A method for determining insurance for at least one player using a network based system. The method comprises determining a list of players available for insurance; determining, by a first processor, a respective likelihood of injury for each of the players in the list; and sending the list of players and respective likelihood of injuries from the first processor to a second processor over a network. The method further comprises receiving a request from a third processor over the network for a second list of players and a value relating to the second list of players; determining by the second processor insurance coverage options for the second list of players based on the value, and the respective likelihood of injuries; and displaying the insurance coverage options on a display in communication with the network.
Receive request to purchase insurance

Send request to insurance underwriter processor

Determine list of eligible players available for insurance

Determine each eligible player's likelihood of injury

Send results to insurance underwriter processor

Receive results

Receive request

Determine coverage options

Receive request

Determine premiums, generate policy

Receive payment

Display coverage options

Request payment

Fig. 3
NETWORK BASED SYSTEM FOR PROVIDING INSURANCE IN FANTASY SPORTS

[0001] This application claims priority to provisional application Ser. No. 61/205,972 filed Jan. 26, 2009 entitled "METHOD FOR PROVIDING INSURANCE IN FANTASY SPORTS", the entirety of which is hereby incorporated by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present disclosure relates to fantasy sports leagues, and in particular to a network based system and method for transferring risk of a financial investment in a fantasy sports player.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Fantasy sports leagues have become increasingly popular. It has been estimated that over 25 million people above the age of 12 participated in fantasy sports in 2007, in the United States and Canada alone. Some statistics show that $800 million is spent directly on fantasy sports products in the United States and Canada each year, with fantasy sports having a total market impact of $4.48 billion per year.

[0004] In many fantasy sports leagues, fantasy team owners build teams to compete against the teams of other fantasy team owners based on the statistics generated by the individual players in selected teams. Generally, an individual player's statistics, which are determined by the player's performance, are translated into a point system. The better statistics a given player has, the more points he or she amasses for the fantasy team. The total number of points for all players on a defined team are compiled and totaled for each game throughout the duration of the season. The winning team is typically determined at the end of the season for a given sport, not including playoffs. The team whose players (who each may come from different teams) amassed the most combined points throughout the season is the winner.

[0005] In many fantasy sports leagues, team owners select players via a "draft" in which team owners choose players in a pre-determined order. The number of players included on a fantasy team may differ among different fantasy sports leagues. Generally, the higher rated players are players who are predicted to have the best statistics, and hence would generate the most points for the fantasy team owner. A fantasy league administrator ordinarily determines the amount a fantasy team owner should pay to participate in the administrator's league. Typically, the players that are predicted to produce the most points cost the most for a fantasy team owner to select or "draft." Accordingly, team owners may choose to spend significant amounts of money on highly rated players, or, alternatively, select lesser-rated players (and hence players who cost less) who may perform better than predicted. In addition, there could be leagues that charge on a per player basis.

[0006] When choosing which player(s) to draft, fantasy team owners may make predictions about, for example, the amount of playing time a given player will have, the player's health (likelihood of injury), and the player's expected performance. There are a plethora of factors and different strategies that team owners may employ when selecting players for their team. Fantasy sports leagues allow team owners to trade, cut, and sign players, which allows the team owner to amend his or her team roster subsequent to the "draft."

[0007] Fantasy sports leagues are also popular internationally with leagues for sports that are not traditionally based in the United States, such as soccer and cricket. Notably, fantasy sports leagues have even branched out to include non-sports related games focused on, for example, politics, celebrities, movies, and television. This disclosure describes an improvement over the prior art systems.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] One embodiment of the invention is a method for determining insurance for at least one player using a network based system. The method comprises determining a list of players available for insurance; determining, by a first processor, a respective likelihood of injury for each of the players in the list; and sending the list of players and respective likelihood of injuries from the first processor to a second processor over a network. The method further comprises receiving a request from a third processor over the network for a second list of players and a value relating to the second list of players; determining by the second processor insurance coverage options for the second list of players based on the value, and the respective likelihood of injuries; and displaying the insurance coverage options on a display in communication with the network.

