

NCAA Sports Written Story

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To say the landscape of college football has not changed in recent years would be a lie. Within the past two years, the Covid-19 pandemic and college athletes being paid off their name and likeness (NIL) has played a big part in any athlete's decision-making. When it comes deciding, college athletes are going to do what is best for them and their future; if that means signing a deal worth over one million dollars like Texas Longhorns quarterback Quinn Ewers did in 2021, so be it. The point is the future of college recruiting, and the transfer portal has been changed drastically.

Starting with the most apparent reason college football has changed is the Covid-19 pandemic. At the start of the pandemic in 2020, people speculated if there would be a football season in the fall, let alone what the players were going to do. This was a weird time for athletes and fans as the season would later go on to be played without people in attendance. The pandemic led to people watching the games at home to protect their health. Of course, college football players also had to ensure their health was in check leading to many players opting out of the 2020 season. One of the most notable players at the time was Ja'Marr Chase of Louisiana State University. He would end up being drafted by the Cincinnati Bengals fifth overall in the 2021 NFL draft. His reasoning at the time was simple "The competitor in me badly wants to play the season and go to war with my brothers, but during this time with so much going on, this is what's best for my family" @Real10javy__ (Twitter). Many other notable athletes shared the same feelings with Chase and opted out, making for a very surprising college football season.

Covid played a giant part in the 2020 college football season, yet what changed to have so many players enter the transfer portal in 2021? Again, the answer is relatively simple as the NCAA started allowing athletes to get paid for their name and likeness. Since these are brand deals, it cuts out the coaches and schools in the decision-making process as athletes are allowed to talk directly with specific brands. In simple terms, the more popular of an athlete

you are, the more likely you are to get a deal and make money. As talked about earlier, Quinn Ewers is an athlete who made the most of his NIL deal. In August of 2021, while enrolled at Ohio State University, Ewers signed a three-year deal worth around 1.4 million dollars with one of the largest autographing companies, GTSM. At only 18 years old, this is still one of the largest deals among college football players. His story to get to this point and how he ended up transferring to the University of Texas this year is very interesting and is a trend I think we will see more of in the future. Ewers chose to graduate high school early and forgo his senior year to enroll at Ohio State University. This was shocking news as Ewers was initially committed to Texas, the school he would later transfer to. After committing to Ohio State, Ewers would sign his big NIL deal. At the time, Texas's UIL announced they would not let any athlete sign brand deals to profit off their name and likeness, which is why many speculate he ended up decommitting. This rule would later end up being terminated by the NCAA and can only be assumed this is another reason why Ewers is going back to Texas.

The future of college football recruiting has been changed forever, and I believe we will hear many stories like Quinn Ewers in the near future. The whole aspect of an athlete's name or likeness will influence their decision when committing or transferring. Many of these athletes will and already have become driven by money which has quickly become apparent in only one year of NIL deals. Overall, for the first time, the power is now in the hands of the athletes.