

## Dave Meluni | The Best Way To Position Yourself For An NIL Deal

Hello everyone Welcome to this episode of the Players Nil podcast I'd like to welcome a special guest today from Syracuse University He's an assistant teaching professor in sports management at the David B Falk College of Sport and Human Development And uh I'd like to welcome Dave Maloney Dave How are you today Good good Thanks for uh thanks for having me Mark I appreciate it Well it's a pleasure Dave I've been following you on uh social media and linkedin and you're actively involved in name image and likeness which is what the players N I is all about specifically You're involved in education But before that I like to get in Go back a little bit I used two words and they're not interchangeable to me They're different and that's sports and athletics And to me sports is the fandom part of it It's going to watch it's paying attention to uh your favorite team watching on television Going with a family member Athletics is when you compete you know it's preparing to compete as an athlete Athletics involves preparation practice winning and losing all those life lessons Let's talk about sports first Tell me some of your early memories of what you watched who you're with and some of the events that you attended Yeah I mean I grew up here in Syracuse and I I always kind of joke um 1987 you know at Syracuse basketball I mean I remember Keith Smart like yesterday and then I cried like a you know cried like a little baby as a nine year old and but uh I think that right there um regardless win or loss um you know I was just a fan for life you know I mean I just on every little instance of su basketball I followed everything from you know Sherman Douglas was my favorite player but Ronnie Pyle Derek Coleman Billy Owens you know I can I remember all those guys and going out and you know shoveling the driveway and and trying to sort of uh emulate Sherman and and you know along those lines that's probably my first um I believe that are not like those are the first recollections I had with Syracuse basketball You know we grew up in you know growing up in Syracuse we had the Syracuse Chiefs which were the Toronto Blue Jays affiliate And um you know the Tony Fernandez is and you know I remember the Red Sox coming in with Mo Bond and hitting home runs And so I mean I remember all of that but those were probably my earliest recollections of uh of sport that's awesome And you know having lived in Syracuse myself I know all those names and watched most of those

games So I I understand the importance especially to a community like Syracuse So then the other word that we used is athletics So now you become a fan you're shoveling the driveway you're shooting hoops you're throwing the baseball out in those wonderful spring days in April in central New York So now you become an athlete let's talk about your athletic career and and where that brought you Yeah I mean I I just simply as a kid you know my things have changed drastically and um you know we have two boys and 16 and 13 But you know when I was growing up it was I loved basketball I mean that was you know I had you know every year I'd asked my dad to buy the NBA Almanac and um I followed everything basketball and um played baseball and played soccer and um you know it just became repetition like you know I I wore out the side of my grandparents chimney by throwing a racquetball and shooting hoops and tennis baseball in the neighborhood And um but that's really how it all started It was just my parents uh introduced me to sports and you know I played you know basketball put the shoes away played baseball put the cleats away played soccer you know put the cleats away and it just went from season to season to season And um you know I always said it was pretty athletic you know pretty athletic And um then had an opportunity I played you know varsity Leonard in three sports at West Tennessee And um ultimately ended up uh really going down the path of baseball and had a great opportunity to get recruited and ended up going to Ithaca College was the best decision I ever made and played for a gentleman that's in the ABC A Hall of Fame George Vani And I wouldn't have traded that for uh for anything So you're you know you're living the dream you're you're a sports fan you become an athlete you get the opportunity to use that to improve your life and go to college Tell us about some of the lessons that you a manager in baseball and some of you maybe some of your professors uh imparted upon you at Ithaca College Still there Mark Yeah we'll we'll I lost the last part there about uh college Yeah So just just tell me about some of the lessons you learned at Ithaca College and and how athletics help prepare you for life during that period of your time Yeah I mean like I said I I probably didn't understand it at the time And like I said you know coach sent besides my dad and grandfather was like you know I would consider him my the the next dad and um a mentor and you know some of the simple things is you know I'll tell you a really quick little story here I was a senior Um and he may not remember this but I remember it Well I was a senior and and we were flying pretty high We were ranked in the top 15th I think as high as ninth um at the time and um we had

