COACH GUIDE TO NIL

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This guide is intended to help coaches understand their role and responsibilities regarding Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) activities involving student-athletes within the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association. Under WIAA rules, student-athletes may participate in NIL opportunities only when those activities remain separate from school athletic programs. Coaches play an important role in helping protect student eligibility and maintaining compliance with WIAA rules.

WHAT IS NIL?

NIL stands for Name, Image, and Likeness. NIL rules allow student-athletes to profit from their personal brand through opportunities such as:

- Social media partnerships
- Sponsorships and endorsements
- Camps, clinics, and lessons
- Merchandise sales
- Personal appearances
- Digital content creation

Student-athletes may participate in NIL opportunities as individuals, not as representatives of their school or their athletic teams.

COACH RESPONSIBILITIES

Coaches are expected to:

- Understand and follow WIAA NIL rules
- Help students understand eligibility expectations
- Maintain separation between school athletics and NIL activities
- Refer NIL-related questions to school administration when necessary
- Avoid involvement in negotiating or arranging NIL agreements

Coaches MAY:

- Educate students on general NIL expectations and eligibility rules
- Encourage students to ask questions before entering agreements
- Refer families to school administration for clarification
- Continue promoting student leadership, character, and professionalism

Coaches MAY NOT:

- Promote or endorse a student's NIL agreement on behalf of a school or the WIAA
- Connect businesses with students for NIL purposes while acting in an official role
- Permit school branding or facilities to be used in NIL promotions without authorization from the school district's legal counsel.
- Allow NIL filming or promotional activities during practices, competitions, team travel, or school- sponsored events
- Use team social media accounts or school communication platforms to advertise NIL opportunities
- Provide preferential treatment to students based on NIL involvement

WIAA ELIGIBILITY REMINDER

Under WIAA rules, a student-athlete may immediately lose athletic eligibility if an NIL agreement is connected in any way to the student's high school, team, or athletic participation.

This includes:

- Wearing school uniforms in endorsements
- Using school branding or facilities
- Referencing the student's school team in paid promotions
- Allowing businesses to imply the school's endorsement or affiliation

PROTECTING STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

Coaches should encourage student-athletes to:

- Keep NIL activities separate from school athletics
- Carefully review all social media content before posting
- Maintain copies of contracts and agreements
- Ask questions before signing agreements
- Speak with the Athletic Director when uncertain

When concerns arise, coaches should immediately notify their Athletic Director or district athletics administration.

CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATIONS

Violations of WIAA NIL or amateur standing rules may result in:

- Immediate loss of student-athlete eligibility
- Team or school sanctions
- Removal of promotional content
- School disciplinary action
- WIAA investigation or penalties

The school cannot promote, organize, endorse, or participate in NIL agreements involving student- athletes. All NIL activities must remain independent from school athletic programs.