EXTEND THE PLAY

national student advertising competition

TEAM 640

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CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES

Join

Phase 1: An invitation to play

Learn

Phase 2: Confidence in the game

Stay

Phase 3: Loyalty to the team

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Football League has grown not only into the largest sports league in the United States, but also into a cultural powerhouse whose influence extends beyond purely sports entertainment. Today, the NFL stands as a leader for fan engagement, cultural relevance, and global impact. For young athletes and families, football represents more than competition - it serves as a foundation for confidence, resilience, and a sense of belonging.

“Extend the Play” (April 2026-April 2027) unites NFL initiatives and brings to life what football can mean beyond the field - a lifelong plan of action for youth development. Through its wide variety of programs, the NFL creates opportunities for improving physical health, confidence, and social interactions for casual fans. By utilizing storytelling, community-based initiatives, and accessible programming, Agency 640 will show that football is more than a game and that off-field moments can shape who a person becomes.

JOIN US TO SEE HOW THE NFL WILL “EXTEND THE PLAY.”

RESEARCH

1,258 Survey Respondents

32 responses from youth under 18

531 responses from youth 18-25

695 from parents with children under 18

68 Secondary Sources

TARGET AUDIENCES



[Age 6-11] [Child]

Wants to build and explore friendships, but has to fill their needs through digital channels (which poses unique health and safety risks).

Messaging: Imply to guardians that children need to have a healthy balance of both outdoor play and digital exposure.



[Age 12-17] [Tween/Teen]

Wants to continue playing sports, but is becoming discouraged by social pressures, declining mental health, and the prevalence of online distractions.

Messaging: Present sports as time away from their woes (exclusion, isolation, social pressures) through fun and friends.



[Age 18-25] [Young Adult]

Lack of racial diversity and LGBTQ+ representation in sports marketing creates the desire to find safe environments to enjoy sports without pressure or judgment.

Messaging: Responsive to inclusive advertising featuring diverse voices and stories.



[Age 25-45] [Mature Adult]

Parents want programs that are positive, welcoming, and development-focused. However, high program costs and lack of time discourages participation.

Messaging: Address major concerns: time, safety, and money. Emphasize the benefits of sports participation for their children.

THE GAME IS CHANGING

THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE OF YOUTH SPORTS

There are 74 million children in the United States,[1] and 27.3 million play in an organized sports program.[2] Despite the array of youth athletics, young people are changing how they spend their time, build friendships, and gain confidence.

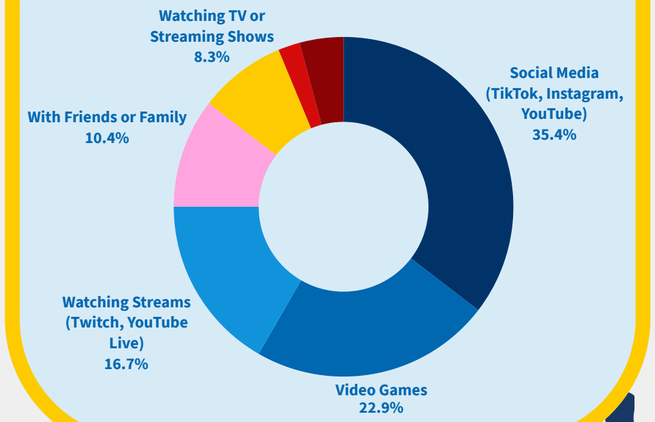
SCREEN HABITS BEGIN EARLY

Screens and electronics are now more common in children's lives than ever before, with many children encountering regular screen exposure as young as two years old.[3]

Through our surveys and research, we found that kids and teens spend the majority of their free time on social media, playing video games, or watching TV/online streams. As digital habits begin earlier, kids' free time is shifting indoors, spending more time playing video games and using streaming platforms.

That shift leaves less time for the spaces that once filled their afternoons. Our surveys revealed that after-school programs, hobbies, and community activities are among the least common ways youth spend their time. Kids are being pulled away from physical spaces where movement, connection, and community are fostered.

WHERE DO YOU TYPICALLY SPEND MOST OF YOUR TIME?