[0009] Another embodiment of the invention is a system for determining insurance for at least one player. The system comprises a first processor; a memory in communication with the first processor over a network; a second processor in communication with the first processor. The first processor effective to determine a respective likelihood of injury for a list of players available for insurance. The first processor further effective to send the list of players and respective likelihood of injuries from the first processor to the second processor over the network. The first processor further effective to receive a request from a third processor over the network for a second list of players and a value relating to the second list of players. The second processor effective to determine insurance coverage options for the second list of players based on the value, and the respective likelihood of injuries. The system further comprises a display in communication with the second processor over the network, the display effective to display the insurance coverage options.

[0010] Yet another embodiment of the invention is a computer storage medium having computer-executable instructions stored thereon which, when executed by a computing device, adapt the computing device to perform a method for determining insurance for at least one player using a network based system. The method comprises determining a list of players available for insurance; determining, by a first processor, a respective likelihood of injury for each of the players in the list; and sending the list of players and respective likelihood of injuries from the first processor to a second processor over a network. The method further comprises receiving a request from a third processor over the network for a second list of players and a value relating to the second list of players; determining by the second processor insurance coverage options for the second list of players based on the value, and the respective likelihood of injuries; and displaying the insurance coverage options on a display in communication with the network.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] The present disclosure will become more readily apparent from the specific description accompanied by the following drawings, in which:
FIG. 1 is a system diagram of a fantasy sports insurance system in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 2 is a system diagram of a fantasy sports insurance system in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 3 is a flow diagram of a process which could be performed in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The methods of the present invention disclosure provides a fantasy sports owner with the ability to transfer risk associated with player injury using an insurance mechanism. The inventors have determined that the prior art does not provide a system that allows fantasy team owners to transfer the risk in their financial investment in their fantasy team.

The present disclosure describes a system for transferring the risk of a financial investment in a fantasy sports league team due to the potential for physical injury to a player. The potential financial loss may be based upon a team owner’s financial investment in his or her team. Alternatively, the potential loss may be based upon the amount a team owner could potentially win in a given fantasy sports league.

Fantasy sports league team owners may build their teams by selecting players prior to the first regular season game via a “draft.” Team owners draft players via a pre-existing fantasy sports platform such as, for example, CBS SportsLine®, Yahoo!®, Sports Illustrated®, ESPN, Fanball.com and NFL.com, etc. The drafting of players is conducted according to the rules, regulations and guidelines of a selected pre-existing fantasy sports platform, or any other alternative method determined by the administrator and agreed to by the team owners.

Team owners choose players in an order which is typically pre-determined by a fantasy sports league administrator. Alternative methods of determining the order in which team owners select the players may be used. For example, the order in which team owners select the players may be determined by agreement among the team owners in a given league, based upon, for example, the final results of the teams that participated in the fantasy league the previous year.

A fantasy sports league administrator may determine the price a fantasy team owner pays to select a given player. When choosing which player(s) to draft, fantasy team owners make predictions about, for example, the likelihood of a particular player becoming injured. Team owners try to select players that will provide the maximum return on the team owner’s investment in that player. Even a player who has no history of injury has the potential to become injured. Moreover, the type of injury and its severity will factor in determining the impact of a given player’s injury for a specific fantasy sports team. Accordingly, the system of the present disclosure provides fantasy team owners the ability to obtain insurance. The insurance may transfer the potential for financial loss due to the physical injury to a player. The value of the financial loss may be based upon a team owner’s financial investment in his or her team and/or the amount a team owner could potentially win in a given fantasy sports league.

Referring to FIG. 1, there is shown a system 100 in accordance with an embodiment of the invention. System 100 includes a plurality of users or team owners 102 each in communication with a network enabled device 104. Network enabled devices 104 may each be in communication with a network 106 such as the Internet. A processor 108 may be in communication with network 106 and a memory 112. An insurance underwriter 114 may be in communication with a network enabled device 116 that is, in turn, in communication with network 106. A fantasy sports administrator 124 may be in communication with network 106 through a network enabled device 104. Network enabled devices 104 could be, for example, a computer, a cell phone, etc.

Memory 113 may be regularly provided with information relating to players in actual games. For example, memory 113 may include data relating to a player’s name 118, a price charged to draft the player 120, and data indicating who has drafted that player 122. Information regarding prior seasons of injuries of the player may also be stored in memory 112. Processor 108 may set an initial draft value for each of the players based on criteria determined by the fantasy sports administrator 124. Processor 108 is operable to request and receive from each team owner 102 an initial selection and purchase of players to form the team owner’s 102 fantasy sports team. Processor 108 may also access data stored in memory 112 and report the status of the team owner’s team.

