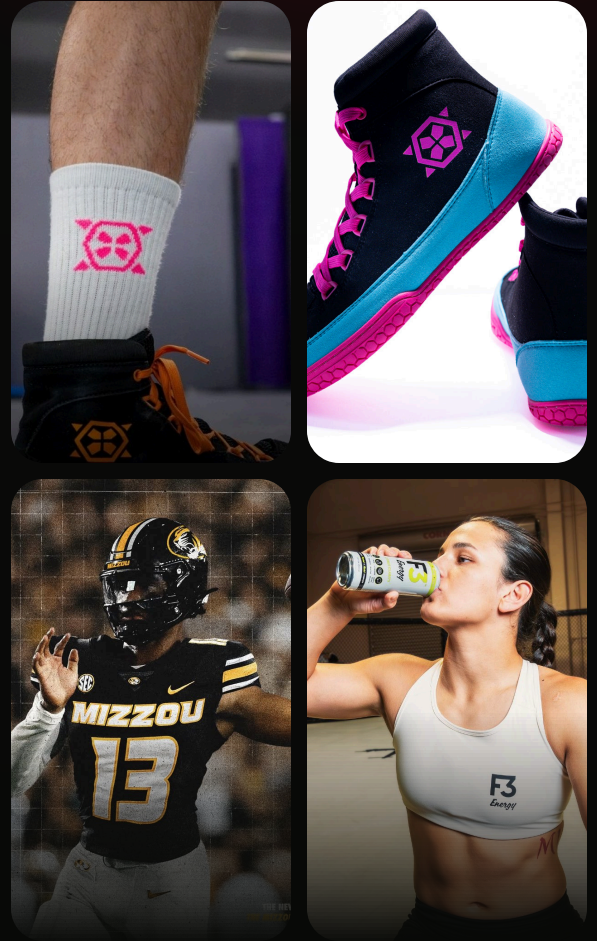


• THE ATHLETESCALE SYSTEM · NIL ATHLETE ADS

The AthleteScale *Playbook.*

Turn athlete content into sales you can trace.
One athlete your buyers already trust, their
content run as ads from their own handle,
every sale tracked.



\$1,679

in Meta ads

Sep 28–Oct 19, 2026 · Meta Ads Manager

\$15,944

in tracked sales

92 orders · Meta Ads Manager

9.5x

return on ad spend

tracked sales, not profit

Combat X × Jax Forrest signature drop, three-week presale.

• WHY THIS PLAYBOOK

How to go from “*we paid an athlete and got a lot of likes*” to knowing which post sold what.

Three parts. Twelve sections. One system: match the athlete, shoot content that sells, run it from their handle, track and scale.

This isn't another guide to influencer shoutouts.

Most athlete marketing is sold on reach: follower counts, views, a nice post on launch day. Then the post scrolls away and nobody can say what it sold.

This playbook is written from inside the ad accounts we run for brands. Apparel, gear, drinks and local businesses that need the athlete to move product, not just make the feed look good.

I spent years at Microsoft and Accenture before I started Evolve Demand. We run Meta and TikTok ads, and we track every sale back to the ad that made it. Our athlete NIL partner, **Axe Sports Group**, handles the athletes: roster, deals and permissions. We handle the ads and the tracking.

An athlete post is a moment. The same content run as ads, from the athlete's own handle, is a sales channel.

Here's the pattern we see. A brand pays an athlete. The athlete posts once. The brand gets a spike of likes, maybe a few orders, and no way to tell which ones came from the athlete. So the next deal is a guess, and the one after that.

The fix is simple to describe. Pick the athlete on fit. Shoot content built to run as ads. Run it from their handle so it reads as the athlete, not a brand. Trace every sale to the ad that produced it. We call that last piece an **Athlete Receipt**.

Use this yourself. Hand it to your team. Or, if you'd rather we run it, the last page tells you how to get a free Athlete Match.



