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The Beauty of Everlasting Sports

Waking up every morning, not going a day without watching or hearing about sports. That was the consistency in my household. Whether you wanted to watch/hear it or not. That's just the beauty of it. People coming together, all to show their love or support of sports. That's the significance and impact it has on our society as it's about the unity and family sports make up. People of all different races, genders, and from all different types of backgrounds come together to either play, watch, or support. We especially see that in football as it's important in our lives and society because differences are able to be put aside for the love of the game. It's also important in our lives and society simply due to the fact that football is America's sport. We see this through statistical numbers as American football (The NFL) was rated number one with a TV viewing of 111.9 million since 2010. As stated in a News Gallop article, "American football, under attack from critics in recent years, has lost some of its popularity but is still the champion of U.S. spectator sports -- picked by 37% of U.S. adults as their favorite sport to watch. The next-most-popular sports are basketball, favored by 11%, and baseball, favored by 9%." "Americans named baseball as the most popular sport in 1948 and 1960, but football claimed the top spot in 1972 and has been the public's favorite ever since." In which, this goes to show you its significance in our society. For instance, the super bowl. I see it all the time through social media, friends, and in my own household where people who don't watch football still come together to watch the super bowl or throw a super bowl party. In other words, it's not only about the lovers of the game, it's about the support and that's the beauty of the game of football.

Football was created in the late 1800's. It was traced back to the combination of both soccer and rugby, whereas football was created. Rugby because of the football aspect of taking the ball and running with it to score and soccer because of kicking the ball into the goal to score (a field goal or after scoring a touchdown: kicking the football in between the posts). However, to differentiate it from those sports, rule changes were launched by Walter Camp who is to be considered the "Father of American Football". November 12, 1892 was a memorable day throughout sports history. It was the game where William Pudge Heffelfinger played and was paid \$500 making him the first ever professional football player as evidence was provided of the financial transaction. Also known as the "pro football's birth certificate". In which, they formed the American Professional Football Association in 1920 but changed it a couple years later to the National Football League (NFL). The first ever official football game was August 20, 1920 in Canton Ohio.

In addition, to historical names that pushed football to what it is today, there are many more familiar faces and names associated with football. For instance, Walter Payton, Brett Farve, Jerry Rice, Ray Lewis, Emmitt Smith, Joe Namath (Notable former NFL players), and the list goes on as they created history. As well as current notable NFL players like Drew Brees, Aaron Rodgers, Russell Wilson, Eli Manning, etc who have made history and are still currently in the league creating more. There are many more well known people you might've heard of that you may didn't know that area associated with football like Micheal Strahan and Terry Crews. They are both former professional football players who have debuted on television shows for several years now. Furthermore, although they may be doing totally different things now, they still and will forever have that bond and connection of football. They're still a part of the athletic (football) community, as well as a familial discourse community. As they are a family and

brotherhood. Like Michael Jordan said “Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships”. In which, that’s how those names made it to where they did and are. Teamwork and communication is how they reached their goals of winning. However, it isn’t only about the players that play a major role in winning, it’s their traits, it’s coaches, staff (medical, water people), fans, etc. because they each play a major role and without them there’s no such thing as football. Coaches help guide as they communicate with them through football terms/language, fans help support and give them motivation, and water and medical staff help make sure they’re hydrated and healthy to play the game. As well as their passionate and determined traits that thrived them to work hard, play, win, and make history in the game of football.

To make history in football it wasn’t and still isn’t easy to do so. Whether it’s high school, college, or professional football. Football comes with many different rules and regulations to each type/level of football you’re playing. On the other hand, they each share the concept of starting a play on their (offensive players on the field) side of the ball and each team having only 11 players on the field. Moreover, offensive players have more rules than defensive players as 7 players must be on the line of scrimmage and the other 4 have to be lined up a yard behind the line of scrimmage. Whereas defensive players don’t contain specific rules for their positions. Moving forward to plays, football has a down system. A down system is where offense is given 4 downs (tries) to get at least 10 yards. If not successful, they lose possession and have to punt it to the defensive team. But if successful, they advance to getting what is called a first down and continue the concept and are closer to the endzone and scoring. Moving forward to scoring, a touchdown is when the ball is successfully carried into the endzone. A touchdown is 6 points with an extra kick attempt that’s worth 1 point (a touchdown is 7 points if extra is successful). A field goal is worth 3 points (a successful kick into the goalposts) and a safety