a practice and and we were doing our circuits of running the bases And um one of the last sort of uh circuits was you have to run a home run So it's down to 1st 1st the third so on and so forth So uh one of the last ones is you run around the bases and uh we got all done Everybody was pretty hyped up We had a good practice and and coach just said all right let's go get back to home plate So you know I'm a captain and and I said you know coach WW what are we doing And he said well you missed second base So I I won't share what I sort of said under my breath but I wasn't very happy and um ended up you know doing it again going up to take a shower and I wasn't very happy and guys are looking at me like hey here's our captain didn't even do the drill Right And you know I had to walk by my coach's office and sort of go hey coach have a good night I probably said it sarcastically and said Maloy come back in here So I came in and I go what's up He knew I was mad and he goes you didn't miss second base said I know I didn't miss second base He said but I needed to use somebody as an example for us not to get complacent We couldn't have done everything successful in the last two weeks we haven't lost a game We had a flawless practice and we needed something negative to end to keep people on their toes mark I'll never forget that Right Um And and is it fair No is it teaching a lesson Yes Did he know that I could probably handle it Yes Could he have done it with some other guys Probably not Um So again those are the things that I I always take like every time you're having a little bit of success put it in perspective Um And understand that at any point you can get knocked down to here It could be taking an exam and you getting a 95 and the next exam you get a 65 we talk about in my household It's like compete Everything you do You compete because as soon as somebody sees that weakness they're gonna jump on it Yeah great lesson and you know how thankful are you and it's great great story And so you you have this career at Ithaca College you play on a great team you know probably friends for life and memories that you just shared So now you start your career and so you are now a retired athlete at least from a competitive standpoint even though in your mind I'm sure you thought you could still play like all of us right But uh so now you start your career tell me how athletics played a part in how you competed in business and in their professional life Yeah I mean you know when I was at Ithaca you know again everybody might look at it and say division three athletics and um but guys could play you know when I was there uh four guys ended up signing pro contracts One made it the AAA um So you always in the back of your mind thought is there an opportunity Um And but that's what it was

that's not what it was all about when I was a junior at Ithaca I was nominated by a professor to attend the NC a leadership conference and there were 300 student athletes and I really wanted to do it and I wrote an essay and the NC A selected me to do that and I was part of the student athlete advisory council And soon as I got back from that my junior year going into my senior year and I knew that I wanted to work in collegiate athletics just from that experience Um so I applied to 56 graduate programs at the major division one level because I had had an opportunity to work in athletics at Ithaca And then Cornell is on the other side of the hill and worked a little bit in hockey and basketball ticket sales in the office So you know relationships uh everything's relationships My coach at Ithaca had a great relationship with Mike Martin um who's a baseball coach just retired from FSU at Florida State uh made a phone call and uh you know send a fax Nobody knows what faxes are anymore fax your resume down get a phone call on an answering machine No one knows what that is anymore And um because of a relationship um and a recommendation um I got a g a position in the athletic department at Florida State Uh when I graduated at the I was playing every summer So I had to do a Capstone And by chance I did the Capstone at Syracuse University in athletics Then I went down to Florida State was down there for 18 months got my graduate degree um got a full time position as a marketing assistant and then uh got the phone call that uh they were looking for an entry level sales person back at S Syracuse with ISP Sportss and uh full circle I came back and I'm sure we'll talk about some of the other things I did But uh came back home moved back in with my uh my parents which was awesome and uh survived that for maybe a year and uh and got out of my own a little bit So living the dream as a graduate assistant probably eating peanut butter and jelly sandwiches between innings That's exactly what we're doing Yeah You know it's part of paying the dues Right So now you're in sports marketing sponsorship you're working in the world of athletics your dream Um you're using your athletic background to compete and to advance Let's fast forward Now you get this opportunity here at Syracuse University Let's talk about name image and likeness not so much about what it means but why it's important to you and how you think you can influence today's young athletes Yeah I mean I think it it's gonna go back all the way to Africa So you know I'm I'm again I've been teaching now going on my eighth year here with uh three as an adjunct that will be coming up on my fifth year next year And you know when I was at Ithaca I explained that I was nominated by you know a professor on campus to go to the NC A

