn't think that there would be a league that would be able to challenge a league like the NFL. But really the XFL is kind of doing a good job in my opinion and carving its own little area right now.

Interview Findings:

Culture is a key component to a sports team's branding and it should be present in many aspects of the organization's branding, especially the social media outlets. Cultural backgrounds and ethnicities are important aspects of self-expression, but Texan culture is an overarching outlet for people to come together despite their demographic backgrounds. Thus, social media branding should aim to target emotions that relate to what it means to be a Texan and how that culture can relate to sports.

In addition to the importance of culture in a team's social media branding, there is also an entertainment component to social media pages. Using television personalities such as The Rock in addition to posts that create connections to Texan culture are essential components to a social media page. Teams must incorporate all the aspects of a team, such as a fan, informational, and interview posts, but the main objective of social media pages for football teams must be to create reliable entertainment for the target audiences.

Qualitative: Observation**Arlington Renegades Opening Day Observations**

On Saturday, February 18, 2023, the opening day for the Arlington Renegades, I observed the fan engagement amongst various social media platforms (TikTok, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) and commentary from media sources online (ESPN, YouTube, XFL Newsroom, Bleacher Report, etc.) during their game against the Vegas Vipers.

Content	Reflective Comments
TikTok comments on the official @xflrenegades account	<p>The Arlington Renegades did not post any opening day content. The account is not new, and shows posts dating back to February 19, 2019, but there is a 3 year gap of no TikTok content between March 12, 2020, and March 2, 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On January 24, 2023, @ daniel 76 commented: “can’t wait till ya start posting again.”
TikTok comments on the official @xfl account	<p>In addition to the opening day game against the Vegas Vipers, the Orlando Guardians played the Houston Roughnecks later that Saturday evening. The XFL only posted (3) highlight videos of this second game, with no TikTok coverage whatsoever of the Renegades nor the Vipers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On February 18, 2023, @lorenzobautista361 commented: “roughneck and Arlington in the ship I'm calling it now🤔”
Instagram comments on the official @xflrenegades account	<p>The Arlington Renegades only made four posts on opening day. Two of these posts were before the game, and two of these posts (one was originally an @espn post) were after the game. There were no game highlights posted during the game.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the “GAMETIME🔥” reel posted directly before the game, @payum chamanara commented: “Social media team needs to step their game up” and received 9 likes. On ESPN’s post, @adamloooong commented: “It’s not the NFL but it sure is more football. It was fun to watch! It can only get better IMO” and received 137 likes. @mikeythemush commented: “The XFL so far with the opening game showed a good product I’m interested om seeing how the other games are gonna be” and received 66 likes. @kevin.reyes17 commented: “It’s honeslty dope that there’s a second league where players have the chance to showcase their talent and possibly get called up. Sort of like the G league to the NBA” and received 9 likes. @thekidpeyy commented: “Go renegades cause imma cowboys fan” and received 195 likes. On the final gameday reel, @mkallen commented: “What's up with that new logo? I'm all for the City of Arlington getting their due, but can we add some color to that

	<p>logo or make the style/pattern similar to the jersey numbers?! It's making a good looking uniform look really cheap.” and received 3 likes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • @blaineschulzz commented: “amazing game. think i like the XFL better than the NFL” and received 18 likes.
Instagram comments on the official @xfl account	<p>Of the 12 posts made on opening day, zero of them were specifically Renegades content.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On a uniform-focused reel, @cajun_flavor50 commented: “Okay XFL... we need to work on some things...watching the 1st game...and there is no starting line up? No introduction to the men playing...no replay of Great plays...commentary should be focused on the players for best introduction so we can get to know play” and received 7 likes. • On an Orlando Guardians reel, @nate_novotny2 commented: “Not a single post from the first game...what a joke” and received 1 like. • @ojmahomespt2 commented: “Why dont y'all post game scores?” and received 27 likes. • On a Houston Roughnecks reel, @yourfriendlyneighborhoodethan commented: “I'm confused why nothing was posted about the Renegades vs Vipers game on here” and received 1 like. <p>Only the final score for the Guardians vs Roughnecks game was posted.</p>
replies on the official @XFLRenegades Twitter account	<p>Of all of the opening day tweets posted, there were not any game highlights or score updates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On a quoted @XFLVipers tweet, @BlackPrez replied, “Why nobody updating the score?” and received 1 reply and 5 likes. • In response to “Who's ready?” @AaronGramza replied, “Are YOU ready?!! Whoever is running this account is asleep!! The game is going on right now!!”
replies on the official @XFL2023 Twitter account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to a @ZOEnergy ad, @McQueen2134 replied, “Need explosive plays and a good editing team if you want the league to take off. I can do both” and received 1 like. • @bsbets1 replied, “How about you use that fuel to provide live stats like every other league that has came to existence?” and received 1 reply.
general trending tweets from opening day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • @ChrisVannini says, “Local TV reporter on the XFL Arlington Renegades: 'I think people are excited to have a team in Arlington that actually plays football in February.'” 👍👍👍👍 • XFL Newsroom journalist @JamesLarsenPFN live-tweeted during the XFL opener – something that both the XFL and Renegades accounts failed to do. • @ESPN tweeted the final score of the opener, announcing that the Renegades had won their first game of the 2023 XFL season. • @FootballGirlAna replied, “Cowboys fans have a new home” and received 7 likes. • @frankrhmueller replied, “I love how the @XFL2023 capture the game, focus on the fan! Thanks for being there for all football addicts during off-season! All best wishes for this great product! #CowboysNation”
Official XFL Ratings for Opening Weekend on ABC & ESPN	<p>The Arlington Renegades vs. Vegas Vipers game had the second highest ratings at 1.53M, closely trailing behind the San Antonio Brahmas vs. St. Louis Battlehawks game at 1.57M. During opening weekend in 2020, the (formerly) Dallas Renegades vs. St. Louis Battlehawks game had the lowest ratings out of the four games that week, but that number of 2.49M was still higher than 2023.</p>
XFL Opening Weekend Delivers World Class Professional Football for Fans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “XFL league and team social media channes gained 4.1M video views in 48 hours, highlighting the importance of the League’s content-driven gan engagement strategy.” (Rachuk) • “Game highlights include the Arlington Renegades rallyinf from a 14-3 halftime deficit, scoring 19 straight points and blocking a 2-point conversion to come out with a win over the Vegas Vipers.” (Rachuk) • Opening weekend generated 31.3M impressions, 4.1M video views, and 1.3M engagements. • #XFL2023 was trending #1 nationally on Twitter on Saturday, February 18.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total attendance across the four home openers in Arlington, Houston, San Antonio, and D.C. was 61,514.
XFL returns, Renegades sees 30% attendance drop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance for the Arlington Renegades vs. Vegas Vipers at Choctaw Stadium was 12,047. In 2020, the attendance for the Renegades’ season opener was 17,206.
Arlington Renegades Fan Fest 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to an XFL YouTube video of the Renegades Fan Fest, @jortrivus5629 commented, “WE NEED MORE CONTENT!!!” and received 3 likes.
Vegas Vipers vs. Arlington Renegades XFL Full Game Highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to XFL full fame highlights from opening weekend, @phantomcyrano says, “I’m excited to see what the XFL can do. I still think the league would never have stopped if it hadn’t been for covid. I also forgot that the “inside the ref review booth” part of the broadcast is one of the best things the XFL does! Such a good idea.” and received 701 likes.

Qualitative: Focus Group

I. Participant Backgrounds

Col. James Rupkalvis is a 55-year-old male. He is well-versed in football at all levels. Having played high school and college football, as well as being an avid watcher of both the NFL and XFL, Rupkalvis is well-versed in the rules and regulations of football. Rupkalvis contributed great insight into the ways that the older audiences recognized team branding and advertisements in the rise of the NFL, and how this can be translated into the XFL. While Rupkalvis does not have a TikTok profile, he mentioned that he enjoys watching advertisements or YouTube videos discussing team matters, showcasing game highlights, and finding humor in trends.

Grace Wolf is a 21-year-old female. She is an avid social media user. Wolf claims to have had TikTok since around 2019, making her an early user of the app. Wolf is also interested in the world of sports, following many NFL and MLB teams on both Instagram and TikTok. Grace provided great insight into the content she enjoys seeing and the content she finds to be most successful in building fanbases. While Wolf has not played football, she has participated in competitive sports and displayed interest in the accounts and content being produced by the XFL and its teams.