ACCESSIBILITY IN ACTIVITIES

When asked what their favorite physical activities were, children, tweens/teens, and young adults (ages 6-25) answered the same.[4]

Top answers included:

1. **Basketball**
2. **Baseball**
3. **Soccer**

Looking at our survey results, we found that teens and young adults are routinely involved in working out recreationally and playing basketball or soccer. These activities are more accessible for teens and young adults due to better equipment access from places like schools or community centers. Accessibility is a key factor in determining whether teens and young adults choose to be physically active.

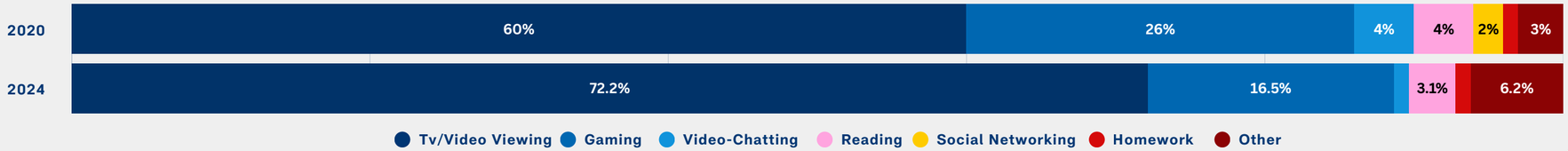
BEYOND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, YOUTH TODAY ARE NAVIGATING INCREASING MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Many young people, particularly girls, report higher levels of anxiety, stress, and self-confidence struggles than previous generations. Young people now feel pressure mainly from social media to look or act a certain way, which leads to insecurities and instability in their mental health.

Parents see these challenges unfold in real time. While youth sports are meant to build confidence, friendships, and teamwork, many parents worry about the hardships their children could potentially face. Concerns around bullying, safety, and risk of injury dominate their worries.[4] Additionally, there are concerns around sports environments being male-dominated and less wlecoming to all genders.

At the same time, access to opportunity is not always equal. In our survey, Black parents were the only group that reported that their children had not been given the chance to try different sports — highlighting how access can shape not only participation, but also the range of experiences available to young athletes.

Kids' free time looks different today. Nowadays, much of it is spent on screens – scrolling, streaming, and gaming.[5] Although experts recommend limiting media use for very young children, the demands of daily life often make screens a practical solution for busy parents.



BALANCING LIFE AND PLAY

Despite being advised to stay active, youth are finding it increasingly difficult to participate in sports. For families, simply wanting to participate is not enough. The pressures of everyday life play a key role.

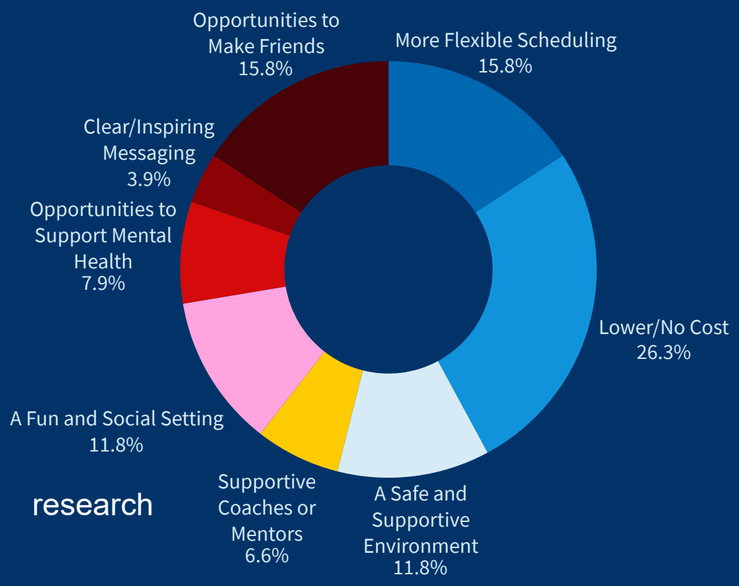
COST VS VALUE

When asking parents about obstacles their children face for sports participation, cost was identified as the most significant barrier. Registration fees, equipment, travel, and overall expenses can quickly add up, making affordability a straining force, especially for lower-income families. With the cost of living rising domestically and internationally,[6] parents are finding it more difficult to support their kids' extracurricular activities.

