

ASU and GoDaddy launch Student Athlete Venture Studio

First-of-its-kind program helps student-athletes navigate name, image and likeness licensing

By Sandy Keaton Leander, ASU News
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In a groundbreaking initiative aimed at empowering college athletes beyond their playing careers, Arizona State University and GoDaddy teamed up to launch the first-of-its-kind [Student Athlete Venture Studio](#).

The program helps student-athletes navigate the rapidly changing landscape of name, image and likeness licensing by providing them with the tools, mentorship and resources to develop, launch and grow business ventures.

Initiated and designed by the [J. Orin Edson Entrepreneurship + Innovation Institute](#) at ASU, GoDaddy and Sun Devil Athletics, this collaboration combines ASU's entrepreneurial resources with GoDaddy's digital expertise to help student-athletes build their brands.

"The Student Athlete Venture Studio enables collegiate athletes to become entrepreneurs and provides a proactive approach to navigating NIL successfully," said Jeff Kunowski, associate director of innovation programs at Edson E+I Institute. "By fostering interdisciplinary collaboration across ASU and leveraging sport as a platform, we are helping athletes develop ventures and lifelong skills to help them excel beyond their careers as college athletes."

Following a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 2021, student-athletes have been navigating what is a relatively new entrepreneurial landscape. College athletes can now benefit financially from their name, image and likeness with no penalty from the NCAA, but figuring out how to do so can be complicated and time consuming.

As part of this program, student-athletes will benefit from in-person and online educational content, opportunities to compete for grant funding, and a collaborative working space at Mountain America Stadium, a significant location due to its proximity to Sun Devil Athletics administration, facilities and the athletes themselves. This convenient setting allows athletes to easily schedule and drop in for hands-on mentoring sessions. Dedicated workstations and conference rooms provide a professional environment where they can actively develop their ventures.

GoDaddy helped found the initiative through its global social impact program, [Empower by GoDaddy](#), and will provide more than 650 student-athletes with free access to digital branding tools, including GoDaddy Airo, the company's AI-powered solution for developing an online presence in minutes. These resources, consisting of more than \$1 million in combined cash and in-kind support to be distributed to students in 2025, allow athletes to establish a professional online presence, launch ventures quickly and easily scale their ideas.

“We’re thrilled to combine the business-building power of GoDaddy Airo with the drive and immense potential of these enterprising student-athletes,” said Jared Sine, chief strategy and legal officer at GoDaddy. “According to our research, 50% of Gen Z aspire to become entrepreneurs, and through Empower by GoDaddy, we’re accelerating this journey for these young innovators by providing them with the tools they need to bring their business dreams to life off the field.”

The program’s inspiration came from a collaboration between Kunowski and Kate Fitzgerald, a former ASU women’s beach volleyball player and founder of [VBAmerica](#), a volleyball lifestyle clothing brand.

“NIL regulations and ASU’s innovative resources allowed me to launch VBAmerica and build opportunities for life after sport,” Fitzgerald said. “As student athletic council president, I saw a need to help other athletes access these same resources: launching businesses, securing grants and building networks. The Student Athlete Venture Studio embodies this mission, empowering athletes to thrive through NIL and entrepreneurship.”

Athletes in the program will pitch their venture ideas for seed funding during a Demo Day each academic year.

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Main image



Argentina Ung sets the ball during a matchup against the University of Arizona in Desert Financial Arena on Oct. 9, 2024. Photo courtesy of ASU Knowledge Enterprise