

**SPORTSJUDGE.COM**  
COURT OF FANTASY FOOTBALL

----- X  
WICKED THREADZ FANTASY FOOTBALL : Index No. **2306-T**  
LEAGUE : Date: **October 30, 2008**  
: League Type: **12 TEAM H-TO-H**  
: **LEAGUE**  
: Dispute: **TRADE DISPUTE**  
: Judge: **MARC EDELMAN**  
: Petitioner, :  
: - against - :  
: REAL MEN OF GENIUS & EXPRESS :  
: Respondent :  
----- X

Petitioner, The Wicked Threadz Fantasy Football League, brings this claim in the Court of Fantasy Football, seeking to overturn the trade of Brian Westbrook (RB-Eagles) and the Tennessee Defense from Real Men of Genius to Express in exchange for Ryan Torain (RB-Broncos), Jonathan Stewart (RB-Panthers), Tory Holt (WR-Rams) and Muhsin Muhammad (WR-Panthers).

This court fully overturns this trade. The court further rejects the commissioner’s proposed alterative trade.

**The Law on Upholding a Trade**

This question of when a fantasy sports arbitrator should intervene to overturn a trade is extremely tricky. On one hand, a major part of the fun of fantasy sports involves making trades and taking risks. The minute an outside party steps into the shoes and takes away the right of an individual fantasy team owner to make his own choices, a big part of the game’s fun is lost. However, on the other hand, if an arbitrator approved every single possible trade without regard to the ethical underpinnings of the deal or its impact on the integrity of the league overall, fantasy sports "would deteriorate into nothing more than a collection of near-Ponzi schemes of side dealing, trickery, and deceit." (*See Commissioner v. Teams A, B, C & D, Docket No. 1443 (C)* (Sept. 9, 2008). If that were to happen, owners would also lose interest in fantasy sports. This result would be equally problematic.

To allow individual leagues the maximum deference in setting their own criteria for trade approval, SportsJudge.com maintains a policy of first turning to a given league’s constitution to provide guidance about when it should overturn a trade. (*See Public Opinion No. 409-T, Commissioner P.K. v. Cartman*). Leagues from around the country have adopted a wide range of different language to instruct our court. Some leagues request that SportsJudge.com uphold any trade so long as there is no actual finding of collusion (this standard has led to almost a 100% trade approval rate). Other leagues request that SportsJudge.com reject any trade where there even is the slightest argument of inequality (this leads has led to under a 30% trade approval rate).

Where a fantasy sports league fails to provide SportsJudge.com with a constitutional standard about when to overrule a trade, the SportsJudge.com court becomes forced to apply our default rule. This default rule states that “any fantasy baseball trade shall be upheld as long as the trade adequately benefits both teams.” (See Public Opinion No. 101, Big Red Rockers v. Big City Bombers).

SportsJudge.com arbitrators have long interpreted this rule to mean that a trade shall be upheld as long as there is a reasonable basis that both teams would benefit. Historically, SportsJudge.com have upheld close to 90% of all submitted trades when using this standard.

**The Proposed Trade**

The proposed trade is a 4-for-2. Express proposes to send to Real Men of Genius:

<b>Player</b>	<b>Preseason Rotowire.com Rank</b>	<b>Current Actual Yahoo! Rank</b>	<b>Wicked Threadz Draft Position</b>
<b>Ryan Torain – RB</b>	Not in Top 150	1692	Not Drafted
<b>Jonathan Stewart -- RB</b>	55	68	47
<b>Tory Holt -- WR</b>	35	181	26
<b>Muhsin Muhammad --WR</b>	Not in Top 150	72	175

Real Men of Genius proposes to send Express:

<b>Player</b>	<b>Preseason Rotowire.com Rank</b>	<b>Current Actual Yahoo! Rank (based on averages)</b>	<b>Wicked Threadz Draft Position</b>
<b>Michael Westbrook – RB</b>	6	1	3
<b>Tennessee Defense</b>	Not Ranked	63 (third amongst defenses)	Not Drafted

**Trade Analysis**

Applying the review standard that considers whether this trade adequately benefits both teams, this court does not require that a trade be even; merely that both teams have a reasonable chance of benefiting. Essentially, this requires a level of good faith by all parties involved. It does not come nearly as far as requiring equality.

There is no doubt that Real Men of Genius benefits immensely from acquiring statistically one of the best running backs (Westbrook) and best defenses (Tennessee) in fantasy football this season.