UNDERSTANDING HISPANIC PARENTS' PERSPECTIVES

Even when community programs are accessible and welcoming, Hispanic parents note that participation often depends on income, work demands, and their child's gender.

WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU MORE LIKELY TO ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE?

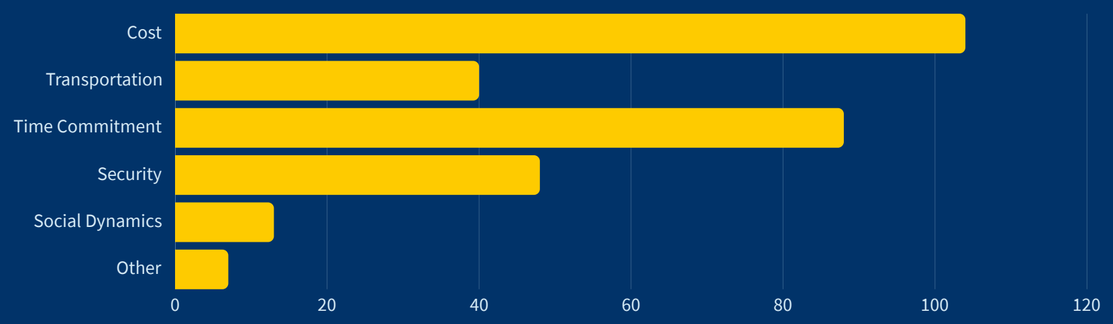


A WOMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

Young women are participating less in sports due to social stigma, unequal opportunities, and lack of role models.[7] Nearly half (48%) of surveyed female respondents reported feeling disconnected from football or the NFL, often citing a preference for other sports.

When girls do participate in football-related programs, the experiences they highlight are telling. Female respondents frequently point to the value of mentorship and guidance, and their participation is strengthened when programs create supportive environments with mentors, role models, and inclusive spaces to grow.

WHAT CHALLENGES OR CONCERNS HAVE PREVENTED YOUR CHILD FROM PARTICIPATING IN SPORTS OR COMMUNITY PROGRAMS? (HISPANIC PARENTS)



DIFFERENCES ACROSS COMMUNITIES

Across diverse cultures — including Black, Hispanic, and Asian youth — respondents reported feeling excluded or experiencing poor coaching support as the most common negative sports experiences. These patterns highlight how the quality of the environment and accessibility play a critical role in sustaining participation.[8] At the same time, young people are balancing busy schedules and constant digital distractions, making it easier than ever to step away from physical activities that feel stressful or unwelcoming.

