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Former football player launches startup to help players leverage name-image-likeness ruling

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Vantage Sports works with more than 415 college athletes that can leverage the new name-image-likeness ruling.
Patrick Johnson

By [Lauren Coffey](#) - TBBJ & Inno Reporter
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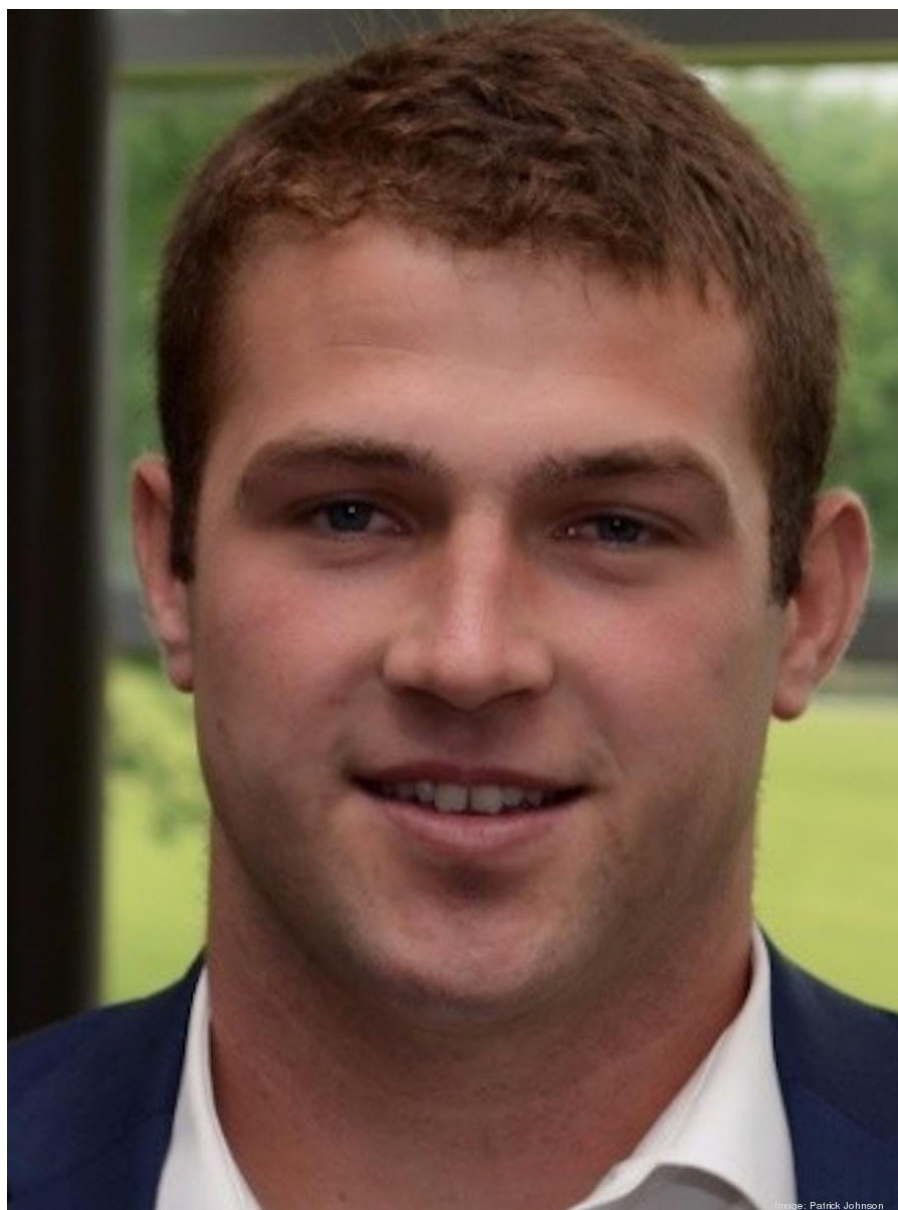
Like many startups, the genesis of Vantage Sports was a mix of opportunity and timing, according to founder [Patrick Johnson](#).

Johnson previously founded and ran a landscaping company, and while he didn't end up sticking with the company, he was bitten by the startup bug.

"I knew after my first experience I wanted to get back into something," Johnson said.

Enter the name-image-likeness bill. Once it passed, allowing college and high school athletes to make money off — you guessed it — their name, image and likeness, which previously was a right reserved for professional athletes. Johnson, a former football and lacrosse athlete, knew he had to get in the game.

"With the NIL movement, me having a couple of years of work experience and being a former athlete, it felt the time was right," he said. "I knew there were a lot of aspiring athletes who wanted to learn right from college athletes, and those that wanted to give back, and I knew technology could make it easier to connect on both sides."



Patrick Johnson, CEO and co-founder of Vantage Sports
Patrick Johnson

He launched [Vantage Sports](#) in fall 2021. The company offers a platform for high school and college athletes to offer coaching, while setting their own rates and time availability.

"With aspiring college athletes, you really don't have any other way to get to current college athletes unless you know someone or have a connection," Johnson said. "It gives the average fan access quite easily."

The company now counts roughly 415 athletes on its platform — mainly Division 1 athletes, with a focus on the Southeast including athletes from the University of South Florida. It has a mass amount of football and baseball players, but run the gamut of sports offerings including soccer and lacrosse. Johnson's near-term goal is to have 2,000 to 3,000 athletes activated each month, creating a steady stream of income for the students.

"We just want to be a valuable service for college athletes out there," Johnson said.

Vantage Sports has raised \$300,000 and is seeking a larger pre-seed round of \$1 million and has four full-time employees.

The company is Tampa based after Johnson made the move from Miami to Tampa, where he knew of the burgeoning startup scene as well as the large pool of college athletes in the region.

"I came for Tampa's up-and-coming startup scene," said Johnson, who is a member at Embarc Collective. "I felt Tampa made a bit more sense for a non-Web3 company and to take advantage of some of the athletes here."

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