

The Super Fan: Sport's New Market Inefficiency  
Gerald W. White II

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sport in American culture has become one of the largest growing industries in the world over the course of the last century, and along with it has been the development of sport fandom. Sport fandom has not only become part of our daily enjoyment, but it has become part of how we identify ourselves. Levels of fandom can vary by personal investment, as some fans identify with their favorite teams stronger than others, and in some small cases, fans reach a level of “super fandom.” Often, when a fan reaches this level they become public figures that are identified by other fans as an unofficial representative or mascot of a fan base. Many examples of this can be pointed out across every major professional sports league and also at the collegiate level, such as famous New York Jets fan, “Fireman Ed,” longtime Dallas Cowboys attendee, “Crazy Ray,” Boston Red Sox fanatic, Mike Schuster, the ever popular Laurence Leavy, a.k.a, “Marlins Man,” Denver Broncos fan, “Barrel Man,” Ohio State Buckeyes fan, “Buck-I-Guy,” and Florida Gators legend, “Mr. Two Bits.” In the case of Texas Christian University, there’s “Frog Daddy.”

Because I’m related to Frog Daddy, I took it upon myself as an undergrad in 2014 to develop and grow his popularity by harnessing the power of social media, and independently created a Twitter account for him. Now, not only can his presence be seen at sporting events, but his voice can be heard in an online platform. My initial intentions with this were simply to grow his popularity and make the Frog Daddy name more familiar to TCU fans because I had an honest appreciation for his devotion as a super fan. But as the account following grew and received more interaction, I quickly recognized that the content I published from his account became more influential because it reached more people.

Understanding and recognizing that giving an online voice to a figure like this, and using the account as an online ambassador for the team they identify with, sparked an interest in me

that made me wonder if teams or organizations would benefit from formally affiliating super fans with their brand. A proposal to do just that with the Frog Daddy concept drafted by myself, and presented to the TCU Athletic Department through TCU's Assistant Athletic Director for Marketing & Licensing, was rejected in August of 2016. However, because I independently manage the Frog Daddy Twitter and Instagram accounts, serving as his social media manager and outreach representative, I could continue to use them to study how the power of social media, coupled with the best practices of public relations by studying Agenda Setting Theory (AST), would allow me to grow and develop Frog Daddy's brand. Included is an examination of those aspects of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) compliance as they relate to a Division I university who competes at the Football Bowl System (FBS) within the Big 12 Conference, and a collection of original data regarding the growth of the Frog Daddy social media accounts that measured fan interaction over the course of the fall semester, 2016.

## **Project Overview**

The purpose of this project sought to understand a number of different things. First, it sought to understand the power of social media and how it could be effectively utilized through the practices of agenda setting (RQ1: Is Twitter the most effective platform for a super fan to utilize as it pertains to agenda setting?). Second, it sought to understand if the online presence of a super fan, once developed, could effectively use principles of Agenda Setting Theory to influence other fans' online following and interaction habits (RQ2: Can the concept of a super fan on Twitter be used to influence other fans as it pertains to Agenda Setting Theory?). Third, because there was actual contact established with the TCU Athletic Department and a rejection of affiliation between the two parties, this project also sought to examine the possible barriers to

entry for affiliation of a super fan with an NCAA “member institution” by exploring official NCAA Guidelines, hopefully serving as a reference point to others trying to do the same (RQ3: Which general principles, definitions, and applications listed in the NCAA Division I Manual effect the in-person and social media efforts of the Frog Daddy concept?).

Other features of this project listed as appendices include:

- A Link to the Frog Daddy 2014 ESPN Fan Hall of Fame Application.
- Videos featuring Frog Daddy as the “Progressive Fan of the Game” at the Texas Rangers game on TCU Night at the Ballpark.
- Executed cross-promotional ideas and activities with other known but non-affiliated TCU accounts.
- A video featuring an endorsement of Frog Daddy as an “ESPN Fan Hall of Fame” applicant, and mention of his Twitter account by ESPN broadcasters Adam Amin and Mack Brown during the call of the TCU vs SMU football game played on 9-23-16.
- A multimedia interview package of Frog Daddy featured on a number of different online news sites, some affiliated with the university, some not.
- A strategic implementation plan that was formally presented to the TCU Athletic Department detailing the benefits of affiliating a super fan with their brand.
- A Comprehensive Timeline of Frog Daddy dating back to 2009

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Selection of Twitter as Platform for Concept Development**

Prior to October of 2014, TCU alum James Vaughan had been attending TCU football games and other sport related events as a super fan known as “Frog Daddy,” but had only relied on the visual connection that fans had with him in the present moment to grow his recognition. Outside of attending games, he had no other means by which to remain connected to the TCU community outside of his participation in online college football message boards. The inspiration to better connect with the TCU community came when a commercial aired on ESPN inviting fans of Frog Daddy’s ilk to apply to the “ESPN Fan Hall of Fame.” Unbeknownst to Mr. Vaughan, an application for Frog Daddy was submitted by Gerald White to the website, but a decision had to be made on what the most effective way to make TCU fans aware of this campaign was. On October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014, the @FrogDaddyTCU Twitter account was created (originally @TCU\_FrogDaddy5).

