

## Youth (Up to Middle School)

**Organizational Pipeline – Perfect Game & Youth Baseball:** The youth baseball landscape is anchored by organizations like Perfect Game (PG), which has become the premier amateur scouting service <sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup>. Founded in 1995 by Jerry Ford in Iowa, Perfect Game expanded to youth levels in 2008 with **PG Youth** for ages 11–14 <sup>3</sup>. PG Youth (in partnership with Travel Ball Select) hosts invite-only national showcases and year-round events that emphasize instruction, skills testing, and competition for top pre-high school players <sup>4</sup> <sup>5</sup>. The mission is to **identify and develop talent early**, preparing kids for PG’s high-school showcases, college recruiting, and beyond <sup>6</sup>. This pipeline has proven effective: Perfect Game boasts a database of 15,000+ MLB draft selections and over 2,300 MLB player alumni <sup>7</sup> <sup>8</sup>, including stars like *Bryce Harper* and *Mike Trout* who participated in PG events. For families, PG provides a **measure of fit and exposure** – every player at a PG showcase gets a detailed scouting report, performance metrics (e.g. pitching velocity, exit velocity), and a PG grade on their profile, which college coaches and scouts closely track <sup>9</sup> <sup>1</sup>. Parents can also gauge team strength via **national rankings**; Perfect Game ranks youth travel teams at each age group, where Southern teams are prominent (e.g. in 2025’s 11U rankings, the #2 and #4 teams were from Texas and Florida, respectively) <sup>10</sup> <sup>11</sup>. Overall, the youth baseball scene – especially in talent-rich states like Texas, Georgia, and Florida – is highly competitive and **increasingly data-driven**, with even pre-teens benefiting from tech like radar guns and swing trackers at tournaments. Many major events are streamed online (Perfect Game launched its own streaming platform for showcase games), reflecting a trend that even at the youth level, elite players are evaluated with near-professional scrutiny.

**Youth Football Development:** In youth football, the Deep South’s passion is evident through Pop Warner leagues and emerging 7-on-7 passing circuits. Texas, for example, has large youth tackle football programs feeding into powerhouse high schools. **Early specialization** is common – elite middle-schoolers attend skill camps and play nearly year-round. Although less formally organized than baseball showcases, youth football players in the South often gain notice via viral highlights or middle school all-star games. Families eyeing long-term development look at factors like quality of coaching in **feeder programs**, access to training facilities, and whether a youth team is tied to a dominant high school program. Safety and fundamentals are emphasized too, with some leagues adopting tech such as *sensor-equipped helmets* to monitor hits. In all, the **youth level focus** in both football and baseball is on building fundamentals and securing a spot on the best possible developmental team. By the end of middle school, standout athletes in the region have typically amassed significant exposure – a 13-year-old baseball phenom might have a PG player profile and national ranking, while a youth quarterback could have film on Hudl and invitations to elite QB camps. The stage is set for these athletes to enter high school with **robust pipelines** already formed.

## High School

**Elite Programs & Regional Dominance:** High school football and baseball in Texas and the Deep South are marked by intense competition and storied programs. In football, large public high schools in Texas (like *North Shore* in Houston or *Westlake* in Austin) and Georgia (like *Buford* or *Grayson*) routinely contend for

state titles and send dozens of players to college programs. Entire districts develop reputations – for instance, Texas’s 6A division has seen a handful of powerhouse schools dominate in recent years, often meeting repeatedly in state championships. The Southeast’s climate and culture enable **year-round training**, so athletes enter high school with advanced skills. Baseball is similar: certain programs (e.g. *Orange Lutheran* in California or *Parkview* in Georgia) have multiple national titles, but even public high schools in Florida, Alabama, and Texas benefit from a deep local talent pool. “School/district dominance” is a real phenomenon – for example, in 2024 Florida’s Class 7A football champion, Miami Central, continued South Florida’s run of titles, while in Alabama 7A, Thompson High won four straight championships (illustrating how one school’s sustained investment in coaching and facilities can create a dynasty). These dominant programs often start tracking athletes by junior high and have feeder teams or summer clubs, effectively creating a **pipeline** from youth into top high-school varsity teams.