Robert Bridger is a 20-year-old male. He is involved in both the world of football and the world of social media. Bridger is a self-proclaimed football “superfan”, rooting for the Carolina Panthers every season since he was born. Bridger also has multiple social media platforms, stating that he has had TikTok for around two years. Bridger downloaded TikTok during the COVID-19 pandemic like so many others and claims that he has found an interest in the pages of sports teams. Bridger specifically mentioned the Savannah Bananas and the NFL’s TikTok accounts.

Priyanshu Saxena is a 20-year-old male. He is a follower of all things sports. Whether that be on social media, through stats and scores, or going to and watching games. Saxena mentioned that watching games is meant to be a spectacle and that the social media accounts, specifically of the XFL, should follow suit. Saxena has had TikTok for around two years and mentioned that he

enjoys scrolling through the accounts of different athletes or teams. He provided great insight into content that he enjoys seeing, sharing different ideas of things that should be implemented more often.

Olivia Rupkalvis is a 25-year-old female. She is a huge sports fan, an avid social media user, and works in advertising and marketing. Rupkalvis has worked in advertising for nearly three years and has worked with other sports teams. She also currently resides in Charlotte where there are a lot of minor league teams that she supports. Rupkalvis has been on TikTok for nearly three years and mentioned that she follows The Hockey Guys, the Savannah Bananas, and the NFL and multiple of its teams. Rupkalvis gave great insight into things that those accounts post, as well as the successful things that teams do to draw crowds to in-person events.

II. Thematic Data Analysis

Our group decided to conduct inductive research because we based the questions conducted in the focus group on the research questions we had previously designated. Through our observation and analysis of the focus group, we were able to identify patterns within the responses we received in our focus group. These patterns subsequently allowed us to create the themes of our research, which we later connected to the direct transcription of the responses our focus group subjects gave. Conducting inductive thematic analysis allowed us to connect our original research questions to the themes we observed in our focus group.

Uncertainty and Lack of Knowledge about XFL

Findings:

- Inconsistency on rule differences (important to highlight in posts)
- Consistent and engaging branded content

Notable Testimonies:

- - Participant 1: ...the XFL is not a minor league or lesser league NFL, but a lot of people think it is.

- - Participant 5: The only reason I know about [the XFL] is because I follow the Rock.
- - Participant 3: ...the differences in the league from the NFL, [I know] the XFL has different rules....I don't think I even knew that during this XFL season, so they need to do more about communicating on social media.

NFL Advantages and Disadvantages (Opportunities)

Findings:

- Legacy and longevity
- Famous, high-profile players and coaches
- Widespread publicity on major news, entertainment
- New rules and regulations limit excitement
- Brand recognition

Notable Testimonies:

- Participant 1: A lot of people think that the quality of football is less than it is in the NFL, but showing those highlights and showing those plays is important. I saw a couple of videos earlier of guys making phenomenal catches for touchdowns or whatever, they were NFL caliber if not better type catches. So, showing those to show that it is not a lesser quality of football, to me, is a good thing as a general football fan.
- Participant 1: when I was your age, the Cowboys used to advertise on TV before all of their games and they called themselves "America's Team." They had a star similar to the American flag on their helmet, and so people identified with that. I think that's key to these other teams, the XFL teams, that are just starting out to get that brand recognition.
- Participant 5: nothing that the NFL does is too crazy or outrageous, so it's all stuff that a smaller team can do too.

Importance of Virality and Brand Engagement

Findings:

- Fun, engaging content
- Use TikTok trends to cater to XFL fans, football fans, and everyone in between
- Use branded accounts to engage with fans through comments, etc

Notable Testimonies:

- Participant 1: I think the bottom line is that people want to have fun. I think that watching the videos is fun and may draw fans to the stadiums to watch the games and that type of thing.
- Participant 5: The more people that follow them and participate in what they are posting, the more inclined they would be to attend or buy gear, stuff like that.
- Participant 3: I feel like the XFL definitely needs to do a better job on social media.
- Participant 5: I think that works well for not only their fanbase but also with random people, like me, whose videos just pop up on their “For You” page.
- Participant 4: I think it is more if someone that I know, or if they are pretty prominent, posts something on their story I would at least look into it. I don’t know if I would end up being the biggest fan or not or if I will end up resonating with them, but it will at least get eyes on that thing.

Community & Accessibility

Findings:

- Non-local “Bandwagon” Fans cultivate a larger fanbase
- Fans appreciate affordability
- Supporting (and promoting) kids, students, and families

Notable Testimonies:

- Participant 2: When I lived in Chattanooga, I don’t think that I had ever been to a minor league baseball game, but we went almost every week just because they were so fun and they did giveaways at every single one.

- Participant 5: I've only been to preseason Panthers games just because I can't afford to go to an actual one, but we go to the baseball and hockey games all the time because tickets are easy to get and they always do tons of fun stuff at them. I almost like to go to those games more.
- Participant 3: ... if the XFL teams do a better job at posting clips from when the games are happening, so people can be talking about them. Like on Twitter, Instagram, or TikTok, just so fans can communicate with their friends back and forth while the game is going on.

Content Ideas from Participants

Findings:

- Post content of the game, while said game is going on for immediate fan engagement
- Raffles, contests, and games both on social media and in-person publicized on social media
- Gameday content of enthusiastic fans
- Past and present player and coach features
- Funny TikTok trends show relevancy
- Highlight rules different from the XFL, and the exciting plays that result because of them

Notable Testimonies:

- Participant 2: ...for people that may not be as into sports, [or] people that are into sports but not in love with football, like if you are trying to get it to random people's "For You" pages, ... funny, short, and more comedy based TikToks tend to go over well. These might not be about the actual game, and that sounds bad, but that might just resonate with a wider audience on top of having a super large amount of game highlights and content.
- Participant 3: Since there are differences in the actual [XFL] game and strategy of it, I think they should let that be known to people.

- Participant 3: my favorite, especially the NFL does a really good job of this... [posting a really good clip from a game, they will post it as the game is going on

III. Recap/Synopsis

- The XFL should emphasize what they have that the NFL lacks

The XFL has different rules from the NFL, and the original XFL emphasized on the theatrics and excitement that was common in the WWE. With the NFL gaining this reputation for being the "no fun league," the XFL can capitalize on the lenience of their rules and the theatrics that they promise.

- The XFL needs to do a better job on social media.

Instant replays, player takeovers, player "day in the life" videos, and even celebrity partnerships can be a way to bring the XFL social media to the same level as NFL. During an NFL game, people will immediately retweet plays on Twitter, and XFL can do the same.

- The XFL can have a strong fanbase and following even if they are not the dominant or main football league.

Like Charlotte's minor league hockey team and minor league baseball team, the Renegades can implement similar ideas like "Winning Wednesdays" and "Bark in the Park" to engage fans within the community. A "minor" or lesser-known league doesn't have to equate to a minor following.

Quantitative: Convenience Survey

I. Sampling Strategy

In order to acquire data, the survey was conducted using a mix of non-probability convenience and voluntary response sampling. The majority of participants in the survey were selected due to ease of access to the group of researchers. This initial gathering of data allowed researchers to interpret results from a familiar group that has easily understandable and decipherable responses. This sampling was conducted by messaging the link of the survey to accessible individuals such as family and friends or posting it on the researcher's social media accounts. The researchers also extended the link and a description of the study and survey to multiple Arlington Renegades “fan clubs” on Facebook; those ranged from 561 members to 4,300 members. All of the members of the Facebook groups that participated in the survey volunteered themselves through self-selection.

This mix of sampling strategies is limited in the way that it provides risk for sampling bias and selection bias. Also, since the data is not probability sampling or randomized, the results cannot be completely generalizable to all football fans, TikTok users, or other populations that this survey applies to. The limit of voluntary response sampling is that people that volunteer themselves are more likely to be interested in the study topic, leading to possible self-selection bias.

