



You know those days when half your Facebook friends want to [sell you a stolen painting](#) and the other half want you to [purchase a cow](#) and all you want to do is to publicly establish what you have always known in your heart - that given half a chance (or a virtual social media game) you would be dribbling your way to Springfield, MA, to humbly acknowledge your place as perhaps the greatest living professional bball player?

You may not have been speaking out loud but [Facebook was listening](#) . And so was the NBA. Tired of being called the "second most favorite sport in America," the NBA is leveraging the volume of fans who "like" them.

According to Anthony Marcusa, writing for the [Social Times](#) :

The most popular sport in North America is without a doubt the National Football League; everyone else is just trying to take over second place.

Anthony doesn't explain his NFL popularity contest reasoning, which makes this statement a few paragraphs later even more confusing:

The NBA has the largest fan base on Facebook with over 7 million 'Likes,' dwarfing the 2.5

million followers of the NFL.

Football, apparently, is the Charles Schwab of major sports, earning their fans the old-fashioned way. Anthony dismisses the disparity in "Likes" with this just-the-wrong-side-of-condescending analysis:

The NBA looks to capitalize on it's social popularity that has been earned indirectly; players have engaged fans on Twitter and the NBA Facebook page has grown without a true concerted effort by the league. Like so many Twitter trends, viral videos, and Facebook groups, the NBA has grown in popularity online due simply to a passionate fan base.

Last time I checked, a passionate fan base was the main factor in a sports' popularity. Is Mr. Marcusa accusing NBA fans of distorting public opinion by going public with their opinions?

Jealousy is a terrible, terrible thing. And I forgive him because I know he and every other NFL fan is jealous of the NBA's latest invention, an interactive Facebook game in which you strive to become an NBA Legend. Appropriately titled [NBA Legends](#), the [N.Y. Times tantalizes with this description](#) :

The Facebook user will create an avatar, join an N.B.A. basketball team, and follow a simulated career. Players will not control the dribbling and shooting, but instead build up — or purchase — attributes like speed and skill in order to compete against people in their network.

Even Anthony Marcusa sounds like [he wishes the NFL had thought of this one](#) :

Part of the enjoyment is not destination, but the journey, beginning as a rookie and playing against other users in the virtual world who too are trying to gain a quick first step. The goal, of course, is to become an NBA Legend.

The [Beta version](#) is up and running. I signed on as Frank Basloe, rookie center, placed

JJ Hickson as my power forward and beat the Miami Heat . I'm hooked.

Much like life itself, it's all about the journey. Except for the part where in real life you retire from a job you didn't really like in the first place and find you don't have enough money to travel or pay your mortgage and there's a limited number of Swiss Alps jigsaw puzzles and golf is expensive and suddenly your job doesn't look so bad but they're not hiring anyway . . .

Over at Facebook, the journey ends with legendary Hall of Fame status. Or at least starts with a satisfying win. The rest is up to you.