leadership conference And um that changed everything So not only did I have a chance to go to that but I also um had an opportunity to play in the New York Collegiate Baseball League which is one of 12 13 leagues that is funded in part by major league baseball And it's really an opportunity to see if you can make it right if you can get drafted and and so on and so forth So I played in that league two years The first year I I played in the league we had 28 guys on the roster 13 got drafted one made the major leagues when I was around Indiana Georgia Ole Miss really sort of opened my eyes to number one All the cool gear those guys got we got a little bit of gear in Ithaca but all these guys were getting Louisville batting gloves and cleats and all this stuff Um then you know when I got to Florida State and I saw that side of things I said and then when I got the sponsorship I said wow I understand their scholarships right I understand like men's and women's basketball hockey to some extent uh really men's and women's basketball and football get full scholarships But when I talked to these guys especially one guy who made it to the majors in Indiana And he said like hey I don't have a full scholarship It's 11.7 scholarships It might have been a little bit more or a little bit less than but it's 11.7 scholarships Now in baseball only 25% is the minimum and you know from um your background with lacrosse and I sat there and I said wow these guys can't even go out and do a lesson Right So the the park school um and Ithaca had students doing television and radio but really it was the music school So I had students or or um friends that were in the music school I had one in particular was a roommate of mine and uh he was in the music school at Ithaca College and uh he was doing lessons on the side and he was making money and he was getting some money there from academic and and you know he could get scholarship from that standpoint and uh and uh in the music world but we couldn't technically in athletics Right So started to spear you know the the hamster wheel in my head and and then I started to see in the sponsorship when I worked for ISP and IMG And uh then I had an opportunity when I worked at sidearm sports to just see like the profiles that schools were building on athletes and video And then when I got here and and we're talking Instagram and branding and I just said wow I said something's gonna shake and then really last January not this one but the one before when the NC A didn't make a decision at the convention on what they were gonna do I was prepared this past summer um to write a course and I said I'm gonna write this course and um we're gonna talk about Instagram we're gonna talk about brands We're gonna work with a software called Sponsor United because students aren't gonna know how to even look

at the prospects and um and then you throw in agents and all this other stuff So my job is to educate the students on you know how do they build their brand Um What are the options for monetization No not everybody has time to do a youtube channel but not everybody has time to do camps either So you have to find that happy medium and guess what And if you're an athlete um that you're taking my course that's one thing But what about the other students in the class that actually can help represent athletes Um is where the thing is going uh for the industry side Fantastic And you know part of our mission here at the players nil is to give back and uh congratulations on all that you've accomplished and the giving back So we'll finish up with question number three and it's it's pretty straightforward you know not the mechanics but go back to Dave Maloney freshman at Ithaca College nil is available What advice would you give him Yeah I mean I guess for me it's a little bit different right I mean I wouldn't have been going down to Rogan's Pizza and signing a deal Um but I think it was just from an nil standpoint Everybody has some options Right Everybody has things that they can do So I don't care if you are the starting shortstop at Ithaca right now or you're the starting attack man or attack woman at Syracuse right So what do you want to get out of this What I'm really excited for is the summer because the summer is gonna present athletes an opportunity to go home and do a camp or do lessons when I worked or I'm sorry when I was in high school I'll never forget this So I played three sports on Sundays I literally stocked shelves Um And you remember phase right In Carl's drug store I worked at PS Right And I stocked like beans on shelves for like seven hours eight hours on a Sunday I would have loved to be able to have gone and done some lessons for even let's just say \$40 an hour Um and did that for three or four hours and then got my hitting in and working with kids And that's where the the Dave Maloney of old would have said here's how I can make a little bit of money or do camps or do some of that stuff Um and then Instagram and social media I'm not sure Right Um It would have all depended on you know if there's some local sporting goods store or I don't think that would have come into play for me but my suggestion is one What are you passionate about There's a lot of student athletes that are passionate about food and cooking and hunting and fishing and art and music in sneakers You can use that platform now at nil to to monetize a little bit But I'm I'm really curious on how it's gonna be for camps and lessons and and and it's not gonna be a lot of money in a division three and division two school and it could be some substantial money at division one but it's how are you going to position yourself And if you want

are on social media you gotta be engaged right A 300,000 follower account is not gonna work as much as if that 300,000 follower account only has a 3% engagement rate compared to somebody that has the magic number I use is 10,000 if they have a 78% engagement rate because that's what brands are looking for Wow powerful my friend um great stuff and uh you know I uh congratulations again and best of luck to you and your family and your boys young athletes So you're getting to live that part of this this circle And pretty soon you'll complete that circle when your kids use athletics to better their lives and you will have accomplished your goals So thank you for joining the podcast here at the players nil and we wish you all the best Hey thanks for having me Mark I really appreciate it