Table 1 – Demographics

N = 50	n	M	SD	%
Demographics				
Age	47	3.15	1.71	
18-21	14			29.8
22-30	6			12.8
31-40	4			8.5
41-50	5			10.6
50+	18			38.3
Race	47			
White	23			48.9
African American	19			40.4
Hispanic	6			13
Asian	2			4.2
Other	3			6.4
Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin	47	1.87	0.33	
Yes	6			12.8
No	41			87.2
Highest Level of Education	47	4.70	1.37	
High School Diploma or G.E.D.	1			2.1
Some College, No Degree	15			31.9
Associates or Technical Degree	2			4.3
Bachelor or A.O.S. Degree	9			19.6
Graduate or Professional Degree	19			40.4
Prefer Not To Say	1			2.1
Social Media Rank by Use and Favorability	42			
Facebook		3.00	1.66	
Instagram		2.12	0.98	
TikTok			3.12	1.26
Twitter		3.81	1.43	
Snapchat		3.71	1.64	
Other		5.24	1.41	

Table 2 – Likelihood of Reposting TikTok Videos

N = 50	n	M	SD	%
Likelihood of Reposting Video 1	46	3.39	1.33	
Extremely Likely	3			6.5
Somewhat Likely	12			26.1
Neither Likely nor Unlikely	9			19.6
Somewhat Unlikely.	8			17.4
Likelihood of Reposting Video 2	46	3.24	1.45	
Extremely Likely	7			15.2
Somewhat Likely	10			21.7
Neither Likely nor Unlikely	7			15.2
Somewhat Unlikely.	9			19.6
Extremely Unlikely	13			28.3
Likelihood of Reposting Video 3	47	3.43	1.35	
Extremely Likely	4			8.5
Somewhat Likely	10			21.3
Neither Likely nor Unlikely	10			21.3
Somewhat Unlikely.	8			17.0
Extremely Unlikely	15			31.9
Likelihood of Reposting Video 4	46	3.39	1.33	
Extremely Likely	3			6.5
Somewhat Likely	12			26.1
Neither Likely nor Unlikely	9			19.6
Somewhat Unlikely.	8			17.4
Extremely Unlikely	14			30.4

II. Data Analysis

There was a large variety in the demographics of the respondents to the survey. There were people from all age groups, with most of the respondents being of the youngest and oldest age groups (18-21 and 50+, respectively). Having a diverse age range within respondents entails that the sample likely has different technological trends and uses within each age group. This provides valuable data to understand how a person's age affects social media usage. The diversity of ages also provides valuable data on how certain ages perceive sports, particularly American football. Further investigation on how age affects social media usage is made in the crosstab section.

The racial demographics of the survey also had diverse results, with most of the respondents being White and African American. These results give greater insight into what the demographics of football fans look like since this survey mostly sampled people that had a preexisting interest in football. Although White and African American respondents made up most of the survey's demographics, people of Hispanic and Asian origin also participated in the survey.

The highest degree of education of the respondents also varied significantly. Most people were high school graduates, but the respondents varied in the types of degrees they had, if any. Most respondents had either attended college without a degree or had a Bachelor's or Graduate degree.

In terms of the respondents' social media usage, most people preferred Instagram, regardless of their age and demographics. Instagram had a significantly higher mean amount of users than any other social media platform. This indicates that it may be beneficial for XFL teams to focus their brand strategies on Instagram's platform since they would receive greater amounts of user interaction. People also expressed that they frequented Facebook and TikTok platforms more than Snapchat and Twitter. This information aligns with the Arlington Renegades' current marketing strategy since they post similar content on their Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram accounts. The top three ranked social media platforms are similar since short-form videos can be posted on all three pages. Twitter and Snapchat, however, have fewer means to support short-form video content.

The survey respondents showed relatively little interaction with the social media platforms of both XFL teams and football pages in general. People follow XFL teams less than they follow general football. The data for football interaction was generally consistent with the overall social media usage and favorability because people interacted the most with football accounts on Instagram. One key outlier was that people viewed general football and XFL content the most on Snapchat, even though it did not rank highly in the overall usage and favorability of the platform. TikTok and Facebook also attracted lower numbers of interactivity in the XFL and general football accounts. Users' likelihood of reposting was the highest on Snapchat's platform and was followed by TikTok and Instagram.

Results

Research Question 1: How can the Arlington Renegades incorporate music, graphics and graphic design, and video to build a consistent brand across all their media platforms?

Table 2: Likelihood of Reposting Video 1

Research Question 2: What strategies can the Arlington Renegades adapt to their TikTok platform to generate more fan involvement?

Table 1: Social Media Rank by Use and Favorability

Research Question 3: How can the Arlington Renegades mold their social media strategies to attract specific target demographics and age groups?

Table 1: Race, Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin, age, and social media rank by use and favorability

Research Question 4: Which areas of interest should the team feature in their social media strategies to motivate new and/or established Arlington Renegades fans to interact with the team's social media platforms more so than others?

Table 2: Likelihood of Reposting Video 1 and Likelihood of Reposting Video 2

Discussion

Hypothesis: If the Arlington Renegades can create a relationship between what it means to be a Renegades fan and the connection to Texan culture through their branding and social media presence, they will develop a larger and more devoted following quicker.

RQ1 asked how the Arlington Renegades incorporated music, graphics and graphic design, and video to build a consistent brand across all their media platforms. Music can be incorporated into creative content in order to engage more viewers. See Table 2 for a full breakdown of what type of content respondents were most and least likely to interact with. In video 1, people showed that they were somewhat likely ($n = 12$; 26.1%) to repost the video. Many of the positive responses to the video indicated that the Biggie Smalls music playing in the video contributed to their positive reaction. Another core finding was that incorporating images that connect with football culture and entertainment positively affects the responses to creative videos. Video 2 incorporated an image of a beer cup with a snake, and many people saw the beer snake as their main takeaway from the video. Video 2 saw the highest number of people being extremely likely to repost ($n = 7$; 15.2%) and also reported high numbers of people being somewhat likely to repost $n = 10$; 21.7%). These results indicate that social media users will be more likely to interact and repost content that thoughtfully selects upbeat and unique music and portrays entertaining visuals.

RQ2 asked what strategies the Arlington Renegades can adapt to their TikTok platform to generate more fan involvement. In addition to the strategies discussed in research question 1, the Arlington Renegades could redirect their focus on the social media

platforms that their viewers interact with the most. Survey respondents reported that they had the highest favoritism and usage towards Instagram ($M = 2.12$), Facebook ($M = 3.00$), and TikTok ($M = 3.12$), and also had interacted with football ($M = 2.95$) and XFL ($M = 2.16$) content on Snapchat's platform. This indicates that the Arlington Renegades should focus on creating a consistent brand across these four social media platforms. See Table 1 for a full breakdown of the demographics and social media preferences.

RQ3 asked how the Arlington Renegades can mold their social media strategies to attract specific target demographics and age groups. See Table 1 for a full breakdown of the

demographics and social media preferences. The survey had diverse demographics in both age groups and in the race. The two largest age categories were 18-12 (n = 14; 29.8%) and 50+ (n = 18; 38.3%). The majority of the respondents were White (n = 23; 48.9%) and African American (n = 19; 40.4%). Although there were not many trends that indicated clear differences in respondents originating from different races, respondents from different age groups showed different preferences. Instagram was the most popular platform among all the survey's respondents (M = 2.12), but TikTok was significantly more popular among younger respondents. Instagram must target more general marketing in order to be inclusive for all ages, but TikTok can target younger audiences.

RQ4 asked which areas of interest the team should feature in their social media strategies to motivate new and/or established Arlington Renegades fans to interact with the team's social media platforms more so than others. As noted in research question one, people interacted the most with lively music and images that connect to entertainment and fun. See Table 2 for a full breakdown of what type of content respondents were most and least likely to interact with.

Our hypothesis stated that if the Arlington Renegades can create a relationship between what it means to be a Renegades fan and the connection to Texan culture through their branding and social media presence, they will develop a larger and more devoted following quicker.

Our hypothesis was supported, but we also received additional findings from our quantitative research. We predicted that culture was an important component to a sports team's branding, such as the beer snake in video 2. People had overall positive reactions when seeing the beer snake shown, since it was representative of Texan football culture. We also discovered the importance of directing the content of sports teams' social media platforms towards content that represented entertainment and fun. Music and visuals are ways in which sports teams can generate positive reactions, as seen in videos 1 and 2.

