

**Jules Bergman**

**Chancellor's Honors Capstone Project**

**The Founding and Process Behind Neutral Zone Reaction**



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## **I. What is *Neutral Zone Reaction*?**

Two years ago, it was nothing but an idea. My passion for football had been present since I was six years old, and I had been following the entire National Football League (NFL) and my beloved Chicago Bears for as long as I could remember. The people I became close to throughout my life were often also huge football fans - my friends back home, friends at college, my cousin, grandfather, and my uncle Mike formed special bonds with me as we seemingly always were talking football with each other. Through high school, our grandparents would often mention how my cousin and I were funny when arguing with each other, and we often joked about starting a talk show together. In my sophomore year of college, I began to have this lingering feeling of wanting to actually see what could happen if I started one, and I was feeling compelled to reach within my creative mind to try something new and outside my comfort zone.

I approached my close friends at school first, with whom I lived with at the time, but none of them seemed interested in committing to start a podcast or a talk show about football. But when I reached out to my cousin Brady, who still lived in the Chicago area while I was attending school in Knoxville, he was eager to join the journey and actually run this show with me. Our love for professional football, connection with each other, and excitement to see where this idea could take us brought the show together, despite living hundreds of miles apart.

We spent all summer figuring out the details on how we would organize the show, what the base characteristics would be, and how we would turn it from an idea to something tangible. The program name was our first order of business, and after initially coming up with “Necessary Roughness” (a play on words of the penalty “unnecessary roughness”) and discovering that two



ex-NFL players had already created their own podcast with that name, we landed on *Neutral Zone Reaction* (NZR), which is also a play on words of the penalty “neutral zone infraction.”

After three months of intensive research into streaming software, technology, graphic design, and the best practices for running a podcast show, we launched the program in September of 2022.

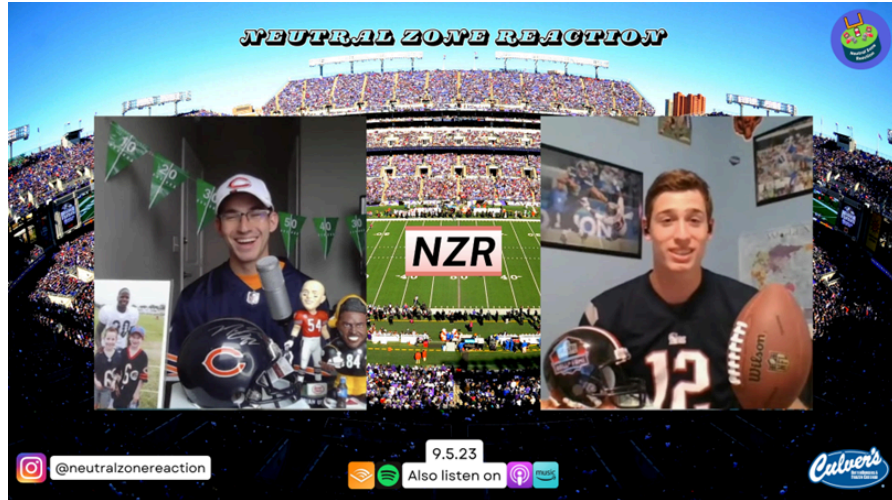
We built our brand from the ground up; have produced the show for two years; earned a sponsorship from Culver’s (restaurant chain around the country) of Chicagoland; and cultivated a small, yet committed fanbase. We even brought our grandfather, Vic, on to the show multiple times in Season One for a segment of his own called “Vic’s Picks” that our fans loved. It was ironic how this connected all the way back to those conversations inspiring us to create the show in the first place.

Episodes were available on all audio streaming platforms in addition to still being available on YouTube, where we film our video show live and stream it out to our audience simultaneously. Those links are located in the appendix. This capstone project will encapsulate the different elements behind the scenes of what went into the process of producing this show, as well as what I have taken from this amazing experience over the past two years.



*Above: Hosting the live program*

While promoting Season Two, AMA faculty advisor and distinguished lecturer Cindy Raines helped mentor me in the strategy behind our marketing efforts, and then more recently assisted in helping me develop this personal venture into my senior honors capstone project. The extensive workload this venture has required has created the opportunity for large professional growth, but the personal growth I have felt while constructing this show is what I take the most pride in.



*Above: What you would see as a viewer of Neutral Zone Reaction*

## **II. Fundamentals and Building Blocks for Running the Show**

In order to turn *Neutral Zone Reaction* from an idea in our minds into a tangible show that people watched or listened to, I implemented many strategies across the categories of branding, promotion, sponsorship, graphic design, scheduling and strategic planning, and communication and organization. For each of these topics, I used multiple creative ideas and tried a variety of tactics to see what was effective through Seasons One and Two.

### **Branding:**

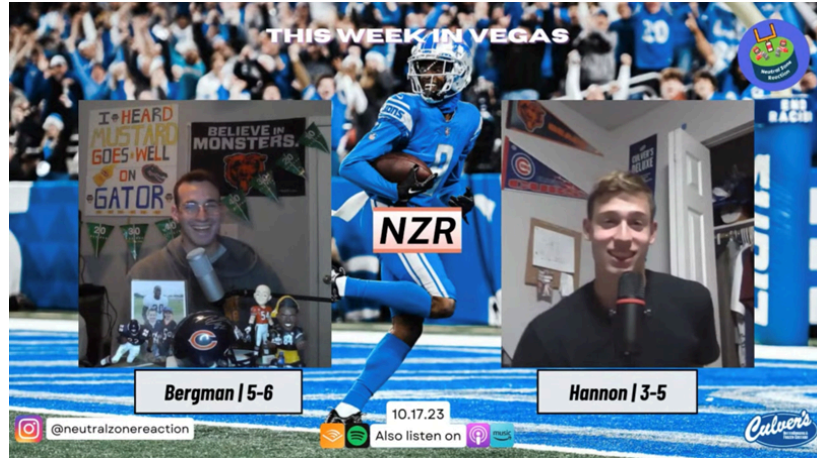
I incorporated a variety of traits and brand personalities to form an identity for the show, meshing professionalism with fun and entertainment to cater towards our young-adult target market. Giving the show an identity helped reach our consumers in a more meaningful and effective way. When our audience hopped on YouTube to watch our program, they knew they would be getting something upbeat, energetic, and worth spending their half-hour-to-an-hour on

because it was something that was engaging and would put a smile on their face. We provided a lighthearted environment, yet still sophisticated enough that we would dive deep into statistics, facts, opinions, and predicting outcomes for the weeks ahead.