Dev Anandpara

FOUNDER, EVOLVE DEMAND · PHILADELPHIA

PART 1

The Problem

Why most athlete deals end with a screenshot, not a sales number.

PART 2

The System

Four steps. Run them in order.

PART 3

The Proof

A real presale, the weekly numbers, your first 60 days.

• CONTENTS

What's inside.

Twelve sections, one system.

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02	Posted once vs. run as ads.	07

• PART 02 · THE SYSTEM

03	The AthleteScale System, on one page.	09
04	Step 1 · Match the athlete.	10
05	Step 2 · Shoot content that sells.	11
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• PART 03 · THE PROOF

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12	Ten mistakes that waste athlete deals.	22

• THE DEAL

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• PART 01

01

The *Problem.*

Why most athlete deals end with a screenshot,
not a sales number.



You don't have a reach problem. *You have a receipt problem.*

Ask a brand what its last athlete deal did and you'll hear views and likes. Ask how many sales it drove, and which post drove them, and the room goes quiet.

That silence is the problem. Without it, every athlete decision is a guess: who to sign next, how much to pay, whether to renew, whether athlete marketing "works" at all. Brands end up judging deals by how good the post looked.

The half you can't see

Every buyer an athlete brings you walks the same path. Most deals only measure the top two steps, and the money is in the bottom three.



A post with a million views and no traced sales is expensive. A smaller athlete whose ads sell is cheap. You can only tell them apart if you can see all five steps.

• ACTION STEP

Pull your last athlete or creator deal. Write down: what you paid, views, clicks, orders. If you can't fill in orders from a system, not a guess, that's the first thing to fix. Section 07 shows you how.

Posted once *vs. run as ads.*

There are two ways to use an athlete. One buys a single moment. The other turns the same content into something you can run, test and scale every week.

POSTED

**One post. One day.
Hope it lands.**

RUN AS ADS

**Same content, every week.
Every sale traced.**

	POSTED ONCE	RUN AS ADS
How long it runs	One day in the feed, then gone	As long as it sells
Who sees it	Whoever the algorithm shows that day	The buyers you target, again and again
How it reads	A post	The athlete, from their own handle
What you learn	Likes and views	Which hook, cut and athlete produced each sale
What you keep	A screenshot for the deck	The ad account, pixel, content and data

A feed post competes with everything else the athlete posts that week. An ad doesn't. It reaches the people most likely to buy, shows them the athlete more than once, and keeps going while it sells.

Why the athlete still matters

Brand ads get scrolled past because they look like brand ads. Content from someone the buyer already follows, trusts or roots for gets watched. Running it as a Partnership or Spark Ad keeps that trust and adds the targeting, testing and tracking a post never has.

The goal isn't a viral post. It's athlete content that sells on repeat, with a receipt for every sale.

• PART 02

02

The *System.*

Four steps from athlete post to paying customer.



The AthleteScale System, *on one page.*

From athlete post to paying customer. Four steps, in order. When an athlete campaign underperforms, one of these is broken.

01

SEC 04

Match the athlete

Your product, buyer and goal first. Picked on fit, not follower count.



02

SEC 05

Shoot content that sells

Shot to run as ads, not to sit on a feed.

03

SEC 06

Run it from their handle

Partnership and Spark Ads from the athlete's own account.



04

SEC 07

Track and scale

Every sale traced to its ad. Budget moves weekly to what sells.

↓ ALL FOUR SIT ON ↓

The Athlete *Receipt*

SEC 07

Every purchase or lead traced to the athlete ad that produced it. You own the data.

Who does what

AXE SPORTS GROUP

The athlete

Roster, fit, the athlete fee quote, contracts and permission to run ads from the athlete's handle.

EVOLVE DEMAND

The ads

Content plan, hooks and cuts, Meta and TikTok campaigns, tracking, weekly budget moves.

YOU

The brand

Product, offer, approvals. Ad spend goes to Meta and TikTok on your card. You own the account.

