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Authentication Provider Quick Overview - Clerk

What is Clerk?

Clerk is a user authentication and identity management service.

It provides:

- **Email** or **Gmail** login/registration

- Email verification and "magic link" sign-in

- Session and token management

- Built-in UI components for sign-in and sign-up

- Secure APIs for backend verification

Why we use Clerk?

In the Varsity Sports platform, we need:

- **Viewers/Fans to log in before watching live streams**

- **Subscribers or giveaway users to get one-time access codes**

- **Sponsor Vince can log in to manage events**

- **Session and IP control to prevent account sharing**

Using Clerk saves time, improves security, and avoids handling sensitive user data ourselves.

How Clerk works?

1. **User opens Varsity Sports Site / IOS App / Android App**

2. **They click "Sign In" and enter an email (or choose Google Sign-In)**

3. **Clerk automatically sends a verification email**

4. **The user click the link -> Clerk verifies their identity**

5. **Clerk issues a secure access token**

6. **Our backend verifies that token to identify who the user is and what permissions they have**

Clerk's Role in the Varsity Sports System

Component	Role	Example
Clerk	Identify Verification	Sign-In/Up, email verification
Backend API	Business Logic	Checking subscriptions, issuing one-time tickets
Database	Stores business data	user records, events, tickets
CDN / Streaming Server	Media Delivery	Actual video streaming URLs

Three Important Key

Key	Purpose	Example
NEXT_PUBLIC_CLERK_PUBLISHABLE_KEY	Frontend key (safe to expose)	Website or mobile app
CLERK_SECRET_KEY	Backend key (must stay private)	Server environment variables
Frontend API	SDK connection URL	Automatically handled by SDK

Multi-Platform Support

Platform	SDK	Usage
NEXT_PUBLIC_CLERK_PUBLISHABLE_KEY	`@clerk/nextjs`	Main web login interface
IOS App	`@clerk/clerk-react-native` or REST API	Same login credentials
Android App	`@clerk/clerk-react-native` or REST API	Same shared identity system
Backend API	`CLERK_SECRET_KEY`	Verifies JWTs and enforces one-IP-per-login rule

<mark>Clerk</mark>: [Pricing](#)

Free Plan
<mark>Cost: $0/month</mark>

Includes:

- ✅ Up to **10,000 Monthly Active Users (MAU)**

- ✅ **No credit card required**

- ✅ **No charge for inactive sign-ups**

- ✅ **Pre-built authentication components**

- ✅ **Custom domain support**

Limitations:

- ❌ No "remove Clerk branding" option

- ❌ No email or premium support

- ❌ Some advanced session and admin tools unavailable

Ideal For:

- MVPs, prototypes, and early testing

- Front-end heavy apps (Next.js, React) needing quick login setup

- Small projects with under 10k active users

Pro Plan
Cost: $25/month + $0.02 per MAU (first 10,000 free)

Includes:

- ✅ Remove Clerk branding

- ✅ Allowlist/blocklist controls

- ✅ Customizable session duration

- ✅ Access to advanced settings

- ✅ Priority support

Recommendation
Clerk **Free Plan** is ideal for development and early launch stages.

Upgrade to **Pro Plan ($25/mo)** later for production polish or when you want to remove branding and gain finer session control.