

ASU receives \$10M gift to endow football coach position

Gift from Brian and Kelly Swette is the largest endowed leadership position in Sun Devil Athletics

By Scott Bordow, ASU News
May 1, 2026

Brian Swette loves college sports and what they mean to a university.

“Success in sports is important for the university,” said Swette, who graduated from Arizona State University in 1976 with a bachelor’s degree in economics. “It enhances the college experience. It brings a sense of community and pride. It enriches our brand. It engages alumni and builds support for the university.”

That belief, along with his support of ASU head football coach Kenny Dillingham, has led Brian and his wife, Kelly, to establish the Swette Family Endowed Football Coach position.

Their \$10 million gift is the largest endowed leadership position in Sun Devil Athletics.

The gift will support:

- Recruitment and retention of the best and brightest student-athletes to ASU

- Recruitment and retention of best-in-class coaches and staff

- Retention and compensation of Sun Devil Football student-athletes as allowed by the NCAA

- New technologies to enhance athletes’ physical and mental development

It is the second endowed coaching position at the university. The Greg Powers Endowed Men’s Hockey Head Coach position was endowed in late 2025.

It’s also the third major gift to ASU from the Swette family. In 2007, the couple made a major gift to establish the [Biodesign Swette Center for Environmental Biotechnology](#), and a major gift in 2017 to establish the [Swette Center for Sustainable Food Systems](#) at ASU, and to create the Swette

Family Scholarship Program, which provides financial support to students from agricultural farmworking and food-working families.

“The dynamics of athletics has changed with NIL and the (transfer) portal,” Swette said. “It requires a new type of leadership. Kenny is uniquely suited to success. We are proud to support him.”

Dillingham guided the Sun Devil football team to the Big 12 championship and College Football Playoff in 2024, just his third year leading the program.

“It’s an honor to have the Swette family endow the head coaching position, and I can’t wait to continue building this program into what it can be with continued support,” said Dillingham, who has made “Activate the Valley” his rallying cry since [being hired](#) in November 2022. “Commitments like this show the direction of the program and buy-in this program has from the community. The Swette family has been a vital piece of our program from season one on, and this gift marks a next-level commitment.”

ASU President Michael Crow said the gift will “enable and empower coach Dillingham to take his energy and creativity to a new level, and will equip the Sun Devil football program with new tools to compete and advance.

“Sun Devil football brings together the entire ASU community around our shared passion for the university and our drive to compete and be the very best. Brian Swette and his wife Kelly have been extraordinary supporters of ASU for many years, and today’s gift is an expression of commitment that we deeply appreciate. We are extremely grateful for their generosity and devotion.”

The gift, part of [ASU's Changing Futures campaign](#) to inspire tomorrow's game changers, supports a larger university priority to advance Sun Devil Athletics and solidify its place as a leader on the national scene.

“This gift not only represents the maturation of Sun Devil Football but also signifies the value this program brings to Sun Devil Athletics and the entire ASU community,” said Scott Nelson, vice president of enterprise development with the ASU Foundation for a New American University and executive senior associate athletics director.

(Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=keblIZzRJGU>)

ASU Athletics Director Graham Rossini said the Swette’s gift illustrates the “momentum around Sun Devil football.”

“Brian is an ardent supporter of football and Sun Devil Athletics,” Rossini said. “We’re very grateful that Brian and Kelly stepped up with this endowment.”

Swette said he needed little convincing when he was first approached. The reason: His confidence in Dillingham.

“Number one, I think he is a first-class coach,” Swette said. “But he’s also a great leader of men. He has incredible authenticity and character, and he loves our state and our university. We’re blessed to have a guy of that caliber on both sides of the equation ... competence and character.”

Swette and Rossini said they hope the gift will inspire others to support Sun Devil Athletics.

“It’s time for the alumni base, business community and our political leaders to embrace our athletic programs,” Swette said. “We’ll never have a better coach. Kids love coming here. We have great academics.

“If you were trying to decide where to go to school, I don’t think there could be a better place in terms of education, personal growth, opportunities and having a great college experience. No one can beat ASU in that regard.”

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

Main image



ASU head football coach Kenny Dillingham before a game against Kansas at Mountain America Stadium in Tempe on Oct. 5, 2024. This was ASU football’s first Big 12 game at home. Photo by Samantha Chow/Arizona State University

Text image(s)



Brian and Kelly Swette. Courtesy photo