*Left: A microphone-shaped word cloud depicting the characteristics we wanted our brand to be based around*

In addition, I knew that much of my target audience was intrigued by sports betting, so one of our weekly segments that has been present from the first episode was “This Week in Vegas,” where we discussed the betting lines we liked for certain matchups and what we would pick. This was once again part of what made our show interactive, because we encouraged our viewers to converse with us and each other during the live streams about which side they would pick.



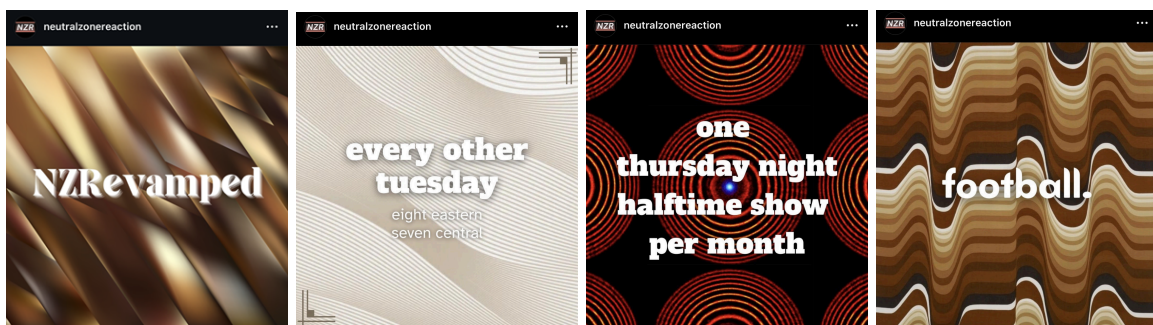
*Above: Our “This Week in Vegas” segment, including records for correctness of our picks*

## **Promotion:**

The first order of business to promote our show was deciding our target market. Our goal was to reach high school and college students as well as young adults, aged 18-30, who were interested in professional football, loved entertainment (we wanted to focus on bringing fun and laughs during the program), enjoyed being interactive (because we wanted to be able to connect with our fanbase before, during, and after shows), and had a fair amount of free time to tune in for a regularly scheduled program. As time went on, we realized that a lot of our potential audience was also passionate about college football, so we incorporated that into episodes far more often in Season Two than Season One.

In order to build hype for the premiere of each season, I rolled out a launch campaign on Instagram, reposted it all over my personal social media accounts, and shared the news through word of mouth to as many of my connections as possible. The first year’s pre-season launch gave details about what our show would be about and which creative show segments we would incorporate to discuss different happenings in the NFL. It also contained posts to get-to-know the

hosts, preview videos to give a sneak peek of what our show would look like, and featured a countdown up to launch day to generate excitement among our viewers. We felt that this would create a strong buildup to our launch episode, and it was successful as we obtained over 175 viewers of our first-ever episode. For the second season's launch, we strategically waited until close to the NFL's Week One opener to announce to the world that we were back, hoping to catch the excitement from our viewers while they were anxiously anticipating the start of the NFL season. These launch posts were more about depicting what updates and changes our fans could expect for this year, as we proclaimed that the show was "NZRevamped." I really enjoyed promoting our podcast before the season because I was able to create an aura around the show and capture the attention of our audience, as well as seeing their shock when we announced our sponsorship with such a well-known company.

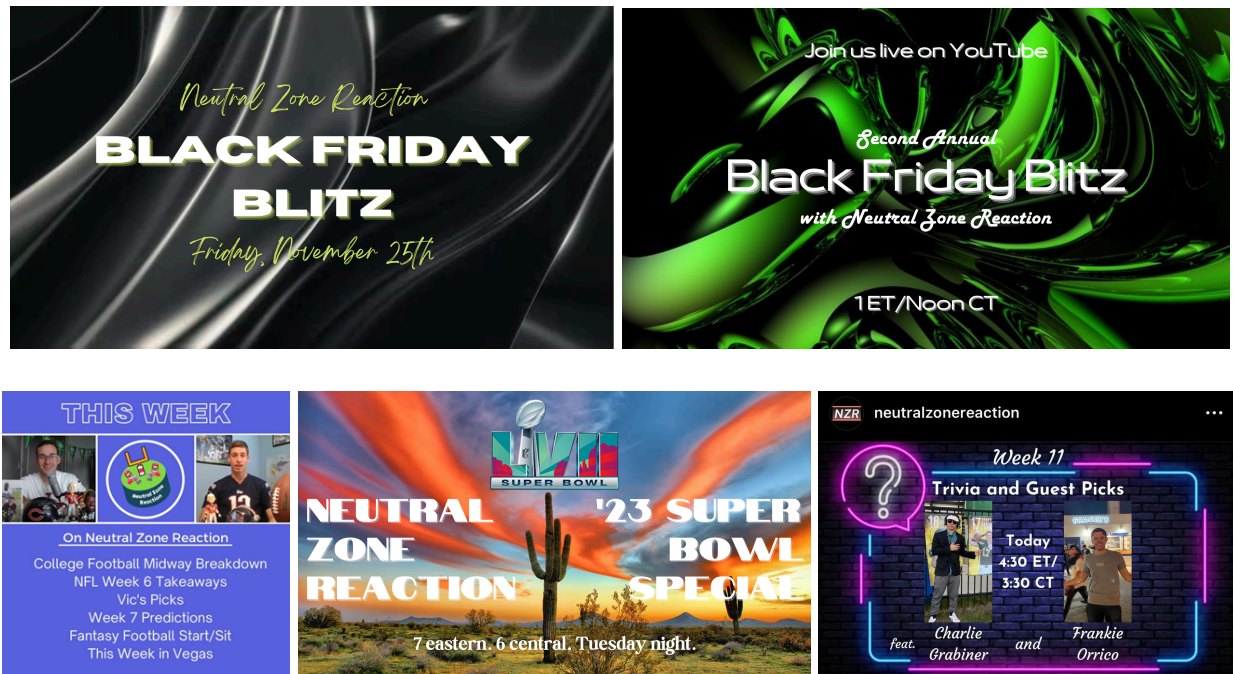


*Above: The slides of graphics for our NZRevamped, briefly previewing what to expect this season*

Meanwhile, throughout the middle of the season, I frequently posted graphics and videos to promote upcoming episodes. For example, this included graphics such as "This Week on NZR," Black Friday Blitz, Super Bowl Specials, MNF (Monday Night Football) and TNF (Thursday Night Football) Halftime Specials, NZR Bowl Bash (which will be elaborated upon later), Guest Host graphics, and then a plethora of videos of Brady and me from the previous episode or discussing the next one. By further connecting with our followers, I learned how we could best