The importance of Twitter as it pertains to matters of campaigning and exposure cannot be understated. The platform itself allows its users to produce content that is not limited in reach, and provides two-way communication and interaction between users. It also offers sharing tools that give published content the potential to be spread virally to other users that aren’t directly connected with the content publisher. The initial use of these tools by the Frog Daddy Twitter account mostly centered around the “hashtag.” As defined by Boynton & Richardson (2015), hashtags are “...agreed ways to find others interested in a topic in which you are interested” (p. 1924). The hashtag “#FanHallOfFame” was repeatedly used to connect the Frog Daddy account with the community of ESPN Fan Hall of Fame applicants, and enter the national conversation of

the campaign. The hashtag “#FrogFam” was frequently used to connect to the TCU Twitter community.

Additionally, “retweets” were encouraged by members of the TCU Twitter community with an established following, firstly, to make TCU fans in the online community aware of Frog Daddy’s newfound online presence, then to spread awareness of the “#FanHallOfFame” hashtag campaign. Boynton & Richardson (2015) also provide us with a comprehensive definition of a retweet: “A retweet is a form of interaction between the person who originally wrote the message, the person who read it and wanted to pass it along to followers, and the followers who read the retweet” (p. 1924). The importance of this form of engagement is reach. The retweet is a tool that allows your message to be received by users that don’t follow you, making your presence stronger. While the hashtag plays an important role in its own right as a link, the retweet is more vital because it’s an interactive form of endorsement by your followers, allowing your message to reach a scope of people that exceeds the limits of your following. Boynton & Richardson (2015) go on to back this claim by saying, “Hashtags are used as a call for communication among those interested in a subject. But the extent to which that call is effective is supposition. Supposition is not necessary with retweeting” (p. 1924). As the online presence of Frog Daddy has grown over the past two years, so has his level of influence among fans, which leads us to how his usage of the Twitter platform falls into the category of Agenda Setting Theory (AST).

***RQ1: Is Twitter the most effective platform for a super fan to utilize as it pertains to agenda setting?***

## Agenda Setting Theory

As explained in the previous section, it was determined that the best social media platform for the concept of a super fan to engage with and grow their personal brand was Twitter. Because the Twitter platform opens up two-way communication and is less limited in terms of reach when compared to other platforms, it was also determined that the concept of a super fan could be used in other ways outside of connecting with fans. Considering Frog Daddy separates himself from the average fan simply by being himself, he could be categorized as an influencer on Twitter within the microcosm of the TCU Twitter community. How the account is used falls right in line with principles of Agenda Setting Theory (AST). Before we get to those uses, it's important we understand what AST is.

Agenda Setting Theory itself is one of the more prominent mass communication theories, and academic literature can be found pertaining to its studies dating back to the 1920's, much of which is focused on how mass media plays a major role in American politics and presidential elections. McCombs & Shaw (1972) argue that mass media is the only way the average news consumer can have contact with politics, and they back that claim by stating, "Most of what people know comes to them "second" or "third" hand from the mass media or other people" (p. 176). They go on to reference Lang & Lang (1966) with the following quote:

The mass media force attention to certain issues. They build up public images of political figures. They are constantly presenting objects suggesting what individuals in the mass media should think about, know about, have feelings about (Lang & Lang, 1966, as cited in McCombs & Shaw, 1972, p. 177).

As it relates to this quote, the concept of a super fan presence on Twitter as an influencer with a large enough following could easily play the role of mass media, forcing the attention of fans to certain issues. Shah et al. (2009) states that, "...elites shape issue conception by the transmission of particular attributes" (p.85). Frog Daddy is recognized as an elite fan because of his obvious distinction from the average fan as it pertains to his outward appearance. Being an elite fan and having an active presence on Twitter gives him a larger voice and allows him shape issues more easily than the average fan because his level of personal investment to TCU is visibly recognizable. However, this does not mean his published content has the ability to influence his followers on how to think, as McCombs & Shaw (1972) suggest that the press "...may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about" (Cohen, 1963, as cited in McCombs & Shaw, 1972, p. 177). The fact that this model of influencer cannot necessarily shape the thoughts and opinions of others does not deter from the fact that it is able to influence what others think about. As it relates to an NCAA member institution, recognizing this influence could present as a possible tool to set an agenda in multiple ways, one example being published content from the super fan account that presents personal thoughts on what specific factors are contributing to the performance of an institution's football team. This opens up dialogue and interaction with other fans, and while they may not be influenced to agree with the presented points, they were still influenced to think about the points that were made.

Because the super fan concept is directly related to sports, it is important to examine how agenda setting theory plays into sports, and how the super fan concept applies. With consideration to the previous paragraph regarding mass media as an agenda setter in politics, (Sanderson 2012) points out that the most notable example of this in sports is broadcast



commentary (p. 51). It is also pointed out by Pegoraro (2014) that, “The growth of Twitter use, particularly in relation to sport indicates that consumers were looking for this new way of consuming communications about sport” (p. 133). This is no different during or outside of the time games are played. Instead of watching the game and taking in the broadcast commentary as a listener and observer, with Twitter, fans are now able to follow the game and serve as commentators in an online platform. Recognizing this trend, the reach of the super fan account could allow his voice as a commentator during the game to reach many fans as they watch along and participate in the online conversation. The draw to this as opposed to watching the game traditionally with only broadcast commentary is that it opens the discussion of the game between fans within the flow of the game in the form of 140 character microblogs.

Outside of sporting events and game flow, the super fan presence on Twitter can serve other purposes as an agenda setter. In a study of how Twitter was utilized by citizens during an influenza breakout, Yun et al. (2015) explained the following:

People set their own health agenda and those follow bottom-up processes. They scan the media, surf the internet and accumulate information to serve their own interest in health and disease. Social networks can help people establish connections and exchange their accumulated information and experience regarding particular health and disease related issues (p. 68).