Processor 108 may determine a pre-season list of players for which a risk transfer insurance option is available based upon, for example, the top 50 pre-season ranked fantasy players compiled from five independent sources. These could be offensive or defensive players. Processor 108 may be further operable to determine each eligible player’s likelihood of injury based upon a variety of factors including, for example: (i) a given player’s history of injury frequency, (ii) a given player’s history of injury severity, (iii) the history of injury severity for the position a given player plays, and (iv) the history of injury frequency for the position a given player plays, along with other applicable analysis. All of this data may be stored in memory 112 and updated as needed. Each player’s likelihood of injury may be calculated using additional factors, such as the weather conditions predicted for a given game or the player’s age, for example. After the list of players available for insurance and the likelihood of injury are determined, the results are sent from processor 108 over network 106 to device 116 in communication with insurance underwriter 114.

Alternatively, players 118 for which the risk transfer insurance option is available may be determined by fantasy sports league administrator 124 based on a variety of criteria, including, for example, a player’s statistical performance the previous season. The players for which the risk transfer insurance option is available may also be determined by the agreement of team owners 102.

Insurance underwriter 114 may agree to indemnify a team owner 102 for the potential financial consequences of a loss of player’s participation for a specific number of games in exchange for the payment of a premium. This insurance could be provided prior to or during a regular season. The insurance could be based on a single player or on an entire team. Based on the list of available players and the respective likelihood of injury, device 116 in communication with insurance underwriter 114 may determine a list of insurance coverage options.

Referring to FIG. 2, fantasy sports team owners 102 may select their respective fantasy teams by selecting players 118 through network 106. For example, team owners 102 may select a fantasy team of 15 to 20 players. However, the methods of the present disclosure are suitable for use for fantasy sports team owners 102.
sports leagues with teams having at least one player, and is not in any way limited by the maximum number of players included in a given fantasy sports team.

[0027] After team owners 102 select their respective fantasy teams players 118, processor 108 may offer the risk transfer insurance option for certain of these players. Processor 108 may display on a display 128 a list of the players 118 chosen by each user 102. Processor 108 may also add an identifier 126, such as an asterisk or an indication of a hyperlink, next to the names of the players for which the risk transfer insurance option is available.

[0028] A team owner 102 may gain access to another display 130 showing a player profile with coverage and deductible options by clicking on identifier 126. Coverage options may be determined by device 116 in communication with insurance underwriter 114 such as, for example, Houston Casualty Underwriters as discussed above. Displays 128, 130 may be images viewable over the network 106 such as HTML (Hypertext markup language) pages.

[0029] After considering the coverage options shown in display 130, team owners 102 may choose the degree of risk protection they wish to purchase. The insured value of a given fantasy team may be based upon, for example, a team owner’s financial investment in his or her team, the amount a team owner could potentially win in a given fantasy sports league, or any other amount of the team owners choosing.

[0030] Team owners 102 may choose, for example, one of at least three deductible options. One option provides coverage for a player who misses from about 8 to about 11 games. Another option provides coverage for a player who misses about 12 or more games. A third option provides coverage for a player missing about 8 to about 11 games and about 12 or more games. Still yet another option provides coverage for multiple players selected that miss an aggregate number of games in a single season. Other options and derivations can be arrived at that can be elected for coverage which are not specifically described herein but are deemed to be within the inventive scope of the present invention. Each variation can have a particular insurance premium associated with the coverage selected determined by device 116 in communication with insurance underwriter 114.

[0031] A deductible may be determined based on a two-tier payout method whereby a team owner 102 is reimbursed a percentage of the team’s insured value if a given player misses a pre-determined number of games, and a greater percentage of the team’s insured value if the player misses more than the pre-determined number of games. Alternatively, the deductible may be determined based on a two-tier payout method whereby a team owner is reimbursed 50% of the team’s insured value if a given player misses 8-11 games, and 100% of the team’s insured value if the player misses more than 12 games. Other deductible options may be used such as a deductible option that provides coverage for a player that misses at least one game. Team owners may choose from the deductible options via a drop down menu on display 130.