When a campaign underperforms, one step is broken. Find it before you touch the budget or swap the athlete.

Step 1 · Match the athlete.

Fit, not follower count.

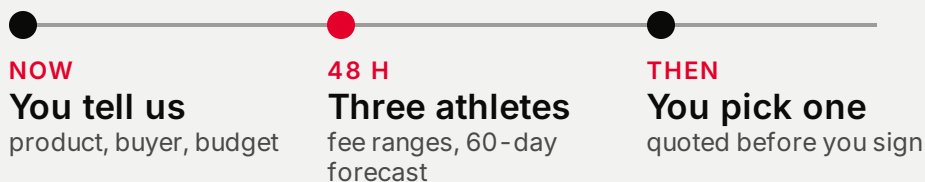
Product, buyer and goal first. Then the shortlist. A big following that doesn't buy what you sell is the most expensive reach there is.

The fit scorecard

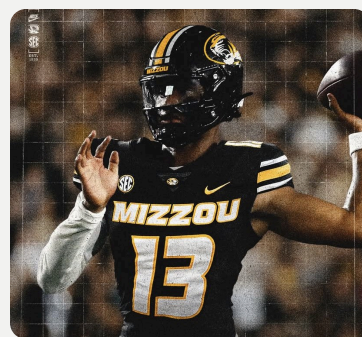
Anyone under 3 on buyer overlap or ad permission is out, no matter how big they are.

CHECK	THE QUESTION	SCORE
1 Buyer overlap	Do your buyers already follow, watch or root for this athlete, their sport or their school?	/ 5
2 Real use	Would they actually use your product on camera without it looking forced?	/ 5
3 On camera	Can they talk straight to the lens for 15 seconds and sound like themselves?	/ 5
4 Where their fans are	Does their audience live where you can sell and ship, or near your location?	/ 5
5 Ad permission	Will they approve Partnership and Spark Ads from their handle for the whole run?	/ 5

The free Athlete Match



Our NIL partner, Axe Sports Group, builds the shortlist, with each athlete's fee range up front.



• ACTION STEP

Write one sentence: who buys your product, and where they spend time online. If your top athlete idea doesn't fit it, keep looking.

Step 2 · Shoot content that sells.

Shot to run as ads, not to sit on a feed.

Most athlete content is shot for the athlete's feed: polished, on-brand, one take. Content that sells is shot for the first two seconds and the last one.

What we shoot



Real use

The athlete using the product the way a buyer would. In the gym, on the field, in the car.



Stories

Why they use it, in their own words. One moment, not a script.



Demos

Close-ups of the product doing its job. What it is, how it works.



A hook to open

The first two seconds: a line, a move or a question that stops the scroll.



One next step

End on one action: shop the drop, get early access, book a visit.

Real NIL product content from Axe Sports Group athletes.

One shoot day, many ads

Plan the shoot around the cuts you'll need, not around one finished video. A half-day shoot should give you:

- **6–10 hooks:** different opening lines and moments for the same product.
- **3–4 real-use scenes** you can mix and match behind any hook.
- **A 15-second straight-to-camera take** in the athlete's words, plus vertical and square framing for every scene.

If it only works with the music on and the full 60 seconds watched, it's a post. Not an ad.

Hooks that open, *endings that sell.*

The brand announcement is the weakest opener. Lead with the athlete, a real moment, or a question.

Same athlete. Different hook.

SCROLLED PAST

Introducing our new collection with @athlete!

• WATCHED

"I wore these for every session of fight camp. Here's why."

SCROLLED PAST

Proud to partner with a champion.

• WATCHED

"Three things I won't train without. Number one..."

SCROLLED PAST

Fuel like a pro. Shop now.

• WATCHED

"What I drink between doubles. Not what you'd think."

SCROLLED PAST

Big news coming soon!

• WATCHED

"They gave me my own shoe. First 100 get it early."