Before we go any further, it is important to decode this quote as it relates to the Frog Daddy Twitter account and the online community of TCU fans. The first sentence of the quote illustrates that fans have individual thoughts and opinions as it relates to TCU and the athletic programs, and they shape said thoughts and opinions in their own unique way through a different combination of resources. In the second sentence, “health and disease” represents TCU. The

average fan has a number of different platforms at their disposal where they can choose to satisfy their need for information. Each news related website will provide its own unique take regarding similar issues surrounding TCU, so fans who only look at one news site could have a different opinion or set of thoughts than a fan who looks at different or multiple sites. In the third sentence, the social network is obviously Twitter. Twitter allows the online TCU community to exchange their individual thoughts and opinions with each other, whether they be differing or similar, regarding TCU related issues.

Where the super fan presence comes into play is that he can set the agenda for who to follow in the TCU Twitter community by endorsing other influencer accounts, or TCU owned accounts with the retweet tool. In relation to the previous quote, Yun et al. (2015) explains the retweet's importance by pointing out that, "Health campaigns are recommended to focus on recruiting influential twitter accounts and encouraging them to retweet or mention in order to produce better results in disseminating information" (p. 67). As stated previously, fans have a number of different TCU news outlets to choose from for consumption, and many, if not all, of these news outlets are active on Twitter. What the quote is suggesting is that the Frog Daddy account could be used as a tool by TCU that could help eliminate the example of the fan who only gets his news from one source by requesting him to give retweet endorsements to multiple TCU news related accounts, and TCU owned accounts, thus, setting the TCU news agenda. This example is merely the tip of the iceberg as it relates to effective utilization of the Frog Daddy Twitter account because it only examines how it can be effectively used through his own personal interaction. Opening up an affiliation with TCU and receiving endorsements from their official accounts and other TCU owned media opens up a number of effective cross-promotional

possibilities that would essentially make the Frog Daddy account an online ambassador for the university.

***RQ2:** Can the concept of a super fan on Twitter be used to influence other fans as it pertains to Agenda Setting Theory?*

## **BARRIERS TO ENTRY**

While the Frog Daddy concept has been alive since 2009 when Mr. Vaughan first wore his outfit to a TCU vs UNLV football game on Halloween, it wasn't until the spring of 2016 that major ideas to effectively grow the concept entered the discussion after Mr. White took the concept on for his Master's Report project. Many ideas outside of the social media landscape had been discussed, with almost all circling back to the thought that if the Frog Daddy concept and Twitter account could somehow receive an affiliation with TCU Athletics, those ideas could materialize. On July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016, Mr. White and Mr. Vaughan met with Drew Martin, Assistant Athletic Director for Marketing and Licensing of TCU, to present their many ideas and draw the line on what could and could not be accomplished. The meeting resulted in an agreement for the Frog Daddy camp to produce a Strategic Implementation Plan (see Appendix B) of the concept for Mr. Martin to present to the athletic department. It is later expressed on August 27<sup>th</sup> that the university would not be able to assist in any way with the ideas listed in the written plan, with no clear explanation as to why. This lead to some investigation.

### **NCAA Division I Manual**

After much discussion between Mr. White and project supervisor Jody Roginson, it was questioned whether or not the NCAA manual might be a playing a role in keeping a super fan

from receiving affiliation with a university, or what the manual refers to as a “member institution.” This was later determined to be the case, as it was discovered that eight of the 22 articles within the NCAA Manual contain general principles, definitions, and applications that the Frog Daddy concept, and Frog Daddy owned media, falls under as either a violation or liability risk to a member institution, and in some cases could result in major sanctions for an athletic program. The following rules were determined to be the most relevant for the purposes of this study.

## **Article 2: Principles for Conduct of Intercollegiate Athletics**

### ***2.1.2 Scope of Responsibility.***

*The institution’s responsibility for the conduct of its intercollegiate athletics program includes responsibility for the actions of its staff members and for the actions of any other individual or organization engaged in activities promoting the athletics interests of the institution.*

If Frog Daddy were to acquire some sort of affiliation to TCU and their athletic program, the university would then be accepting responsibility for his actions as an individual. This could be his actions in person, or content produced by Frog Daddy social media accounts.

### ***2.8.1 Principle Rule of Compliance: Responsibility of the Institution.***

*Members of an institution’s staff, student-athletes, and other individuals and groups representing the institution’s athletics interests shall comply with the applicable Association rules, and the member institution shall be responsible for such compliance.*

Similarly to the Scope of Responsibility principle, by gaining an affiliation with the university, Frog Daddy would be held to the standard of the NCAA Rules of Compliance. His

failure to do so would fall back on the university, which would subject them to the *Penalty for Noncompliance 2.8.3*. A possible example of this would be if he were to contact, endorse, or speak of the athletic capabilities of a prospective TCU athletics recruit as it relates to their program via social media during a “Dead Period” on the NCAA recruiting calendar.