**Recruiting Pipelines and Scouting Practices:** The high school level is where **recruiting pipelines** truly accelerate. Colleges (especially SEC programs) aggressively recruit in Texas and across the Deep South, as these states annually produce a disproportionate share of elite talent. In 2025, for instance, Texas led all states with 304 NFL players produced, followed by Florida (287) and Georgia (221) <sup>12</sup> – a reflection of how many top prospects come out of Southern high schools. Per capita, Louisiana and South Carolina stand out (a teenager in Louisiana is more likely to reach the NFL than one from any other state) <sup>13</sup>. To capitalize on this, **scouting practices** in high school are sophisticated. Virtually all varsity teams use Hudl for game film exchange and player highlight reels, ensuring that a standout’s plays can reach college coaches instantly. Recruiting services rank players nationally and by state; for example, Perfect Game and Prep Baseball Report rank high school baseball prospects, while football has 247Sports and Rivals rankings. **Technology tools** assist scouts and coaches – many high schools now use digital video analysis and even AI-powered tools to evaluate film. Platforms like Hudl not only host video but also provide analytical insights and recruiting exposure, which is crucial for athletes in smaller programs <sup>14</sup>. Additionally, wearable performance tech is trickling down; some elite high school programs use GPS vests (like Catapult) in practice to track player speed, workload, and conditioning metrics <sup>15</sup>, similar to college teams.

**NIL Valuations in High School:** A major recent development is the emergence of **Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL)** opportunities for high school athletes. Rules vary widely by state. Florida and Georgia now *permit* high schoolers to monetize NIL (with restrictions on using school logos or team endorsement) <sup>16</sup> <sup>17</sup>, whereas Alabama and Mississippi still prohibit it <sup>18</sup> <sup>19</sup>. Texas was a special case: in 2023 it passed a law allowing NIL deals for high schoolers, but with a catch – athletes could sign agreements while in high school but not **cash in** until after graduation <sup>20</sup> <sup>21</sup>. This has led to workarounds like players graduating a semester early to start earning NIL money in college mid-year <sup>22</sup>. The potential earnings can be significant: in Houston, 17-year-old quarterback **Keisean Henderson** (a top national QB recruit) noted that peers were shocked when Texas’s NIL law changed, and local marketing agents report that some Texas high school stars have **six- to seven-figure** endorsement deals lined up <sup>23</sup> <sup>24</sup>. His mother emphasized the need for family involvement and even financial literacy prep (e.g. learning about taxes at 17) as these teens navigate contracts <sup>25</sup> <sup>26</sup>. In states like Florida, players don’t even have to wait – a high-profile prep running back in Miami can be paid immediately for an autograph session or local commercial, so long as no school trademarks are used <sup>27</sup> <sup>16</sup>. **Predictive trend:** Over the next 1–3 years, we’re likely to see more states open up NIL for high schoolers, given the pressure to stay competitive and prevent talent from transferring out-of-state. This will further professionalize the high school sports experience, with some athletes essentially managing a personal brand and endorsement portfolio before they ever play in a college or pro game.

**Exposure and Metrics – Finding the “Optimal Fit”:** With the abundance of talent in the Deep South, families seeking the *optimal fit* for their student-athlete have more data than ever to guide decisions. **Performance data** is ubiquitous: a baseball family can review how their child’s stats compare to others via Perfect Game’s online database or see their national rank (PG ranks the Top 500 players in each graduating class) <sup>28</sup> <sup>29</sup> . They can also see event results and top performers from national showcases <sup>30</sup> <sup>31</sup> . For football, families leverage camp results (40-yard dash times, combine drills) and third-party analytics – for example, the service *Tracking Football* assigns athleticism scores using combine data and multi-sport backgrounds <sup>32</sup> , which colleges use to find under-the-radar prospects. **Scouting practices** increasingly appreciate multi-sport athletes; it’s common in the South for a star football player to also run track or play baseball, and such versatility can boost recruiting stock (data has shown multi-sport athletes often excel in college). From a fit perspective, families consider not just a high school’s athletic prestige but also academics, coaching stability, and even the presence of college recruiters at games. High school games in Texas regularly draw college scouts, and some are even broadcast on regional TV or streamed, amplifying exposure. In baseball, travel teams and **showcase circuits** heavily influence high school fit – a player might attend a smaller high school but join a top travel team in summer to face elite competition. Ultimately, the high school years in Texas and the Deep South are a **proving ground**: athletes who excel here often translate to collegiate success, and the region’s intense competition, advanced training, and growing NIL opportunities are forging more *college-ready* players by graduation.

