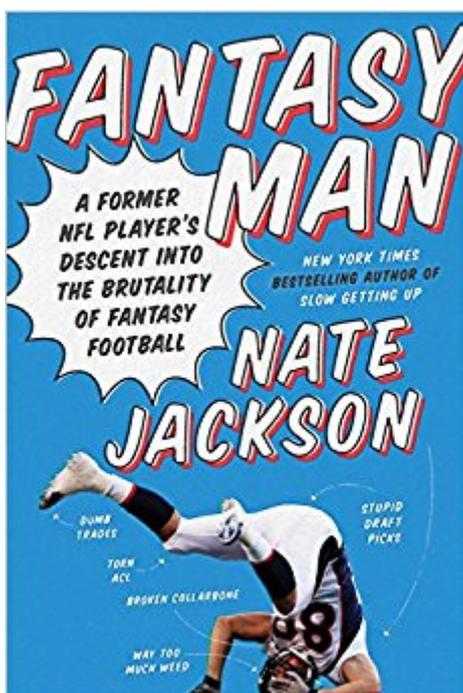


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# Fantasy Man: A Former NFL Player's Descent Into The Brutality Of Fantasy Football



## Synopsis

The New York Times bestselling author of *Slow Getting Up* chronicles his descent into the madness of early retirement and fantasy football. In *Slow Getting Up*—hailed by Rolling Stone as “the best football memoir of all time”—Nate Jackson told his story face down on the field. Now, in *Fantasy Man*, he’s flat on his back. Six years have passed since the former Denver Broncos tight end wore a helmet, and every day he drifts further from the NFL Guy, the sanctioned-violence guy, the psychopath who ran head first into other psychos for money. But Nate hasn’t quite left the game. Bed-ridden by a recent surgery to remove bone fragments in his ankle, he’s trying to defend his title in one of the millions of leagues captivating America through modern fantasy football, the interactive human poker game started by rotisserie leagues, boosted by ESPN and Yahoo!, and now elevated to that rarefied world of vaguely-legal Internet gambling by FanDuel and DraftKings.com. And this time it isn’t a 300-pound wall of flesh rushing to crunch his spine. It’s worse. Exploring the fantasy and the reality of professional football after you’ve left the field, *Fantasy Man* is as funny, self-deprecating, and shockingly honest as *Slow Getting Up*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“When I played in the NFL, I was always in such a hurry to run my routes, so eager to please, and so scatterbrained. We all were. But the older you get, the more of the field you see.”  
From *Fantasy Man*  
At the start of 2015–16 NFL season, New York Times bestselling author and former Denver Broncos tight end Nate Jackson was rehabilitating his

latest surgically repaired body part— an ankle clouded by bone fragments— while setting his lineups for three different fantasy football leagues. Six years after playing his last game, Jackson has found a welcome distraction in fantasy sports— just like millions of other Americans. The reigning champion in two of his leagues, Jackson drafts with his heart and foils the statistical analytics of the “little experts,” as well as his pals Ryno, Rocky, Razor, Bruise, and the rest, by drafting old teammates from his former life, including Jay Cutler, Brandon Marshall, and the entire Mile High defense. He quickly learns that smashmouth football in the NFL is not nearly as brutal as the life of an obsessed fantasy owner. Part exorcism, part catharsis, *Fantasy Man* takes us behind the scenes as a recently retired athlete grapples with the uncertainties of a second career: from being an outspoken advocate at marijuana conventions with Ricky Williams to offering radical ideas about football tactics (three quarterbacks behind the center, anyone?) to tending to his battered post-football body. He even makes it into Roger Goodell’s skybox to bear witness to Peyton Manning’s final heroic playoff run. At once poignant and uproarious, *Fantasy Man* is the story of the 2015–16 NFL season as seen through the razor-sharp lens of the game’s best writer.

Nate Jackson played six seasons in the National Football League as a wide receiver and a tight end. His writing has appeared in *Deadspin*, *Slate*, *Daily Beast*, *BuzzFeed*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *New York Times*. A native of San Jose, California, he now lives in Los Angeles. This is his first book.