Six hooks to shoot every time

01 The routine. "What I do before every game."

02 The list. "Three things in my bag, always."

03 The test. Put the product through what the sport does to it.

04 The reveal. First look at a drop, a color, a signature item.

05 The answer. Reply to a real fan question about the product.

06 The invite. "First 100 get it early. Link's here."

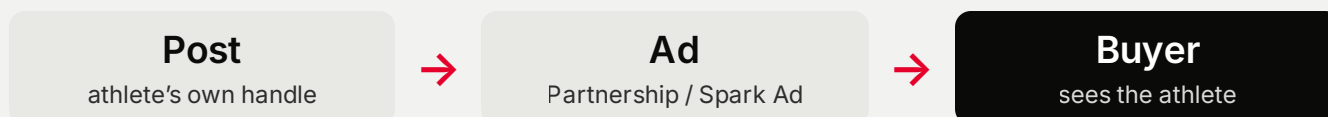
• ACTION STEP

Write six opening lines for your product, one per hook type. Read them out loud in the athlete's voice. Cut any that sound like your website.

Step 3 · Run it from their handle.

Why it doesn't look like an ad.

Footage cut into hooks and formats, run as Partnership and Spark Ads from the athlete's own account. The buyer sees the athlete, not a brand.



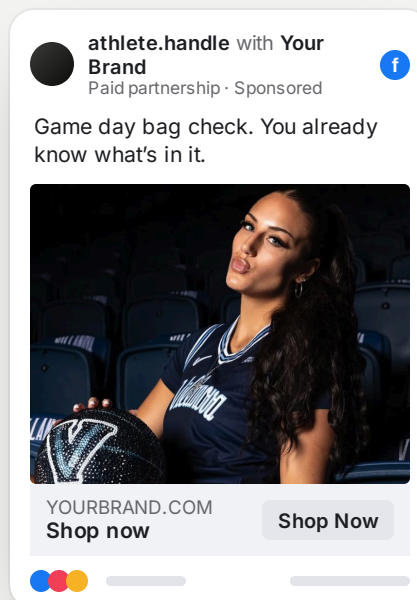
	PARTNERSHIP ADS	SPARK ADS
Platform	Meta: Facebook + Instagram	TikTok
Shows as	The athlete's handle, with your brand as partner	The athlete's original post, boosted
Needs	Athlete approves your brand as a partner	Athlete shares an authorization code
Best for	Retargeting, broad buyers, shopping and lead forms	Reaching new, younger buyers fast

How one shoot becomes 18 ads



Launch together. Losers off within days, winners get the budget.

Permission comes first. Ads only run from the athlete's account with the athlete's approval. Our NIL partner handles that permission as part of the package, so it's settled before a dollar is spent.



Partnership Ad layout. Mockup.

• ACTION STEP

Before signing, confirm in writing: ads run from their handle, on which platforms, for how long.

Step 4 · Track and scale.

Every sale traced to its ad.

An Athlete Receipt is one line of truth for every sale: which athlete, which ad, which hook, when they clicked, what they bought. Once you have them, arguments about whether the athlete “worked” end.

ATHLETE RECEIPT

ONE PER TRACKED SALE

BUYER	Order #2291, Columbus OH
ATHLETE	Your athlete
AD	Hook 3 · ‘Fight camp’ · 15s vertical
PLATFORM	Instagram Reels · Partnership Ad
CLICK	Oct 4, 8:12 PM
PURCHASE	Oct 4, 8:19 PM
ITEMS	Signature shoe + socks
<hr/> ORDER VALUE \$184	

Example layout, not a client result.

One per tracked sale. Stack a month of them and you see which athlete, hook and cut actually sell. Not which got the most views.

Total the receipts by ad and you get real **cost per sale**. That’s the number budget moves on, every week.

It all lives in a dashboard you can open any time.
You own the data.