[0032] A premium to insure a given fantasy sports team may be determined by device 116 in communication with insurance provider 114 based upon a pricing matrix. The pricing matrix may be determined based upon (i) the insured value of a fantasy team (based upon, for example, a team owner’s financial investment in his or her team and/or the amount a team owner could potentially win in a given fantasy sports league), (ii) the likelihood that a given player may become injured, and (iii) the deductible option chosen by the team owner. The pricing matrix may be represented as a percentage per $100 of the insured value of a given fantasy sports team.

[0033] Network device 116 in communication with insurance underwriter 114 may use the pricing matrix to determine the premium amount. Insurance underwriter 114 could be, for example, a company/entity that evaluates the risk and exposures of potential clients, such as a fantasy sport team owner looking to insure a player or aggregate group of players. Underwriting involves measuring risk exposure and determining the premium that needs to be charged to insure that risk. Different insurance companies may have their own set of underwriting guidelines to help the underwriter determine whether or not the company should accept the risk. The information used to evaluate the risk and therefore apply a premium for insuring the player or aggregate of players may include, past injury of the player(s), age of the player(s), years in which the player(s) have been playing the sport, position of the player(s) and the importance of each player to the success of the team. Other factors can also be used to underwrite the coverage that may be predetermined or may be customized for each request for insurance. Multiple underwriting companies can be used so as to provide competitive pricing or a single underwriting company can be used.

[0034] The premium determined by device 116 is sent to display 128, 130. After the team owner 102 has chosen insurance, the team owner is prompted by processor 108 on display 128 to provide payment. Once payment is received by insurance underwriter 114, such as by a PAYPAL account or other methods, an insurance policy is issued to team owner 102. The policy may include language pertaining to, for example, policy limits, premium, coverage triggers (deductible), and payout details.

[0035] As the regular season progresses, team owners 102 may track the performance of his or her team via a pre-existing fantasy sports platform. Likewise, after the regular season ends, team owners may track the performance of his or her team via a pre-existing fantasy sports platform. After the regular season ends, an end of the season analysis is conducted for each player who was injured during the regular season. If a team owner 102 had an insured player who was injured during the regular season, the team owner is reimbursed by insurance provider 114 based upon the parameters defined in the insurance policy.

[0036] Referring to FIG. 3, there is shown a process which could be performed in accordance with an embodiment of the invention. The process of FIG. 3 could be implemented using, for example, system 100 discussed above.

[0037] At step S2, an administration processor determines a list of eligible players available for insurance. This list may be compiled from various sources as discussed above including being generated by users. At step S4, the administration processor may determine each eligible player’s likelihood of injury. At step S6, the administration processor may sends the results of steps S2 and S4 to an insurance underwriter processor. At step S16 the insurance underwriter processor may receive the results.

[0038] At step S8 a team owner’s processor may send a request to the administration processor for players in a fantasy team. The request may include an indication of the value of the players and/or the team. The value may be based on an investment by the team owner or an amount the team owner could potentially win. At step S10, the administration processor may receive the request and send the request to the insurance underwriter processor. At step S18, the insurance under-
writer processor receives the request. Based on the request and the results received in step S16, at step S20 the insurance underwriter processor determines coverage options and sends the coverage options to the administration processor. At step S12, the administration processor displays the coverage options to a team owner. At step S14, the team owner processor may receive a request to purchase insurance for a particular player. At step S22, the team owner processor sends the request to purchase insurance to the insurance underwriter processor. At step S24, the insurance underwriter processor receives the request for insurance. At step S26, the insurance underwriter processor determines a premium and generates a policy. At step S28, the insurance underwriter processor may request payment for the policy. At step S30, the team owner processor may send payment for the policy.

[0039] Although sports teams are mentioned, system 100 may also be applied to a method for transferring the risk of a financial investment in a non-sports related game such as, for example, games which are focused on politics, celebrities, movies, and television.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for determining insurance for at least one player using a network based system, the method comprising:
   - determining a list of players available for insurance;
   - determining, by a first processor, a respective likelihood of injury for each of the players in the list;
   - sending the list of players and respective likelihood of injuries from the first processor to a second processor over a network;
   - receiving a request from a third processor over the network for a second list of players and a value relating to the second list of players;
   - determining by the second processor insurance coverage options for the second list of players based on the value, and the respective likelihood of injuries; and
   - displaying the insurance coverage options on a display in communication with the network.