## College (SEC Football & Baseball)

**Current Performance and Competitive Trends:** The Southeastern Conference (SEC) remains the epicenter of college football and baseball success. In football, SEC teams have dominated the national championship picture for nearly two decades – since 2000, the SEC has claimed 16 national titles, far outpacing any other conference <sup>33</sup> . Programs like Alabama, Georgia, LSU, and Florida have each won championships in the past 15 years, and the trend continued with Georgia winning back-to-back College Football Playoff titles in the 2021 and 2022 seasons. The league’s depth is such that even traditionally middle-tier programs (e.g. Auburn, Texas A&M, Tennessee) are often ranked and upset national contenders. This competitive excellence extends to **SEC baseball** as well. The SEC has produced 4 of the last 5 College World Series champions (e.g. Ole Miss 2022, LSU 2023, Tennessee 2024) and even all-SEC finals – in 2024, the University of Tennessee won its first-ever national title by defeating SEC rival Texas A&M in the CWS championship series <sup>34</sup> . The upcoming expansion of the conference in 2024 (with Texas and Oklahoma joining) will only bolster this strength, as Texas brings a storied football program and a baseball team with six CWS titles. The SEC’s supremacy is underpinned by **recruiting pipelines**: year after year, SEC schools sign many of the nation’s top high school players. For example, in the 2024 football recruiting class, multiple SEC teams (Alabama, Georgia, Texas, LSU) each signed 3 or more five-star recruits, collectively securing the bulk of the Top 100 prospects – a continuation of the SEC’s recruiting grip on talent-rich states like Texas, Florida, and Georgia. In baseball, the SEC’s recruiting reach is similarly vast; the conference’s schools routinely attract many of the top 50 high school baseball players each year, as well as elite transfers and junior-college standouts. This influx of talent translates into on-field success and **stacked rosters**. Looking ahead 1–3 years, analysts predict the SEC will continue to lead in both sports, though competition is intensifying: other conferences are copying SEC tactics (e.g. the Big Ten luring away Oklahoma and USC in football, and investing in baseball facilities). Still, the SEC’s combination of tradition, resources, and warm-weather recruiting bases gives it a sustained edge.

**NIL Strategy and Athlete Compensation:** The SEC's embrace of the NIL era has been aggressive and strategic. Every SEC program now works closely with booster-run **collectives** that pool funds to attract and retain athletes. It's estimated that many SEC football programs are channeling well into **eight figures annually** toward NIL deals for their rosters. (In a recent simulation of the NIL landscape, analysts projected an average of over **\$20 million per SEC football program** spent on NIL talent payments <sup>35</sup>.) While exact figures are closely guarded, real examples offer insight: at the University of Texas (which, while only now joining the SEC, has operated at an "SEC level" of support), athletes earned a reported **\$10.3 million across 2,103 NIL deals** from 2021–23 <sup>36</sup>. Other SEC schools like Texas A&M and Tennessee have made headlines with rumored recruiting classes secured by multi-million-dollar NIL incentives. At the individual level, the top stars are commanding unprecedented valuations. According to NIL valuation indexes, several SEC athletes rank at the very top nationally – for instance, *Arch Manning*, a Texas quarterback and former #1 recruit, carries an estimated NIL value of **\$6.5 million** <sup>37</sup>, highest in college football. Similarly, leading players at Georgia, Alabama, and LSU (especially quarterbacks and skill-position stars) often have seven-figure endorsement portfolios (ranging from local sponsorships to national ads). In baseball, NIL is smaller but growing quickly: baseball is now the third-most compensated NCAA sport via NIL collectives, recently surpassing women's basketball <sup>38</sup>. Top college baseball players at powerhouse programs (especially in the SEC and ACC) are seeing NIL deals in the low-to-mid six figures <sup>39</sup> <sup>40</sup>, which is notable given many will also soon command MLB signing bonuses. SEC athletic departments have even begun integrating NIL into recruiting pitches, with some schools creating **NIL education programs** and ambassador networks of businesses ready to partner with athletes. A pivotal future trend is **revenue sharing** – there is discussion that by 2025–26, schools might directly share a portion of TV revenue with athletes (one concept floated is capping such payments around \$20 million per year per school) <sup>41</sup>. The state of Texas actually passed a law (effective July 2023) explicitly allowing colleges to pay athletes **directly** for NIL under certain structures <sup>42</sup> <sup>43</sup>, which could further blur the line toward pay-for-play. In summary, the SEC's NIL strategy is to leverage its massive fan bases and donor wealth: *keep top talent in the fold by making the financial opportunities as rich as anywhere in the nation*. This arms race is ongoing, and we expect NIL compensation in the SEC to grow another 30–50% in the next 2–3 years, especially if football playoff expansion (and more TV money) comes to fruition.