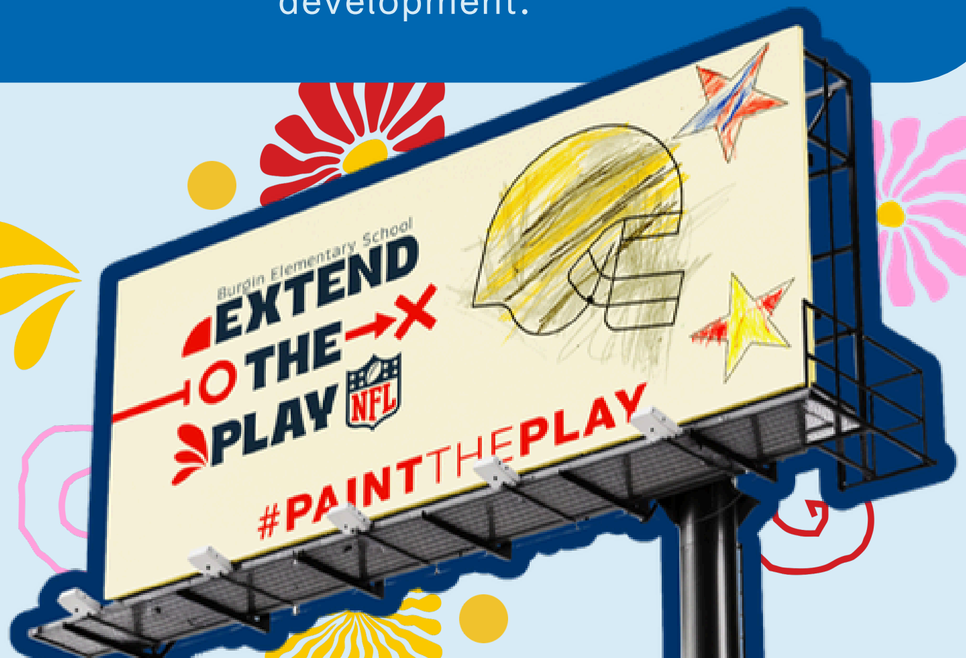
PRESSURE ON YOUTH

For youth, the pressures look different — but they are just as influential.
Many young athletes report that sporting environments are overly competitive, noting that the pressure to perform outweighs the enjoyment of "Extending the Play."

WHAT KEEPS THEM ON THE FIELD

MY CHILD'S NEEDS BECOME MINE

Parents share a similar perspective to their children. Many parents reported that they value sports not just for physical activity, but also for the broader benefits they provide for their kids such as building confidence, supporting mental well-being, and helping develop character.[9] Social connection and friendship plays an important role, reinforcing the idea that sports are most meaningful when they focus on supporting a child's overall happiness and development.



Despite the many barriers shaping youth sports today, one truth remains consistent:

KIDS DESERVE TO PLAY!

Young athletes cited having fun, doing their best, and spending time with friends as their priorities when participating in sports.[10] While friendly competition and performance can be part of the experience, personal enjoyment and social connection are what keep kids engaged.

Families are looking for an environment where kids feel supported, confident, and excited to be there. When sports provide a sense of enjoyment and connection, kids stay involved. When sporting environments are negative, participation plummets.[11]

54%

of surveyed parent respondents said that the main reason they encourage their child to participate in sports is because their child enjoys it.

WHY KIDS STAY OR LEAVE

The feeling of community grows by experiencing, "I belong here." That feeling emerges when people feel seen, needed, and safe. Both parents and youth aren't just seeking activity – they're seeking safe, inclusive, and positive environments where they feel supported and connected. By reframing football as a place where kids can experience fun, belonging, and community, the target audience can be reached.

OUR KEY CAMPAIGN ELEMENTS ARE THE FOLLOWING:

ACCESSIBILITY

1. Meeting youth and parents where they are and fulfilling any needs to eliminate exclusion.
2. Equipping youth and families across the nation with the necessary tools and resources, helping them develop their identity, engage with others, and understand the world around them.
3. Building a sense of self (understanding themselves in the big world, and understanding the world around them)
4. Boosting self-esteem (feeling capable and empowered)
5. Easing the challenge of having the tools necessary to further achieve one's potential (more accessibility means more opportunities to show up for yourself and potentially create milestones)

COMMUNITY

1. Fostering a sense of connection and belonging through a common practice
2. Creating new environments to engage youth
3. Connecting families by decentering winning

POSITIVE PLAYING ENVIRONMENTS

1. Feeling comfortable enough to be outside of one's comfort zone
2. Encouraging positive coaching structures
3. Having inclusive play areas and classrooms to help all children build social/emotional skills, communication, and self-esteem.

"EXTENDING THE PLAY"

Extend the Play highlights the three key elements of our campaign: accessibility, community, and positive playing environments. These elements are crucial for our target audience to participate in future events and activities. Extend the Play shows how by extending accessibility, community, and positive playing environments to more individuals, we create more opportunities for everyone to play.

By unifying existing NFL programs under a single umbrella centered on these elements, the campaign is able to effectively reach and engage a broader range of audiences.

Extend the Play exemplifies how the NFL's initiatives give opportunities to break the cycle of structural societal issues and help youth access the resources they need to live healthy, active lifestyles.



CREATIVE MANIFESTO

IT ALL STARTS WITH A TEAM.

Football's not just about winning games, it's also about the people you're with. Teams become communities that you grow alongside. Coaches become life mentors. When you step on the field, you open the door to growth - both personally improving your physical and mental health and growing with a group of peers.

