Player Participation Newsletter – 2005-01

Wednesday, July 20, 2005

General

Welcome back as we get ready for another exciting NFL season. This year we will be continuing our pilot of the Player Participation system through the entire 2005 season. Last year 21 clubs participated in a highly successful pilot season. We'd like to thank those clubs for their hard work in making 2004 a success. Several more clubs will be joining our pilot to help us refine the process and improve the accuracy of the data collected by the system. It is only with your continued support and feedback that we can provide the most efficient and accurate system of reporting player playtime. We are hoping for another successful pilot season and we hope that you'll continue providing us with all of your extremely helpful feedback.

As part of our continued effort to provide a mechanism for communicating best practices, software updates, and general information about the Player Participation system, we are beginning a new season of newsletters. We hope that you'll read the newsletters and find them helpful. If you come across any ideas you'd like to share with us and the other NFL clubs, please forward them to the address below and we'll make sure we include them in a future newsletter.

John Cave
National Football League
280 Park Ave
New York, NY 10017
Email: cavej@nfl.com
Work: 212.450.2441
Cell: 917.359.4531

Preparation for Pre-Season

We have just placed the order for the additional equipment we will be sending to you this season. Specifically, we are sending hard drives that will replace the DVD burning you did last season and sending an additional camera body to each club. The additional camera body is a newer and much improved model of the Canon EOS Digital Rebel. We suggest you begin using the new camera at one endzone location and move one of the older model camera bodies into a role as spare. You will use the spare in the event of a camera failure. The additional camera body will not be shipped with a lens. A lens from one of the older cameras will need to be moved to the new camera body. Also, you will receive a second laptop to be used exclusively for Player Participation during the game. This laptop will come from the new IBM laptop that was shipped as part of GSIS last year and is identical to the IBM G40 model you used last year.

Please make sure you have game credentials and transportation arrangements for every home game of your team. We plan on having crews begin working the first pre-season home game. Also, if your team continues into the post-season we again plan on operating the Player Participation system in every post-season game including Super Bowl. Please note that the Player Participation crew of the Super Bowl host city will operate the Player Participation system at the Super Bowl (i.e. Detroit crew will operate Super Bowl XL).

New Data Verification Report

We've replaced the Data Verification Report with a new version which is easier to use and saves a lot of time in the verification process. This report is divided into two sections. The first section lists each play in which players are suspicious because they participated in every play except 3 or fewer. The second section, lists each play in which players participated in only 3 or less plays in the game.

In the sample report below, Buffalo player #94 is suspicious in play id #296 because he is in every play except for play id #296. You will need to open play id #296 and check the photos to see if he did or didn't participate in that play.

An example of the new Data Verification report is shown below:

The PlayID in the Data Verification Report refers to the ID of each Play which can be seen below as the 1st column (Id) in the Play List in the Player Participation software.

Disk Drive Space (New Disk Cleanup software feature)

After completing several games, you may run out of disk space on your primary laptop. The laptops have only 40GB or 60GB of disk space depending on the laptop model and the photos of each game consume 4-5 GB of disk space. Depending on the amount of available disk space on your laptop you will run out of disk space after doing about 6-8 games. Last year we asked that you check the available disk space before each game and remove older games as necessary from the c:\GSISPlayerParticipation folder. This year we've added a new feature in the software to assist you with freeing up disk space on the primary laptop.

If your Primary Laptop has less then 10GB of free disk space, the software will help you free up some space by asking you if you want to delete the photos of the oldest game on your laptop. Here is an example of the dialog box you will see if this scenario comes up:
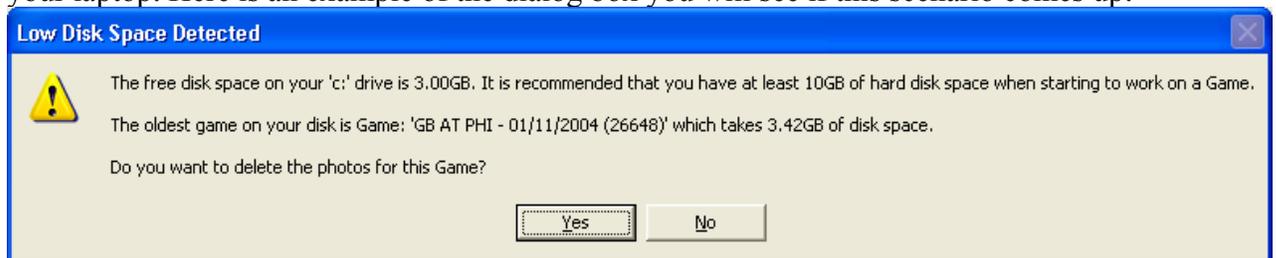
In the example above the oldest Game on the Primary laptop was Game "GB at PHI – 01/11/2004 (26648)" and the photos for this game take up 3.42GB of disk space. If you click "Yes" on the dialog window above the software will automatically delete the photos for this Game and free up disk space. This process will continue until you have at least 10GB of free disk space on your laptop. If you do not want the software to delete the photos for the specified Game then click on the "No" button and the login process will continue.

Note: If the disk on your primary laptop is full when you're loading photographs from the CompactFlash card, the application will report that the photos are corrupt because it is unable to copy them to your laptop. If you see this behavior you must check your hard disk space.

New "Start Fresh" software feature

A situation could arise where you discover that the Camera Offset values you set before marrying the photos to Plays were wrong and maybe you also manually married some Photos to the wrong Plays and you've reached a point where so many Plays are married to the wrong Photos that you can't continue with your work. If this situation occurs and you want to just start over, you can use the "Start Fresh" option in the software. **Be very careful with using this feature.** However, if you do a "Start Fresh" operation, the software will delete all the photos you've loaded for this game, reset all Camera End Zone Offsets and erase all Player Participation data entered up to that point. The GSIS plays and game roster will not be deleted.