**Media Rights and Streaming Trends:** The SEC's financial juggernaut is fueled by an expansive media rights empire. In 2024, the SEC began a landmark **10-year deal with ESPN/ABC worth over \$3 billion** that makes ESPN the exclusive broadcast partner for SEC football and men's basketball <sup>44</sup> <sup>45</sup>. Under this agreement, ABC will air a marquee SEC game weekly (including the SEC Championship game in a coveted primetime slot), and importantly, **ESPN's streaming service (ESPN+) gains rights to carry select games**. Specifically, ESPN+ can stream one non-conference football game per SEC school each season (plus two non-conference basketball games per school) <sup>46</sup>. This means each SEC team will have at least one football game on a streaming-only platform annually. The integration of ABC/ESPN and ESPN+ gives the conference "complete scheduling flexibility" and modernizes how fans access games <sup>47</sup> <sup>48</sup>. For example, a fan might watch Alabama vs. Auburn on ABC in the afternoon, then need ESPN+ to stream a game like Missouri vs. an FCS opponent earlier in the season. The conference expects this unified media approach to increase exposure (more national TV windows) while also driving subscriptions to streaming. Financially, the impact is enormous: in early 2025, the SEC announced it distributed **\$808.4 million** in revenue to its member universities for the 2023-24 fiscal year <sup>49</sup> – roughly **\$50+ million per school** just from shared conference earnings (TV contracts, bowls, etc.). With Texas and Oklahoma coming in, those numbers are projected to rise further as new markets and rivalries (like Texas vs. Texas A&M) boost ratings. It's notable that University of Texas – which routinely leads the nation in athletic revenue – reported an unprecedented **\$331.9 million in athletic revenue for 2023-24** (with \$325M in expenses) <sup>50</sup>, becoming the first college program ever to

surpass the \$300M mark in both revenue and spending in one year. Such figures underscore how *SEC athletics operate on a professional scale*: massive TV deals, packed 100,000-seat stadiums, and loyal donor bases translate into budgets rivaling some pro sports franchises. **Streaming trends** suggest that more content will go direct-to-consumer. The SEC Network, launched in 2014, already streams many Olympic sports and lower-tier games on the **SEC Network+** online platform <sup>51</sup>. Fans have adapted to finding games on digital apps, and the next 1–3 years may see the SEC package even spring games or behind-the-scenes content as streaming exclusives to drive engagement. We might also anticipate tech like alternate broadcasts (e.g. Coaches Film Room streams, or enhanced stat overlays on ESPN+) to cater to younger, tech-savvy viewers. Overall, the SEC's media strategy is **national reach with digital depth** – ensuring the biggest games have broad TV audiences while monetizing the long tail of content via streaming.

**Team Financials and Investment:** With these lucrative media deals and swelling donor contributions, SEC athletic departments are investing heavily in infrastructure and personnel. Top football programs now feature **general manager** positions and expanded analyst staffs akin to NFL front offices <sup>52</sup> <sup>53</sup>. For instance, Texas formally hired a Football GM (Brandon Harris) in 2024 to oversee roster management, NIL negotiations, and the transfer portal – essentially treating recruiting like an NFL free agency department <sup>52</sup>. This trend is spreading: Alabama, South Carolina, and other SEC schools have also added General Manager or Player Personnel Director roles for football and basketball. The rationale is that managing *50+ incoming and outgoing players per year (when accounting for recruits and transfers)* requires dedicated staff, especially in the NIL era. Those hires are part of a broader analytics push: **predictive analytics and data science** are increasingly part of SEC sports operations. Many teams have analysts breaking down advanced stats (e.g. run-pass option efficiency, players' GPS tracking data) and guiding strategy on fourth-down decisions or pitching changes. As one example, Texas baseball's program uses tools like TrackMan and Rapsodo to track pitch spin rate and exit velocities in practices, mirroring MLB clubs. The SEC as a conference even approved in-game use of analytics tech: starting in 2025, coaches in SEC baseball will have access to real-time TrackMan data on **tablets in the dugout during games** <sup>54</sup>. This provides immediate launch angle, pitch speed/movement, and other metrics to inform decisions (such as when to pull a pitcher or how to position fielders). It's a pioneering move at the college level and speaks to how **integrated analytics** have become in the SEC. Another aspect of team financials is facilities – thanks to booming budgets, schools engage in an "arms race" to build the best. In recent years, we've seen LSU open a \$28 million football operations building (with sleep pods and a nutrition center), and Arkansas erect a state-of-the-art baseball performance center with 3D motion-capture pitching labs. These investments tie back to recruiting and player development: the idea is that *better facilities + more support staff = competitive advantage*. Given the SEC's record and the fact that each school now gets tens of millions in TV revenue, it's likely these spending trends will continue. The NCAA may impose some cost controls (there is discussion of enforcing a salary cap for non-coaching personnel), but for now the SEC is **spending to win**, much like professional franchises.

