

NFL hopes lasers can help boost attendance

NFL. Sometimes watching at home seems better than actually being there.

Year after year, the NFL rakes in billions. It is the most successful sports league in North America — and it continues to grow.

Still, there are plenty of areas in which the league needs to improve.

Among the league's top issues may be a threat posed by the very thing that made the league so popular in the first place: television.

The advantages of staying at home to watch football these days typically far outweigh the benefits of the in-stadium experience.

"The NFL told us that their biggest competition is the couch and the beer in the fridge. They're really fighting with that," said Alan Amron, founder and chairman of First Down Laser. "They won't admit it outright, but people aren't going to the stadium like they used to."

Fans at home get the benefit of changing camera angles and the all-important "yellow line" that shows where the first down marker is.

Amron and his former



The NFL could make first downs easier to see in the stadium using laser technology. / GETTY IMAGES

Lasers could benefit players

"Right now players try to contort themselves after catching the ball to take a look to the sidelines to see where the marker is."

Alan Amron, chairman of First Down Laser

partner in this endeavor, late broadcaster Pat Summerall, pitched the idea of a laser as a first down marker to the league office and the competition com-

mittee eight years ago.

The idea is that a 4-inch wide laser, projected from sideline to sideline, would give everyone in the stadium — players, coaches and

referees — a much better idea of what is and what is not a first down.

"Pat and I got great, positive feedback from the league," Amron said. "Pat really wanted to see the game evolve. He had a passion for the game. Anything to make things more accurate on the field."



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