

NIL: A 'Brand' New Marketplace

How will the Big Sky & MSU handle the big news?

NCAA student-athletes in every sport stand to benefit from Name, Image and Likeness legislation passed this summer (though in Montana it does not take effect until June 2023). The change not only creates financial opportunity for student-athletes—it also creates learning opportunities. At Montana State, we plan to integrate the academic community into this endeavor and educate Bobcat athletes on the various aspects of name, image, and likeness opportunities. This will allow our student-athletes to understand situations more fully with the guidance of those supporting their academic pursuits. Student-athletes who choose to participate will fully experience branding, marketing and business opportunities during their academic careers that will provide invaluable experience. Creating personal brands will prepare student-athletes for entrance into the business community, in addition to providing financial compensation.

While some student-athletes may benefit in high profile ways, compensation may also come in the form of a smoothie or a meal in exchange for a shout-out on social media for a local business. We will work with our athletes, encouraging them to represent their teams, their teammates, and Montana State in a positive manner. We will also review all activities to make sure they are in line with established guidelines of Montana State University, the NCAA, and any existing state/

federal legislation. "Everyone involved in athletics understands that we're entering a period that offers great challenges along with great opportunities," says MSU's Assistant AD For Compliance, Sean Dotson. "As with all new ventures, much is unknown. We're happy to answer any questions that arise, and look forward to meeting this challenge." In addition to MSU being proactive by involving the academic/business community, the Big Sky



Conference has leapt forward to ensure success, both for athletes and their institutions. BSC recently announced a multi-year, league-wide agreement with INFLCR to provide the INFLCR Verified platform to each of its 11 member institutions department-wide, which will assist each of the conference's student-athletes to realize their full Name, Image and Likeness (NIL) potential across every sport. "The Big Sky Conference is thrilled to partner with the industry leader in this dynamic and evolving space to help our student-athletes maximize their NIL opportunities while simultaneously best positioning our schools to manage this new

venture," says Commissioner Tom Wistrill. "INFLCR's history of being an athlete-centric company resonated with our members, and the vision that founder and CEO Jim Cavale and his team have about how we best move forward demonstrated a continued commitment to support our students as they navigate this new day in intercollegiate athletics." Navigating name, image and likeness has been a major priority for the Big Sky Conference, and this partnership will go a long way to help educate all Big Sky athletes on how to successfully build their own personal brand and be active in the new landscape of NCAA athletics. **The Big Sky Conference is just the second league to announce a conference-wide partnership with INFLCR. With over 1,000 teams using the platform and more than 40,000 student-athletes active on the app,** INFLCR has become an industry leader in the NIL space, and will elevate the championship experience for Big Sky student-athletes, as the conference office will be able to directly share content with participants, along with them being tagged in photos from both Big Sky home and road events that they can share on their social media platforms. "Through our partnership, every student-athlete competing for a Big Sky institution is equipped with industry-leading technology and education to build their brand and a successful NIL business for themselves," says Cavale. "Each Big Sky institution will benefit from having a system of record for all student-athlete NIL deals and transactions made through the INFLCR Compliance Exchange as they automatically report back to the institution's compliance team through the INFLCR app. We couldn't be more thrilled about this historic partnership with the Big Sky and the respective student-athletes that will be empowered by INFLCR's technology."

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