Professional Recommendations

1. Music can help tell a story. The team highlight video with a Biggie Smalls' song playing along to the touchdown generated a positive reaction. By using popular sounds and trending songs, the Renegades can help expand audiences, encourage engagement and lighten the feel of "advertising."
2. Behind-the-scenes content is one way to make this team and its players more personable, as fans feel like they are a part of the team. Showing footage from locker room celebrations or team bonding activities can show the makings of the team, the strength of friendship, and allow followers and fans to be more deeply connected with the team. Content on individual players can highlight these player personalities. Whether that be "Day in the Life" or "Get Ready with Me" videos, fans will engage more with content. This content can be funny and entertaining, but fans also seem to enjoy emotional and inspirational content as well. Allowing players to be seen as people rather than pawns in a game allows people to form bonds with individual players and overall programs, benefiting the Renegades in both senses.
3. One thing that separates TikTok from other social media platforms is its ability to make sound and challenge trends. If the Renegades keep track of what is trending on the platform and participate, they have more potential for going viral. Not only does this expand their audience, but it gives a more fun flair to the team and their media accounts. The Renegades can also encourage their fans to create their own TikToks or social media content related to the team. Whether it be a photo challenge or a dance challenge, fans can feel more involved in the process of content creation. These videos could also be displayed on Renegades accounts, or even screened on the jumbotron during the football games.
4. Everyone loves a fun and interactive spectacle. Interactions between fans and Renegades media is one way to encourage more engagement. Things like the D.C. Defenders' beer snake that was shown in our survey generated a lot of positive reactions. People expressed what an engaging and creative idea it was for the Renegades community to have a similar activity that is unique to their games.

5. People are not as familiar with XFL players as they are with NFL players. By showing more familiar faces like owner Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, or even other social media personalities and influencers, the Renegades could reach a wider audience. The Renegades could also portray their more well known players, people that have come from large, D1 college programs or even from the NFL. This would benefit both the Renegades and whoever they collaborate with.

Limitations and Future Research

The largest research limitation our group encountered was with an issue with our Qualtrics survey. More than a dozen questions that we had went missing on the final report, and all the data from those questions was lost in the process. We worked with Qualtrics directly through virtual and face-to-face discussions in an attempt to resolve the issue, but went days without receiving answers. We were not able to find an explanation for the issue with Qualtrics and the case was directed towards the engineering team. After spending almost five days seeking an explanation for the malfunction, the engineers at Qualtrics were able to give us this response regarding the issue.

The issue is with the two blocks "Football Content Behaviors" and "TikTok - Specific Behaviors".

Unfortunately, these blocks weren't included in the survey flow between 4/11 at 4:43pm and 4/18 at 5:09pm, so they wouldn't have been displayed to the respondents during that time. Now that they are included, future responses will have those blocks.

The blocks were originally included in the survey flow, which is why you would have seen them during the initial preview. However, they were removed from the survey flow in version 19 of the survey (April 11, 4:43 PM), and were not added back in until Version 33 of the survey (April 18, 5:09 PM).

Although we lost all the data that was provided on those questions by the survey respondents, we were able to resolve the issue thanks to the thoroughness of our survey. We were able to use the questions that had data reported, since it was enough valuable information to analyze our data via quantitative analysis and crosstabs. The two limitations that came from the issue with the Qualtrics survey were that time became constricted because of the delay, and we were not able to fully report what we had envisioned. With this delay, we also needed to restructure our research ambitions because the data we had was different from what we had envisioned when we created our research questions.

Other limitations in our study were those of geography and lack of background knowledge of the Arlington Renegades' social media marketing strategies. Since we were not located in Texas, and one limitation we encountered was that we did not readily have access to large sample sizes of Texan football fans. We worked around this limitation by using technology such as Arlington Renegades Facebook fan groups to reach people with the interests of the target fan demographic. We encountered the limitation of not knowing the strategy of the Arlington Renegades' social media management by researching their previous social media. We then used samples from their own content in our survey to identify how people responded to different posts to gain a sense of what the target audience wants to see more and less of.

Research for future studies in this area can involve researching the different XFL teams' social media management and identifying similarities and differences with the Arlington Renegades' management. Just as many teams in the XFL can gain from the research we conducted in this study, the Arlington Renegades can benefit from the

research done on other social media accounts within the XFL. Another area where more research can be conducted in the future is studying demographics more profoundly and their impact on social media preferences and usage. Although we outlined both age and race in our survey, we mostly focused on the different content that Arlington Renegades fans preferred. Now that our research study has set a foundation on who likes what content more, deeper research can be made in future studies to explore how people from different demographics interact with social media content in different or similar ways.

Conclusion

This research project aimed to generate more fan involvement on social media for the Arlington Renegades by exploring strategies that their social media team could adopt to increase their TikTok following, as well as their overall engagement amongst other platforms. Through a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods, including interviews, observations, focus groups, and a survey, the study found that survey respondents were more likely to use Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, indicating that the team should focus on creating a consistent brand and create consistent content. Our research supported our hypothesis and provided us with additional findings concerning fan entertainment. Unfortunately, our research faced limitations due to an issue with the Qualtrics survey, which resulted in the loss of data for several questions. We were able to use a large majority of our available data to do a sound analysis. The Arlington Renegades should be able to generate more fan engagement and interaction across all of their social media platforms as long as they are consistent with their posting, vary the types of posts that they make, and display a cohesive brand that reflects the team and their values.

Appendix

A. Focus Group Transcript

Interviewer

Hi everyone. Thank you so much for coming. The whole point of this is so that you can discuss amongst the group the different questions. I'm going to lead the discussion just by asking the questions and following up, but I want you all to feel comfortable sharing anything you want. Your opinions, feelings, reactions toward different things you have seen in the XFL or TikTok through advertising of any companies. Potentially the NFL or other sports teams, anything that you believe is successful in promoting a company.

So the first question is:

What do you believe the "it" factor for a team such as the Cowboys, the Patriots, or the Packers is? The factor that contributes to their strong fanbase, people willing to buy tickets, merchandise, or other things. What do you think these teams have that others may not?

Participant 2 (Wolf)

I would say that at least for the two that I know the most about, the Packers is a publicly owned team with really famous players. So, a lot of people feel like when they live there, they own it. Just because you literally can be an owner. Also, people like Aaron Rodgers or Tom Brady stick out so much that that person attracts more of a fanbase. People can really touch more on that.

Participant 5 (O. Rupkalvis)

I think also with the teams that you mentioned, they have a history of being very well-known, and they are still good now, but historically they have won lots of Super Bowls. I think a lot of people recognize that and have kind of hopped on that bandwagon to root for those teams.

Interviewer

With lesser-known teams, especially within the XFL.

If you are not familiar with the XFL it is a smaller football league, however not a minor league. There are eight teams, and while they are not super well-known like NFL teams are, they are becoming more and more recognized. Our specific team we are looking into is the Arlington Renegades in Arlington, Texas.

So, how do you think that the advertising of those big teams with big name players could translate to smaller teams that don't have such well known players?

Participant 1 (J. Rupkalvis)

So, I think, what I was going to say to your first question is:

A team like the Cowboys is all about brand recognition. I know I'm a lot older than you guys,

but when I was growing up, when I was your age, the Cowboys used to advertise on TV before all of their games and they called themselves “America’s Team.” They had a star similar to the

American flags on their helmets, and so people identified with that. I think that’s a key to these other teams, the XFL teams, that are just starting out to get that brand recognition.

I don’t know if they have a cool logo or any of that type of identifying markings, but getting that out and known to a larger audience would help them a lot.

Participant 4 (Saxena)

To build on that, a team in the XFL, like you said the Arlington team, will have to do something kind of different to stand out because the best talent will inevitably go to the NFL. Just because of the legacy that the NFL has built. So, whether that be in terms of how they play, I don’t know, some of the things they do off the field, they have to do something different to stand out and entertain that’s not related to the talent aspect. Just because the best talent will go to the NFL.

Interviewer

Yeah that is a great point. A lot of past NFL players are actually going to the XFL now, which is pretty cool. Do you think maybe advertising more of the well-known players that have gone from big colleges or NFL to the XFL would be successful?

Participant 4 (Saxena)

I think so. Again, to carry that legacy already and having already built a following in the bigger league. Especially for their fanbase that they built seeing that. Them going into the XFL will definitely turn some heads and gain some viewers, in my opinion at least.

