

Foreword, Dedication & Acknowledgments

New Birth Villages Ministries First Edition

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Foreword

We are living through one of the most significant transformations in the history of amateur and collegiate athletics. For generations, young athletes followed a relatively predictable path. They played youth sports, competed in high school, hoped to earn an opportunity to compete at the collegiate level, and for a very small percentage, perhaps one day pursue professional athletics. While the journey was never simple, the structure was generally understood.

That world has changed. Today's athletes and families must navigate recruiting, transfer portals, social media visibility, personal branding, Name, Image and Likeness (NIL) opportunities, financial decisions, contractual considerations, public exposure, and increasingly complex athletic ecosystems.

Yet despite these changes, one reality remains constant: most families are not prepared for the responsibilities that accompany opportunity. Athletes train for competition. Families rarely train for opportunity. This Playbook was created to help close that gap.

It was not written merely to explain NIL. It was written to provide perspective. It was written to provide structure. It was written to provide a framework that helps athletes and families navigate opportunity with wisdom, maturity, stewardship, and intentionality.

Throughout these pages, readers will discover that NIL is not the destination. The NFL is not the destination. Even athletic success itself is not the destination. Rather, these opportunities represent stages within a much larger journey of personal development, family stewardship, community impact, and legacy creation.

**Opportunity creates responsibility. Responsibility requires stewardship.
Stewardship creates impact. Impact creates legacy.**

Whether an athlete eventually competes professionally, earns a collegiate scholarship, starts a business, serves a community, or leads a family, the principles contained within these pages remain relevant. The goal is not merely to build better athletes. The goal is to build stronger families, wiser decision-makers, responsible leaders, and faithful stewards of opportunity.

If this Playbook helps even one family navigate that journey more effectively, then its purpose will have been fulfilled.

Dedication

This Playbook is dedicated to every athlete who has been entrusted with opportunity, every family who has sacrificed in support of a dream, and every community that has poured time, encouragement, resources, and faith into the development of its young people.

It is dedicated to the parents who rise early, travel countless miles, work long hours, and make sacrifices that often go unseen.

It is dedicated to the coaches, mentors, teachers, pastors, and community leaders who recognize that athletics is not merely about competition, but about character, discipline, leadership, and personal growth.

It is dedicated to those who understand that while athletic achievement may open doors, the ultimate objective is not simply success on the field, but the development of responsible men and women who will positively impact their families, communities, and future generations.

Most importantly, it is dedicated to the belief that opportunity is a gift, stewardship is a responsibility, and legacy is built one decision at a time.

May every athlete who reads these pages remember that talent may create opportunity, but character determines what is ultimately built from it.

Acknowledgments

No meaningful endeavor is ever accomplished alone. While this Playbook bears a title page and an author's name, it is ultimately the product of countless lessons learned through conversations, observations, experiences, mentors, coaches, athletes, families, educators, community leaders, and faith-filled individuals who have contributed to the perspectives contained within these pages.

First and foremost, all honor, glory, and gratitude belong to God. The principles of stewardship, service, leadership, responsibility, family, community, and legacy that form the foundation of this Playbook originate from a belief that every opportunity entrusted to us carries a responsibility to serve others well. Without God's guidance, grace, wisdom, and provision, this work would not exist.

Special appreciation is extended to the many athletes whose journeys inspired the creation of this Playbook. Some achieved extraordinary success. Others faced adversity, disappointment, and unexpected challenges. Each provided valuable lessons regarding perseverance, character, resilience, and the responsibilities that accompany opportunity.

This work is also dedicated to the parents and families who quietly sacrifice behind the scenes. The early mornings, long drives, financial commitments, emotional support, encouragement, discipline, and unwavering belief often go unseen by the public. Yet these sacrifices frequently form the foundation upon which athletic success is built.

To the coaches, mentors, educators, pastors, community leaders, and volunteers who invest in young people every day, thank you. Your influence often extends far beyond athletics and leaves a lasting impact that reaches into future generations.

Special recognition is also given to those working to strengthen communities through service, education, mentorship, leadership development, and stewardship. Many of the concepts contained within this Playbook emerged from a broader commitment to community development and the belief that strong individuals, strong families, and strong communities are interconnected.

Gratitude is extended to New Birth Villages Ministries (NBVM), whose mission, values, and commitment to serving families, communities, and future generations helped shape the broader vision behind this work. The Family Blessing Office™ concept, stewardship principles, and governance frameworks presented throughout this Playbook are deeply influenced by that mission.

Finally, thank you to every family who chooses to invest the time required to read, discuss, and implement the concepts contained within these pages.

The greatest success of this Playbook will never be measured by books distributed, workshops delivered, NIL opportunities secured, scholarships awarded, or professional contracts signed. Its success will ultimately be measured by stronger families, wiser decisions, responsible stewardship, positive community impact, and lasting legacy.

May the principles contained within these pages serve as tools that help athletes and families navigate opportunity with wisdom, humility, purpose, and faith. And may every blessing entrusted to us become a blessing for others.