## **Article 6: Institutional Control**

### ***6.4.2 Representatives of Athletics Interests.***

*An institution’s “responsibility” for the conduct of its intercollegiate athletics program shall include responsibility for the acts of individuals, a corporate entity (e.g., apparel or equipment manufacturer) or other organization when a member of the institution’s executive or athletics administration or an athletics department staff member has knowledge or should have knowledge that such an individual, corporate entity or other organization:*

*(a) Has participated in or is a member of an agency or organization as described in Constitution 6.4.1;*

*(b) Has made financial contributions to the athletics department or to an athletics booster organization of that institution;*

*(c) Has been requested by the athletics department staff to assist in the recruitment of prospective student-athletes or is assisting in the recruitment of prospective student-athletes;*

*(d) Has assisted or is assisting in providing benefits to enrolled student-athletes; or*

*(e) Is otherwise involved in promoting the institution’s athletics program.*

The key to this principle as it applies to the Frog Daddy concept is (e), as Frog Daddy promotes multiple TCU athletics programs on multiple platforms. One of the main ideas

highlighted as a part of this study is to examine how a super fan can be used by a team or learning institution as an online ambassador through social media, and there is now a large enough following of Frog Daddy on social media, particularly Twitter, to argue that this is already the case, even without an official affiliation with the school. As of now, TCU is not responsible for any content published from Frog Daddy owned media, but if they did decide to affiliate his accounts with the school and something reprehensible was published or endorsed from one of them, TCU would have to answer to the NCAA.

#### ***6.4.2.2 Retention of Identity as “Representative.”***

*Any individual participating in the activities set forth in Constitution 6.4.2 shall be considered a “representative of the institution’s athletics interests,” and once so identified as a representative, it is presumed the person retains that identity.*

Being a registered season ticket holder, Mr. Vaughan falls under part (b) of principle 6.4.2, making him a booster for the football program.

### **Article 10: Ethical Conduct**

#### ***10.01.1 Honesty and Sportsmanship.***

*Individuals employed by (or associated with) a member institution to administer, conduct or coach intercollegiate athletics and all participating student-athletes shall act with honesty and sportsmanship at all times so that intercollegiate athletics as a whole, their institutions and they, as individuals, shall represent the honor and dignity of fair play and the generally recognized high standards associated with wholesome competitive sports.*

What this principle is saying is, were Frog Daddy to become affiliated with TCU, he would be held to a higher standard as a fan in the public eye. This includes simply being in the stands, tailgating and activities before football games, or anywhere he might be in costume. This wouldn't have been as big of a concern on the university's part 10 years ago, but with the age of the smartphone comes the risk of exploitation. Anyone at any time could take a picture of or film Frog Daddy doing something questionable, making him a huge liability risk, even if he conducts himself in a predominantly positive fashion.

## **Article 11: Conduct and Employment of Athletics Personnel**

### ***11.3.2.7.1 Exception---Actions That Indicate Approval of Content on Social Media Platforms.***

*An athletics department staff member may take actions (e.g., "like," "favorite," republish, etc.) on social media platforms that indicate approval of content on social media platforms that was generated by users of the platforms other than institutional staff members or representatives of an institution's athletics interests.*

One of the main points presented to the TCU Athletic Department in the Strategic Implementation Plan (see Appendix B) was, *"We feel that in order to effectively and positively grow the Frog Daddy concept as an online ambassador, it would be important for Frog Daddy accounts to receive some forms of endorsement from TCU owned media."* Even minimal use of the sharing features that the Twitter platform offers (e.g., "retweets," "tags," "mentions," etc.) by TCU owned media would allow Frog Daddy's online presence to reach an entire scope of TCU fans that participate in an online community. Interestingly, this rule permits the athletic department to do this while remaining unaffiliated. To this point, it is unknown why this has not yet taken place.

## Article 13: Recruiting

### ***13.10.2.1 Comments Before Commitment.***

*Before the signing of a prospective student-athlete to a National Letter of Intent or an institution's written offer of admission and/or financial aid or before the institution receives his or her financial deposit in response to its offer of admission, a member institution may comment publicly only to the extent of confirming its recruitment of the prospective student-athlete. The institution may not comment generally about the prospective student-athlete's ability or the contribution that the prospective student-athlete might make to the institution's team; further, the institution is precluded from commenting in any manner as to the likelihood of the prospective student-athlete committing to or signing with that institution.*

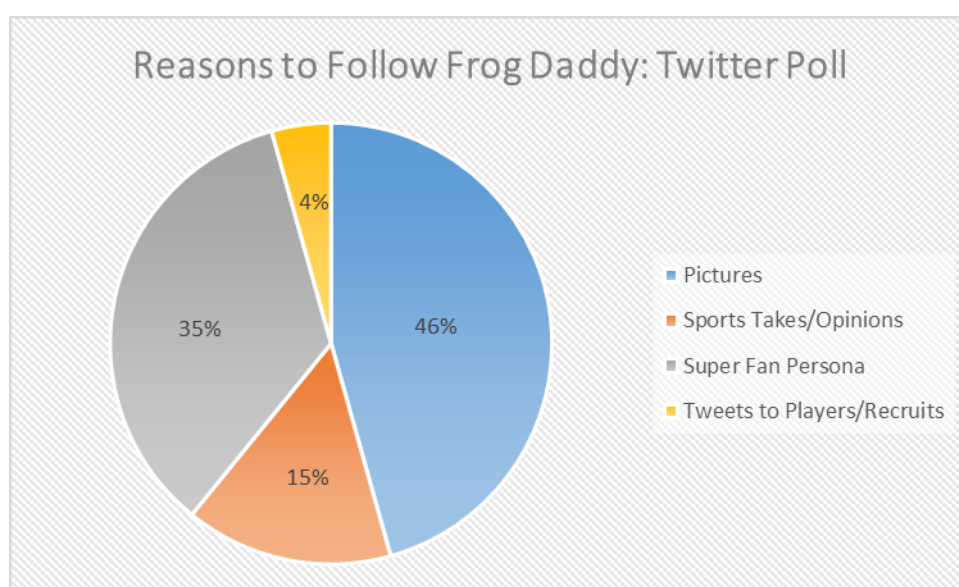
Mr. Vaughan's fandom and participation on social media as Frog Daddy isn't limited to the current team that TCU puts on the field. He also follows the recruiting trail very closely, and in some cases has reached out to prospective student-athletes on social media, especially if they've taken official visits to TCU, or are considered to be highly sought-after recruits. This means had he been affiliated with the university, he would have been in violation of this rule. Luckily, we've learned this now so if an official affiliation was ever acquired, we could place tighter constraints on what is and isn't permissible as it pertains to social media activity and NCAA recruiting violations.