(where the offensive player with the ball is tackled in the endzone) is 2 points. Overall, the game of football may be difficult to understand at first but you'll understand it sooner than you'd think. Even if you don't understand it's still interesting to watch as many people still do, from young children to adults. Especially for big events like the Super Bowl as people come together to show their love and support for the game whether they're a fan or an associate of a fan. They still show up because that's the impact it has and what football is a whole. In which, that's the beauty of it. Football is a companionship and a camaraderie on and off that field from players all the way to fans. In other words, it's still and will forever be majority of everyone's favorite sport, as well as the most watched sports, and most of all it'll still be America's #1 sport.

“American football is too dangerous, and it should be abolished” -Dave Bry. This was brought to my attention. People often think that football is the most or one of the most dangerous, deadliest sports. In fact, when looking up the top 5 most deadly sports, football is not in that category yet alone top 10. The top 10 Most Dangerous Sports in the World are base jumping, horse riding, scuba diving, running of the bulls, jallikattu, bull riding, gymnastics, boxing, soccer, and cycling (with cycling being the worst). We constantly see and hear about people like Dave Bry who argue and fight against football and its concept and believe overall it should be cancelled/banned. In a The Guardian article, Bry goes on to say “I'd suggest recreating the game without helmets instead, but that's not going to happen, so we should all just channel our primal bloodlust elsewhere”. In which, he is correct on the part that it's not going to happen. On CBS news where the topic and his claims/comments was brought up, a doctor named Dr. York made a statement saying “The co-chairman of the NFL's health and safety advisory committee believes that helmets in American football are part of the culture and tradition and

doesn't foresee an NFL where helmets aren't being used." Therefore, it led them to the option of just making football illegal as a whole due to how dangerous it is.

In a Harvard Medical Neurobiology article *Football and the Brain: Lifestyle Impacts Health*, it stated "One pioneering study has uncovered a direct link among traumatic brain injury (TBI), Alzheimer's disease, and CTE (Chronic traumatic encephalopathy)." This conveys that when it comes to the "anti-football association" they aren't necessarily wrong. There are dangers to it, like concussions that can be severely damaging, impacting them later in their years. In which, this is why they write articles, and why doctors and schools are doing constant studies and letting the media know through interviews and articles. It's to educate the public (e.g. fans, players, families of a football player, football medical committees/associations). However, they often believe that nothing is being done. They don't realize that in actuality each year there comes new rules and regulations in the NFL and football in general to make it a safer sport. For instance, the recently new rules involve it being illegal to do a helmet on helmet hit, you cannot hit a player once they're out of bounds, and while the kicker is kicking the ball it's illegal contact if you hit their feet or legs. Also it's a foul if a player lowers his head to initiate and make contact with his helmet against an opponent. In which, the player is most likely to be disqualified. In fact, "The kickoff rules changes that were implemented in 2018 were made permanent. In 2018, the restrictions resulted in a 35% decrease in concussions on kickoff plays when compared to the 2017 season", as stated in a NFL article titled *Health & Safety Rules Changes*. Therefore, substantiating the claim that football (the NFL) does make changes to make it a safer sport. Although some may say these new rules are "babying" these players, football isn't what it used to be, etc. they're right. Football isn't what it used to be, it's better. It's much safer. Football players were always given such a short lifespan. A Denver cardiologist Jeffrey Boone brought

up, due to it being such a violent sport, depending on their position it was said to be 53-59 years old. But as time goes on, technology advances and we learn more. In other words, how to prevent players from having a short lifespan and making football a safer sport. Which is why this is very important to families, fans, and society overall. Fans aren't the only ones who care about players' lives. For instance, Kobe Bryant. His passing was such a devastating loss that not only left fans grieving but the entire world. People who never watched a game of basketball or even seen him play were heartbroken over his death. This goes to show you the impact sports has. Therefore, if rules need to change every year to make football safer and make sure players are less harmed and safe then so be it. But to cancel it, it isn't right. Looking back at Kobe Bryant's passing, it wasn't just his family hurt, we all were grieving together, as one, and as a unity. That's what sports, specifically football is about. We're passionate about the game as well as love and support our teams and care about our players and their lives. That's the significance about all of this and football being America's #1 sport.

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