Normally, after the Super Bowl, avid football fans like myself have to wait over six months for more football. In 2001, the XFL originated which provided fans with more after the NFL season. However, the XFL only lasted one season because they couldn’t generate enough revenue. Now, the XFL is starting back up and its first games will be on February 8th.

Will the XFL be a success this time around? In order to answer that question, we need to determine what would make it a success. If their goal is to be bigger than the NFL, they will fail because that is not going to happen, at least for the foreseeable future. However, there are reasons to believe that the XFL can be one of the top 2-3 most popular sports leagues in America.

Football is unquestionably the most popular sport in America. In 2019, the then-new professional football league, the Alliance of American Football, drew 3 million views on their first weekend which tells you that there’s always a heavy demand for football. Also, the XFL plans to implement new rules such as, allowing double-forward passes behind the line of scrimmage. Another rule-change will force teams to attempt a play from the 2-yard line for one point, from the 5-yard line for two points or from the 10-yard line for three points rather than kicking an extra point after a touchdown. Additionally, on punts, players on the punting team will not be allowed to cross the line of scrimmage before the ball is caught. These rule changes will likely result in higher-scoring games, which appeals to most football fans. Additionally, the game clock in the XFL will not stop outside of the game’s final two minutes meaning that games will be faster-paced.

While there are reasons to be optimistic about the XFL, there are reasons to be skeptical. Since the league folded before, people aren’t going to give them the benefit of the doubt until they sustain success. Also, who will be playing in the XFL? Most, if not all of the league’s players will be playing in the XFL because they aren’t good enough to be playing in the NFL. There may not be a strong incentive to watch games since the players won’t be as good or recognizable as their NFL counterparts. However, the XFL can combat that problem by signing big-name  players who aren’t good enough to start in the NFL but have made enough money in their careers so they’d be willing to take a pay cut to play in the XFL. Former Heisman trophy winner but current Baltimore Ravens backup QB Robert Griffin III would fall under that example. Also, the XFL would be wise to convince top-tier college football players to play in the XFL before they are eligible to play in the NFL rather than playing in the NCAA for free.