Participant 1 (J. Rupkalvis)

I think they have to leverage their coaches too. I mean the Renegades’ coach is Bob Stoops, who is a National Championship winning coach, at least at the collegiate level, but that is pretty well-known across the ranks. So, it’s not just the players, I think it’s the coaches too.

Interviewer

Yeah that’s a super good point.

I’m not sure if all of you have TikTok, I know that a few of you do. But, in the terms of TikTok, have you guys seen advertisements or posts for either the NFL or just different NFL teams. If so, what do you think those posts on the NFL’s with the well-known players, the humor, or the interviews, or the game highlights would be most successful to translate to a smaller league?

Participant 5 (O. Rupkalvis)

I follow quite a few NFL teams on TikTok and they do a wide variety of stuff. I know the teams that get— I know the Chargers have a really good following, I think the Buccaneers too— they do prank videos, I think most of them are humor for TikTok. I think that works well for not only

their own fanbase, but also with random people, like me, whose videos just pop up on their “For You” page. So, I do think that the well-known players starting off and doing interviews, maybe

Having them do a day in the life or them just making videos just to get people to see them would be cool to start out. Then, they could definitely get into the stuff that the bigger NFL teams do. But, nothing that the NFL does is too crazy or outrageous, so it’s all stuff that a smaller team can do too.

Participant 2 (Wolf)

I feel like for people that may not be as into sports, like if you are trying to get a base for people that are into sports but not in love with football, like if you are trying to get it to random people’s “For You” pages, you could probably do things more focused on being funny, short, and more comedy based. TikTok tends to go over well. These might not be about the actual game, and that sounds bad, but that might just resonate with a wider audience on top of having a super large amount of game highlights and content.

Interviewer

Yeah absolutely, especially since TikTok is more of a casual side of social media platforms, so without having to post all of their ticket sales and all of the stuff they might have to put on Instagram or Facebook. They can have more fun with it.

How would you guys or have you interacted with different sports social media accounts?

Participant 2 (Wolf)

For myself, I mostly interact with them around big games or championships. It is very time of the year oriented or as I am seeking out information. It’s not like a constant.

Participant 4 (Saxena)

I know that I repost a lot of things for the teams that I follow and that I’m a fan of. But, the reason that I repost them is because I have been a fan for a long time, so I don’t know if I would promote the XFL exactly. But, I think that is a great way to get more eyes onto the post, especially if people are reposting things on their stories and stuff like that.

Interviewer

Yeah, that’s very true. I know the Rock, obviously he is a partial owner of the XFL, so he does a good job promoting.

Participant 4 (Saxena)

I think it is more if someone that I know, or if they are pretty prominent, posts something on their story I would at least look into it. I don’t know if I would end up being the biggest fan or not or if I will end up resonating with them, but it will at least get eyes on that thing. I think the more eyes people draw to this, I mean I think it is a relatively new league, the more publicity that it will

gain. I mean the style of play, and I don't know if there are any rule differences for the XFL to the NFL. Just the things that will make it stand out to viewers.

Interviewer

What would you say is a good, well-rounded mix of like game highlights, interviews, silly TikToks, day in the life. What would you say a ratio each of you would want to see out of a brand?

Participant 3 (Bridger)

Well my favorite, especially the NFL does a really good job of this, is like when a team gets a Pick 6 or whatever team you follow has a really good clip from a game, they will post it as the game is going on. Like you will look at it and it's posted six minutes ago, they just did it. I think that if the XFL teams do a better job posting clips from when the games are happening, people can be talking about them. Like on Twitter, Instagram, or TikTok, just so fans can communicate with their friends back and forth while the game is going on. I think that would be better and they would get more fans.

Participant 1 (J. Rupkalvis)

I think that that is probably a key thing because what you started out with was that the XFL is not a minor league or lesser league NFL, but a lot of people think it is. A lot of people think that the quality of football is less than it is in the NFL, but showing those highlights and showing those plays is important. I saw a couple videos earlier of guys making phenomenal catches for touchdowns or whatever, they were NFL caliber if not better type catches. So, showing those to show that it is not a lesser quality of football, to me, is a good thing as a general football fan.

Interviewer

That is such a good point.

The XFL has definitely had some interesting things go on. I have a little folder of things on TikTok that have gone viral from the XFL, and just because they have different rules than the NFL there are some crazy things that go on. Just different catches wise or you can drop the ball, pick it back up, and run the other way, so definitely the different play aspect. I don't know if any of you have seen the Beer Snake for the D.C. Defenders, but that has gone pretty viral on TikTok.

Do you think that posting on social media about the fans, the experience of an XFL fan may attract more fans, rather than trying to advertise? If you post more about fan opportunities or the over spectacle for the fans, would you potentially gain more.

Participant 2 (Wolf)

I think that interactable things are fun. Like if you have a story where the fans can vote about which thing is better, which one is more impressive. I think these are things that make more people pay attention because then they have to vote, rather than just clicking through where they might not pay attention. But with polls, you would get to give a little bit of your input into it. So that kind of stuff might be fun to start throwing in, or like really small raffle things that big

techniques that places use to attract people and try to apply them to an Instagram or social media model.

Participant 1 (J. Rupkalvis)

I think the bottom line is that people want to have fun. I think that watching the videos is fun and may draw fans to the stadiums to watch the games and that type of thing.

Interviewer

These are all such great insights into this question.

What have been some things that different sports teams have done on social media that have stuck out to you individually? Whether that be Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, commercial advertising, anything like that.

Participant 4 (Saxena)

One thing that I have noticed almost inevitably goes viral, but it might prove to be a little expensive or might have to get the right sponsors is when they have halftime contests at games. I know for basketball for example, they have like a half-court shooting thing where if a random fan gets a half-court shot they get a certain amount of money or a free car, just something cool like that. I know that when that thing happens, something cool, it always goes viral. I think that would be one thing to look into, it may be expensive potentially, but cool.

Interviewer

Yeah, but that would be a great idea nonetheless, to have some type of fan interaction on social media rather than just having the players, coaches, or the game on it.

Participant 5 (O. Rupkalvis)

You can do, like for the halftime stuff, some cheaper things too. Like with the Seahawks have had a Dachshund race at one of their games over the season and it went like crazy viral, and I think a college basketball team had a baby race, that might be a little extreme for a football field, but the dog race is funny.

Interviewer

I think that there are a couple teams that have hosted different fan things that wouldn't be expensive. Like winning T-shirts or I know a lot of NFL teams have contests that are like "How far can you throw a football" that are always interesting.

Participant 5 (O. Rupkalvis)

I think maybe doing cool things in the games. Like we have a minor league hockey team in Charlotte and they have it's called "Winning Wednesdays," and it's where if you come to a game on a Wednesday and the team wins you get a ticket to the next Wednesday's game. So maybe

Something like that, or like themed nights, I know a lot of the teams here do “Bark in the Park” and every night of the week or every game they have something different. These attract people because Charlotte has a lot of minor league teams, but they are always very popular with everyone here.

Interviewer

Do you think that in the sense of social media or just online interaction and television, are there any advertisements that have stuck out? Maybe different companies using players in commercials or I know the thing with Pete Nance and the lemon Oreos went a little viral. Is there anything that has stuck in your brain from past seasons?

Participant 2 (Wolf)

This is kind of related to the last question and kind of this one. I think that one thing that the NFL has done to attract younger people is the PLAY 60 stuff. They have really engaged kids and there are a million and one advertisements about healthy eating and PLAY 60. That might be something good, some sort of challenge or way to relate to kids teams. That is definitely a market that is super saturated with the NBA and NFL, but there are perks that would be huge. Kids are like the next generation of watching.

I think quirky things like the Oreos tend to go viral, but I feel like that is hard to plan without being so off the cuff and being funny. Like that wasn't a planned thing.

Interviewer

Yeah definitely. You have to kind of have stuff like that happen naturally for it to work out. I know that in the NFL right now there is a big thing about a lot of the players that people find attractive, those TikToks tend to go pretty viral, or just play into any special trends.

Participant 5 (O. Rupkalvis)

Definitely, I think it is really funny whenever big brands or teams play into and participate in the trends that everyone else is doing on TikTok. I think that it shows that they actually, well I know their social media manager does, but that they are actually watching the TikToks. I think that is really cute.

