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Equal Play, Equal Pay: How Name, Image, and Likeness Empowers Women

Introduction

In a world where the wage gap still sees [women earning a mere 82 cents for every dollar earned by men](#), the groundbreaking introduction of name, image, and likeness (NIL) policies is nothing short of revolutionary. This seismic shift offers female athletes unprecedented opportunities for financial independence and recognition, signaling a new era of economic equality that breaks old barriers and redefines collegiate sports. I firmly acknowledge how recent this debate is, but I'm confident that NIL policies are changing female collegiate sports for the best.

Opportunities

All throughout amateurism in collegiate sports, [female athletes have always been depicted as "lesser" than their male counterparts](#). As of late, we are seeing drastic changes in a woman's role in society, especially in the world of sports. The era of name, image, and likeness has quite literally changed amateurism and collegiate sports forever for female athletes, allowing them to capitalize on their identities. This creates more financial independence and a platform to advocate for change, showing the world

how this is just the beginning for how NIL is changing the perception of female athletes.

[In sports that are seemingly unprofitable for female student-athletes to go professional](#), like the WNBA, NIL gives them the financial stability, security, and safety to pursue their loftiest goals in their respective sports while adhering to financial discipline. On one occasion, Sedona Prince, a college basketball player for the University of Oregon, said in front of the US Senate that “[the ability to monetize our NIL rights in college is especially important for “non-revenue” sport athletes and female athletes like myself who have more limited professional opportunities down the road.](#)” Another example is how [NIL deals are helping keep women in school to receive an education](#), furthering their professional prowess and receiving a college degree at the same time. To put simply, NIL is providing the means by which female athletes are reaching new levels of financial stability that would not be known otherwise without the help of NIL policies.

Additionally, NIL policies are a major part of why [viewership for women’s sports has risen to all-time highs](#). NIL should credit the social media world for building the bridge to more opportunities that drive change in communities across the world. [Degree’s “Breaking Limits” movement](#), among many other companies and organizations, spearheads these social reformations. Another fact is that [females are experiencing 7x more engagement per NIL than their male counterparts](#). Social media

presence coupled with movements in the industry are a powerful tool for female college athletes to achieve real change in a world that preaches the opposite.

Opposing

Although NIL is driving change for female collegiate athletes in the United States of America, this perception could be seen as hypocritical. NIL policies, per Forbes, are seen to [create more inequities](#) through feminist depictions of female athletes' bodies. In agreeance, another study found that [commercials and social media advertisements often depict female athletes while posing, while depicting male athletes actively engaging in their sport](#) (24). Although female body image has not changed much in society throughout years of trying, NIL is successfully raising awareness for females through their different battles with gender equality.

Conclusion

As I look at the recent varying discussions regarding female athletes in the world of collegiate sports, I cannot help but conclude that NIL is exponentially doing more good than harm for female athletes. I understand that there are ongoing issues that need to be worked out, but looking at things with a broader perspective, I can see how NIL policies are helping female student-athletes create more financial independency, redefine generations of barriers in recognition and perception, and build a bridge for more equality. NIL is changing countless lives of female athletes one deal at a time, which is crucial in pushing for change in their environment and communities. Like I

said, although there are many issues still yet to be worked through, NIL is a major catalyst for women as they fight for equal rights and privileges within collegiate sports. After all, isn't this the whole reason we are pushing for NIL deals among women? I look forward to a world in which every person has equal opportunity, disregarding gender. With that being said, I am a firm believer that NIL will be the vehicle to reach that point in collegiate sports.