Cultural Monopoly,

There are brands and ideas we take for granted and don’t consciously think about on a daily basis. To make it easy let’s focus on one, American football. I can honestly say I’m not a huge NFL, or college football fan, but somehow I can name 10 active players. How is that? How is it that I can name 10 active NFL players, but I can’t name one character off the “Big Bang Theory” (another huge show that I’m unfamiliar with)? Could it have been my upbringing? Playing a variety of Madden games with my older brother only to try and garner his respect and approval? Could it be my inner circle of friends who are in tune with the culture, yet knowing my position, don’t usually engage in this subject when in my presence? One may never know how or why American football is engrained into my social DNA, but one thing is for certain, the idea of the NFL is never going away.

In this more politically correct and sensitive world, it’s amazing how violent sports such as MMA, American football (and even in some regards WWE), are not only still existing but growing and thriving. Even with the constant pacifying of the NFL (no touch down dances, minor injuries requiring players to seek medical attention and time away from the game, a variety of illegal hit zones) and players being seen as stock assets rather than athletes, fans continue to flock to games in wild and rabid fashion and the Superbowl halftime still remains one of the most lucrative, and prestigious, one hour to both music performers and advertisers alike. With this uncompromising devotion to the game (tattoos, memorabilia, even flags), it begs the question, if the NFL were to somehow shut down, what would happen? Where would these fans go?

When I proposed this question to a group of friends, the look on their faces was a look of baffle to say the least. To imagine a world without the NFL? Blasphemy! So were able to utter a response to the degree of, “Well something else would come around that would have the same characteristics of football. Maybe not the exact same thing, but yeah I can see the fans going to a different sport just like that with the same passion.” Curious by the word passion, almost alluding to a intimate relationship with the sport, I asked, “So what would drive you to stop watching the NFL? Like what is something they could/would do that would be a deal breaker?” After an awkward pause the reply was, “I don’t know really. I just know it’s not just one thing, I love the game as a whole.”

Now granted this was a very small and not even random sample to constitute as a valid statistically case to draw a reasonable conclusion, but it does pose an interesting question; when it comes to American staple, what would cause you to stop watching? Also, what would be your alternative?