Interviewer

I think that out of the trends aspect, would you think that maybe having the players participate in the trends would be successful on the actual Arlington Renegades TikTok account or their personal accounts?

Participant 5 (O. Rupkalvis)

Definitely the team account. The individual accounts aren't always representative of the entire team.

Interviewer

Do you guys think that the building of TikTok or just social media in general will translate to fan engagement and fans coming to get to know what the XFL actually is?

Participant 5 (O. Rupkalvis)

I think so. The only reason I know about it is because I follow the Rock. The more people that follow them and participate with what they are posting, the more inclined they would be to attend or buy gear, stuff like that.

Participant 3 (Bridger)

I feel like the XFL definitely needs to do a better job on social media. Just talking about the differences in the league from the NFL, the XFL has different rules. I know there is a rule in the XFL where you can pass forward twice and then they don't get extra points like you do in the NFL. Like you have to run all of your extra points after touchdowns. Since there are differences in the actual game and strategy of it, I think they should let that be known to people. I don't think I even knew that during this XFL season, so they need to do more about communicating that on social media.

Interviewer

Yeah definitely. I think that a lot of the TikToks that did go viral are the different rules. People see that as "Wow, they can do that." Whether it is the double pass forward or that they can hit in ways that the NFL can't, kind of body slamming people. Since originally the XFL was kind of a mix between wrestling and football, I think it is interesting to show people how different it is. Saying, "Look, they can do things in this that you haven't seen before."

Participant 5 (O. Rupkalvis)

I think that some people miss that about NFL football, so that might be something to pull them in for sure.

Participant 1 (J. Rupkalvis)

I think the other thing is that the NFL in recent years have put so many policies into place, that now it's becoming known and a lot of people are calling it the "No Fun League," the NFL. But, I think that the celebration rules and things like that after scoring are different as well and they can have more of an ability to do funny things after scoring, whereas the NFL has it so regulated after scoring that guys don't even do touchdown dances anymore.

Participant 2 (Wolf)

Yeah, I will say too, I didn't know that the rules were different until this conversation. I feel like that is something that is intriguing because it does make it a slightly different sport. But, I don't think anyone views it like that. Highlighting that on their accounts would be interesting to see.

Interviewer

Well that is all of the questions that we have, but if anyone has any closing statements they are obviously welcome. This has been such a great conversation.

Participant 2 (Wolf)

The one last thing I'll say, going back to what Olivia [Participant 5] said about the whole city really loving the teams, even if they are minor league. I completely agree with that, however much a team engages with the community, like when I lived in Chattanooga, I don't think that I had ever been to a minor league baseball game, but we went almost every week just because they were so fun and they did giveaways at every single one. It was mostly like a game, it was like guessing the price of this item at the grocery store and the closest person to guess won like \$10 and the item. Whatever it was, even if it was just a jar of peanut butter.

But, anyway, it was always entertaining and fun, so I think that if you can do those little things for schools, like they would have free ticket days for students in Chattanooga, or the fans you can really get engagement just by making it affordable.

Participant 5 (O. Rupkalvis)

Yeah, I think that's a major thing. Just like Charlotte having all of these minor league teams, it's a lot more accessible for people to go to games, and a lot more affordable than compared to NFL games. Like I've only been to preseason Panthers games just because I can't afford to go to an actual one, but we go to the baseball and hockey games all the time because tickets are easy to get and they always do tons of fun stuff at them. I almost like to go to those games more.

Interviewer

Yeah, that is a big driving factor too for the XFL. The XFL is very fan-oriented, I mean their least expensive tickets that they have, I mean they definitely have higher ticket prices for the different seats, but the least expensive tickets are \$18. That's a big point, but they don't really come across saying, "Hey, we are really cheap, a lot cheaper than the NFL." But, yeah, that would also be a great thing to start incorporating in there.

Alright, I just want to thank you guys so much for participating in the focus group, it really means a lot to us. We will definitely take all of your comments and put them to good use.

B. Survey Questions

Survey Questions via Qualtrics

Default Question Block

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Research Information Sheet for Participant Consent

Researchers: Max Feliu Merce, Alexandra Rupkalvis, Alexis Dixon, Kennedy Cox
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Jennifer Harker

The purpose of this research study is to better understand the role of social media in the fan engagement across separate XFL teams. You are being asked to take part in a research study because of your demonstrated interest in the Arlington Renegades and the XFL.

Being in a research study is completely voluntary. You can choose not to be in this research study. You can also say yes now and change your mind later.

If you agree to take part in this research, you will be asked to answer the following survey questions. Your participation in this study will take about 10-15 minutes. We expect that 100 people will take part in this research study.

You can choose not to answer any question you do not wish to answer. You can also choose to stop taking the survey at any time. You must be at least 18 years old to participate. If you are younger than 18 years old, please stop now.

To protect your identity as a research subject, the researchers will not share your information with anyone. In any publication of this research your name nor any personal information will be used.

If you have any questions about this research, please contact the researchers or faculty advisor named at the top of this form by emailing or Dr. Harker at jlharker@unc.edu. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the UNC Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB_subjects@unc.edu.

- ☐ I consent
☐ I do NOT consent

1

Social Media Use

Thank you for agreeing to take our survey. We will begin asking you questions regarding social media use. Please click the arrow at the bottom right to continue.

Rank each social media platform by your overall use and favorability:

Drag and Drop

Facebook

Instagram

TikTok

Snapchat

Twitter

Other:

For the following platforms: how likely are you to 'repost' and/or share content from accounts you do *not* follow (i.e. from your 'For You' feed, 'Explore' page, etc)

(Please rank with the following scale: 1 being Extremely Unlikely and 5 being Extremely Likely)

	1	2	3	4	5
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
TikTok	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Snapchat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

For the following platforms: how likely are you to follow and engage with accounts with American Football (NFL, XFL, etc.) content?

2

Survey Questions cont.

(Please rank with the following scale: 1 being Extremely Unlikely and 5 being Extremely Likely)

	1	2	3	4	5
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
TikTok	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Snapchat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

For the following platforms: how likely are you to follow and engage with accounts associated with the XFL?

(Please rank with the following scale: 1 being Extremely Unlikely and 5 being Extremely Likely)

	1	2	3	4	5
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
TikTok	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Snapchat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Demographics

Choose your age group:

- ☐ 18-21
☐ 22-30
☐ 31-40
☐ 41-50
☐ 50+

Choose one or more races that you consider yourself to be

- ☐ White or Caucasian
☐ Black or African American
☐ American Indian/Native American or Alaska Native

- ☐ Asian
☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
☐ Other
☐ Prefer not to say

Are you of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- ☐ Some high school or less
☐ High school diploma or GED
☐ Some college, but no degree
☐ Associates or technical degree
☐ Bachelor's degree
☐ Graduate or professional degree (MA, MS, MBA, PhD, JD, MD, DDS etc.)
☐ Prefer not to say

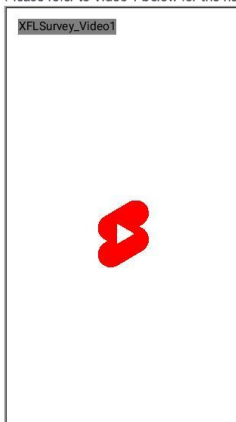
In which state do you currently reside?

A/B Testing Examples

Thank you for your responses so far. Next, we have a fun activity for you. Please view the next four short social media videos and answer the questions that follow.

Survey Questions cont.

Please refer to Video 1 below for the next two questions.



[B197b1b7 1e64 40be 8af2 94c01331c69a](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B197b1b71e6&list=PL40be8af294c01331c69a)

In a word or phrase, what is the first thing you noticed about Video 1?

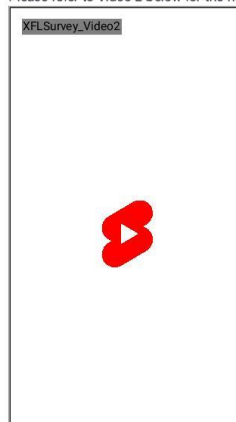
How likely are you to like, repost, or share content similar to Video 1?