***RQ3:*** *Which general principles, definitions, and applications listed in the NCAA Division I Manual effect the in-person and social media efforts of the Frog Daddy concept?*



## METHODOLOGY

Based on the findings within the NCAA Manual, deductive reasoning would lead one to believe that the risk outweighs the potential reward for a university as it relates to affiliating their brand with a super fan, making it a cool idea, but ultimately something that's not feasible. While this might be true regarding actual affiliation, to reach the conclusion that the super fan concept could not be capitalized on, or utilized at all, would be premature.



During the course of this study, a poll was taken on the Frog Daddy Twitter account asking fans what their favorite thing about following Frog Daddy was, their choices being: *Pictures, Sports Takes and Opinions, Super Fan Persona, and Tweets to Players and Recruits.* At the conclusion of the poll, which received 46 responses, it was determined that *Pictures* (46%) and *Super Fan Persona* (35%) were the two most dominant reasons TCU fans enjoyed following the Frog Daddy Twitter account. The results from the respondents who selected *Pictures* as their favorite reason to follow the account tells us two things. First, it tells us that Frog Daddy's flamboyant, outward appearance is visually appealing to fans. And second, it tells

us that the Twitter account would most likely be more effective if it produced more media content as opposed to mostly message tweets. The results from the respondents who selected *Super Fan Persona* tells us that fans like the super fan and what he stands for. When you couple the near even totals of respondents who selected *Pictures* and *Super Fan Persona*, it leads to the conclusion that fans not only like the super fan, but his outward appearance allows them to visually see something that is a representation of how they feel about a team. These results also back the idea that the super fan is a representative of a fan base, and is someone that fans can relate to. Now that this study has proven the super fan is likeable, visually appealing, and a representation of how someone feels about a team, the important question to ask is, where does the super fan fit in the vast landscape of sports marketing?

## **CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION**

It was initially thought during this entire process that in order to grow the super fan concept, it would have to be done through affiliation with a team. This was a very narrow-minded and simplistic approach, and only took into account super fans at the collegiate level, forgetting that many recognizable super fans exist at the professional level which doesn't have a governing manual containing general principles, definitions, and applications that prevent a super fan from affiliating with a team. That said, it's not the teams that should be targeted when it comes to marketing and growing the super fan, it's the major athletic apparel companies.

Every major professional sports league, and every NCAA member institution has a contract with one of the major athletic apparel companies. Almost all NFL gear is produced by Nike, MLB has fan gear produced by Nike and Under Armour, most NBA gear is produced by Adidas, and all four of those brands have contracts with college teams. Affiliation with a team isn't necessarily a problem at the pro level, but since there are so many barriers to entry at the

collegiate level, affiliation between a super fan and one of these apparel companies would create a loophole that would allow for universities to work around the guidelines set by the NCAA. At this point, all liability risk would shift from the universities to the apparel company, then the only thing left to be figured out would be how to develop the super fan social media presence as an agenda setting tool for the university which, according to the NCAA Manual, there are no restrictions that stop a university from endorsing a super fan social media account.

When ESPN came up with the concept of a Fan Hall of Fame, they tapped into a market that had not previously been exploited, but has been readily available for anyone to capitalize on, and then they stopped doing it. This idea of recognizing super fans and effectively using them as a tool has created a window of opportunity for major athletic apparel companies and sports organizations to capitalize on by not only recognizing the super fan, but branding him professionally and making him more official than unofficial. By creating a line of apparel devoted to super fans, you've not only created an opportunity to grow your brand, you've developed a tool for universities and professional teams to use as agenda setters in social media, and you've created jobs within your company because it will take a team of people to recruit and manage what super fans you want to co-brand with. This includes recruiting campaigns to try and seek out who the best candidate from every professional and college team would be. Sports marketers are constantly searching for new idiosyncrasies that could assist them their marketing efforts to fans, but the one thing they have yet to use in that search is the fans themselves. What makes the super fan a market inefficiency isn't that he can be capitalized on, it's that he's been readily available and waiting to be capitalized on for decades. If properly cultivated with an influential social media presence, the super fan at any level, in any league, offers an opportunity for teams to create positive PR for themselves, and in the process, create a new revenue stream.

