

High School Athletes Facing Discrimination And Lost Opportunity In Exercising Their NIL Rights

[Leonard Armato](#) Dec 12, 2022,

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) recently voted to allow student-athletes to profit from their name, image, and likeness (NIL), a major victory for college athletes who have long been unable to monetize the value of their public persona. This decision, however, does not apply to high school athletes. Most jurisdictions have strict rules prohibiting them from profiting from their NIL, including the state of Georgia.

Julian Lewis is a 14 year old prodigy and Freshman quarterback for Carrollton High School in Atlanta, Georgia. Last weekend Julian set a State Finals record by throwing for 531 yards and 5 touchdowns in the State Championship Game. Although he is already a star athlete with influence, over 100K Instagram followers, and recognized as a phenomenal college prospect, laws in the state of Georgia do not permit Julian to profit from his NIL.

Julian Lewis 14 year old record setting [+]

Julian Lewis

He and his family have already begun to feel the effects. Julian's father, TC Lewis said: "We have turned down multiple money making opportunities over the past year that would sure help offset the

expense our family must undertake to ensure that Julian receives the best training. We are aware of high school athletes from other states, no more talented or influential than Julian, generating substantial income through their NIL. We love the football program, education, and culture at Carrollton and it is sad that if Julian wanted to capitalize on his football achievements and influence the only option we have would be to move to another state which allows high school athletes to capitalize on their notoriety".

Justin Giangrande is the CEO of the The Network Advisory (TNA) and an NIL pioneer who advises and represents college and high school athletes said: "This amounts to outright discrimination and lack of equality for young athletes that are similarly situated. NIL must be applied equally to everyone and it is incumbent on each state to recognize that and protect its resident athletes".

Notable sports attorney Tabetha Plummer, who represents Deion Sanders among others, cut to the heart of the problem stating: "states are slowly coming on board but unless they move quickly many good people will be adversely affected. The families of talented athletes will have no choice but to move or send their kids off to schools in states that permit high school athletes to profit from their NIL. In states that do not recognize these NIL rights the result will be that coaches and local communities will suffer by losing these outstanding young men and women."

Plummer believes that time of the essence for state lawmakers to take action and pass laws that allow high school athletes to profit off of their NIL. This would level the playing field and give young athletes like Julian Lewis the same opportunities as college athletes and certain of their their high school counterparts.

NIL legal specialist Darren Heitner sums it up nicely: "The biggest mistake states made when they passed NIL legislation leading up to the NCAA removing its prohibition on NIL transactions was that they stopped at college athletes and did not mandate that high school athletes have the same rights."

Julian Lewis is just one example of the many high school athletes who are just as talented and deserving of the opportunity to earn income from their NIL as college athletes. The NCAA's decision to allow college athletes to profit off of their NIL is a step in the right direction but neglecting to address the issue of high school NIL was a huge misstep that must now be corrected by state legislation. Until then, high school athletes in states like Georgia and Texas will be unfairly disadvantaged and unable realize their full potential to earn the income they deserve.

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