

Accessibility Inspection

Nfl.com

<http://www.nfl.com>

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Executive Summary

Terminology & Conventions Used

Different terms are often used when referring to the same part of the browser window or web page. To facilitate understanding of this analysis, one term was used consistently for each browser/web page element. The terms are:

Global navigation: Links/buttons that are available from every page, leading to major sections of the website and/or significant pages.

Link label: The label is the word or words that are linked. These words can be in graphical form (such as the graphical buttons on the left side of the petsuppliesplus.com interface) or HTML text that is linked (such as the “Take our holiday survey...” link on the petsuppliesplus.com Home page).

Local navigation: Links/buttons for moving between pages in a section of the website (such as the fly-out menus on the petsuppliesplus.com global navigation).

Page name: The primary heading for the page, often shown in larger text and located between the top graphical aspect of the window and the text content of the page.

Masthead: The top portion of the web page containing the logo.

Single quotes are used to indicate link labels, page names, and window names. Double quotes indicate non-linked body text, field names, alt text, and are used when generally referring to a page. Any divergence from these conventions is noted in the analysis and is done for the purpose of improving clarity.

Priority Levels

The issues identified in the accessibility inspection are grouped into three levels of priority:

High priority: These issues are likely to impact a large number of users significantly. They should be resolved as quickly as resources allow.

Medium priority: Issues at this priority level are also likely to affect a large number of users but generally are less disruptive to the user experience, relative to the high priority issues. If resources are available to address these issues, they should be addressed.

Low priority: Low priority issues typically impact a small subset of the overall user base, although they may impact a larger group. Regardless of the number of users affected, these issues carry only a minor negative impact. Low priority issues are generally easy to resolve. There is less time pressure to fix low priority issues, compared to medium priority issues and especially high priority issues.

Accessibility Guidelines

Simplicity and Clarity

The layout should be easy to understand and follow, without extraneous or distracting elements. There should not be unnecessary aspects to the design and important moments should have appropriate visual focus.

Home

- There are moments where the graphic design is overdone. Flash is used as a marketing piece in the middle of the home page; this space should be used for something of greater value for the site. Animated images are used in too many places leading to a more confusing layout.
- The layout uses 4 columns packed with information. Having 4 columns leaves the user with no place to rest the eye.
- There are too many elements scattered around the page. It is impossible for the amount of information given to be grouped logically.

States

- An unnecessary advertisement uses the top portion of the content area. This should be removed to allow the important information to be moved closer to the top of the page.

Schedules

- Tables are complicated and dense. The user is likely to get lost in the list of tables and not know what has been read.
- A newsletter signup is available at the bottom of the page. It is unclear if the newsletter is for the weekly game recaps that are linked throughout the page, or if it is an overall site newsletter. The description should be stated clearer and signup location should be moved to the top of the page.

Team Depth Chart

- The table alignment is not clear and could be confusing for users that do not see the image behind the text.
- Player stats are not descriptive enough to give the user the information needed to read the table.

History

- Drop down menus for selecting specific record information is unclear. Some sections contain 2 drop down menus with no header or description.

NFL Mobile

- The page purpose is unclear. There is no information briefly explaining what NFL Mobile is about.

- The dark background clashes with the rest of the website and is harder on the users' eyes.

Video

- Unnecessary images and advertisements push the main section of this page below the fold.
- Video section headings are unclear and harder to read than other headings used within the website.
- The Live NFL Games trial is unclear. The image used to represent Live NFL Games seems disconnected to the content provided along side of it.

Scores

- The key to the table is located at the bottom of the page. This leaves the user confused while reading the table if the symbols are unknown.
- Links to other pages in the website are provided in unusual places. This is confusing and makes an incorrect connection between the link and the information it is placed by.
- A newsletter signup is available at the bottom of the page. It is unclear if the newsletter is for the weekly scores or if it is an overall site newsletter.

High Priority:

- **Home page needs to have clear grouping.** The amount of information being represented on the home page is overwhelming. Users need to have this information grouped more appropriately in order to deal with it.
- **Reasons for alignment need to be clear.** The Team Depth Chart pages need a brief paragraph explaining the reason for the location of information. The image behind the text gives reason for the alignment; however users who do not see the image will be confused.
- **Form elements must be described.** Drop down menus in sections such as History are not labeled. The user should not have to look through the drop down menu to figure out what it is for. A simple label should be added.