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## APPENDIX A

### Links to Videos, Articles, etc.

1. Frog Daddy ESPN Fan Hall of Fame Application 2014  
<http://fanhalloffame.com/applicants/2014/james-vaughan-frog-daddy/>
2. Interview with Texas Rangers broadcaster Jim Knox before being selected as the “Progressive Fan of the Game,” and in-game selection video.  
<https://www.facebook.com/FOXSportsSouthwest/videos/10153669986394624/>  
<https://twitter.com/FrogDaddyTCU/status/803120315995783168>
3. Cross-promotional video “Go Big or Go #Gnome” with owner of @TCUGnome Twitter account, another non-affiliated agenda setter in the TCU Twitter Community.  
<https://vimeo.com/180983247>
4. In game feature of Frog Daddy, including commentary, during the TCU vs. SMU game which was featured on ESPN2.  
<https://twitter.com/FrogDaddyTCU/status/789301130220101632>
5. “Who’s Your (Frog) Daddy?” An article written by Sierra Tuthill that was featured on tcu360.com.  
<https://www.tcu360.com/2016/09/whos-your-frog-daddy/>

## **APPENDIX B**

### **“Strategic Implementation Plan of the Frog Daddy Concept”**

Proposed by Gerald W. White II and James B. Vaughan

to

TCU Assistant Athletic Director for Marketing & Licensing Drew Martin

July 21, 2016

It is with sincere intentions of goodwill, and post graduate academic endeavors, that we formally request the TCU Athletic Department to consider allowing Frog Daddy, the character and concept, to be utilized in an unofficial role on football game days and other external events to promote TCU in a positive fashion, and to instill the love and school spirit Mr. Vaughan has for TCU in current and future fans.

The Frog Daddy concept is currently the centerpiece of an academic study being conducted by Mr. White in Texas Tech University’s Mass Communications department, which will evaluate the power of social media through social media management, and how it can be effectively used as a tool in efforts pertaining to the mass communication theories of agenda setting and press agency. He has been given approval by his department to execute this project, and has an academic supervisor who has agreed to oversee his work.

Listed within the body of this document is an outlined plan that illustrates how this concept can be effectively implemented into a number of different university activities, and describes how TCU benefits from the utilization of this concept. We feel this plan will help bring a new and refreshing sense of tradition and school spirit, benefiting TCU long into the future.

## Strategic Plan Outline

### I. Game Day Implementation

- a. **On-field Pregame Rituals:** As proposed in a movement by fans on Twitter that gained enough traction to be written about in Frogs O' War, the implementation of the "Iceland Soccer Chant" as an on-field pregame ritual is an excellent example for TCU in exploring opportunities to build new traditions for fans to get behind, and it would also present a great opportunity to cement those ideas by allowing Frog Daddy to be the person to lead such rituals. This is an easy way to successfully plug the concept in and gain exposure with fans.
- b. **Pregame Events in Frog Alley:** Another avenue for implementation would be pregame events in Frog Alley, possibly related to either walking with the band as they walk into the stadium, or being directly involved in other University run pregame activities outside of the stadium before the game is played.
- c. **Video Exposure:** To promote the Frog Daddy concept as a symbol of TCU Spirit, including Frog Daddy in TCU hype videos, such as the Riff Ram chant that is played during games on the jumbotron, or videos that are designed with the intention of getting fans excited about the upcoming athletic season, would be another easy way to gain exposure with fans. Additionally, an initial contact has been made between Frog Daddy and music group "Them T.C.U. Boyz" about being included in their future works.
- d. **Positional Awareness:** We would like to make the Athletic Department aware of where Frog Daddy is sitting so the on-field camera crew can be aware of him and occasionally feature him on the jumbotron during breaks in the game.

## II. Social Media: Usage and Endorsements of Frog Daddy Accounts

### a. On the Part of Mr. White and Mr. Vaughan

- i. Mr. White manages the official Frog Daddy Twitter and Instagram accounts for the purposes of his master's report project, and has been doing so independently for the last two years prior to this becoming the center of an academic study. He would like to utilize and manage the accounts in a way that best fits the needs of TCU. In order to accomplish this, it is important to discuss directly with the Athletic Department about a set of guidelines on what content is and is not appropriate to publish, with the goal of bringing the most positive reflection of TCU as an institution of higher learning and as an athletic program as possible, as the Frog Daddy concept has built a large enough following online to be viewed as an unaffiliated Online Ambassador for the school. Mr. White feels it is imperative to discuss this matter, as he in no way wants to publish content from Frog Daddy owned media that could potentially tarnish TCU's reputation.

### b. On the Part of TCU

- i. It has been explained to Mr. White and Mr. Vaughan that there may be some compliance and crisis control complications in affiliating the Frog Daddy concept officially with the university. However, we would like to explore the possibility of occasional endorsements of the @FrogDaddyTCU Twitter account by any and/or all major TCU owned Twitter accounts. This includes but is not limited to: Occasional retweets



of his account, organic photos of Frog Daddy tweeted from TCU owned accounts, and usage of @FrogDaddyTCU handle in published tweets of TCU owned accounts that pertain to him in order to make it easier for fans who don't already follow him on Twitter to do so. We feel that in order to effectively and positively grow the concept, it is important to receive some forms of endorsement by TCU owned media.