But throughout the years, not everyone has felt equally welcome on the other side of that door.

THE NFL IS HERE TO CHANGE THAT.

Extend The Play unites all NFL initiatives to expand the field and extend the play for everybody. Every child deserves a community that has their back, mentors that help them unlock their best self, and an outlet to let loose and express themselves.

Because it's more than a game, it's an experience. And when we all play, we all win.

THIS IS THE WAY WE EXTEND THE PLAY.

FONT

All-Pro Fonts: To keep the brand recognizable and consistent.

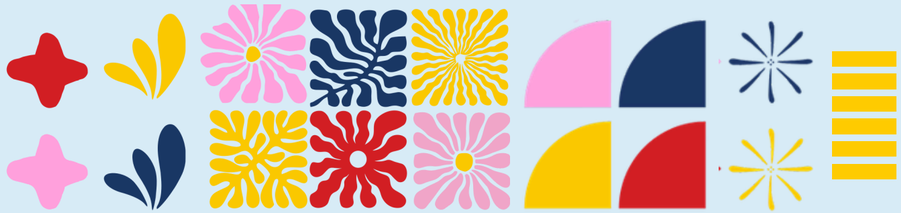
All Pro Sans	All Pro Display C	All Pro Display (A)	All Pro Display B
All Pro Sans	**All Pro Display C**	**All Pro Display (A)**	**All Pro Display B**

DESIGN STRATEGY

MOTIFS

Floral Designs: Inspired by **Hispanic murals and calligraphy**, the motifs focus on being friendly, playful, culturally rooted, and somewhat feminine. They also draw from **children's art** to represent the youth's present voice within the NFL's programs and initiatives.

Team Play: As a general rule, advertisements should never focus on a single person. Showing multiple people participating, cooperating, or spectating showcases how sports can bring people together. The variety of figures also shows diversity and culture.



COLOR PALETTE

NFL Core Colors: The NFL brand colors you know and love. The iconic red and blue, plus neutral tones from the public NFL Brand Guidelines.

New Accents: Also inspired by Hispanic murals, but refined for a fun, lighthearted, child-like appeal.



CREATIVE ASSETS

EXTEND THE PLAY DAY

Extend the Play Day is a city-to-city event centered around community engagement. Local vendors and NFL initiatives are invited to set up booths to engage with the community and help people learn about their services so they gain interest and interactions. The main event centers around Flag Football and encourages kids to get up, get moving, and get themselves out there to make new friends and connections.



EXTEND THE PLAYGROUND WITH KABOOM

By partnering with Kaboom, the NFL aims to dismantle barriers for youth joining sports. Through this partnership, the NFL and Kaboom will deliver play resources — such as building playgrounds and sports equipment — to underdeveloped communities across the country. This will increase access for kids to play.

PAINT THE PLAY

During the Extend the Play Day, kids will paint football helmets. The art is then posted online with the hashtag #PAINTTHEPLAY and reposted by the NFL's channels, inviting others to share fan art of their local teams. This gives kids an opportunity to get themselves out there, even if they didn't attend Extend the Play Day.

FORTNITE

Play, Extended is an NFL-themed Fortnite minigame accompanied by the release of custom mascot skins. The Battle Royale mode will be updated with new map features like stadiums with statues of past coaches that aid players. Skins can be unlocked by getting codes from special trading cards given out at Extend the Play Day, encouraging kids to play both online and offline.





AMBIENT ADS

These ads will appear as the campaign begins. They show a QR code that takes people to a page on the NFL website for information about the upcoming events in the campaign (Extend the Play Day, Fortnite: Play Extended, and Extend the Scene with Kaboom). This gives viewers an inside look at what's going on, prompting them to engage with their community and download the app.

MEDIA STRATEGY

With $10M, we reached each of our personas across multiple channels and markets. At the end of our campaign, running April 2026 - April 2027, we will have made 1.34B total impressions through paid and owned media.

Extend The Play will run both nationally and internationally to assist the NFL in diversifying its operations and expanding their initiatives to larger audiences.