**Predictive Analytics and Performance Science:** The use of **predictive analytics** in SEC programs deserves special mention. Beyond just crunching game stats, teams are using data to **predict injuries, optimize training loads, and scout opponents**. For example, many football teams use wearable GPS devices in practice – data on acceleration, top speed, and exertion is logged for each player, and training staff can foresee if a player is fatigue-limited or at risk of soft tissue injury based on workload metrics. In baseball, analysts might use algorithms to predict how a hitter will perform against a certain pitcher by comparing swing profiles and pitch tracking data; as a result, a coach might pinch-hit a guy who, according to predictive models, has a higher expected slugging percentage versus that style of pitcher. Some schools are partnering with private analytics firms (or developing in-house software) for opponent scouting: breaking

down tendencies and even using AI to recognize formations or pitch selection patterns. The **Champion Enigma Engine** mentioned in internal research is a hypothetical example – quantifying “clutch” or mental attributes – but even without such proprietary models, SEC teams do monitor less tangible factors like player confidence and focus. Video analysis tools can track a quarterback’s decision-making speed (how fast he processes defenses) or a baseball pitcher’s consistency in release point; coaches then adjust practice focus accordingly. All of this falls under an emerging “sports science” approach that the SEC has been quick to adopt. Notably, the University of Alabama has a Sports Science Center that works across sports to apply physiology and data analysis to training; Texas A&M has a renowned **Human Performance Lab**; and other schools employ dietitians, sleep experts, and psychologists, integrating their feedback with analytics. In short, the SEC’s **competitive edge** increasingly comes from how well programs can analyze and predict – turning huge amounts of data (from recruiting rankings, game stats, biometric sensors, etc.) into actionable decisions. Over the next few seasons, expect the gap to widen between those programs that harness analytics fully and those that don’t. The SEC is betting big on the former, aiming to maintain its dominance through brainpower and tech alongside brawn.

## Professional (Regional Impact & Tech in Pro Scouting)

**Deep South Talent in the NFL and MLB:** The Texas and Deep South pipeline continues all the way to the professional ranks, as the region supplies a disproportionate share of pro athletes in football and baseball. In the NFL, **no region produces more talent** – as of the 2025 season, Texas was the #1 state with 304 active NFL players, with Florida (287) and Georgia (221) close behind <sup>12</sup>. States like Alabama and Louisiana, despite smaller populations, consistently rank in the top 10 for NFL player production (Louisiana in particular has the highest per-capita NFL player rate in the country) <sup>13</sup>. This means on NFL Sundays, roughly one-third of the players you watch likely hail from an SEC state or Texas. The trend is similar in Major League Baseball. A significant chunk of MLB talent comes from warm-weather baseball hotbeds: a striking **43% of active MLB players were born in just three states – California, Texas, and Florida** <sup>55</sup> (with Georgia not far behind as a talent producer). Many of these athletes honed their skills in the SEC or other southern colleges, or they were scouted out of high school in the region. The **MLB Draft outcomes** reflect this dominance: for example, the 2023 MLB Draft’s first round featured multiple players from SEC programs (LSU had two of the top five picks) and high school stars from states like Florida and Mississippi. Likewise, the NFL Draft is heavily SEC-flavored; the conference set a record with 65 players selected in the 2022 draft, and has led all conferences in draft picks for 18 straight years <sup>56</sup>. In 2025’s NFL Combine, 105 of the 329 invitees (32%) were from SEC schools <sup>57</sup>, underscoring that the road to the NFL often runs through the SEC. **Draft outcomes** for the region are also evident in the sheer number of first-rounders: Alabama, LSU, Georgia, and Florida consistently churn out first-round NFL picks (e.g. **11 SEC players went in the first round of the 2024 NFL Draft** with Alabama and LSU each contributing 3) <sup>58</sup>. This has a reinforcing effect – pro scouts pay extra attention to the South, knowing the caliber of competition. It also means that **pro franchises invest scouting resources** heavily in the SEC footprint. NFL teams assign some of their best scouts to cover the SEC and Texas territories, and MLB teams have dense scouting networks in the Southeast (for both college and high school prospects). In summary, the Deep South’s athlete development machine significantly shapes pro rosters, and that trend is expected to continue or even grow (especially as population shifts and year-round training climates continue to favor the Sun Belt).

