



Two years after it upended college sports, there is no reliable data on NIL

BY SAPNA BANSIL
PHOTO BY JOE RYAN

There are profound differences in the way the University of Maryland and public data sources characterize student-athletes' performance in the name, image and likeness (NIL) marketplace, according to [an analysis by The Diamondback](#).

A [publicly accessible NIL deals tracker from On3.com](#), a media and data company covering college sports, listed a total of 37 deals with Maryland student athletes across six sports since NIL went into effect. By contrast, athletics department spokesperson Jason Yellin said athletes have disclosed more than 1,100 deals to the university across 20 different sports.

Changes to NCAA rules and state laws surrounding NIL went into effect in July 2021, allowing student-athletes to make money off endorsements, appearances, merchandise and more for the first time. Since then, the NCAA has established no uniform laws or standards regarding disclosure of NIL deals, leaving it up to a disparate set of stakeholders to decide for themselves what information becomes public, according to Mit Winter, an attorney who specializes in collegiate sports law.

The lack of NIL disclosure standards have made accurately and comprehensively cataloging deals nearly impossible for independent aggregators.

Data sources diverge wildly in their analyses of Maryland student-athletes' NIL performances

A lack of uniform disclosure standards limit the ability to track an ever-expanding NIL landscape.

	Maryland athletics department	On3 deals tracker
Total deals	1,100+	37
Method of data collection	Disclosure by student-athletes	Aggregation by staff
Sports represented in data	20	6
Female athletes represented in data	48%	19%
Male athletes represented in data	52%	81%

Source: University of Maryland Athletics, [Analysis by The Diamondback of On3's deals tracker](#) • By Sapna Bansil
On3 data includes deals for all athletes that On3 lists as attending the University of Maryland through May 8.

● A Flourish table

The chasm between the two sources of Maryland's NIL data illustrates broader transparency issues within the vast and unwieldy landscape of NIL.

Faith Masonius, a senior on this university's women's basketball team, said the lack of complete, accurate and independently-verified data about NIL raises questions for athletes, ranging from what kinds of deals are permissible to how much to charge for an NIL deal.

"I've talked a lot with my teammates because sometimes they'll be like, 'Well, how much do you charge for an Instagram post?' ... It's really just about talking to the people you're working with and negotiating and knowing your value...and putting your foot down if you think you deserve more money," Masonius said.

On3 president Jeff Cravens acknowledged the company's initial goal for developing its deals tracker may have been ambitious. Three reporters maintain the site's tracker by cobbling together information from social media posts, brands, agents and other sources, but it is nearly impossible to account for the sheer volume of deals.

"We thought that deal tracker would be a little bit more comprehensive, but it is very difficult because there's such a variety of deals out there," Cravens said. "By no means do we think that that's anywhere close to comprehensive."

Public aggregators capture a small fraction of NIL deals disclosed to universities

A tracker by On3 includes 37 deals by University of Maryland student-athletes, though hundreds more are missing

Search for deals...				
Date	Name	Sport	Type	Partner
03/30/2023	Diamond Miller	Women's Basketball	Company	Reebok
03/28/2023	Octavian Smith Jr	Football	Collective	The Best Is Ahead Foundation
03/07/2023	Olivia Weir	Gymnastics	Company	United States Sports Cards
02/12/2023	Jordan Geronimo	Men's Basketball	Collective and company	Hoosiers Connect, The Vue
12/09/2022	King Ripley	Men's Lacrosse	Collective	Hard Shell Collective
12/09/2022	Chase Cope	Men's Lacrosse	Collective	Hard Shell Collective
12/09/2022	Joshua Coffman Coffman	Men's Lacrosse	Collective	Hard Shell Collective
12/09/2022	Colin Burlace	Men's Lacrosse	Collective	Hard Shell Collective
12/09/2022	Jack Koras	Men's Lacrosse	Collective	Hard Shell Collective
12/09/2022	Michael Roche	Men's Lacrosse	Collective	Hard Shell Collective

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Source: Analysis by [The Diamondback of On3's deals tracker](#) • By Sapna Bansil
Data includes deals for all athletes that On3 lists as attending the University of Maryland through May 8. Deals by Jordan Geronimo and Marcus Dumervil were made before they transferred to this university.

● A Flourish table

The Hard Shell Collective, which consists of boosters who support the Maryland men's lacrosse team, has 16 athlete deals listed through On3. But the collective's website [mentions partnerships with 23 athletes](#). On3 also leaves out deals athletes make for meet and greets, video shoutouts and other fan activities.

"We could probably have 20 people [contributing to the tracker] and still only get us a percentage of the deals," Cravens said.

Compounding the challenges for On3 are the many restrictions placed on data disclosure. Citing privacy considerations, athletes and their NIL partners sometimes write confidentiality provisions into the terms of their deals, keeping their partnerships out of the public, Winter said. For some athletes, there is a concern that too much disclosure could invite scrutiny by the NCAA, which for decades opposed athletes being able to profit off their NIL.

"One reason the NCAA is talking about wanting some sort of [NIL] database is so they can have more control over what's going on," Winter said. "They can see deals that are happening and potentially investigate some of those deals that they are not fans of."

Outside of Maryland, some state governments are making it increasingly difficult to obtain a university's NIL data.

"There are some state laws that say terms of deals are not public records and are exempt from public records requirements and cannot be disclosed pursuant to a public records request," Winter said.