As a safeguard against accidentally deleting a lot of work, the system will not let you perform a Start Fresh operation if you've identified more than 1,100 players (approx. 50 plays) for this game.

Here are the steps to "Start Fresh" a Game:
1. From the Primary laptop go to **File, Start Fresh**.

2. The following dialog window will appear:
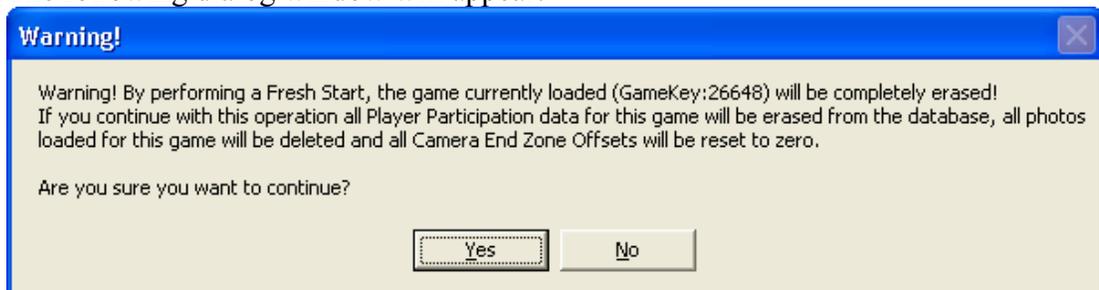
3. If you do not wish to continue with the "Start Fresh" operation then click the "No" button. If you want to continue with the "Start Fresh" then click on the "Yes" button.

4. The following window will appear showing the progress of the "Start Fresh" operation:
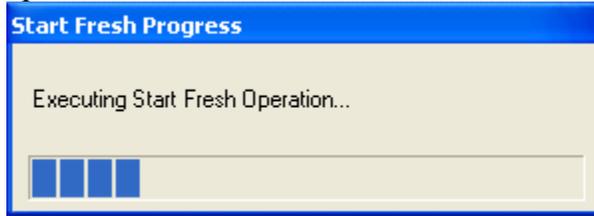
Switching from DVDs to USB Hard Drives

Last year we had you burn DVDs of the Game photos after the Game was over and ship them to the League Office in New York. This year we're going away from DVDs and we're going to be copying the Game Photos onto USB Hard Drives and shipping those to the League Office instead.

The reason for this change is that we had various problems with the DVDs last year. Sometimes the DVD burning process would not complete successfully and the Player Participation crews would have to perform a second burn to get it to work or sometimes we would get the DVDs in New York and we couldn't read the data off of them. The DVD burning process would also take a lot of resources on the primary machine so most times it wasn't possible for the PP crew to keep working while the DVD is burning which slowed things down. Another issue was that many times the photos from a Game would not fit onto a single 4.7GB DVD so crews had to burn 2 separate DVDs and ship them to New York.

This year we're shipping two LaCie 80GB USB 2.0 external hard drives to each club. Here is what these drives will look like:

We've added a feature in the Player Participation software which makes it easy to copy the Game Photos to the Hard Drive and it take approximately 3:30 minutes to complete (significantly faster than the 12+ minutes required to burn a DVD). Furthermore the copying process occurs in the background and you can still use the Player Participation software with no interference. After each Game you will copy the photos to the Hard Drive and ship it to New York. We will copy the photos off of the Hard Drive and send it back to you. If you haven't received your Hard Drive back from us by the time of your next home game you will use the 2nd Hard Drive we've provided to you.

Once all the photos have been loaded in the software and they have been married to the correct Plays, you will Connect the LaCie USB Hard Drive to the Primary laptop and copy the "c:\GSISPlayerParticipation\<game key> folder to it by following these steps:

1. Select **Photos, Copy Photos To Disk Drive** from the menu-bar. The following dialog window will appear:
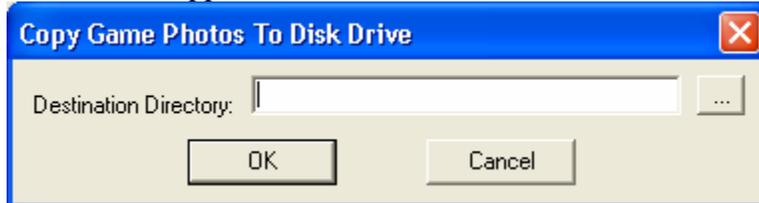
2. Click on the "…" button and you will see the Windows "Browse For Folder" dialog window:

3. Expand the "My Computer" entry by clicking on the plus sign to the left of it and select the "LACIE" drive from the list by clicking on it. When you're done click on the "OK" button.

4. Click "OK" on the "Copy Game Photos To Disk Drive" dialog window.

5. The progress of the copy operation is displayed on the heading of the application and also a progress bar is displayed on the information bar on the bottom of the application. Here is an example of this:

6. While the copy operation is completing you can continue using the application to identify players. When the copy operation completes the following message will

appear:

Done Copying Game Photos To Disk Drive

Done Copying directory 'c:\GSISPlayerParticipation\18002\' to destination directory 'E:\'. 7 photos were successfully copied.

OK

7. Open **Explorer** (or **My Computer**) and navigate to the LACIE drive. Verify that the photos for the Game have been copied successfully by navigating to the <GameKey> folder of your loaded game and opening up one of the JPG files. Double-clicking on the JPG file will open it in Internet Explorer.