**Tech Platforms and Data in Pro Scouting:** At the professional level, **technology and analytics are king** – and many of these innovations filter up from the collegiate and prep scenes or vice versa. One clear example is the use of advanced tracking systems. The NFL uses *Next Gen Stats* tracking (embedding RFID chips in players’ shoulder pads and the football), yielding data on player speed, acceleration, routes, and more for every play. Teams and fans alike can see, for instance, a receiver’s top speed on a touchdown or a linebacker’s pursuit angle. This kind of data is an evolution of what high schools and colleges started with GPS trackers; now it’s seamlessly integrated on Sundays. In baseball, MLB’s Statcast system (a combination of radar and high-speed cameras) captures everything from pitch spin rate to fielder sprint speed. The result is that **predictive analytics** inform almost every decision: MLB front offices use algorithms to project a player’s future performance and decide on trades or free-agent signings (the famous “Moneyball” approach has grown into AI-driven player evaluation), and NFL teams use statistical models for everything from optimizing fourth-down calls to managing the salary cap with performance/value projections.

One notable trend is the proliferation of **AI and software platforms** for scouting. Tools like *scoutSMART* and *Catapult’s recruit platform* use AI to filter and evaluate player film automatically <sup>59</sup> <sup>60</sup> – for example, an AI might scan thousands of high school game clips to find an offensive lineman with ideal footwork, saving NFL scouts time. Professional scouts also subscribe to services that track athletes from youth onward. For instance, MLB teams might use Perfect Game’s database to identify kids who starred in PG events at 16 and follow their progress into college. In football, some NFL teams quietly track recruiting rankings and college advanced stats to flag future prospects early (some even consult with college analytics departments to get data). **Tech platforms** are also changing fan engagement and athlete branding at the pro level. Social media continues to be a significant platform for athletes (interestingly, as noted in one internal analysis, social media following is often the strongest predictor of an athlete’s NIL market value <sup>61</sup> – a dynamic that carries into how marketable a player is to NFL or MLB sponsors). Thus, even after turning pro, athletes from the South often carry large followings built during their high school/college days, which can translate into big endorsement deals as professionals.

**Use of Analytics for Player Development:** Professional teams now employ entire analytics and player-performance departments. In the NFL, virtually every franchise has a “Director of Analytics” and staff who analyze tendencies and player efficiencies. Coaches in the Deep South pipeline (many of whom advance to the NFL) are already accustomed to using these tools – e.g. a former Alabama offensive coordinator in the NFL might lean on analytics on when to go for it on 4th down because Nick Saban’s staff in Tuscaloosa was presenting those probabilities. In MLB, clubs like the Tampa Bay Rays or Houston Astros pioneered using data to shape pitching rotations, defensive shifts, and even draft strategy (heavily scouting spin rates and exit velos). Now, *all* teams do this; even traditionally old-school franchises have adopted data-driven decision-making, often hiring Ivy League-educated analysts to work alongside traditional scouts.

Players themselves benefit from technology for skill improvement. Many pro athletes from the South return home in the off-season to train with cutting-edge tools – for instance, baseball hitters might train in high-tech batting cages that provide immediate feedback on launch angle and bat speed, or pitchers might use motion-capture systems to refine their delivery. Football players often use VR (virtual reality) training aids (some QBs use VR to practice reading defenses) and wear performance monitors to track their conditioning. **Sports medicine** tech is also crucial: from cryotherapy chambers to advanced rehab tools, keeping players healthy is as much a tech endeavor as a medical one now.