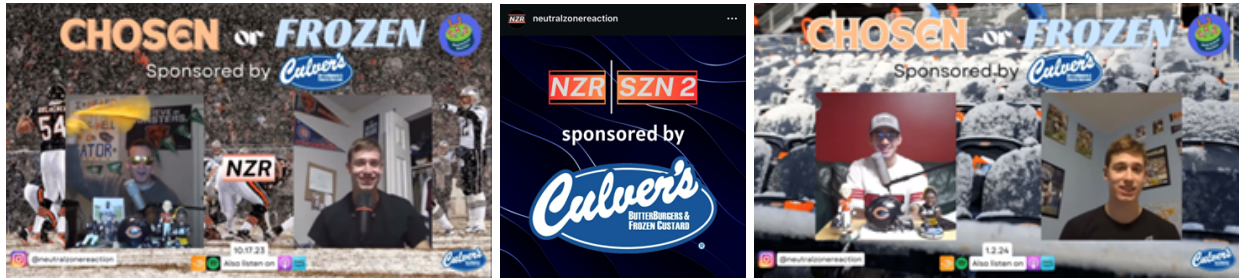
position our show and promote audience engagement, which will be further elaborated on in the Connection to Coursework section of this document.



*Above: A collection of graphics promoting upcoming episodes, such as Black Friday Blitz, This Week on NZR, guests joining the show, and more*

## Sponsorship:

An essential component of our 2023-2024 season was the introduction and partnership with a corporate sponsor! To fund our second season with higher-end software and equipment, we hoped to reach a deal with a company where there could be mutual benefits. After evaluating our options, Brady and I decided to pursue a collaboration with Culver's of Chicagoland, a well-known restaurant chain that had often engaged with our community in the past. Brady had been working there for a couple of years, so he had a connection to them and got us a meeting. There is further elaboration on the sponsorship details and the value it brought me professionally in a later section.



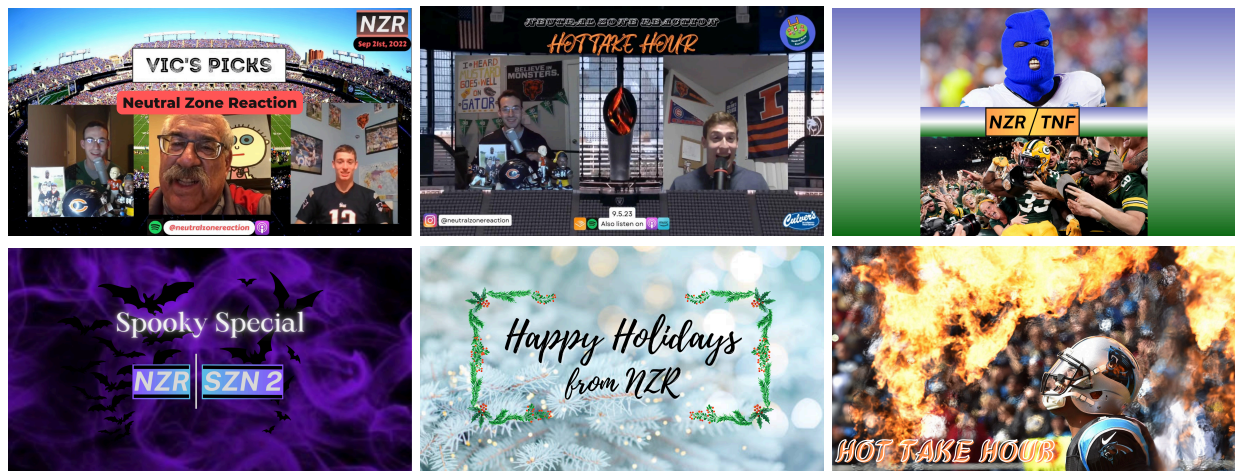
*Above: The “Chosen or Frozen” segment, a section of our show every other episode dedicated to promoting Culver’s and their limited-time menu items or offers and our favorite things about the restaurant*

## **Graphic Design:**

To publicize our episodes, construct the show backgrounds, and enhance social media presence, I created many different graphics throughout each season using Canva and other applications.

Without prior experience with graphic design, I committed to discovering an assortment of methods to produce effective and attractive graphics. This was an important experience for me because I was able to bring more creative ideas to become tangible images, and discover skills on these applications that have allowed me to improve my graphic design for group projects and bolster my confidence in making them for a professional role in the future. As mentioned earlier, there was a huge multitude of graphics made, and I had to create them not just for Instagram but also for the background screens of the show and its different segments, video thumbnails, audio title covers, and plenty more. I updated these weekly to keep the presentation of our show fresh for our viewers. From “Hot Take Hour” backgrounds to “Vic’s Picks” to holiday posts, launch countdowns, weekly previews, and all sorts of other media we formed, graphic design was a monumental part of running this program.





*Above: A variety of graphics used in our show that helped us bring something new to the table week-to-week*

### **Scheduling and Strategic Planning:**

A fundamental part of the process to host a live podcast was to plan times to do the show.

However, given a full school schedule and extracurriculars, this was very difficult. Brady was a senior in high school when we launched the program, so he had football practice every day and then fraternity rush the following year, while I was often occupied with my own activities and responsibilities. We originally aired sporadic episodes once a week, but not on any certain day and really just whenever we could find free time. For the second season, though, we designated every other Tuesday night to have an episode in order to maintain consistency, help our viewers know when we'd be live, increase engagement, and be able to create and put out our graphics and videos at appropriate times during the week.

Posting short clips on our YouTube channel and Instagram page was important in keeping our audience engaged, so we strategically set times to pick which videos would go up. The selection of which segments should be included week-to-week was intentionally done a certain way to not

get repetitive, and we made efforts to reach our viewers with relevant content regularly in encouraging them to watch or listen.

