

Power Plays and Paydays: NCAA, Post Malone & the New Sports Economy

06.13.25 01.07.26

Welcome back to the Spotlight! For time immemorial (since 1906, to be exact), the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) so-called amateurism rules sought to enforce a bright-line distinction between college sports and professional sports. To the NCAA, the platform of college sports was educational, while professional sports had underpinnings of commercialism. Under these rules, prospective and current college athletes were, amongst other things, precluded from profiting off their name, image and likeness (NIL) from endorsements without losing their athletic scholarship or eligibility. But, over time, the core assumptions of those dividing lines became blurred as college sports evolved, ballooning into a multibillion-dollar business itself. Why could coaches and school administrators make millions in revenue from sports, while athletes of those same schools were relegated to being students first? Well, after years of feet dragging, antitrust litigation, lobbying and intervention of state legislatures across the country, a watershed moment occurred in July 1, 2021, with the NCAA issuing interim guidelines to enable prospective and current collegiate athletes to enter into endorsement, influencer and other revenue-generating deals centering around the commercial exploitation of their NIL. In the nearly four years since that fateful day, we have borne witness to the rise of NIL collectives, prominent use of the NCAA transfer portal and more litigation. Along the way, many high school and college athletes have earned sums of money that would not have otherwise been available to them unless/until they play professional sports. Now, with a federal judge approving the terms of a \$2.8 billion antitrust settlement in *House v. NCAA*, schools themselves will be able to pay their athletes directly: a stunning development that seemed impossible just a few years ago. Key questions do remain, however: How will sports less lucrative than football and basketball fare? Will athletes be treated as employees? Will athletes have collective bargaining rights? Is it too late for me to go back to college? What happens from here is anyone's guess, but one thing's for sure: there will be lawyers.

- Online mental health service BetterHelp partners with three WNBA teams in a sponsorship deal, enabling them to reach more fans to assist with pointing them in the right direction particularly when they're back on the block and on the rebound after someone steals their heart.
- Viral drinkware company Stanley 1913 partners with Post Malone on his own collection featuring styles evocative of the artist himself including bolo tie accessories. To make it even more evocative, consumers can pay my sons \$5 to scribble on it.

- Tennis great Andre Agassi is among an impressive list of investors in a racquet sports social club concept called "Ballers." You might say, Agassi is hoping you love it.

For inquiries and/or unabashed compliments, please feel free to contact me at josh.bloomgarden@foster.com or add me on [LinkedIn](#).

Endorsement Deals, Sponsorships & Investments

[Kansas State QB Avery Johnson Adds to His NIL Profile with New Endorsement Deals](#)

June 10, 2025 via Kansas City Star

[With Help From Post Malone, Stanley 1913 Wants to Show It Sells More Than Cups](#)

June 9, 2025 via AdWeek

[Live Consumption of Sport Continues to Dominate](#)

June 9, 2025 via Biz Community

[What Does the House Settlement Mean for University Liability?](#)

June 9, 2025 via D&O Diary

[Celebrity Deals Bring Limelight, Storytelling to Mattress Marketing](#)

June 8, 2025 via Furniture Today

[NIL Payroll for UNC Men's Basketball is Reportedly \\$14 Million. What is the Women's Team Spending?](#)

June 7, 2025 via SB Nation

Sports

[BetterHelp Joins Forces with Three WNBA Powerhouse Teams as Official Mental Health Partner](#)

June 12, 2025 via BusinessWire

[Track Is America's Opportunity Sport. Colleges Need to Save It](#)

June 10, 2025 via Sportico

[ABC/ESPN NBA Finals Broadcast's Addition of Digitally-Imposed Trophies Took Criticism](#)

June 9, 2025 via Awful Announcing

[WA Rep. Pushes Bill that Challenges NCAA Settlement, Seeks Fair Pay for Student-Athletes](#)

June 9, 2025 via KIRO 7 Eyewitness News

MLB Executive Bryan Seeley Named College Sports Commission CEO After NCAA Settlement Approval

June 7, 2025 via LancasterOnline

Pacers-Thunder Game 1 Thriller Draws Near Record-Low TV Crowd

June 6, 2025 via Sportico

White Sox Owner Jerry Reinsdorf Reaches 'Long-Term' Agreement that Could See Justin Ishbia Own Team by 2029

June 5, 2025 via CBS Sports

Music Biz

Universal Music Inks Joint Venture with Hollywood Agent Patrick Whitesell

June 12, 2025 via Financial Times

Music Industry Moves: Sony Music Publishing Acquires Hipgnosis Songs Group

June 9, 2025 via Variety

Taylor Swift's Master Plan

June 8, 2025 via New Yorker

Reservoir Acquires Catalogue Master Rights of Fool's Gold Records

June 7, 2025 via Music Week

Get Rid Of Music Copyrights: Jack Dorsey

June 6, 2025 via Forbes

Film & TV

RIAA Applauds 'Critical Stand' Made by Disney and NBCUniversal in Copyright Lawsuit Against AI Image Generator Midjourney

June 12, 2025 via Music Business Worldwide

Warner Bros. Discovery Splitting into Two Separate Media Companies - Separating CNN from HBO Max

June 9, 2025 via The Independent

Emerging Sports

From Fatwas to 'Fortnite': Saudi Arabia's \$38-Billion Play to Rule Esports

June 9, 2025 via Los Angeles Times

Agassi, Blitzer Join \$20M VC Round for Racket Sports-Themed Club

June 9, 2025 via Sportico

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