Robert Paretti/The Diamondback

Timeline: Moments that have defined NIL at Maryland

How the NCAA's new era has played out in College Park over the last two years.

Gen Hagan signs Maryland's first NIL deal

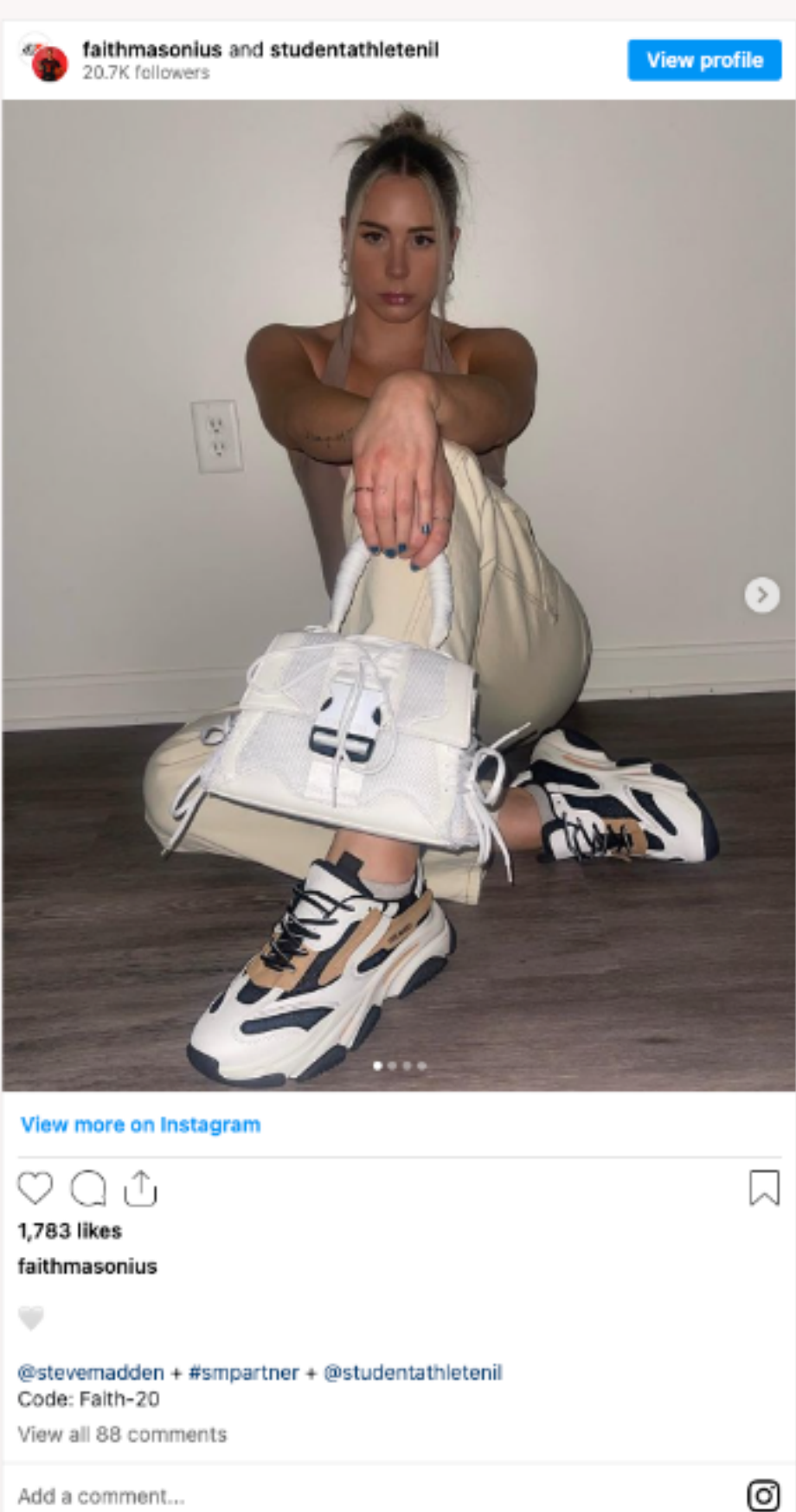


While public NIL data is limited across the board, The Diamondback's analysis suggests that is particularly the case for female student-athletes. Few players from this university's women's basketball team have been as prolific in the NIL market as Masonius, who has signed deals with [Urban Outfitters](#) and [Steve Madden](#). Yet On3's tracker does not include any of the Terps captain's NIL deals.

While female student-athletes like Masonius have made 48 percent of all NIL deals disclosed to the university, women account for only 19 percent of Maryland's deals listed in the On3 tracker.

According to Shannon Scovel, a researcher who teaches a course on NIL at this university's journalism college, reporters covering college sports often overlook female athletes' performance in NIL.

"Journalists represent women signing these enormous NIL deals — at least early, July 1, 2021 — as a surprise, as a shock, as the unexpected thing," Scovel said. "[The coverage] would often be like, 'You'll never believe that the leading NIL star is a women's gymnast.'"



Scovel said making accurate NIL data more widely available would help the public better understand the value of women in the NIL marketplace. But there is little optimism that complete disclosure is on the horizon.

"I just don't think you're ever going to get to a place — unless there's a college athlete association or union — where that kind of deal data is commonly public across the board," Cravens said.