FF Draft Runner Tips

From: I’ve been there, and you young whippersnappers have no idea! Back then, we walked to the drafts uphill both ways in the snow, used pencil and paper to do our calculations, and randomized using numbers out of a hat!

I’ve seen an increase in the number of draft runners lately, and a decrease in experienced draft runners. Some have retired from the league; others have simply gone dormant or don’t have the time. I should know; I’m one of them. I used to run a quarter of the events every season, and I wrote the original program to run drafts with. I’ve been sidelined by this thing called work—I just don’t necessarily have the time to run a draft.

But the lack of experience is starting to show up. So, I have opted to write down a number of things that I just do by habit that might not be obvious to a newbie.

**Draft Setup**

If you use a draft program, this is a breeze. Make sure the time is set to 3 minutes, 2 minutes, and 2 minutes. Then check that the player list matches where you’re supposed to be on the current rotation. Takes 10 minutes to set up a complete draft and post it.

If you don’t use the draft program, or there isn’t one available, start by making the random (or rotated) list of players and the one for teams. Use whatever you need to—I find that I can do pretty well by generating a random list of numbers in Excel and taking the first one that goes to a slot with someone (or some team) in it, which ends up refreshing the list. Then split the tiers if needed. (To determine that, #teams/3 < number of players results in at least one split.) Then make the times list.

.txt files are your friends as well. They’ll copy into a CD [code][/code] block quite nicely.

The EARLIER you post, the better, to a point. My favorite trick was the “continuously drafting” approach, where as soon as I wrapped up a draft, I’d post the next night’s draft. That way, folks online at that time of night could see what was coming up and make their lists and picks when they wanted to. But posting a new draft while the previous one is going on… Ouch. 2-3 days in advance for critical drafts or re(scheduled) drafts tends to work well, provided that you clarify the draft start date.

**Draft Running**

This is a list of general tips with regards to timing of picks, what to do with the rest of the time, and other things that might happen during a draft.

 --Slots open at the time listed. However, if the slot ahead of any given slot is filled, the slot is considered to be open regardless of time. (This allows the first pick to be made as soon as the draft is posted.)

--Players may make a pick for a slot at any point after the slot opens. Ditto for trades to a slot. Trading a slot after it’s been picked in is right out.

--Lists are considered to be a pick effective as soon as the slot opens.

--Random picks are distributed if a pick is not made by the time the next slot opens—that is, a pick effective as soon as the slot “closes”.

--If a player takes a random, assume they’re not going to be there until they show up, and dose more randoms the next time through.

--“swing” picks—the last player’s first and second and the first player’s second and third—are usually issued together, when the pick after the second slot in the series opens up. Players can also request both at the same time.

--When multiple picks come in around the same time, particularly for the same team, go through by timestamp. First one in gets the pick—this means that lists win over live picks if the list slot is before the live pickers.

--Running lots of lists together frees up a lot of time that can be used for quick breaks. I’ve taken several meal breaks mid-draft (first round only, though), and almost always made it back in time to run the next set of picks/lists/randoms.

--If you make a mistake, don’t be afraid to admit it. Sort out the problem as best you can. We’ve all been there.

--Editing posts is a handy way to keep your post count down and work around the CD post time limit, but doing a new post every few picks or after someone else makes a pick or comment is appreciated.

-If it takes you a bit to make an update post, preview it before posting and see if anybody’s posted a pick since you started. If so, incorporate those picks. Also check after it goes up, then edit if necessary.

**Post-draft**

After the draft is over, take a few minutes and take a quick break. Come back in about 5 minutes and “clean up”—chances are, someone wants to trade a random team, or there are teams in the pool that were already picked, or maybe two different people have the same team (second to take that team gets a random, unless the first one dropped them). Fix all those minor details, say about 15 minutes worth of work, and you’re done for the night. Unless, of course, you volunteered for the next night, in which case it’s time to start over again!