

Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) Influences Adolescent Athletes’ Disclosure of Health Information

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INTRODUCTION: Underreporting of injuries in adolescent sports medicine potentially compromises safe return-to-play decisions and an athlete’s long-term health. NIL deals have rapidly grown in scale and value, creating financial and reputational pressures that may influence athletes’ medical decision-making and possibly withholding health information. The impact of NIL awareness on injury reporting behavior remains largely unstudied.

METHODS: A cross-sectional survey was distributed to high school and collegiate athletes in Georgia annually from 2023–2025. The survey collected data on demographics, injury history, NIL policy familiarity, and willingness to disclose health information. Multivariable logistic regression was used to identify predictors of nondisclosure. Chi-square tests assessed changes in NIL-related beliefs and behaviors over time. Statistical significance was defined as $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS: Across three-year survey cohorts, there were 1076 respondents, 902 high school athletes, and 174 collegiate athletes. 25% of high school and 12% of collegiate athletes indicated they would withhold health information to protect NIL opportunities. Multivariable logistic regressions identified (OR 1.60, 95% CI [1.07–2.48] $p = 0.023$), belief that NIL could be affected by medical issues, and greater NIL policy familiarity (OR 1.78, 95% CI [1.08–3.06], $p = 0.024$) were independently associated with increased odds of withholding. Baseball players (OR 1.75, 95% CI [1.02–3.00], $p = 0.042$) were more likely to withhold, while soccer players (OR 0.42, 95% CI [0.19–0.95], $p = 0.012$) and undergraduate students (OR 0.37, 95% CI [0.35–0.64], $p = 0.002$) were less likely. Chi-square analysis demonstrated significant year-over-year changes in belief that NIL could be affected by medical issues ($\chi^2(4) = 44.87$, $p < 0.001$) and willingness to withhold health information ($\chi^2(4) = 22.77$, $p < 0.001$), but not in NIL policy familiarity ($\chi^2(4) = 5.11$, $p = 0.276$).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION: NIL policy familiarity and belief that medical issues may jeopardize NIL opportunities are associated with increased willingness to withhold injury information among adolescent athletes. Significant year-over-year changes suggest evolving attitudes in response to NIL policy exposure. These findings highlight the need for targeted education and safeguards to ensure injury disclosure in an increasingly commercialized amateur sports environment.

Table 1: Year-over-year differences in NIL-related responses

Question	Chi-square Statistic (χ^2)	Degrees of Freedom (df)	p-value
Familiarity with NIL	5.11	4	0.276
Belief NIL could be affected by medical issues	44.87	4	<0.001
Willingness to withhold health information	22.77	4	<0.001

Table 1: Chi-square test results comparing student responses to three NIL-related questions across the 2023, 2024, and 2025 survey years. Statistically significant variation was observed in belief that medical issues could affect NIL opportunities and willingness to withhold health information. No significant year-over-year difference was found in familiarity with NIL policies.

Table 2: NIL-Related Beliefs as Predictors of Withholding Health Information

Category	OR (95% CI)	p-value
NIL Familiarity		
No Knowledge	Reference	-
Somewhat Familiar	0.85 (0.67-1.45)	0.542
Very Familiar	1.78 (1.08-3.06)	0.024
Belief NIL Affected by Health		
No	Reference	-
Somewhat	0.79 (0.69-1.21)	0.298
yes	1.60 (1.07-2.48)	0.023

Table 2: Logistic regression results evaluating the association between students’ familiarity with NIL policies, their belief that health status could impact NIL opportunities, and their willingness to withhold health information. Reference groups: “No Knowledge” for familiarity and “No” for NIL impact belief.