2. The method as recited in claim 1 wherein the likelihood of injury for a particular player in the list is determined by:
   - how frequently the particular player has been injured throughout his career, a severity of injuries of the particular player, a history of injury frequency for a position of the particular player, and a history of injury severity for the position of the particular player.

3. The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising receiving an insurance request by the second processor from the third processor, the insurance request indicating at least one player to insure.

4. The method as recited in claim 3, wherein the insurance request includes a deductible.

5. The method as recited in claim 4, wherein the deductible is based on a potential number of games the player in the insurance request may miss.

6. The method as recited in claim 5, further comprising generating, by the second processor, an insurance policy for the player in the insurance request based on the deductible, the value, and the respective likelihood of injury.

7. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the value is based on one of an investment by a team owner or a potential loss of the team owner.

8. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the list of players is determined based on prior season performance, by team owners or by a team administrator.

9. The method as recited in claim 6, further comprising receiving payment for the insurance policy by the third processor from the second processor.

10. The method as recited in claim 6, wherein the second processor is effective to determine whether to issue an insurance policy based on a history of past injury of the player in the insurance request, an age of the player in the insurance request, a number of years in which the player in the insurance request has been playing, a position of the player in the insurance request and an importance of the player in the insurance request to the success of a team including the player in the insurance request.

11. The method as recited in claim 6, further comprising:
   - determining, by the second processor, that the player in the insurance request was injured during a season; and
   - generating, by the second processor, payment based on the policy.

12. A system for determining insurance for at least one player, the system comprising:
   - a first processor;
   - a memory in communication with the first processor over a network;
   - a processor in communication with the first processor;
   - the first processor effective to determine a respective likelihood of injury for a list of players available for insurance, the first processor further effective to send the list of players and respective likelihood of injuries from the first processor to the second processor over the network;
   - the first processor further effective to receive a request from a third processor over the network for a second list of players and a value relating to the second list of players;
   - the second processor effective to determine insurance coverage options for the second list of players based on the value, and the respective likelihood of injuries; and
   - a display in communication with the second processor over the network, the display effective to display the insurance coverage options.

13. The system as recited in claim 12, wherein the likelihood of injury for a particular player in the list is determined by:
   - how frequently the particular player has been injured throughout his career, a severity of injuries of the particular player, a history of injury frequency for a position of the particular player, and a history of injury severity for the position of the particular player.

14. The system as recited in claim 12, wherein the second processor is further effective to receive an insurance request from the third processor, the insurance request indicating at least one player to insure and a deductible, the deductible being based on a potential number of games the player in the insurance request may miss.

15. The system as recited in claim 14, wherein the second processor is effective to generate an insurance policy for the player in the insurance request based on the deductible, the value, and the respective likelihood of injury.
16. The system as recited in claim 12, wherein the value is based on one of an investment by a team owner or a potential loss of the team owner.

17. The system as recited in claim 16, wherein the third processor is further effective to receive payment for the insurance policy from the second processor.

18. The system as recited in claim 17, wherein the second processor is effective to determine whether to issue an insurance policy based on a history of past injury of the player in the insurance request, an age of the player in the insurance request, a number of years in which the player in the insurance request has been playing, a position of the player in the insurance request and an importance of the player in the insurance request to the success of a team including the player in the insurance request.

19. The system as recited in claim 15, wherein:
   determine that the player in the insurance request was injured during a season; and
   generate payment based on the policy.

20. A computer storage medium having computer-executable instructions stored thereon which, when executed by a computing device, adapt the computing device to perform a method for determining insurance for at least one player using a network-based system, the method comprising:
   determining a list of players available for insurance;
   determining, by a first processor, a respective likelihood of injury for each of the players in the list;
   sending the list of players and respective likelihood of injuries from the first processor to a second processor over a network;
   receiving a request from a third processor over the network for a second list of players and a value relating to the second list of players;
   determining by the second processor insurance coverage options for the second list of players based on the value, and the respective likelihood of injuries; and
   displaying the insurance coverage options on a display in communication with the network.

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