**An Athlete and Parent’s Guide to Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) Deals**

**Introduction**

The NCAA’s 2021 policy change allowing athletes to profit from their Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) has created new opportunities—and complexities—for student-athletes. This guide explains how NIL works, key legal considerations, and strategies to maximize value while protecting eligibility.

**Section 1: Understanding NIL Basics**

What Is NIL?

NIL refers to a student-athlete’s right to earn money from:

- Endorsements (e.g., promoting brands on social media)

- Sponsorships (e.g., wearing a company’s logo)

- Merchandise Sales (e.g., autographed jerseys)

- Appearances & Camps (e.g., paid speaking engagements)

**Who Can Participate?**

- NCAA, NAIA, and JUCO athletes (rules vary by division).

- High school athletes in some states (but may affect NCAA eligibility).

**What’s Still Prohibited?**

🚫 Pay-for-play (compensation tied directly to athletic performance).

🚫 School involvement in arranging deals (but some facilitate NIL collectives).

🚫 Certain industries (e.g., gambling, adult content, banned substances).

**Section 2: How to Secure & Manage NIL Deals**

Step 1: Know Your State & School Rules

- Some states have NIL laws (e.g., disclosure requirements).

- Schools may impose additional restrictions (check your athletic department’s policy).

**Step 2: Build Your Brand**

- Social Media Presence (Instagram, TikTok, YouTube).

- Engage with Local Businesses (restaurants, car dealerships, apparel brands).

- Join NIL Marketplaces (Opendorse, INFLCR, Icon Source).

**Step 3: Negotiate Contracts Carefully**

⚠️ Key Terms to Review:

- Payment structure (flat fee vs. commission).

- Exclusivity clauses (can you work with competitors?).

- Termination rights (what happens if you transfer or get injured?).

- Intellectual property (who owns your likeness in ads?).

**Step 4: Disclose Deals (If Required)**

- Some schools require athletes to report NIL agreements.

- Failure to disclose could risk eligibility.

**Section 3: Tax & Legal Considerations**

**Tax Implications**

- NIL income is taxable (report on IRS Form 1040).

- Deductible expenses (agent fees, marketing costs).

- Consider forming an LLC for liability protection.

**Agent & Legal Representation**

- NCAA-certified agents can negotiate deals (but not for future pro contracts).

- Consult an attorney before signing complex agreements.

**Protecting Eligibility**

- Avoid “Pay-for-Play” Language – Compensation must be for NIL, not athletic performance.

- Don’t Use School Logos Without permission (trademark infringement risk).

**Section 4: Common NIL Scams & Pitfalls**

❌ Fake “Agents” – Verify credentials before signing anything.

❌ Unrealistic Promises – If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

❌ Violating School/NCAA Rules – Always check with compliance first.

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**Section 5: Maximizing NIL Opportunities**

For High-Profile Athletes

- Partner with national brands (e.g., Nike, Gatorade).

- Leverage NIL collectives (booster-funded groups that facilitate deals).

**For Lesser-Known Athletes**

- Focus on local businesses (e.g., gyms, restaurants).

- Offer personalized content (e.g., Cameo videos, training tutorials).

**Conclusion**

NIL offers unprecedented financial opportunities, but navigating contracts, taxes, and compliance requires caution. By understanding the rules, building a strong brand, and seeking professional advice, athletes can profit from their NIL while protecting their eligibility.

**Need Help?**

**For contract reviews, tax planning, or eligibility questions, consult a sports attorney or financial advisor.**

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**Disclaimer: NIL rules evolve frequently. Always verify with your school’s compliance office or legal counsel.**