The attached template, including its intellectual property, logos, ideas, and processes included within, is the exclusive property of Highball Entertainment. This opinion may not be re-used, reproduced or otherwise copied for pecuniary gain without the express written consent of SportsJudge.com or Highball Entertainment. In addition, this opinion serves exclusively for entertainment value, and it may not in any way be construed as the practice of law by its authors. In some cases, the author may not even be a licensed attorney. Additionally, in some cases, the names of the representative league and parties are changed, at the sole discretion of SportsJudge.com

However, unless Westbrook gets injured (and there is no reason to presume that event), there is less than an angstrom of chance that Express would ultimately benefit. Without the proposed trade, Express logically would be expected to start the following players at the applicable for the remainder of the season (factoring in teams that have bye weeks to remainder of the way, and presuming that Larry Johnson misses the rest of the season with a suspension -- a presumption that looks at the trade in its most favorable light):

Position	Week 9	Week 10	Rest of the Way
WR – 1	Roddy White	Roddy White	Roddy White
WR –2	Santonio Holmes	Santonio Holmes	Santonio Holmes
RB – 1	Jamal Lewis	Jamal Lewis	Jamal Lewis
RB – 2	Brian Westbrook	Brian Westbrook	Brian Westbrook
FLEX	Randle El	Henderson	Randle El or Henderson
Defense	Tennessee	Tennessee	Tennessee

After the trade, however, Express instead would start this team:

Position	Week 9	Week 10	Rest of the Way
WR – 1	White	White	White
WR –2	Holmes	Holmes	Holmes
RB – 1	Lewis	Lewis	Lewis
RB – 2	<b>Torain</b>	<b>Stewart</b>	<b>Stewart</b>
FLEX	<b>Holt</b>	<b>Holt or Muhammad</b>	<b>Holt or Muhammad</b>
Defense	<b>WAIVER PICK</b>	<b>WAIVER PICK</b>	<b>WAIVER PICK</b>

Stated otherwise, by making this trade, Express assumes a gaping hole at defense and a substantially weaker running back, while gaining little elsewhere. Even in terms of depth, any gains for Express are questionable. Two of the players that Express acquired are amongst the less than 33% of players in the league that still have their bye weeks lying ahead.

In addition, if you tabulate starting lineups based on average points per week thus far this season (and indeed, that is an imperfect method of projection), this trade will yield Express on average an astounding 15.54 point drop per week.

Old Player	Likely New Player	Average Difference Per Week
Westbrook (20.92)	Stewart (8.31)	Loss of 12.61 points/week
Tennessee (10.50)	Seattle (6.50)	Loss of 4.00 points/week
Holmes (8.59)	Muhammad (9.66)	Gain of 0.93 points/week
		<b>Loss of 15.54 points/week</b>

With that said, there is absolutely no good faith argument that this trade could reasonably benefit Express. This trade is problematic from every possible angle.

### **The Commissioner’s Proposed Compromise**

The second issue this court must discuss is the viability of the Wicked Threadz Fantasy League Commissioner’s good faith effort to produce a compromise solution that would allow for a more

The attached template, including its intellectual property, logos, ideas, and processes included within, is the exclusive property of Highball Entertainment. This opinion may not be re-used, reproduced or otherwise copied for pecuniary gain without the express written consent of SportsJudge.com or Highball Entertainment. In addition, this opinion serves exclusively for entertainment value, and it may not in any way be construed as the practice of law by its authors. In some cases, the author may not even be a licensed attorney. Additionally, in some cases, the names of the representative league and parties are changed, at the sole discretion of SportsJudge.com

reasonable version of this trade. The Commissioner here has suggested removing the Tennessee Defense from the deal and approving this trade as a four-for-one. However, this compromise does not seem to solve the problem, nor is it permissible pursuant to the SportsJudge.com default rules.

While I commend the league commissioner for attempting to play Henry Clay, unless a league constitution explicitly gives a league commissioner power to involve himself in a trade, the commissioner does not have the right to do so. While there is no doubt the commissioner had only the best intentions in mind, allowing him to intermingle himself in a trade produces too high risks that the commissioner will substitute his own self-interest for the needs of the respective teams.

In addition, allowing such a remedy encourages teams to propose the most uneven trades imaginable—knowing that if they are seen as *too unfair* the commissioner would just *fix them*. Ultimately, it could put the commissioner in the inevitable position of consistently needing to rework trades.

### **Final Thought**

As a final thought, I wish to turn attention now to a comment on the message board from the owner of Real Men of Genius:

*Re: some thoughts*

Posted by:  [timmaaay40](#) (Real Men of Genius)

Message ID: 631 Oct 28 12:24am | [Reply](#) | [Post](#) | [< Previous](#) | [Next >](#)

*To [Another Team Owner]: I don't think its (sic) my responsibility not to [rip off] people. If they let it happen then its (sic) their fault not mine. You dont (sic) always have to give something good to get something better. The integrity of this league is still there.*

Based upon the SportsJudge.com default rules, that statement is not accurate. While there is nothing wrong with a team making a trade that benefits them far more than their trade partner, our default rules will not allow a trade that does not even lead to a reasonable possibility that both parties would benefit.

If you wish in the future for SportsJudge.com to take a more hands-off approach to trades, you should write that standard directly into the league constitution for next season. That obviously, however, is an issue for you to discuss with your league mates.

### **Conclusion**

For the foregoing reason, the commissioner rejects the proposed trade in its entirety.