



You may have heard about “NIL” in the context of sports and wondered what it means for your high school athlete. NIL stands for Name, Image, and Likeness, and it refers to the ability of athletes to earn money by allowing businesses, brands, or individuals to use their personal identity—such as their name, photo, or reputation—for things like endorsements, social media promotions, or merchandise.

How Does NIL Work at the High School Level in California?

California allows high school athletes to profit from their NIL without losing their eligibility to play sports in high school or college. The California Interscholastic Federation (CIF), the governing body for high school sports in the state, has specific bylaws (212.C.(3) and (4) that are important for all schools, students and parents to know.

What does this look like in practice?:

- Your child can earn money: They might sign a deal to promote a local business on social media, appear in an advertisement, sell autographs, or even create their own branded merchandise;
- No school involvement: The CIF does not allow schools, coaches, or teams to directly arrange these deals or pay students. Deals must come from outside entities like companies or sponsors, and your child is prohibited from using their school uniform, logo, or team affiliation in these activities;
- Eligibility stays intact: As long as the deals follow CIF rules (like not tying payment to game performance), your child can still play high school sports and remain eligible for college recruitment.

What Should You Know as a Parent?

- Opportunities Vary: Not every athlete will get an NIL deal. It often depends on their visibility, performance, or social media presence;
- Rules to Follow: Your child is prohibited from accepting money for game performance. Deals also can’t conflict with existing school sponsorships (like promoting a rival shoe brand if their team is sponsored by another);
- Disclosure: The CIF requires athletes to report their NIL activities to their school. This is not for approval, but to ensure transparency and compliance with eligibility rules;
- Protecting Your Child: Companies might offer unfair contracts with high commissions or long-term commitments that could limit your child’s future options. Review any deal carefully to make sure it’s fair.

Benefits and Challenges

- Benefits: NIL can teach your child about financial responsibility, marketing, and entrepreneurship. It might also help pay for training, equipment, or college savings;
- Challenges: It could add pressure to perform or maintain a public image. Managing deals takes time that might compete with schoolwork or practice. There is also risk of scams if deals are not vetted properly.

How Parents and BAHS Can Support Your Athlete?

- Talk to Them: Discuss their goals and whether they are interested in pursuing NIL opportunities;
- Build Their Brand: Encourage a positive online presence—brands like athletes who are respectful and engaging;
- Get Guidance: Make sure student-athletes and parents are following all CIF and school guidelines;
- Keep Balance: Help them prioritize school and sports over chasing deals—NIL is a bonus, not the main focus.

California’s unique stance on high school NIL means today’s students have new opportunities. It is a chance to explore, but it is also new territory for everyone involved. The rules regarding NIL are always changing, so continue to check with CIF and legal consultants to ensure compliance. For questions, contact the Bishop Amat Athletic Department at 626-962-2495 x7430