What it takes to produce one

- 01 Meta Pixel + Conversions API, and the TikTok Pixel,** on your store, firing on every purchase or lead.
- 02 UTMs on every ad,** so each order carries its athlete, ad and hook into Shopify or your CRM.
- 03 Platform numbers checked against your store.** Ads Manager is a starting point. Your Shopify or CRM is the truth.

Budget moves weekly *to what sells.*

Once every sale has a receipt, scaling stops being a debate. Money goes to the ads that sell, comes off the ones that don't, and the next shoot is planned around what won.

The weekly budget call

IF YOU SEE	DO THIS
Cost per sale below target for 7 days	Raise budget on that ad set in steps
Cost per sale above target, enough spend to judge	Pause the ad. Keep the hook, try a new cut
One hook winning across cuts	Shoot more of that hook next time
Frequency climbing, results falling	Rotate in fresh cuts before the audience tires

Raise in steps, not leaps. Big overnight jumps can reset the platform's learning and spike costs. Raise, wait a week, read the receipts, repeat.

Minimum viable tracking

- ☐ Meta Pixel + Conversions API firing on purchase (or lead) with order value
- ☐ TikTok Pixel + Events API firing on the same events
- ☐ UTMs on every ad: athlete, hook, cut, platform
- ☐ Shopify or CRM orders tagged with the UTM source
- ☐ Weekly check: platform-reported sales vs. store orders
- ☐ Ad account, pixel and data owned by the brand, not the agency

• ACTION STEP

Pick one order from last week. Try to trace it back to the exact ad. If it takes longer than two minutes, or can't be done, your tracking is the bottleneck, not your athlete.

• PART 03

03

The *Proof*.

A real presale, the weekly numbers, and your first 60 days.



Combat X × Jax Forrest.

The athlete did the selling.

Combat X makes combat-sports apparel. For the Jax Forrest signature drop, we ran the Meta ads over a three-week presale.

MANAGED CAMPAIGN • SEP 28 – OCT 19, 2026

\$1,679

IN META ADS
Meta Ads Manager

\$15,944

IN TRACKED SALES
92 orders · Meta Ads
Manager

9.5x

RETURN
ON AD
SPEND
tracked sales,
not profit



His ad drove about 60% of early sales.

What actually moved

- **One athlete the buyers already knew.** The drop was built around Jax, so his content led every ad.
- **Content run as ads, not posted once.** The presale ran for three weeks, not one launch day.
- **Every sale tracked.** 92 orders, each attributed in Meta Ads Manager, so budget went to what sold.



The Jax Forrest signature shoe

How to read these numbers. Every sales figure here is Meta-attributed: not profit or verified Shopify revenue. Average order works out to about \$173 (\$15,944 ÷ 92). Past results for one brand, not a forecast for yours.

The numbers to check *every week.*

Views are the number everyone screenshots and the one that matters least. These six, read together, tell you which step of the system needs work.

NUMBER	FORMULA	IF IT'S OFF, LOOK AT
1 Cost per sale	Ad spend ÷ tracked sales	The whole system
2 Return on ad spend	Tracked sales \$ ÷ ad spend	Offer, price, order value
3 Hook rate	3-second views ÷ impressions	The first two seconds
4 Click-through rate	Link clicks ÷ impressions	The middle and the ending
5 Frequency	Impressions ÷ people reached	Time to rotate fresh cuts
6 Athlete share	Sales from athlete ads ÷ all sales	Is the athlete doing the selling?

Strong hook rate but weak clicks: the opening works, the ending doesn't. Good clicks but weak sales: look at the product page or offer, not the athlete.

Scale on cost per sale. Diagnose with the other five.

Weekly scorecard

NUMBER	WK 1	WK 2	WK 3	WK 4
Cost per sale				
Return on ad spend				
Hook rate				
Click-through rate				
Frequency				
Athlete share				

Know your number *before you sign an athlete.*

The question isn't "is this athlete worth it?" It's "what can I afford to pay for a sale, and how many sales does this need to make?" Work it out once and every athlete conversation gets easier.