**neutralzonereaction**

# September Schedule

**NZR Season Kickoff**  
Tuesday, September 5th - 8 ET/7 CT

**Weeks 2/3**  
Tuesday, September 19th - 8 ET/7 CT

**Lions - Packers TNF**  
Thursday, September 28th at Halftime

Neutral Zone Revamped

Late summer: look into new streaming software

Upgrades:  
Brady will have a microphone  
Better streaming service for guests hopefully  
Introduction video  
Two laptops

Changes for this year:  
Biweekly episodes every other Tuesday night at 8 ET/7 CT, plus one Thursday night halftime show per month  
Hour long meeting within 24 hours of podcast  
Tuesday night meetings to discuss next weeks plan  
MUST UPLOAD 5-10 minute videos onto the main channel page

Guests and flyers starting week 4/6 (promote early)  
First tnf halftime:

3 Practice rounds with new streaming tech

This week in Vegas  
Occasionally Vic's picks  
Hot take hour  
New segments

Interrupt the show with Tuesday trivia

SCHEDULE:  
Tuesday, September 5th is the season launch  
Tuesday, September 19th  
Tuesday, October 3rd  
Tuesday, October 17th

TNF schedule  
Lions Packers sept 28

*Above: our schedule graphic in addition to a coordination outline for the beginning of the season*

## Communication and Organization:

Given that Brady and I lived in different cities over 450 miles away and were in a different time zone, we had to communicate effectively to maintain the quality level we sought. I even spent a semester studying abroad in Italy and we still managed to run the show. I often found myself broadcasting live from Rome at 1 or 2 AM! Each of us had specific roles and responsibilities to ensure that NZR would run smoothly, and it was important to be organized to build its profile outside of the live episodes. Although it was rocky at times, we were able to communicate effectively enough to achieve many of the initiatives we set forth for each episode and complete our designated pre/post-episode responsibilities. For me, these included cutting the audio; putting the descriptions, keywords, and graphics into our audio syndication software; repurposing video

clips into shorter Instagram reels; connecting with our fans through polls, questions, comments sections; and more. Brady had responsibilities of his own before and after the show, which were mostly focused around the YouTube videos. And of course, the two of us coordinated before each episode about our content plan and staying on the same page regarding which topics would be discussed.

### **III. Connection to Coursework**

#### **BUAD 332 – Demand Management (basically a marketing overview class)**

A key takeaway from this class was how important it is to have cohesivity and consistency across your marketing efforts to be successful. For each of the 4 P's (Product, Place, Promotion, Price), I made changes from Season One to Season Two to ensure consistency. Having a marketing plan but being able to adapt to sudden changes is necessary.

The way we ensured cohesivity and consistency this season was by sticking to a schedule of the same time and place for each episode (every other Tuesday at 8 ET/7 CT, whereas Season One was a jumbled mix of different times), creating a brand identity to position ourselves in the minds of consumers as a fun, entertaining, modern, and creative show, and also purchasing more reliable, high-end software to enhance the professional appearance of our product. The consistent schedule was a key benefit for our viewers because they wouldn't have to wonder when we were going live, and could incorporate it into their own schedules far more easily.

To promote Season One of the show, I focused more on salience and awareness of our podcast, to bring our connections to YouTube to "give us a watch." This helped to cultivate our fanbase and

bring people to the page. For Season Two of the show, the main focus was to grow our fanbase further and increase positive perspectives when it came to the judgments and feelings about our show, eventually leading to strong loyalties among our most committed fans. Those elements are part of the Brand Resonance pyramid, which I learned about in depth in my MKT 464 class: Brand Management. Although this wasn't one of the two capstone classes I chose, it brought valuable insights because this helped us generate a perception around what our brand personality was and how to resonate with our consumers.

### **MKT 350 – Consumer Behavior**

I learned from this class how important it is to find the best ways to reach your consumer, and to be a step ahead of their behavior before it has taken place. Another thing I learned in this class was about breaking down a target audience, and understanding how their psychographics and demographics made them the right viewer for us to target. By connecting with our “consumers,” we discovered that the key values to them were to be involved in the show, to have accessibility to short clips often, and to hear about both the NFL and collegiate football.

My favorite implementation of our audience-centered strategy was our 2023 Bowl Bash. As I learned about how to get into the mindset of consumers and how they behave and react to certain ideas, I felt as if Bowl Bash would be the perfect way to bring in our fans' passions for their teams and give them a chance to talk about their own football knowledge. For this episode, I planned on making it a big event encompassing our audience's college fandoms and allowing them to actively be a part of the show. We reached out to our viewers and invited them to send in a short clip of themselves picking the winner of a college bowl game this past winter (2023 into 2024), and many of them chose their favorite teams or the college they attend. This appealed to

our consumers because they loved being able to contribute directly to the show and see themselves as guests during the program. After the live show, I put out a video of a compilation of short clips from each participant's responses, so they could all be in one place on our Instagram feed.



*Above: The Bowl Bash badge I created and put out as a graphic on Instagram, and the background display shown during the program*

### **Mentorship Meeting & Other Coursework Takeaways:**

A few other elements we used in the show were pieces I took from both class and my meetings with my mentor, Cindy Raines, to strategize how to best reach our target market.

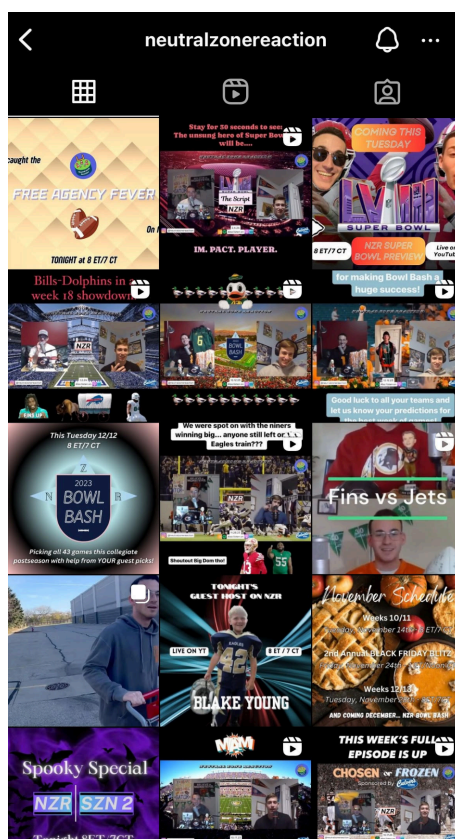
One of these, for example, was through search engine optimization, in which I was taught how to use crucial keywords and hashtags to enhance the likelihood of our video being seen. We prioritized using terms such as “sports,” “football,” “NFL,” “College Football,” “NFL playoffs,” “sports betting,” “football podcast,” “primetime,” “NCAA Football,” “sports talk,” and plenty more depending upon what was going on during the season. Using these terms was to draw an audience to our videos both on YouTube and on social media, as it increased the likelihood they would be shown our content out of the blue, and those people typically fit our ideal target viewer.

