

## Player Injuries Unfairly Overshadowed By Fantasy Sports

Written by [kylestack](#) on 9/8/2011 11:37 PM

Indianapolis Colts quarterback Peyton Manning is causing his fantasy football owners almost as much grief as the Colts' organization. That seems like such an asinine sentence to write; too bad it has a measure of validity to it and it frustrates me.

The lingering effects of off-season neck surgery have put Manning in a position to likely miss his first game since he entered the NFL in 1998 – a string 208 consecutive regular season games. His consistency throughout his distinguished career should be highlighted, yet fantasy football has altered how athletes' injuries are perceived.



Fantasy football was an \$800 million industry in 2009, according to Fantasy Sports Trade Association president Paul Charchian in a [CNN article](#). That number is higher today. The proposition of being a fake general manager is so alluring that even the NFL insiders who cover the real sport for print and TV are drawn to it. Their advertisers surely have benefited from it, since fantasy players watch games all day and update websites to see how their players perform.

The fallout from Manning's injury has stoked as much fantasy football-intended analysis as it has of its real life consequences. Now, there is a correlation between the Colts' success with or without Manning and how that affects his fantasy football status. Points in the fantasy game are derived from players' performances on the field, so there will always be a connection. While that's all well and good, the emphasis given toward a fantasy football perspective for this situation bothers me.

I think fantasy sports have caused fans to become so distracted that they don't take the time to relish a great player. Manning's consecutive games streak is a statistic for the ages. Only one other NFL quarterback has started more than 116 straight games – Brett Favre at 297. More should be written and talked about regarding Manning's illustrious career. He's third in NFL history in passing yards (54,828) and passing touchdowns (399).

If Manning recovers from his neck injury in time to play Week 1 this Sunday, then analysis will obviously turn to his play on the field. I suspect even then it's only a matter of time before the critiques are modified to account for the legions of fantasy football players who have Manning on their teams. That's the sports era in which we live, but I'm not happy about it.

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