Worked example: from order value to target cost per sale

Average order		\$120
Gross margin (55%)		\$66
Max ad spend per sale (break-even)		\$66
Target cost per sale (half of margin)		\$33

At \$1,500 a month in ad spend and a \$33 target, the ads need to drive about **45 sales a month**. Now you can judge an athlete fee against real numbers, not reach.

Hypothetical numbers for the math only, not a client result.

YOUR NUMBERS

Average order value	\$ / %
Gross margin %	\$ / %
Break-even cost per sale	\$ / %
Target cost per sale	\$ / %
Monthly ad spend	\$ / %
Sales needed per month	\$ / %
Athlete fee (from your match)	\$ / %

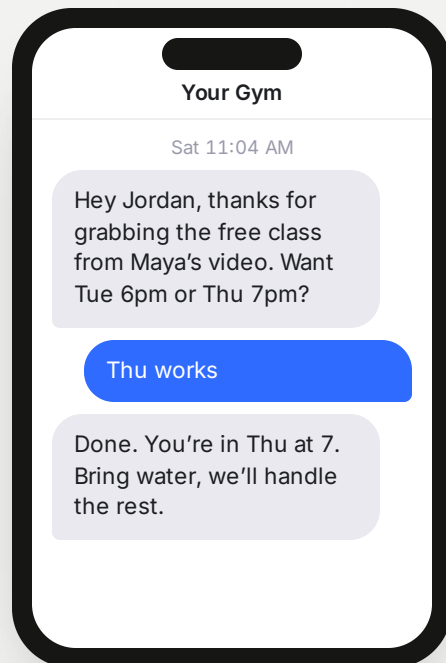
Selling a service?

The lead version.

The same system works for local businesses. For gyms, apartments, med-spas and other services near a campus or arena, the athlete content runs to a lead form or booking page instead of a store.

What changes

- 01 **The athlete is local.** A name fans on campus or at the arena already know. Their audience is your service area.
- 02 **The ad ends on a form or a booking page.** One next step: a free class, a tour, a consult.
- 03 **Every lead gets a text back within 60 seconds.** Speed decides who books. The lead that waits until tomorrow books somewhere else.
- 04 **We report cost per qualified lead.** Not cost per form fill.



Text-back within 60 seconds. Example.

Agree the lead value up front

For lead campaigns, the guarantee is measured against a per-lead value we agree in writing before launch. Work it out the same way as Section 09: what is a new member, tenant or client worth, and how many leads become one?

For a service business, the receipt traces the lead, the booking and the sale, all back to the athlete ad.

• ACTION STEP

Submit a test lead on your own form today and start a timer. How long until a text arrives? That number is your real speed to lead.

Your first 60 days.

Step by step.

Before you spend a dollar

- ☐ You know your average order value and rough margin (Section 09)
- ☐ Your store or CRM records where each order or lead came from
- ☐ Ad budget set: at least \$1,500 a month on one channel, \$3,000 across both
- ☐ Someone on your side can approve content within 48 hours

WEEKS 1-2

Match & set up

- ☐ Free Athlete Match: three athletes, fee ranges, forecast
- ☐ Athlete picked, quoted and signed by our NIL partner
- ☐ Pixels, Conversions API and UTMs installed
- ☐ Ad account and dashboard in your name

WEEKS 2-3

Shoot & approve

- ☐ Shot list built around six hook types
- ☐ Half-day shoot: hooks, real use, straight-to-camera
- ☐ Cuts edited in vertical and square
- ☐ You approve the content

WITHIN 14 DAYS OF APPROVAL

Go live

- ☐ Partnership Ads live on Meta
- ☐ Spark Ads live on TikTok (if two channels)
- ☐ 18+ variants launched together
- ☐ First Athlete Receipts in the dashboard

THROUGH DAY 60

Read & scale

- ☐ Six numbers read every week
- ☐ Losers paused, winners raised in steps
- ☐ Platform sales checked against your store
- ☐ Day 60: sales vs. ad spend, in writing

Don't judge the athlete on day three. Judge the system on whether tracked sales cover ad spend by day 60.