Additionally, the thumbnail and attractiveness of the video to be clicked on were also cues that we focused on to raise the perceived quality of our program. Having appealing visuals is key to drawing in the eyes of your consumers, so we spent more time on this as the year went on. By implementing these strategies, we expected views to be higher than they ended up being; however, I felt it was valuable experience to make these changes and upgrades as it could have greater success in a marketing campaign at a business with different types of competition, a more established brand, and larger budgets.

When it came to social media, our presence was on Instagram. I learned from class that consumers think visually, and videos are the number one thing that captures their attention. This was the reasoning for our efforts in posting short video segments on the Instagram page in addition to our cool graphics. On a different video platform, however - TikTok - we did not find success. This was because Brady and I found it difficult to fit time into our schedules to create enough content that could be posted regularly on the platform. It ended up being something we just couldn't keep up with, having been so far away and so busy. On Facebook, meanwhile, we tried to promote our show a bit but realized that our target market of young adults was not as active on Facebook and not an effective use of our time. Instagram would be the best method to reach our target audience and show our past, present, and future through our visuals. By using short clips and energetic segments to catch the attention of our viewers, we chose to post more mini-clips from the show on our Instagram and YouTube channel during the second season. I ran the Instagram page, while Brady was in charge of posting the clips on our YouTube page. After checking in with our fans, it was evident that they enjoyed our short Instagram clips, but we never heard much about our four-to-ten minute YouTube segment videos taken from each livestream. Further research and time for this project would have been necessary to combat the



struggles with views, but with the time put in I felt that the graphics, brand awareness, professional appearance, search engine optimization, and strategic planning were all marketing components that our show improved strongly from Season One to Season Two. Overall, the insights I took away from my capstone courses, mentorship from Cindy Raines, and experience in my other business courses definitely helped me put purpose behind our marketing initiatives at each level of our plan.



*Left: our current Instagram feed shows a mix of short videos and graphics to catch the attention of our followers as consumers think visually*

#### IV. Professional Experience with Sponsorship

Why was this sponsorship opportunity so important for me on the professional side? One of the best things to come from running this show has been the business experience in honoring

responsibilities within a real-life business deal, which is something crucial that will be a part of any career. Even just being able to give a presentation to high-level executives of a big-time business took a lot of courage, and has made me more comfortable in being able to do this again in a professional setting. The pitch to Culver's, agreement on a deal (it went so successful that they accepted our proposal without hesitation), steps we took to advertise their company throughout our show and keep our partner in the loop with our plans to promote them, and having an open line of communication via email were all great elements of business experience.

Part of our deal was that we would have a specific Culver's-sponsored segment of the show, every other episode. The name I came up with was "Chosen or Frozen," which connected the frozen custard that Culver's is known for with the ability for us to analyze which players in the NFL we felt were currently on fire and "chosen" versus those who were on a cold streak and could be considered "frozen." We were consistent in hosting this segment of the show on the timeline we agreed to and it became a very successful element of our program, and considered trademarking the name of that segment if we were to continue the show.

The full slideshow we presented to Culver's can be found in the Appendix section, but here are a few key points about why the partnership would be beneficial to both sides and how our agreement would work. First off, we made it clear to Culver's that this was an opportunity for them to have inexpensive advertising, returns on investment, reputation and community relations, and a positive view from corporate oversight. By adding this unique venture to their portfolio, it would broaden their catalog, make a great impact in their community, and drive business from the people who watched the show. On our end, we felt that it would increase the professionalism of our show, help us cover expenses for the improved equipment, give us

experience in business partnerships, and help us support community-centered businesses that had been active in our hometown for as long as we could remember.

Our presentation also depicted the graphics we would use in their segment of the show, the specifics of what type of advertisement and promotion we would give in each episode, statistics and projections on viewership season-to-season, and a timeline of how we would communicate with them as partners.

We completed the presentation and the two executives who we met with were thrilled with what they had heard. They wanted to find new avenues into community relationships and partnerships, and they told us how much they could see our passion, commitment, and excitement about our program. Our analytical approach to our future projections was backed by evidence and reasoning, and our pitching of the mutual benefits gained by both partners stood out as a persuasive and strong element of our presentation (which I had curated and practiced with the Director of Marketing of the Iowa Cubs during my summer internship). They agreed to the first of our two payment proposal options, and we kept in contact throughout the year about limited-time offers the restaurant was promoting, new highlights about their delivery options, seasonal menu offerings, and, of course, we discussed the flavors of the day at the Chicagoland locations that were owned by the gentleman we had presented to.

Because of this sponsorship, I feel more ready to enter the business world having now had experience working directly with a corporate partner as well as understanding how these partnerships work and how they can benefit different sides of each business.

## **V. Financial Plan**

When it came to financials, Brady and I were comfortable putting a bit of money towards the show out of our own pockets. During the first season, we only spent money on my microphone and our Liberated Syndication (Libsyn) subscription, which was an online application that easily distributed our podcast across multiple audio platforms. We chose to go this route because a friend of mine who had been running a podcast for multiple years, Skip Lineberg, suggested using this application as it would help with convenience and organization. We agreed, and after the free trial, we purchased the \$15 per month plan that had 250 MB of monthly storage. This plan was a good fit for our first season because we were doing the show every week and needed a greater amount of storage. During the offseason, we reduced our plan to the \$7 per month, 162 MB plan with statistics, so that we had greater insights into our analytics to help prepare for the future, and then went down to just the \$5 per month, 162 MB plan for Season Two as we were putting out fewer episodes. This was due to our decision to run the show every two weeks instead of every week. We ended the payments at the conclusion of the second season, as that is where the show had come to a close.

A priority going into Season Two was to purchase a new streaming software for our live episodes. Why was this the case? Well, Season One was full of technical difficulties, and although it was nice to start by using OBS Studio (Open Broadcaster Software), a free streaming software, it was not consistent, didn't let us incorporate all the elements we wanted into the show, and was just problematic as a whole to deal with and prepare episodes on. Upon doing research, I found a new software called StreamYard that looked as if it could be a great fit for our show. This enabled us to put in new backgrounds each week while keeping other components the

same, bring guests onto the show without technical problems, insert video clips into the episode, have a countdown and intro video leading into each program, show our logo and add other layouts that could be formatted in multiple ways, and engage with our viewers on YouTube through a comments section built into the software. There was just so much flexibility, ease of use, and consistency with StreamYard that was well worth the payment of \$25 per month.

