

Many NFL players' reluctance to get vaccinated could jeopardize competitive balance of upcoming season

The NFL won't require players to get the vaccine, while the NFL Players Association continues to say it will encourage it. Soon, though, players will be split into two groups: Those who are vaccinated and those who aren't, and the NFLPA doesn't want to hear those in the latter group say their decision is due to a lack of information.

"We've talked about this now for four months," NFLPA executive director [DeMaurice Smith said \[June 10\]](#).

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One senior team executive told The Athletic that his coach is using [vaccination] data to make an argument about competitive advantage. He tells his team that if a division rival has more vaccinated players, for example, that opponent would have fewer players who would be subject to quarantines and missed game time in case of exposure.

Or if another team had more players allowed to gather in person for film sessions and meetings, that would be an advantage over a team that had to meet virtually.

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"Don't force people to do it," [one] agent said, "just make their lives so much better that they say, 'Why wouldn't I?'"

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