International Markets

Toronto, Canada
Mexico City, Mexico
London, UK
Dublin, Ireland
Berlin, Germany
Vienna, Austria
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Madrid, Spain
Melbourne, Australia
Auckland, New Zealand

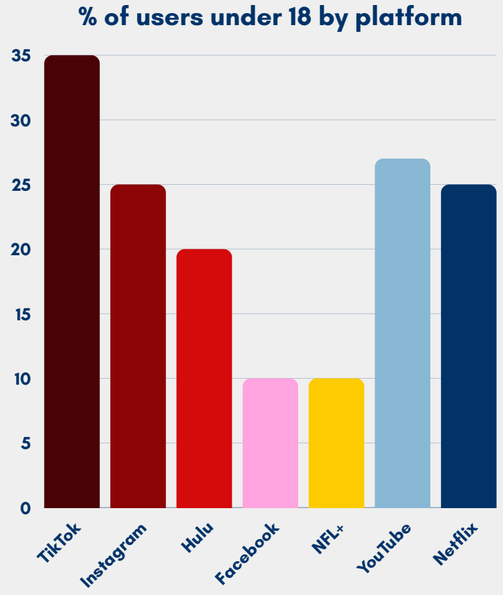
National Markets

Seattle, WA
San Francisco, CA
Phoenix, AZ
Denver, CO
Dallas, TX
Atlanta, GA
Miami, FL
Charlotte, NC
Philadelphia, PA
New York, NY
Chicago, IL
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Smaller Towns

Kent, WA
Sunnyvale, CA
Yuma, AZ
Pueblo, CO
Garland, TX
Macon, GA
Hialeah, FL
Rock Hill, SC
Reading, PA
Aurora, IL

Alongside the national and international markets, we have selected 10 smaller towns, one within each national market. These are shown throughout our campaign to get a more specific reach to our target audience.



Social Media: Short-form video ads specifically designed to unite NFL programs, as well as influencer sponsorships, will be featured on three social media platforms to meet youth and parents where they are.

Streaming: NFL content on streaming services will reach the youth and their parents through long-form video ads.

Merch: Custom-branded merchandise like Fortnite Cards and Starter Kits for mothers distributed at events can significantly enhance both brand visibility and audience engagement. These items act as lasting reminders of the brand, encourage interaction, and create more memorable experiences for attendees.

OOH/Guerrilla: Includes billboards, Extend The Play prints, Kaboom truck, Extend the Playlist stickers, and Paint the Play media, to bring direct attention with eye-catching, interactive, and recognizable NFL graphics. This will push youth and casual fans to go out in hopes of seeing these displays, leading them to learn more about the programs and get involved.

Events: Planned promotional events such as Extend the Play Day and Paint the Play will help to promote our plans for a lifelong program for youth development for the NFL.

Influencers: Youth, especially girls and minorities, rely on influencers to advocate for brands they're unsure about. Influencers are especially important when a brand is setting out to reach casual consumers/fans and people who are not familiar with the brand at all.

MEDIA FLOWCHART

2026-2027

		Apr.	May.	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Cost	Impressions
Channels	Social Media													$1.8M	360M
	Streaming													$150K	25M
OOH	Billboards													$870K	435M
	Extend the Play prints													$60K	30M
	Extend the Playground													$920K	153.3M
	Extend the Playlist													$540K	90M
	Paint the Play Media													$4.3M	1.05B
Partnerships	Kaboom													$50K	8.3M
Merch	Play, Extended pack													$720K	90M
	Extend the Play pack													$16K	2M
Events	Extend the Play Day													$64K	10.6M
Influencers	Sponsorships													$1.75M	291.6M
														Total 10M	2.53B

Production: The 400k allcoated to production will be put towards **pre-production** planning, **production** itself with equipment, travel, etc. and **post-production** music liscencing.