When we were putting together the sponsorship proposal, our goal financially was to gather the funds to pay for a full season of the new streaming software, plus our Libsyn plan, and to cover both Brady's and my microphones. The \$350 generated from that deal covered this perfectly, leaving the only out-of-pocket costs to be the Libsyn payments from Season One. Below is the spreadsheet of our budgeting chart that overviews all of the expenses we had through the duration of *Neutral Zone Reaction*.

| Season 1 expenses                                      | Months | Cost Per Month | Total |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------|----------------|-------|
| Jules Microphone (one-time expenditure)                | —      | —              | \$50  |
| Libsyn Free Trial                                      | 2      | \$0            | \$0   |
| Libsyn Classic 250 Plan                                | 5      | \$15           | \$75  |
| Libsyn 162 with Basic Stats Plan                       | 4      | \$7            | \$28  |
| Libsyn 162 Plan                                        | 1      | \$5            | \$5   |
| Total                                                  |        |                | \$158 |
| Sponsorship Revenue from Culver's                      |        |                |       |
| \$350                                                  |        |                |       |
| Season 2 expenses                                      |        |                |       |
| Brady Microphone (one-time expenditure)                | —      | —              | \$50  |
| Streamyard Premium - Monthly Basic Subscription        | 8      | \$25           | \$200 |
| Libsyn 162 Plan                                        | 8      | \$5            | \$40  |
| Total                                                  |        |                | \$290 |
| Total Revenue:                                         | \$350  |                |       |
| Total Expenses:                                        | \$448  |                |       |
| Money Spent Out-of-Pocket                              | \$98   |                |       |
| Split in half by the two of us - Money OOP per person: | \$49   |                |       |

## VI. Personal Growth

I look back on this experience and take a lot of pride in the process of taking this wild idea and a passion for football and turning it into something real. I had no idea what I was doing at first, having never been a “content creator” or even being in front of a camera. Since kicking off this project two years ago, I have learned how to identify a target audience, build a brand, create graphics, run a social media campaign, schedule strategically, speak on-camera to an audience, and respond to technical problems in a composed way.



The technological growth is something that especially stood out to me. I used time, practice, trial and error, and videos to figure out how to use Canva, and I'm looking forward to learning Photoshop in the future. I also used YouTube videos to learn the ins and outs of the streaming software, and then did it all over again the next year when we changed platforms. All in all, I feel more confident that I can jump into something that I've never done before and find ways to succeed.

I still remember the outburst of joy I felt after we finished the first episode, and how amazing it felt to have just brought my idea to life. Two years later, I am extremely proud of the entire NZR experience and building "my baby" from the ground up. Hosting the show became a part of my identity among my friends and was always something that made me happy to wear with pride. By taking the initiative to go after something I wanted to try, I feel like I have gained so much experience and belief in myself and my abilities to go out of my comfort zone and try new things again, in any facet of life.

## VII. Appendix

Link to the show's YouTube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/@neutralzonereaction>

Link to the show's Instagram page: <https://www.instagram.com/neutralzonereaction/?hl=en>

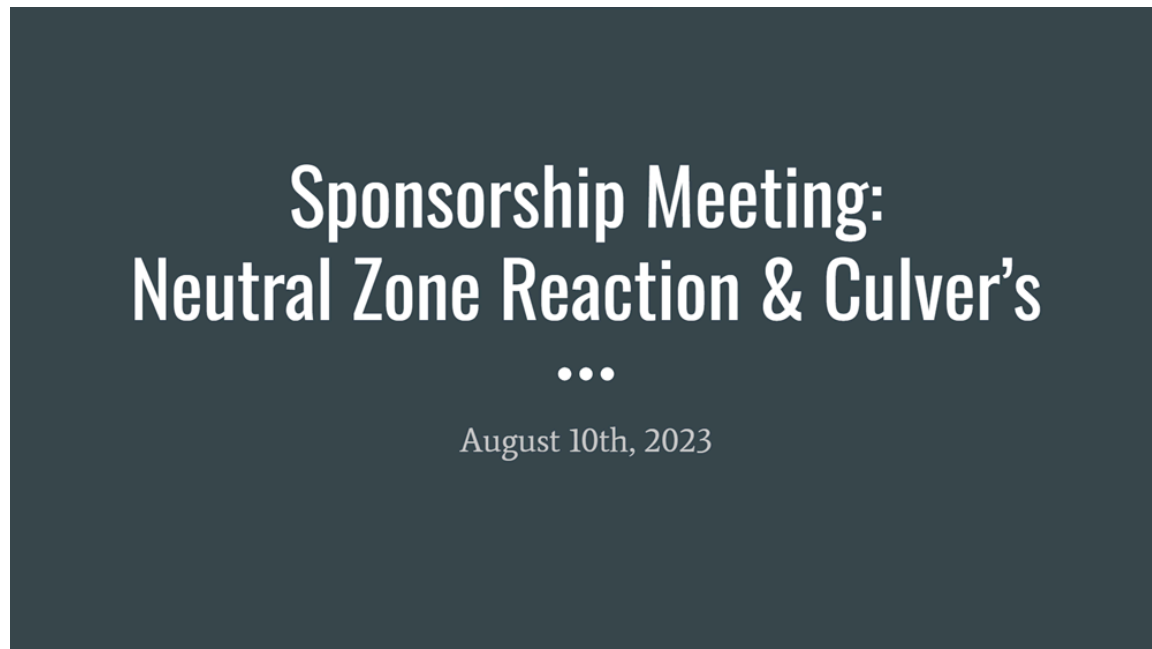
Link to the show's Spotify page: <https://open.spotify.com/show/1VMoD1zMt2OIMWwd8Ja9Jp>

Link to the show's Apple Music page:

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/neutral-zone-reaction/id1644716010>

Note: The program will likely not be playable on these audio platforms (Spotify and Apple Music) after May 31st, 2024.

Our full sponsorship proposal presentation to Culver's:



# About Us

## Jules

- 21, born and raised in Buffalo Grove, Illinois
- Senior Marketing Major at The University of Tennessee, Chancellor's Honors Program
- Member of American Marketing Association as well as the Phi Kappa Tau fraternity
- Love traveling, studied abroad in Rome, Italy this past year
- Football fan
- Concerts + Live Music
- Spent this summer interning with the Iowa Cubs



## Brady

- 18, born and raised in Buffalo Grove, Illinois
- Entering the University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign as a business major
- Enjoy all things sports, especially football
- Love hanging out with friends and family, watching shows and trying new food

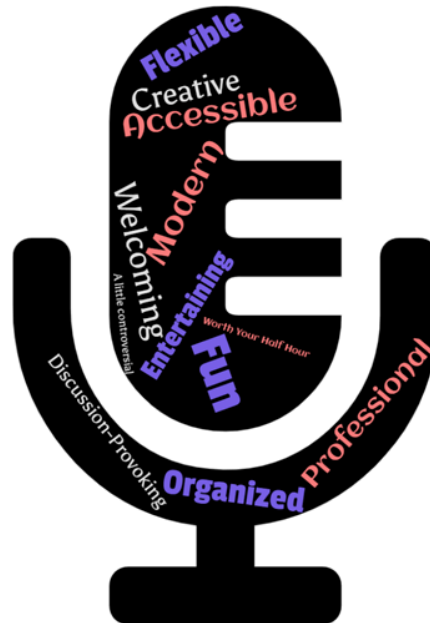


## About our Podcast

- Second season (Sept '22)
- NFL + College
- Live broadcasted video show (YT), audio playable on other platforms
- Segments
- Guests
- 15+ months, starting from scratch



## Our Brand



## Our Interests in a Partnership

### Professionalism of our Show

One of our goals is to increase the show's professionalism, and have our viewers take our show more seriously, rather than just a little project we started up. We feel that a sponsorship could build our credibility as a real-deal podcast show.