Ten mistakes that *waste athlete deals.*

01

MISTAKE

Picking the athlete by follower count.

• FIX

Pick on fit: buyer overlap, real use, ad permission.

02

MISTAKE

Paying for one post.

• FIX

Pay for content you can run as ads for months.

03

MISTAKE

Opening with the brand announcement.

• FIX

Open with the athlete, a moment or a question.

04

MISTAKE

Shooting one polished video.

• FIX

Shoot many hooks and cuts. Let the numbers pick.

05

MISTAKE

Running it from the brand page only.

• FIX

Run it from the athlete's handle as Partnership and Spark Ads.

06

MISTAKE

Signing before ad permission is settled.

• FIX

Get it in writing first. No permission, no deal.

07

MISTAKE

Judging by views and likes.

• FIX

Judge by cost per sale and tracked sales.

08

MISTAKE

Trusting platform numbers alone.

• FIX

Check them against Shopify or your CRM every week.

09

MISTAKE

Letting an agency own the ad account.

• FIX

Your account, your pixel, your data.

10

MISTAKE

Calling it after one week.

• FIX

Give it 60 days and read the six numbers weekly.

If the first 60 days don't return your ad spend, *the next 60 are free.*

01

Return

Tracked sales in the first 60 days equal or exceed what you spent on ads, or the next 60 days of management are free.

02

Speed

Ads live within 14 days of content approval, or month one is free.

03

Proof

Every tracked sale or lead traced to the athlete ad that produced it, in a dashboard you can open any time, or that month is free.

Terms: Ad spend goes to Meta and TikTok on your card: minimum \$1,500 a month on one channel, \$3,000 a month across both. The athlete package is quoted by our NIL partner before you sign; it is separate and not covered. The 60 days start when ads go live. Return means platform-reported sales reconciled to your Shopify or CRM in that window, against the same window's ad spend; lead campaigns use the per-lead value agreed in writing before launch. Free means our management fee; ad spend and the athlete fee continue while we keep working. Six-month minimum.

What brand builders ask before they start

How much does the athlete cost?

Our NIL partner quotes it before you sign, based on the athlete and the deliverables. Your free Athlete Match shows the fee range for each of your three matches. The athlete fee is separate from our management fee and from your ad spend.

Meta or TikTok?

Start where your buyers already spend time; your free Athlete Match recommends the first channel. Run both and we compare cost per sale across them every week.

Who owns the ad account?

You do. The ad account, pixel, content and data are yours. Ad spend goes straight to Meta and TikTok on your card, never through us.

• FREE, NO CALL

Start with the free *Athlete Match.*

Tell us who buys it and your budget. In 48 hours: three athletes, fee ranges, a 60-day forecast.

- 01 Three athletes matched to your product and buyer, picked on fit
- 02 The fee range for each, quoted by our NIL partner, Axe Sports Group
- 03 A 60-day forecast and the channel to start on

01

Return

60 days to return your ad spend, or the next 60 days of management are free.

02

Speed

Live within 14 days of content approval, or month one is free.

03

Proof

Every sale traced to its athlete ad, or that month is free.



\$1,679 in Meta ads. \$15,944 in tracked sales. 92 orders. The athlete did the selling.

Combat X × Jax Forrest · Meta-attributed, not profit

Get my free Athlete Match →

Book a quick call

evolveddemand.com/athletescale · (609) 287-3550

Turn athlete content *into sales.*

Free Athlete Match. 48 hours. No call.

evolvedemand.com/athletescale →



Results vary by business, offer, budget and market. Platform-reported figures.

Guarantee terms as stated in this playbook.

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