Extremely Likely Somewhat Likely Neither Likely nor Unlikely Somewhat Unlikely Extremely Unlikely

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

5

Please refer to Video 2 below for the next two questions.



[Pb41ae78 3108 4b1a bb0a 7bcbca217bd6](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pb41ae78310&list=PL40be8af294c01331c69a)

In a word or phrase, what is the first thing you noticed about Video 2?

How likely are you to like, repost, or share content similar to Video 2?

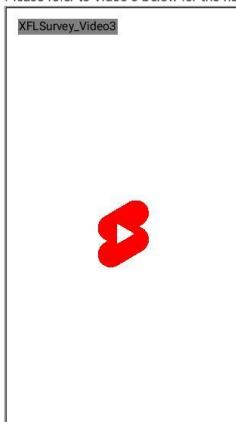
Extremely Likely Somewhat Likely Neither Likely nor Unlikely Somewhat Unlikely Extremely Unlikely

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

6

Survey Questions cont.

Please refer to Video 3 below for the next two questions.



[6a4ab846_3b9f_47ff_9eb2_33d93652fc9f](#)

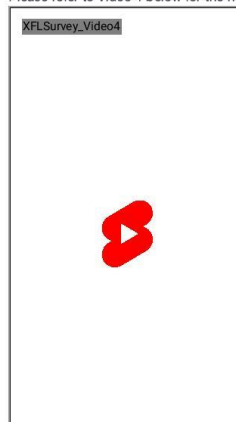
In a word or phrase, what is the first thing you noticed about Video 3?

How likely are you to like, repost, or share content similar to Video 3?

Extremely Likely Somewhat Likely Neither Likely nor Unlikely Somewhat Unlikely Extremely Unlikely



Please refer to Video 4 below for the next two questions.



[78ba2ed8_2072_45d1_aefc_abb7673f633](#)

In a word or phrase, what is the first thing you noticed about Video 4?

How likely are you to like, repost, or share content similar to Video 4?

Extremely Likely Somewhat Likely Neither Likely nor Unlikely Somewhat Unlikely Extremely Unlikely



Rank the previous videos from most interesting to least interesting.

Survey Questions cont.

Video 1 (Team Highlight)

Video 2 (Fan Interaction)

Video 3 (Interview)

Video 4 (League Highlights)

Football Content Behaviors

How likely are you to look up and watch instant replays on social media during a football game?

(Please rank with the following scale: 1 being Extremely Unlikely and 5 being Extremely Likely)

1 2 3 4 5

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

How likely are you to track statistics of players on social media during a football game?

(Please rank with the following scale: 1 being Extremely Unlikely and 5 being Extremely Likely)

1 2 3 4 5

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

How likely are you to use a hashtag when discussing your team on social media?

(Please rank with the following scale: 1 being Extremely Unlikely and 5 being Extremely Likely)

1 2 3 4 5

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

How much do you value player identity, diversity, and representation being displayed on their team's social media account?

None at all A little A moderate amount A lot A great deal

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

How much do you value community building, charity, and other philanthropic endeavors being displayed on a team's social media account?

(Please rank with the following scale: 1 being Extremely Unlikely and 5 being Extremely Likely)

None at all A little A moderate amount A lot A great deal

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

TikTok - Specific Behaviors

Now, let's focus just on TikTok.

Do you have a TikTok account?

☐ Yes

☐ No

What have you **viewed** while using TikTok? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Watched a video
- ☐ Watched a hashtag challenge
- ☐ Watched a live stream

How have you **reacted** while using TikTok? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Liked a video
- ☐ Commented on a video
- ☐ Saved or shared a video
- ☐ Followed or unfollowed a user

What have you **participated** in while using TikTok? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Created a video

Survey Questions cont.

- ☐ Used a visual filter or effect
- ☐ Duetted another user
- ☐ Participated in a hashtag challenge

Powered by Qualtrics

C. Survey Crosstabs

Age & Social Media Platform Favorability

New Crosstab

		Q1: Choose your age group:					
		Total	18-21	22-30	31-40	41-50	50+
Q6_2: Rank each social media platform by your overall use and favorability: Instagram	Total Count (All)	49.0	14.0	6.0	4.0	5.0	20.0
	1	13.0	5.0	2.0	0.0	2.0	4.0
		26.5%	35.7%	33.3%	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%
	2	17.0	4.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	9.0
		34.7%	28.6%	33.3%	25.0%	20.0%	45.0%
	3	11.0	4.0	2.0	1.0	0.0	4.0
		22.4%	28.6%	33.3%	25.0%	0.0%	20.0%
	4	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0
		4.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	5.0%
	5	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
		2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%
	6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Average	2.1	1.9	2.0	2.5	2.0	2.3
	Median	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.5	1.5	2.0
	Standard Deviation	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.7	1.4	1.0
Q6_3: Rank each social media platform by your overall use and favorability: TikTok	Total Count (All)	49.0	14.0	6.0	4.0	5.0	20.0
	1	5.0	4.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		10.2%	28.6%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	2	8.0	2.0	1.0	0.0	2.0	3.0
		16.3%	14.3%	16.7%	0.0%	40.0%	15.0%
	3	15.0	6.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	7.0
		30.6%	42.9%	16.7%	25.0%	0.0%	35.0%
	4	10.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	6.0
		20.4%	7.1%	16.7%	25.0%	20.0%	30.0%
	5	5.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	3.0
		10.2%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	15.0%
	6	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0
		2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
	Average	3.1	2.3	3.3	3.5	3.5	3.5
	Median	3.0	3.0	3.5	3.5	3.0	3.0
	Standard Deviation	1.2	1.0	1.6	0.7	1.9	1.0

New Crosstab

Age & Corresponding Video Ranking

Age & Corresponding Video Ranking		Q1: Choose your age group:						
		Total	18-21	22-30	31-40	41-50	50+	
Q19: Rank the previous videos from most interesting to least interesting.	Total Count (All)		47.0	14.0	6.0	4.0	5.0	18.0
	Video 1 (Team Highlight)	1	9.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	3.0
			19.1%	14.3%	16.7%	25.0%	40.0%	16.7%
		2	7.0	1.0	2.0	0.0	1.0	3.0
			14.9%	7.1%	33.3%	0.0%	20.0%	16.7%
		3	14.0	7.0	2.0	0.0	1.0	4.0
			29.8%	50.0%	33.3%	0.0%	20.0%	22.2%
		4	8.0	3.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
			17.0%	21.4%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	22.2%
	Video 2 (Fan Interaction)	1	17.0	7.0	3.0	0.0	2.0	5.0
			36.2%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	40.0%	27.8%
		2	8.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	2.0
			17.0%	35.7%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	11.1%
		3	7.0	1.0	2.0	0.0	1.0	3.0
			14.9%	7.1%	33.3%	0.0%	20.0%	16.7%
		4	6.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	4.0
			12.8%	0.0%	16.7%	25.0%	0.0%	22.2%
	Video 3 (Interview)	1	6.0	3.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
			12.8%	21.4%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%
		2	11.0	4.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	5.0
			23.4%	28.6%	16.7%	0.0%	20.0%	27.8%
		3	9.0	2.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	5.0
			19.1%	14.3%	0.0%	25.0%	20.0%	27.8%
		4	12.0	4.0	4.0	0.0	2.0	2.0
			25.5%	28.6%	66.7%	0.0%	40.0%	11.1%
	Video 4 (League Highlights)	1	6.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
			12.8%	7.1%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	22.2%
		2	12.0	3.0	3.0	1.0	1.0	4.0
			25.5%	21.4%	50.0%	25.0%	20.0%	22.2%
		3	8.0	3.0	2.0	0.0	1.0	2.0
			17.0%	21.4%	33.3%	0.0%	20.0%	11.1%
		4	12.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	4.0
			25.5%	42.9%	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	22.2%
	Average (Video 1 (Team Highlight))		2.6	2.8	2.5	1.0	1.8	2.6
	Average (Video 2 (Fan Interaction))		2.1	1.5	2.2	4.0	1.8	2.4
	Average (Video 3 (Interview))		2.7	2.5	3.2	3.0	3.3	2.5
	Average (Video 4 (League Highlights))		2.7	3.1	2.2	2.0	3.3	2.4
	Median (Video 1 (Team Highlight))		3.0	3.0	2.5	1.0	1.5	3.0
	Median (Video 2 (Fan Interaction))		2.0	1.0	2.0	4.0	1.5	2.5
	Median (Video 3 (Interview))		3.0	2.0	4.0	3.0	3.5	2.5
	Median (Video 4 (League Highlights))		3.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	3.5	2.0
	Standard Deviation (Video 1 (Team Highlight))		1.1	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.2
	Standard Deviation (Video 2 (Fan Interaction))		1.1	0.7	1.3	0.0	1.0	1.3
	Standard Deviation (Video 3 (Interview))		1.1	1.2	1.3	0.0	1.0	0.9
	Standard Deviation (Video 4 (League Highlights))		1.1	1.0	0.8	0.0	1.0	1.2

