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COURT OF FANTASY FOOTBALL – COMMISSIONER APPEALS

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HERMANN’S HEAD	:	Date: September 1, 2006
	:	League Type: Football/Yearly
	:	Dispute: Votes/Roster Size
Petitioner,	:	
- against -	:	
	:	
COMMISSIONER of the YALE FOOTBALL	:	COMMISSIONER’S PLAN TO
LEAGUE	:	INCREASE ACTIVE ROSTER SIZE
	:	AFTER THE DRAFT IS
	:	<u>OVERTURNED</u>
Respondent	:	
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Petitioner HERMANN’S HEAD brings this claim in the COURT OF FANTASY FOOTBALL, COMMISSIONER APPEALS DIVISION, seeking to prevent the Commissioner of the YALE FOOTBALL LEAGUE from changing the league’s active roster size from eight to nine players by adding a third active running back slot. This proposed change in roster size was made by the Commissioner three days *after* the league’s online draft was conducted. HERMANN’S HEAD argues that the proposed rule change is unfair because teams including his own relied on the league’s original roster settings that included just two active running backs. HERMANN’S HEAD also argues that the COMMISSIONER would have been less likely to unilaterally impose this rule change had the COMMISSIONER himself not drafted five running backs for his roster.

In response, the COMMISSIONER argues that adding a third active running back makes the league more competitive for all owners by slightly reducing the impact of drafting one of “the big three” on overall team performance. (The “big three” includes Larry Johnson, LaDainian Tomlinson and Shaun Alexander). The COMMISSIONER references the proposed changes to complaints made by many different team owners, each whom contended that without this change the computer-generated draft order would significantly impact which team would win the league.

Where a league constitution grants a commissioner broad authority either to adjudicate disputes or to call for a league vote on changing rules, the commissioner’s decision should be upheld as long as this decision is neither arbitrary nor capricious. (We stated this position previously in the published opinion, *Balco Orange Juice v. Commissioner of the Jefferson League*, Index No. 00173). However, in a league that lacks a formal constitution, as is the case here, a league commissioner is no more powerful than an ordinary owner. With that in mind, the Commissioner’s proposed change to expand the active roster size should only be upheld if this proposed change is fair and reasonable to all parties.

While there are certainly virtues to maintaining a larger size roster in fantasy football, it would be neither fair nor reasonable to change the league’s roster size *after* the draft is conducted. If the COMMISSIONER had wanted a nine-player roster, he should have suggested this change before the draft was held – possibly even before the draft order was selected. Not only does the possibility exist that the Commissioner would not have suggested this rule change had the computer granted his team a higher pick, but the possibility also exists that a team such as HERMANN’S HEAD might have drafted differently had the Commissioner’s proposed rule change occurred prior to the draft. Therefore, for the aforementioned reasons, I rule in favor of HERMANN’S HEAD. The YALE FOOTBALL LEAGUE roster size shall remain unchanged at eight active players (and just two active running backs) for the 2006 season. Best of luck!

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