### Corporate Resources

Money earned would really help us cover our expenses. These include: monthly software subscription, audio platform distribution service, microphone equipment, decor, possible camera and lighting equipment, and more. All will be going back into the podcast.

### Experience in Business Partnerships

As both of us want to enter a career in business, the chance to form a partnership with a business would be an incredible opportunity for us to gain experience in the field. It is an element of our podcast that we hope to achieve personal growth from.

### Supporting Community-Centered Business

Something we both care about is supporting businesses that give back to their communities, especially Culver's, given the experience and relationships I have built over the last several years. Culver's community involvement is something we resonate with and want as part of our brand.

## Your Potential Benefits/Gains

| Advertising                                                                                                                                                                                              | Return on Investment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Reputation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Corporate View                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| This opportunity gives Culver's a chance for some inexpensive advertising and a spot as our first sponsor. We would highlight them often and provide a great client experience, and go above and beyond. | If we encourage college kids at 8pm to grab some Culver's after the show, it quite honestly is likely that this would happen often. Plus, members of our local community, whether they are new or returning customers, will be inclined to go to Culver's after watching the show. | Culver's can broaden their catalog of sponsorships and community relations, which would further build their reputation as a great, supportive, community place, and also give back to employees like Brady who have proudly been a part of the organization. | As a follow-up to the last point, Culver's corporate will see this and be encouraged by what they see. A strong collection of unique sponsorships may increase benefits and reviews from upper-level corporate management, and their confidence in your franchises to engage with the community.. |

## What You Would Receive (Specifics)

| Show Segment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Message About Culver's                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Thank You at Start of Every Show, Logo Throughout                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| You will get a full sponsored show segment (5-10 minutes long) every other episode.<br>Our suggested name is "Chosen or Frozen" and the Culver's logo would be right underneath the title. It is meant to promote the delicious, fresh frozen custard at Culver's. | During the sponsored segment, we will highlight some of our favorite aspects of Culver's. For example, our favorite item, a new promotion, the flavor of the day at your various locations, or certain topics you'd like us to cover. | We plan on making our thanks to our sponsor very clear and shout them out at the beginning of every show. This will immediately put Culver's into our audience's head as well as being out of respect to show our thanks. |



Graphic #1: Sponsored Segment of the Show (Background 1)



Graphic #1: Sponsored Segment of the Show (Background 2)





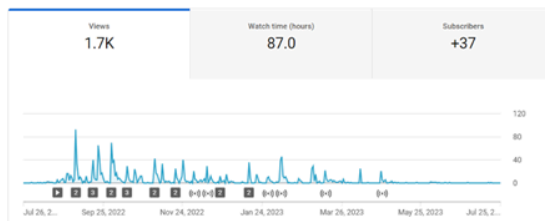
## Graphic #2: Logo in Non-Related Segments of the Show



## Statistics & Projections

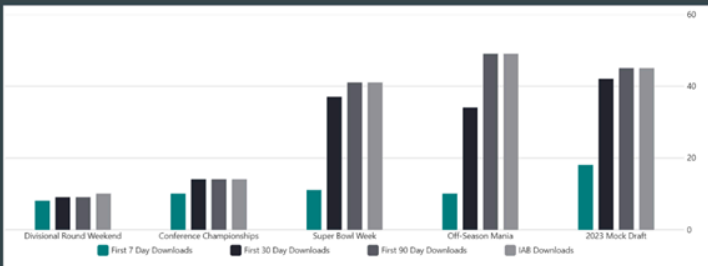
# 2022-2023 YouTube Statistics (As of July 26th, 2023)

Your channel got 1,708 views in the last 365 days



| Content                                                 | Views        | Watch time (hours) | Subscribers | Impressions   | Impressions click-through rate |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Total</b>                                            | <b>1,708</b> | <b>87.0</b>        | <b>37</b>   | <b>46,585</b> | <b>2.1%</b>                    |
| Season Kickoff - Neutral Zone Reaction Live Stream      | 176 10.3%    | 12.7 14.6%         | 6 16.2%     | 849           | 11.4%                          |
| NZR Week 4                                              | 144 8.4%     | 4.8 5.6%           | 0 0.0%      | 4,431         | 1.7%                           |
| We're sorry, Browns fans...                             | 126 7.4%     | 1.6 1.9%           | 1 2.7%      | 220           | 16.8%                          |
| NZR Week 9 - Crazy Trade Deadline w/guests Sammy...     | 99 5.8%      | 7.2 8.2%           | 0 0.0%      | 481           | 9.8%                           |
| NZR Week 2                                              | 94 5.5%      | 3.9 4.5%           | 0 0.0%      | 790           | 5.6%                           |
| MRF! Halftime Special                                   | 77 4.5%      | 3.4 4.0%           | 0 0.0%      | 4,653         | 0.8%                           |
| Week 3: Part 1: Vic's Picks and Week 2 Reactions        | 73 4.3%      | 2.4 2.7%           | 0 0.0%      | 8,828         | 0.6%                           |
| NZR Week 11 with guests Frankie Ormco and Charlie Gr... | 68 4.0%      | 4.9 5.7%           | 0 0.0%      | 851           | 6.4%                           |
| NZR Week 13                                             | 68 4.0%      | 3.8 4.4%           | 0 0.0%      | 2,053         | 1.7%                           |

# 2022-2023 Audio Platform Statistics (As of July 26th, 2023)



PODCAST  
**Neutral Zone Reaction**  
By Jules Bergman and Brady Hannon  
21 Episodes