Medium Priority:

- **Pages with dense tables need visuals.** Some visual focus should be included to help break up information and increase clarity on the Schedules page.
- **Table keys need to have a place of importance.** Moving the key to the top of the page adds visual focus and leads the user to the key before the tables.

Low Priority:

- **Newsletter forms should be moved to the top of pages.** Having the newsletter form at the bottom of the page leads the user to believe the newsletter is tailored to the specific page. To help clarify that the newsletter is for the overall site, the signup form should be moved to the top-side of the pages.
- **Links need to be clearer.** Each link on a page should be grouped with related content and should be explained. The link should not say "click here" but should have a clear description of where the user will be sent if the link is clicked.

Supporting Visual & Non-Visual Navigation

Home

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High Priority:

Medium Priority:

Low Priority:

Proper Text Markup & Phrasing

To have proper text markup and phrasing, the website needs to have descriptive link labels and content needs to be at an appropriate reading level. In addition, the content should include <abbr>, <acronym>, and language tags.

Scores

- Not enough explanation is given. The tables are blank and missing headers.

High Priority:

- **Tables need to be explained.** The tables on the Scores page need headers to understand what the columns represent. A short paragraph is also needed to understand the tables.

Proper Structural Markup

Adaptive technology needs logical document structure to assist in interpreting the document and conveying it to the user. Headings should be used and proceed from higher to lower level in an understandable fashion. Tabular data should be presented in an accessible fashion in tables and the entire document. Markup should be used correctly and have appropriate end tags and validation.

Team Depth Chart

- Heading for the Team Depth Chart page is too general; the team selected is not mentioned.

Low Priority:

- **Headings need to say exactly what the user has selected.** Team Depth Chart pages need to have the team name in the heading, not only “Depth Chart”.

Providing Content & Context

Many disabled users experience content in a non-visual modality. It is important that proper context is given for interpreting the information as well as access to that content. Frames should be titled and have long descriptions. Summaries should be given on all data tables. Videos should have options for closed-captioning and text transcripts.

Home

- Video is not compliant with providing content and context. The video does not offer users options for closed-captioning or text transcripts.
- Tables are used for the layout and for data. There are no summaries to help distinguish the two.

Newsletter

- An iframe is used for the content. This iframe does not have a title or a long description.

Video

- Video is not compliant with providing content and context. The video does not offer users options for closed-captioning or text transcripts.

Scores

- An iframe is used in an unnecessary place in the page header.

High Priority:

- **Video pages need to have options for all users.** The Video page should have a section where users can select closed-captioning and text transcripts. All the game highlights have videos and users need to be able to have other ways to access that information.

Medium Priority:

- **Iframes should have descriptions and appropriate locations.** Iframes that are within page headers should be removed; they serve no purpose there. The iframes used for content, such as the Newsletter page; need to have titles and long descriptions.

Device Independence

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High Priority:

Medium Priority:

Low Priority:

Graceful Degradation

The user experience of the website should be able to hold up when technologies are disabled and when adaptive technologies are used. Content should be accessible with CSS, Javascript, Java, images, and other technologies turned off. Screen readers should be able to get to the content area of the page before navigation. Images should have alt tags.

Home

- Not all images have alt tags; therefore they have no meaning with the image turned off.
- Content is below the fold when CSS is turned off. This prevents screen readers from reading the content first.
- Rotating cover stories become inaccessible with Javascript turned off. The user also has no way of selecting a favorite writer or team to narrow the stories.
- Fangs screen reader shows that the content is being read well after a series of unintelligible markup.

States

- Alt tags are not used for images.
- Turning off Javascript disables the forms. Users are given no way to access the information on the page without Javascript.

Newsletter

- Javascript is used to generate popup windows for enlarged images of newsletter samples. When Javascript is disabled, the user is stuck seeing only a small image.
- Alt tags and text describing the image are not provided.
- Fangs screen reader can not access information in an iframe.

Schedules

- Fangs screen reader has trouble sorting the numerous tables because headers are not used in any of the tables.

News

- Navigation comes before content with screen readers.

History

- Navigation comes before content with screen readers.

NFL Mobile

- When CSS is turned off a large image prevents the content from appearing before the fold.

Video

- Images serve as placeholders for images; when the images are turned off, the placement is incorrect.