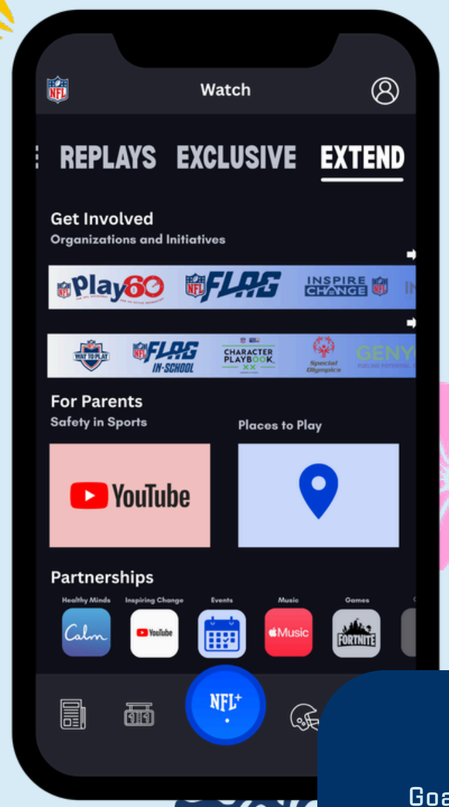
Low Medium High

TIMELINE



MEASUREMENT AND OPTIMIZATION

VEHICLE	MEASUREMENT	OPTIMIZATION
SOCIAL MEDIA	Short form ads - Engagement (likes, comments, shares), reach/impressions, video views, follower growth, link clicks	A/B Testing: Content (reels vs stories vs posts), optimize posting times, test different CTAs (sign up vs learn more)
STREAMING	Long form ads - Impressions, video completion rate, increase in site searches, and visits.	A/B Testing: Ad format (15s vs 30s), placement (pre-roll vs mid-roll), refine targeting (age, interests, sports fans), optimize creative based on drop-off points
MERCH	Units sold, revenue, conversion rate, event traffic, social mentions	Product optimization (designs, pricing), test limited drops vs ongoing merch, bundle offers, adjust based on best-selling items
OOH	QR code scans, social mentions, foot traffic increase, website visits, app downloads	Location testing (high-traffic vs local communities), creative variations, rotate placements, integrate with mobile/social campaigns
EVENTS	Attendance, social engagement, participation rate, post event retention	Experience optimization (activities, layout), timing (weekends vs weekdays), city performance comparison, improve engagement with giveaways + interactive zones
INFLUENCERS	Engagement rate, reach, impressions, affiliate link clicks, conversions, cost per engagement (CPE)	Creator testing (micro vs macro influencers), content style (authentic vs scripted), platform performance, optimize based on ROI
PARTNERSHIPS	Co-branded reach, audience growth, engagement, PR/media mentions, campaign awareness lift	Partner optimization (best brand fit), test activation types (events vs digital), improve cross-promotion strategies



SUMMARY

Extend the Play is a campaign that unifies all NFL initiatives through authentic storytelling, community events, and colorful composition. Using insights from diverse backgrounds, we were able to truthfully capture how our target audience lives and feels to allow them to better engage with our messaging. These strategies turn casual viewers into lifetime fans. Extend the Play shows that football is more than a game: It's a lifestyle, and there's a place for everyone on the team.



METRICS

AWARENESS

Goal: Raise awareness for NFL initiatives and their goals of creating inclusive, safe, and positive environments for youth.

EVALUATIONS METHODS & KPI'S:

- QR codes on ambient ads, monitoring number of website impressions created and time target audience spends on landing page
- Event attendence for Extend the Play
- Tracking user created content using the hashtag #PaintThePlay
- Observing number of skin downloads on Fortnite app

PERCEPTION

Goal: Assert the NFL as community-focused to strengthen connection and increase brand preference.

EVALUATIONS METHODS & KPI'S:

- Initiating discussions via online forums to evaluate Extend the Play day experience
- Pop-up reviews within the Extend the Play tab of the app to gain feedback
- Before and After surveys to let consumers talk about their experiences with NFL programs

UTILIZATION

Goal: Motivate youth and their parents to stay engaged with the NFL and their inititiaves.

EVALUATIONS METHODS & KPI'S:

- Tracking frequency of app downloads
- Tracking utilization of in-app resources though digital analytics
- Monitoring increase in sign-ups for NFL initiatives, especially through the ones present at the event
- Measuring engagement increase, including women and Latino communities, through QR scans on Play Pack Checklist