In *Slow Getting Up*, Nate mined for our benefit his unique place in an otherwise quarantined world: a head-smashing pro who can think and feel and express the physical and psychological impact of football on its combatants. In *Fantasy Man*, he does the same, only in a world we couch-bound coordinators know all too well: fantasy football. The results are just as fun, just as funny, and maybe a little more depressing. That’s what the drugs are for! *Fantasy Man* is driven by fantasy football: drinking and fist-fighting at the live draft, who we pick and why, the false feelings of control, the hollowness of the fantasy loss and the fantasy win. Really, though, it’s about life after football: about Nate finding his way as a writer, and as a man, no shield for him to protect or to protect him. Just him and his squad, stalking the waiver wire and catching wobblers from his friends on the beach. It makes me sad thinking about it. But it’s an important story, because it’s all of us at the end -- at the end of whatever -- watching our previous identities slip away, holding on however we can, even if it’s by the meaningless thread of a sneakily lopsided trade offer. Plus, there’s sex, and weed, and

whiskey, and Peyton Manning falling through a trap door in the floor. Sound dark? It's Nate. It is. But it's Nate, so it's hilarious and sweet and real, and worth whatever time you can spend with it.

In *Fantasy Man*, Nate Jackson lays bare his demons and angels as a football player. Playing inside Jackson's head, whether through a virtual reality of raw, intense football anecdotes, or listening to his touching stories of loyalty and friendship, the reader can begin to understand the earnest message he brings to the attention of anyone who can plow through the carnage of the game of football. Fantasy football players will appreciate how the book weaves the online life with Jackson's real life game memories. Most of all, recuperating from ankle surgery, Jackson knows about pain relief, as he embraces medicinal marijuana for a better healing experience. This book continues the saga of Jackson's life, as a backdrop for the social issues he encounters in his post-NFL life. None of the narrative is sugar-coated, and in fact, it's perhaps overly candid. At this point in his life, when he has emerged as a contemporary social commentator and writer, he's content with mincing no words with the masses.

Nate is an amazing writer who invites us in to see the intimate details of his life as an NFL player, The good, the bad, and the ugly. And the funny! Before reading *Slow Getting Up* and *Fantasy Man*, I knew little about football and even less about fantasy football. Almost immediately, though, I was a captive reader of first *Slow Getting Up* and then *Fantasy Man*, in which he takes readers along with him on his journey from NFL player through his transition to becoming a writer. Nate makes us FEEL physical pain, emotional blockbusters, and the highs that make it all worthwhile through his vivid descriptions, clever writing techniques, and humor! What a treat! I can't wait to read his next book!

Excellent read and very well written. It is entertaining and informative, funny and provocative, and each trait is well interlaced throughout the story. I highly suggest you read "*Slow Getting Up*", Nate's book about playing in the NFL before reading "*Fantasy Man*" but that is more to give the reader some fuller insight to some of the references made to his NFL experiences. If you are engaged in any fantasy sport leagues you will enjoy and laugh much and find yourself in familiar company. Once started it was hard to put down and the finish came way too quickly!! I can't wait for Nate's next offering.

Not being involved in fantasy football, I approached this one with some trepidation. Not to worry.

The fantasy stuff, moderately interesting in its own right, serves mainly as a framework from which Jackson explores a dozen or more themes from his years in the NFL and his subsequent adventures. One that I found especially interesting: his account and comments about the "bountygate" episode with the Saints a few years ago. Jackson wrote a fine book with "Slow Getting Up" and I think this one is even better.

Great to have another Nate Jackson book! He is an amazing writer. I knew nothing about fantasy football but really enjoyed Nate's first book. I learned a lot from this one and Nate's voice is honest and clear and you just cannot beat his writing!

Nate's previous book "Slow Getting Up" was great. This one, not so much. It's a bit unfocused, funny at times but often not. Three stars.

Great writer. Loved this book. More!!!

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