High Priority:

- **Images need to have alt tags added.** Each page is missing at least some alt tags. These should be added to give the user a better idea of what the image is. If images are turned off completely, this will let the user know what would have been in that space.
- **Stories and news need to be accessible.** Primarily on the home page, many stories are not accessible with Javascript turned off. The rotating cover story on the home page is one of the most important aspects of the page; they need to be accessible
- **CSS should be used to order information.** Screen readers, such as Fangs, can not give the user valuable information until after reading through nonsense in the markup. CSS would help clear up the markup and sort it so the content can be above all the other information.
- **Forms should not be controlled by Javascript.** Entire pages are inaccessible without Javascript. This is poor formatting of information; the tables should be constructed by other means to improve accessibility.
- **Javascript should not be the only means of opening a popup window.** Users with Javascript turned of need to be able to get to enlarged images if images are turned on. Using CSS to open a new window would be a more accessible way of handling needed popups.
- **The Newsletter page needs to be taken out of an iframe.** Users can not get to information in an iframe with a screen reader. The newsletter needs to be in plain text and use a form.
- **Tables must have headers.** Many complicated and nested tables are presented to the user. Screen readers can not sort this information and return it to the user in a logical manner. Headers must be added to tables to help screen readers convey information to users.

Low Priority:

- **Images should not be used to hold a layout in place.** The Video page needs structure to hold elements in place.

Allowing User Control

Control over the interface is crucial for disabled users; any aspects out of their control may derail the experience. Animations should have a way to be frozen. New windows should not open without the user doing so. Text needs to be resizable. Pages should not change or refresh without the user doing so.

Team Depth Chart

- Text begins to overlap with other columns when enlarged.

History

- Drop down menus load a new page when an option is highlighted.

High Priority:

- **Drop down menus need user control.** A submit button should be provided so the user has to submit their request. It can be disconcerting when a new page is loaded when a user selects an option before submitting.

Low Priority:

- **Table cells should be coded so text does not overlap when enlarged.** Users should be able to read information clearly when text is enlarged. Tables with numerous columns need to be coded with this in consideration.

Respecting the User

Users that feel disrespected will leave the website and not return. It is important that the website uses practices that give the user a sense of respect. Timed processes should have a long enough interval for all users to complete the task. In addition, processes should not be timed unless necessary. Backgrounds and text need to have a strong contrast. The browser 'Back' button should not be disabled. If accesskeys are changed anywhere on the website, there needs to be a new explanation or guide to the new settings.

Team Depth Chart

- The football field image behind the text causes poor contrast. Headers and text colors are too light.

NFL Mobile

- White text on black and dark blue backgrounds is straining on the eye.

Video

- A bright blue with white text is used for tabs of the video section. The selected tab is the opposite. The two colors are hard to look at.

High Priority:

- **Colors on NFL Mobile page should be flipped.** Text should be black on a white background, the opposite of what it currently is. The page would be easier to read, and more consistent, without the dark background.
- **Video tabs should be different colors.** A color more consistent with the rest of the website would be more appropriate here. The colors currently being used are too hard to read.

Medium Priority:

- **Darken colors over background images.** The Team Depth Chart page needs to have darker headers and text colors to increase contrast.

Specific Topic Related Issues

Markup Tags

- No <abbr>, <acronym>, or language tags are used. Users are not given what is needed to help explain information on the website. These tags should be used on every page.

Table Properties

- All tables are lacking summaries and headers. These must be implemented to be useable by all users and technologies.

Validation

- Each page fails validation. Many errors prevent users and technologies from getting clear information from the site. Some of these errors include:
 - Open tags
 - Incorrect CSS
 - Missing attributes
 - No character encoding
 - Deprecated attributes
 - Duplicated IDs
 - Improperly enclosed Javascript
 - Invalid sgml characters

Coding of www.nfl.com needs to according to standards. Proper code will help various adapted technologies function better.

Animations

- Most pages throughout the website have a Flash banner advertisement on the top of the page. This needs to be removed to give the page content more room above the fold.
- Real One videos cause problems on a Mac.
- Animations and Flash can not be stopped or frozen. The user needs to have control on these elements.

Text

- Text can not be resized in Internet Explorer. CSS should be used to change text to a format other than pixels to give users more control.
- When text is enlarged, the global navigation labels overlap and become illegible. The navigation bottom sizes should be able to accommodate larger text to keep all the information legible for all users.

Table Contrast

- All data tables in the website use shades of grey and blue. The contrast between grey text and backgrounds is too subtle. Higher contrast colors should be used for these tables.