“King of NIL” Rayquan Smith on How to Market Yourself with Hustle

Takeaways:

Rejection is Not “No” – Rayquan Smith doesn’t care about “rejection”. After companies initially denied the opportunity to partner with Smith, many of them changed their tune once he proved his branding and marketing value.

“The King of NIL” Origin Story – Social media is more than a place to post fun content. Rayquan Smith found his moniker, King of NIL, on Twitter and instantly leaned in. Now, searching “King of NIL” on Google will lead you to articles about Rayquan Smith.

The Right Partner is the Best Partner – Norfolk State is not a “Power 5” conference school. However, student athletes like Rayquan Smith that attend smaller schools are hungry, hard working, and willing to do what it takes to execute on a plan, making them the perfect NIL representatives.

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Labeling yourself the “King” of anything is ambitious, to say the least. For Norfolk State student athlete Rayquan Smith, being the “King of the NIL” was earned through an relentless belief in self and the ability to deal with hearing “no” until you hear “yes.”

“I don’t really care about rejection,” Rayquan “King of NIL”

Smith says on the Restaurant Influencers podcast hosted by Shawn P. Walchef of CaliBBQ Media. “Everybody gets rejected. And rejection is not a no.”

That perseverance and determination is what has led Rayquan Smith to nearly 80 deals with various businesses ranging from local companies to big ones like Eastbay and Champ Sports, and the restaurant company Bubba’s 33. That’s all despite being an athlete at a small college with an enrollment just north of 5,000 students.

NIL stands for Name, Image, Likeness. It refers to the ways student athletes can now profit from their personal brand.

The NCAA passed a rule saying that college players, notoriously unable to monetize their personal brand as student athletes, were now able to earn money based on endorsements using any of the three NIL elements: Name, Image, Likeness.

The question is how did the NIL master manage to land such a large number of sponsorship deals being a student athlete at a small college?

As Rayquan simply states, “the big time athletes ain’t always the good people to partner with.” He views the small market as an asset for athletes and encourages them to take advantage of it like he did.

Rayquan Smith is probably not a name most know upon first hearing, but it is one you should get to know. At an early age, he has found an effective way to market himself, and help others do the same. He definitely doesn’t plan to stop here.

As he grows and moves on past college, he is eager to pass the torch to the next King of NIL.

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