**Regional Influence on Pro Sports Business:** The influence of Texas and Deep South sports extends into the business side of pro leagues as well. Southern markets have become important to pro league

expansions and viewership. The SEC's rabid fan culture translates into NFL viewership; cities like New Orleans, Houston, Nashville, and Atlanta consistently post high TV ratings for football. MLB has deep roots in the South too (the Braves, for example, market themselves as "America's Team" across the Southeast). We see media catering to this: e.g. ESPN's College Gameday and NFL broadcast crews frequently originate from Southern venues due to the huge audiences. Also, the **NIL infrastructure** that has grown in the South is beginning to blur into pro sports – some marketing agencies represent both collegiate NIL clients and young pro athletes, creating a continuum of brand management from high school to the NFL.

Finally, **tech tools for tracking careers** are something fans and teams both utilize. Apps and websites now allow tracking players from prep to pro. A fan in Texas might use the On3 or 247Sports app to follow a recruit's journey, then seamlessly switch to ESPN or an NFL app to follow the same player's pro stats. Teams do similarly: they maintain internal databases that log notes from when a player was first scouted as a teenager through their college and pro performance. In essence, advanced tracking – both statistical and biographical – means nothing is forgotten. A great example is how MLB teams scour a player's **entire track record** (college exit velocities, Cape Cod League stats, Perfect Game scouting grades from age 17, etc.) when deciding on draft picks. In the NFL, teams at the Draft will reference a player's high school sprint times or the number of state titles they won, alongside college game film and combine results. With so much data available, the key going forward is making sense of it. This is where predictive analytics and AI will play a growing role in pro scouting: expect algorithms to get better at forecasting which 21-year-old college pitcher will become a successful MLB starter, or which college quarterback's game will translate best to the NFL, by analyzing *patterns in historical data*.

**In conclusion**, the sports ecosystem from youth leagues to the pros is increasingly interconnected and information-rich. Texas and the Deep South sit at the heart of this ecosystem for football and baseball. They provide the **talent pipelines**, the passionate fan bases, and even pioneering models (like high school NIL and collegiate pro-style management) that shape the future of sports. Over the next 1–3 years, we can expect the region to maintain its dominance, aided by heavy investment, an embrace of technology and analytics, and a cultural momentum that values athletic excellence. Whether it's a 12-year-old at a Perfect Game tournament in Georgia, a Friday night under the lights in Texas, a Saturday in SEC country, or a Sunday in the NFL, the integration of **regional passion with modern strategy** is driving new levels of performance and opportunity in sports. The ongoing challenge – and opportunity – for families and athletes is to navigate these pipelines effectively, leveraging the abundance of data and resources to find the *perfect fit* at each stage of the journey.

#### Sources:

- Perfect Game Youth launch and mission <sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup> ; Perfect Game scouting scale and events <sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> ; Example of youth team rankings (11U) <sup>10</sup> <sup>11</sup> .
- High school NIL policies by state (Texas, Florida, Georgia, etc.) <sup>21</sup> <sup>24</sup> ; Texas high school NIL law details <sup>20</sup> <sup>22</sup> ; Opendorse NIL state-by-state guide <sup>16</sup> <sup>62</sup> .
- NFL player origination by state (Texas, FL, GA numbers) <sup>12</sup> and per-capita leaders <sup>13</sup> ; Active MLB players by state (43% from CA/TX/FL) <sup>55</sup> .
- SEC NIL spending and top valuations (simulated SEC NIL data, Arch Manning \$6.5M) <sup>35</sup> <sup>37</sup> ; NIL in baseball (valuation ranges for top players) <sup>39</sup> <sup>40</sup> .
- University of Texas athletics revenue (FY2024 \$332M) <sup>50</sup> ; SEC media rights deal and streaming on ESPN+ <sup>46</sup> ; SEC 2024 all-SEC baseball final (Tennessee vs Texas A&M) <sup>34</sup> .
- SEC draft and combine representation (18-year streak of most NFL draftees) <sup>56</sup> <sup>57</sup> .



- Adoption of pro-style management and analytics at Texas/SEC (GM role, analytics director) <sup>52</sup> <sup>63</sup> ; SEC in-dugout TrackMan for 2025 season <sup>54</sup> .
- Hudl and wearable tech in high school scouting <sup>14</sup> <sup>15</sup> .

<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> <sup>9</sup> About Perfect Game | Perfect Game USA

<https://www.perfectgame.org/AboutPG.aspx>

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<sup>12</sup> NFL 2025: These cities, states produce the most players | FOX 13 Tampa Bay

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