Set Trailer

Starts  
71  
All-time

Streams  
37  
All-time

Listeners  
26  
All-time

Followers  
13  
All-time

| Title                    | Date         | First 7 | First 30 | First 90 | Total |
|--------------------------|--------------|---------|----------|----------|-------|
| 2023 Mock Draft          | Apr 25, 2023 | 18      | 42       | 45       | 45    |
| Off-Season Mania         | Mar 13, 2023 | 10      | 34       | 49       | 49    |
| Super Bowl Week          | Feb 07, 2023 | 11      | 37       | 41       | 41    |
| Conference Championships | Jan 28, 2023 | 10      | 14       | 14       | 14    |
| Divisional Round Weekend | Jan 20, 2023 | 8       | 9        | 9        | 10    |
| Wild Card Weekend        | Jan 14, 2023 | 6       | 6        | 6        | 7     |
| Week 17                  | Dec 28, 2022 | 3       | 3        | 3        | 3     |
| Week 16                  | Dec 23, 2022 | 3       | 4        | 4        | 4     |
| Week 15                  | Dec 13, 2022 | 3       | 4        | 4        | 4     |
| Week 13                  | Dec 03, 2022 | 6       | 8        | 8        | 8     |

All Time  
**238**



## 2022-2023 Statistics

- YouTube - we averaged 68.045 viewers per live stream over 22 streams. We had 21 episodes, but one is cut in two from technical issues.
  - Video tab - 126, 34, and 30 views, and we plan on publishing at least three of these *per episode* this year.
  - Audio platforms - 238 downloads, strong upward trend at the end of the season
- 

## 2023-2024 Projections

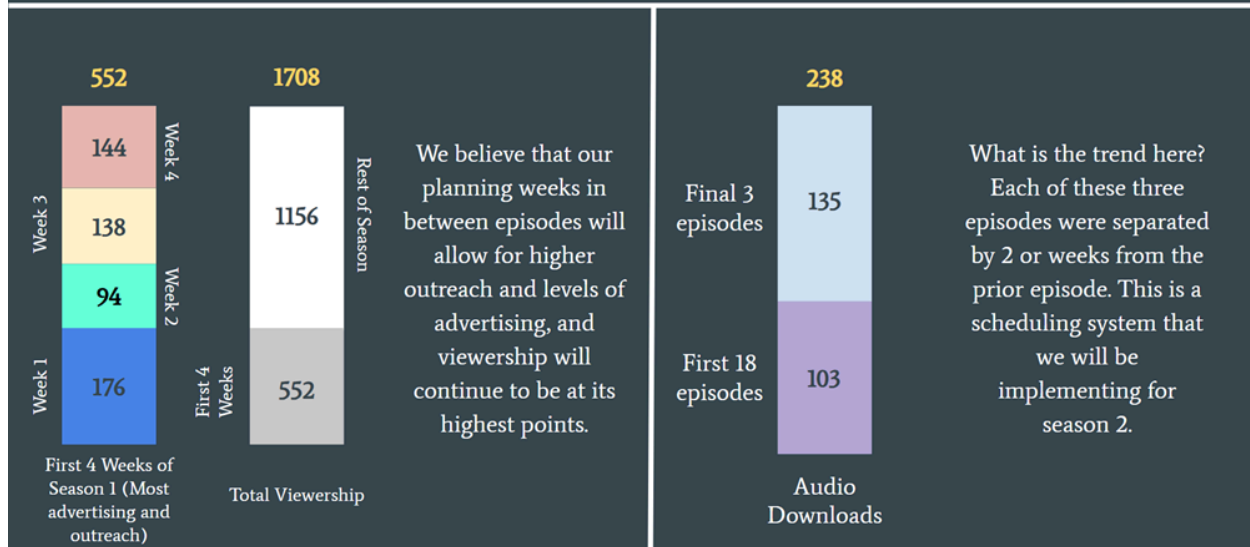
**4,000-5,000 views on YouTube, 500 listens on Audio Platforms**

**Why:**

- BIGGEST REASON: We will be uploading at least three (3) 4-10 minute segments, per episode to the channel
- More videos posted ➡ more views
- Better quality show, fewer technical difficulties
- Consistent schedule of episodes (every other Tuesday plus one Thursday night halftime show per month) and meetings
- Plan to bring on bigger name guests
- Fanbase support, will continue to grow as we make more connections and continue to implement our marketing plan
- Presence on Tik Tok + YouTube Shorts in addition to our existing Instagram page

## Some Key Analytics

\*not to perfect scale\*



## Payment Proposals

### Option 1

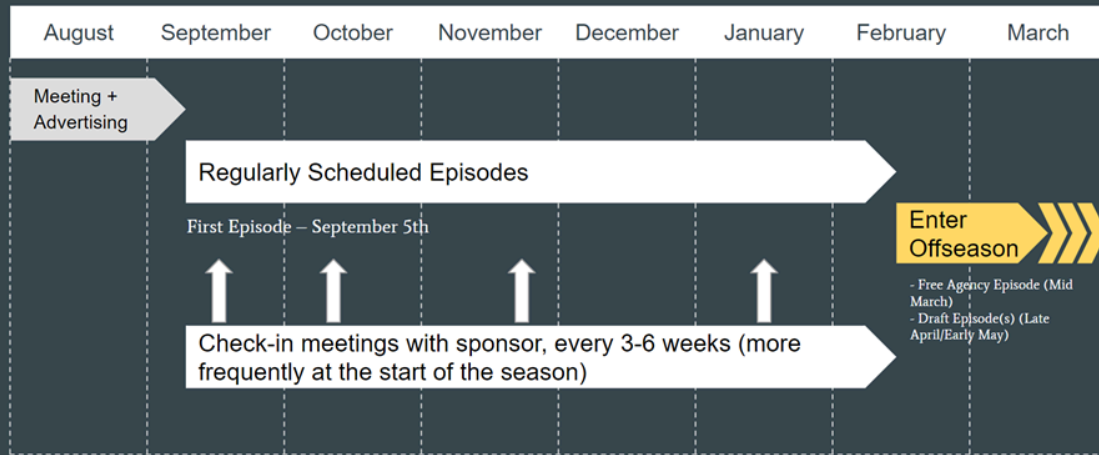
- \$350 total, lump sum due by August 29th
- Payable by check, zelle, cash, etc.

### Option 2

- \$420 total, made in 6 monthly payments of \$70
- Due by the last day of each month, August through January

We are open to negotiate on prices, terms of the deal, what's included, etc!  
Outside-of-the-box ideas are always welcome!

# Timeline



Thank you for listening!

We can't wait to have a fun, exciting and productive podcast season!