### III. External Events and Activities

#### a. TCU Related Events

- i. **Special Guest Appearances:** While Frog Daddy is widely recognized as a regular game attendee at TCU Football, Baseball and Basketball games, we do not feel that his efforts in promoting TCU Spirit and pride in being a Horned Frog should be limited to these events. What the Frog Daddy concept represents exceeds the boundaries of athletics and sports fandom. Taking this into consideration, Mr. White and Mr. Vaughan would like to offer the services of their concept to any event TCU finds applicable. One example of this that has already taken place is Frog Daddy making guest appearances at on-campus parties hosted by TCU Dining Services in their facilities.
- ii. **Violinist Appearances:** In addition to appearing at events, Mr. Vaughan would like to make it known that his talents are not limited to promoting TCU Spirit from a vocal standpoint. He is also an experienced violinist of 50+ years and would like to make his abilities readily available to the school where a violinist may be needed, such as formal dining events,

alumni events, and things of that nature. This service can be provided as Frog Daddy by request, or simply by Mr. Vaughan.

b. Philanthropy and Community Service

- i. **Outreach:** As we develop and grow the Frog Daddy concept into a more recognizable figure in relation to TCU, opportunities to expand our scope of public outreach regarding any and all possible avenues of community service and philanthropic work would present an opportunity for the Frog Daddy concept to be implemented in a way that shines a light on TCU as an entity that believes in giving back to the community. Mr. Vaughan would like to make himself available to be involved in any community outreach or service programs that TCU may be affiliated with, and assist with their efforts in making the world a better place.
- ii. **Unaffiliated Positive PR:** As discussed with Mr. Martin, there may be some complications in making this possible regarding matters of affiliation between TCU, Frog Daddy, and the organizations TCU has ties to. If we're not able to reach a possible solution regarding these legal matters, it should be noted that Mr. Vaughan is currently active in a number of different community service and faith based organizations within the community of Granbury. At the very least, his independent work as a philanthropist should create an opportunity for TCU to recognize his work publicly, and in turn, use his recognition as positive publicity for the school by making it known that there are TCU alums who are striving to make a the world around them a better place through

servant leadership. This recognition would not be for the personal gain of Mr. Vaughan or the Frog Daddy concept. Rather, this would be a way for TCU to create some positive PR while being able to remain unaffiliated, thus avoiding issues of liability.

#### IV. Future Outcomes

- a. **Building Tradition and School Spirit:** As expressed to Mr. Martin, the Frog Daddy concept and ideas surrounding its implementation with University activities, particularly as they pertain to involvement in the game day experience, presents an opportunity for TCU to create a new tradition that provides the added benefit of using super fan as an Online Ambassador, and providing the school with positive PR as a figure of philanthropy. Referenced to Mr. Martin was the comparison of University of Florida super fan and longtime game day figure, Mr. Two Bits. Very similar comparisons can be drawn between Mr. Two Bits and Frog Daddy as it pertains to sports fandom. To illustrate the success Mr. Two Bits created for Florida and their fans, he became such a longstanding tradition with his pregame chant given from the field to fire up the crowd before kickoff, that now with him no longer being able to attend games, Florida has created a role for students to become an Honorary Mr. Two Bits during their time in school, just as students can be the official mascots during their time in school. Many other major universities have secondary mascots with traditions centered around what they embody and represent, and Frog Daddy presents a unique opportunity with multiple avenues of potential use for TCU to do the same.

Mr. White and Mr. Vaughan would both like to thank TCU and the Athletic Department for taking their proposal into consideration. They both look forward to discussing matters further with TCU.

## APPENDIX C

### Comprehensive Timeline of the Frog Daddy Concept

**October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009-** Concept debuts at TCU UNLV game.

**October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014-** Frog Daddy Twitter account is created.

**October 2014-** Request for endorsements from TCU owned twitter accounts and established, unaffiliated TCU twitter accounts to make online community aware of Frog Daddy account.

**October 2014-** Twitter account reaches 300 followers.

**November 2014-** Application is submitted for Frog Daddy to the ESPN Fan Hall of Fame, and online campaign is run on twitter.

**April 2015-** TCU baseball jersey is purchased and customized with name embroidered on back to be worn at baseball games in place of the purple jacket.

**April 2015-** @FrogDaddyTCU twitter handle is embroidered on baseball jersey and football costume to help boost online following. Frog Daddy football costume is updated with new colors, switching from leopard print trim to silver trim to better match school colors. His name is embroidered in silver cursive font on back.

**May 2015-** Baseball Coach Jim Schlossnagle DM's account to give Frog Daddy seats in his private box to Super Regional vs Texas A&M after ticket promo snafu by TCU Athletic Department.

**January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016-** Frog Daddy receives pregame video interview with official Alamo Bowl media staff, although the interview itself remains untraceable.

**April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016-** Frog Daddy is selected by Jim Knox as the “Progressive Fan of the Game” when he attends “University Night at the Ballpark” for TCU at the Texas Rangers game. Tweets were sent Knox’s and Fox Sports Southwest’s twitter accounts to make them aware of his attendance.

**April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016-** Frog Daddy wins bid for VIP pregame experience prior to TCU vs Texas Tech baseball game. Hangs out in the dugout with players and Coach Schlossnagle prior to game.

**April 2016-** Gerald White and Jim Vaughan agree to partnership in 6050 Master’s Report project.

**May 2016-** Gerald receives approval from mass comm department to move forward with project, Jody Roginson agrees to be project supervisor.

**May 2016-** Contact is established between Gerald and TCU Athletic Director for Marketing and Licensing, Drew Martin via email.

**May 2016-** Secured capital investor to facilitate the process of acquiring necessary intellectual property protections of Frog Daddy concept.

**May 2016-** Contact is established between Gerald and Intellectual Property Attorney Mark Kahler.

**May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016-** Frog Daddy receives retweet from four star high school football recruit Malcom Askew, generating 12,000 impressions, the largest amount recorded from a single tweet by account.