Short Answer Opinion Responses

Example Video 1 - Team Highlight Reel

Q20: In a word or phrase, what is the first thing you noticed about Video 1?	Total			
	Total Count (All)		50.0	
	music	2.0	Music	14.0
		4.0%		26.0%
	Music	2.0		
		4.0%		
	Music	1.0		
		2.0%		
	The music	2.0		
		4.0%		
	The catchy music	1.0		
		2.0%		
	The music	2.0		
		4.0%		
	The music staged to the touchdowr	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Biggie Smalls	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Biggy	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Orange uniforms; good music	1.0	Branding/Uniform	12.0
		2.0%		24.0%
	Color of uniforms	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Colors	2.0		
		4.0%		
	Uniform colors	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Orange	1.0		
		2.0%		
	The orange team	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Uniform	1.0		
		2.0%		
	The uniforms	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Helmet	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Helmets	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Unfamiliar uniforms	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Goal-line formation, orange team threatening to score. Bunch formation...i think? I'm still learning my formations, but a lot of packing at the line of scrimmage.	1.0	Gameplay	7.0
		2.0%		14.0%
	Crazy play	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Handoff and touchdown!	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Run play	1.0		
		2.0%		
	The nice tackle	1.0		
		2.0%		
	The pass	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Touchdown	1.0		
		2.0%		

Example Video 1 cont.

	The good quality of video	1.0	Video Quality	2.0
		2.0%		4.0%
	Shaky camera	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Cool	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Fun	2.0	General Positive	4.0
		4.0%		8.0%
	Griddy	1.0		
		2.0%		
	physicality	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Tough	1.0	Player Recognitio	2.0
		2.0%		4.0%
	Short	1.0	General Negative	1.0
		2.0%		2.0%

Short Answer Opinion Responses

Example Video 2 - Fan Interaction (Viral Stadium Beer Snake Video)

Q22: In a word or phrase, what is the first thing you noticed about Video 2?	Total			
	Total Count (All)	50.0		
	Beer Snake	2.0	Beer Snake	13.0
		4.0%		26.0%
	Beer snake	3.0		
		6.0%		
	The beer snake	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Long "snake"	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Cup snake	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Snake	3.0		
		6.0%		
	The cups	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Cups	1.0		
		2.0%		
	How very creative they were with the cups	1.0	Community	6.0
		2.0%		12.0%
	Community	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Fan engagement	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Fans	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Fans; beer	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Red team has great fans!	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Color	1.0	Branding/Uniform	6.0
		2.0%		12.0%
	It's branded xfl and paired with drinking alcohol	1.0		
		2.0%		
	The XFL animation transition. Reminded me of ESPN	1.0		
		2.0%		
	The logo for xfl	1.0		
		2.0%		
	XFL logo	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Xfl intro	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Fun	1.0	General Positive	8.0
		2.0%		16.0%
	Goofy	1.0		
		2.0%		
	fun	1.0		
		2.0%		
	fun	1.0		
		2.0%		
	funny	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Upbeat	1.0		
		2.0%		
	Slay	1.0		
		2.0%		

Example Video 2 cont.

Insane, and wanna join	1.0		
	2.0%		
Length	1.0	Video Quality	2.0
	2.0%		4.0%
News explanatory	1.0		
	2.0%		
College football	1.0	General Negative	5.0
	2.0%		10.0%
Frat boys that won't let go of their college experiences	1.0		
	2.0%		
The media creators were trying to have a comedic effect	1.0		
	2.0%		
Didn't get it	1.0		
	2.0%		
Oddity	1.0		
	2.0%		

Short Answer Opinion Responses

Example Video 3 - Inspirational Player Interview

Q24: In a word or phrase, what is the first thing you noticed about Video 3?	Total		
	Total Count (All)	50.0	
	AJ McCaron	1.0	Player/Team Recognition 4.0
		2.0%	8.0%
	AJ McCarron	1.0	
		2.0%	
	St. Louis	1.0	
		2.0%	
	St. louis	1.0	
		2.0%	
	Interview	1.0	Video Type 4.0
		2.0%	8.0%
	Interview	2.0	
		4.0%	
	news actual interview	1.0	
		2.0%	
	Branded xfl. Human interest	1.0	Branding/Uniform 15.0
		2.0%	28.0%
	Blue	1.0	
		2.0%	
	Branding	1.0	
		2.0%	
	The teams logo	1.0	
		2.0%	
	XFL	1.0	
		2.0%	
	XFL logo	1.0	
		2.0%	
	Logo	1.0	
		2.0%	
	uniforms	1.0	
		2.0%	
	Team head cover	1.0	
		2.0%	
	The symbol on his beanie	1.0	
		2.0%	
	Symbol on hat	1.0	
		2.0%	
	Cool hat	1.0	
		2.0%	
	Hat	1.0	
		2.0%	
	His cap	1.0	
		2.0%	
	The music in the background and the sentiment the player is giving off	1.0	Emotion / Inspirational 11.0
		2.0%	22.0%
	Emotional interview	1.0	
		2.0%	
	Emotional	1.0	
		2.0%	
	Father excited	1.0	
		2.0%	
	emotional	1.0	
		2.0%	
	emotional	1.0	
		2.0%	

Example Video 3 cont.

How happy and proud he seems to be playing football	1.0		
	2.0%		
Inspirational	1.0		
	2.0%		
Second Chance	1.0		
	2.0%		
The motivational message	1.0		
	2.0%		
dedication	1.0		
	2.0%		
Great	1.0	General Positive	2.0
	2.0%		4.0%
Funny	1.0		
	2.0%		
Another missed opportunity to showcase women's sports on a national platform like ESPN.	1.0		
	2.0%		
Low key interview after hyped ir	1.0		
	2.0%		
That it must be cold there.	1.0		
	2.0%		
His sniffing was annoying	1.0		
	2.0%		
Forced sentimentality	1.0		
	2.0%		
		General Negative	5.0
			10.0%

Short Answer Opinion Responses

Example Video 4 - League Gameplay Highlight

Q26: In a word or phrase, what is the first thing you noticed about Video 4?	Total		
	Total Count (All)	54.0	
	Action	1.0	Gameplay
		1.9%	11.0
	Action	1.0	20.4%
		1.9%	
	Big hit	1.0	
		1.9%	
	The hit and crack of the helmet	1.0	
		1.9%	
	The sound of the first hit	1.0	
		1.9%	
	The hard crash when the guy rammed the player	1.0	
		1.9%	
	Can't touch this	1.0	
		1.9%	
	Great plays	1.0	
		1.9%	
	Great plays!	1.0	
		1.9%	
	Exciting replays	1.0	
		1.9%	
	Plays	1.0	
		1.9%	
	It's a highlight reel, definitely something people like to see on their media feed	1.0	Video Quality
		1.9%	13.0
	Brief synopsis of general highlights from the XFL from a certain season.	1.0	24.1%
		1.9%	
	The fact that it's a highlight reel	1.0	
		1.9%	
	highlights	1.0	
		1.9%	
	Highlights	1.0	
		1.9%	
	Highlights	3.0	
		5.6%	
	Highlight clips	1.0	
		1.9%	
	The transition	1.0	
		1.9%	
	Top plays	1.0	
		1.9%	
	Top Plays	1.0	
		1.9%	
	Game footage	1.0	
		1.9%	
	XFL logo	1.0	Branding/Uniform
		1.9%	2.0
	Colors	1.0	3.7%
		1.9%	
	Fan chest shield	1.0	Fan Engagement
		1.9%	3.0
	Breastplate	1.0	5.6%
		1.9%	

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