

Any student-athlete can make money through Name, Image, Likeness, from the stars to walk-ons, and there is no limit as to how much athletes can make under NIL.

“It gave me opportunities to do deals with different companies, which could help me later in life after my athletic career ends,” senior and kicker for Huron’s football team, Adam Samaha said.

Samaha is a five star student athlete committed to University of Michigan, where will attend school in the fall of 2023.

“I found out about NIL when I was getting recruited by colleges,” Samaha said. “They told me that I could be earning money based on my performance.”

Nowadays, the profession of “athlete” — even just at the college level — extends far beyond the act of the sport itself. It encompasses the athlete’s image and how they perpetuate that presence on social media. In fact, being on camera before, during, and after games is not an odd appearance for today’s athletes. Through Instagram reels, photoshoots, hype videos and more, athletes now have the ability to make a name for themselves. It’s as easy as a post.

As of July 1, 2021, college athletes have the opportunity to make money off of their name, image and likeness (NIL). With many new athletes beginning to build their brands and this lucrative sector of sports rapidly expanding, there are increasingly more people to help them along the way.

An example is former Michigan State University linebacker, Darien Harris, who works with the football program in Servant Leadership for recurrent student-athletes and Director of Player Relations and Program Advancement.

Harris guides student-athletes in the football program through the NIL programs. This includes social media branding, reaching out, talking to businesses and podcasting. He wants to make student-athletes' lives better than he experienced, and NIL provides a new addition to the world of college sports.

“Just seeing all these opportunities that these young folks are getting that I didn’t have, it’s exciting for me,” Harris said.

Another member of the Huron community who has partaken in NIL is Senior Torrence Greene, a receiver and defensive back for the Huron football team.

“[NIL] is pretty helpful for high school recruits that go to big schools like Michigan, Michigan State, or Ohio State,” said Green, who committed to Wayne State University for the fall of 2023. “They usually automatically make money once they go there.”

Although there are pressures around deals and image, for Samaha there are additional pressures for playing at the collegiate level.

“There’s a whole bunch of fans screaming your name, and when you go to other stadiums and they’re all booing you, and then zoning in through that, that’s the biggest challenge,” he said.

NIL deals can be presented differently depending on where athletes play and what sport they play. The help that athletes get can go from none to a huge amount.

In fact, the more money a program or team brings in, the more money their players will get in deals. This makes it so bigger programs athletes make more than smaller programs athletes.

“But it also comes with consequences for these kids fresh out of high school,” Harris said. “These schools make promises for deals that they can’t necessarily keep. The kids fall helplessly into it.”

Samaha admits that NIL can be a distraction to athletes.

“It can make them become selfish,” Samaha said. “Luckily for me, my priorities are to get a good education and degree, and do whatever it takes to help the team win. If NIL presents itself, I have a team of people to support me and help me make the best decisions.”

Deleted from piece: Although there are negatives about NIL, there are also positives.

“You have to have good time management. Being able to switch from just being social, academic, and athletic all at once,” Samaha said.