**May 2016-** Twitter account reaches 500 followers.

**May 2016-** Frog Daddy Instagram account is created.

**May 2016-** Agreement for a cross-promotional partnership between @FrogDaddyTCU and @TCUgnome is discussed, custom Frog Daddy garden gnome is ordered from @ianthegnome to execute plan.

**June 2016-** Frog Daddy attends TCU Baseball watch party for NCAA Tournament announcement. Gets picture with Coach Schlossnagle and Big XII Championship Trophy, mingles with players.

**June 2016-** Meeting between Gerald, Jim, Mark Kahler and Capital Investor to discuss intellectual property options.

**July 2016-** Trademark for the “FROG DADDY” typemark and copyright for Frog Daddy appearance are filed to U.S. Patent Office.

**July 2016-** Contact established between Frog Daddy and rap group ‘Them T.C.U. Boyz,’ expressing interest in being included in future works.

**July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016-** Official meeting between Gerald, Jim, and TCU AD Drew Martin takes place to get TCU behind the concept. All aspects of project are discussed, outlining how all sides benefit.

**July, 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016-** Formal Strategic Implementation Plan is submitted to Drew Martin to be presented to entire TCU Athletic Department.

**July 2016-** Cross-promotional tool (Frog Daddy Gnome) is completed and received at home address.

**August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016-** Plan for cross-promotional hype video produced by owner of @TCUgnome account that includes Frog Daddy is executed. Will be called “Go Big or Go Gnome.”

**August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016-** Gerald and Frog Daddy attend “Meet the Frogs” event. Frog Daddy is interviewed and featured in TCU owned media by student journalist Sierra Tuthill.

**August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016-** Gerald speaks with Drew Martin at Meet the Frogs, and it is explained that the university will not be able to assist in any way with academic project.

**August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016-** Interviewer from Meet the Frogs event, Sierra Tuthill, DM’s Frog Daddy account expressing interest in another interview to do a feature story.

**August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016-** Cross-promotional video “Go Big or Go Gnome” is launched by owner of @TCUgnome.

**September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016-** Interview of Jim/Frog Daddy is conducted by Sierra Tuthill at TCU, along with multiple videos to complement the interview. Final product is labeled as a “Multimedia Package.” Sierra is the Capitan of the TCU Showgirls, News Intern at WFAA-TV, Audience Engagement Director at The109.org, and contributor to TCU360.com.

**September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016-** Frog Daddy is recognized during the call of the TCU vs SMU football game by ESPN College Football announcers Adam Amin and Mack Brown. They shared his name, his twitter account information, and status as an applicant to the ESPN Fan Hall of Fame during the broadcast. Prior to the game, a tweet was sent to ESPN’s College Football account @ESPNCFB in an attempt to make them aware of his attendance.

**September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016-** Twitter account reaches 600 followers.

**September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016-** Frog Daddy video interview and article is published on TCU360.com, and shared on multiple social media platforms.



**October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016-** In an attempt to boost following and exposure, Frog Daddy proposes on Twitter to select a fan to take as his guest to the Kansas State game on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016, if he receives either 5,000 retweets or acquires 3,000 followers by December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016. Only fans who retweet and follow are eligible for this.

**November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016-** Frog Daddy receives retweet from TCU's 2011 Rose Bowl Defensive MVP, and current Cleveland Browns Linebacker, Tank Carder.

**November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016-** Twitter account reaches 700 followers.

## APPENDIX D

## Screenshot of Selected Tweets



Frog Daddy™ '82 '95 @FrogDaddyTCU · Nov 3

Serious question, #FrogFam, trying to improve my Twitter use. What's your favorite thing about following me? Reply with write-ins. Please RT

46% Pics (of me &/or w/ fans)

15% Sports takes/opinions

35% Super fan persona

4% Tweets 2 players/recruits

46 votes • Final results



2



1



Frog Daddy™ '82 '95 @FrogDaddyTCU · Oct 31

Fact: On this day in 2009, I debuted #FrogDaddy at a 41-0 @TCUFootball win over @unlvfootball. As they say, the rest is history. 🐸 ⬆️ 🎃  
#FrogFam



2



22





**Frog Daddy™ '82 '95** @FrogDaddyTCU · 21h

Whether you're going with me or not, everyone needs to wake up and be at the Carter on Saturday! These seniors deserve to be sent off right!

Want to go to the TCU vs K-State game, #FrogFam? Show #FrogDaddy some love with a retweet and follow, and you could be my guest at the game!

@FrogDaddy

**Frog Daddy™ '82 '95** @FrogDaddyTCU

Want to go to the TCU vs K-State game, #FrogFam? Show #FrogDaddy some love with a retweet and follow, and you could be my guest at the game!



6



Frog Daddy™ '82 '95 Retweeted



**RIFF RAM** @RiffRamTCU · Nov 21

@FrogDaddyTCU spotted.  
#GoFrogs



1



2



8



Frog Daddy™ '82 '95 Retweeted



Cam Middleton @Middleton\_Cam · Nov 19

@FrogDaddyTCU with Russell Athletic Bowl scouts

👤 Cam Middleton, Frog Daddy™ '82 '95 and RussellAthleticBowl



👍 1 ❤️ 6 ...

Frog Daddy™ '82 '95 Retweeted



Frog Daddy™ '82 '95 @FrogDaddyTCU · Apr 15

Oh you know, just hangin' with my boy @KnoxatFox cheering on the @Rangers, nbd...

#FearTheFrog @TCU\_Athletics



👍 1 🔄 2 ❤️ 7 ...