Erik Averill ([00:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=CBCRWA-E72y7MUDiQaAxQ1Lz8KrBWMWXETUdNf1fNhAw9JAQ1xLfyc5BScXBoqndzch6_r6OR-1DbBFmxoPUomt6Yhc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=16.07)):

Hey, everyone, welcome back to The Athlete CEO Podcast. I am your host, Erik Averill, and I'm joined alongside my cohost and brother, Brandon Averill. We are the co-founders of AWM Capital, where we partner with our clients to unlock the full potential of their wealth for maximum impact. And one of the main things that we believe at AWM is that the greatest driver of your net worth is yourself, it's something called your human capital. And so this podcast, The Athlete CEO Podcast, is dedicated to bringing you the knowledge, the skills and access to world-class experts to help you unlock the full potential of your human capital.

Erik Averill ([00:56](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=x0WYBRKt5L9RwOK_zgjN1b49nZMRin6gs8aX2AXkl9z-AFmqdSqsLG5_h-BBePdgQldUKqj1X1wWZIUCmiEHqRB_B8E&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=56.94)):

And so today, we have the privilege to sit down with one of the leading experts when it comes to sports journalism, the business around sports, marketing, branding, the senior vice president and general manager of The Athletic, Evan Parker. Evan, welcome to the podcast.

Evan Parker ([01:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Ha2kRqZGzrEMl94JA4rTbl1PizfbEOGFnaiGMdL7oAHgKGflx3CH8qHUS2-EqWHqWnHNpsxBXFKdR8RJMC9a3E5-VfQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=79.1)):

Thanks for having me guys. Erik, you should do my intro into every call. That makes me sound much more impressive than I think I am.

Erik Averill ([01:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Z80dHbDIAjQpG2MznnNN-mSGPYZ_CSX7jnEVvT-Rqe5sSi7w_2OSjyshF4oCODKXy0fwjGEQ71R9aJQLEh1_D0aynG4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=85.34)):

Hey, I'm here for the pump-up sessions. Anytime you need me to lead off a Zoom call, I'm here for you. But truly, we're excited to have this conversation because The Athletic, the importance of your company in the world of sports could not be understated. In a world where we saw sports journalism and individuals being laid off, you guys have really doubled down on bringing true sports journalism back to the industry. And so it's just an iconic company that we're excited to be around. We'd just love to hear, what is your day to day role and what're you doing at The Athletic?

Evan Parker ([02:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6hkVuXTLQVDf8sTx9gm8ilKgnCXj9LUz5U8x8sF0SOFFCnu8aIlmk6UkZ5bQ2fo2EdNkD7dLYZFGm1C0tUaFyiRYxy8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=128.73)):

I sit on our content operations side of the house, and it's really overseeing the business of our newsroom, and how, we've got 350 plus writers and editors, what are they working on? How are we making sure that their time is spent in the best way to satisfy our subscribers, to find new subscribers? How do we give them the right tools so they can do their jobs? We want our writers and our editors to think every day about the content that they're creating and not the business stuff behind it, the operational stuff behind it. So that's what my team and I spend our time working on and hoping to give them every tool that they need to be successful.

Evan Parker ([02:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=RKCqOtJxSq4fTyTKM7e9g3sq_CrDf1m62do1MUNKI1W0KardL2jCHFr9sExUjHqy_C3TFY1iRnMbrA7nO1xuR_XwfKY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=162.88)):

Our business is based on hiring the best possible writers in the world and giving them as much latitude as possible to write the best possible work to entertain and educate sports fans, and so the less they have to think about anything other than hunting down the right story, breaking news, finding the tidbits that make sports fans fall in love with the game, the better off we'll be, and my team and I and the others at our headquarters group can worry about the boring stuff.

Erik Averill ([03:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=CLM1KUW50VZGPertWTJEDvvkGRG_yIYnentiUuaXnWCb78j-8S307v1qfaTQ07gnxHi8HykX_rVgDtV7-emzHwDLs0M&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=191.58)):

Wow, I love the analogy. What went through my mind is, your writers are kind of like the players on the field, and you're the front office and you're running the operations. And one of the things we talk a lot about with our clients, or just in general, you're actually running the business. I understand you have a team that's helping you do that. But it's a very interesting thing that we like to demystify for athletes, a lot of times using baseball as an example. This is a $10.6 billion industry, these are billion-dollar organizations or teams that are functioning with some of the most intelligent, savvy business individuals in the front office.

Erik Averill ([03:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=L12FGBCv5MVXJ37oDaaLX2hal1kW8YMxEncBIlVTppJLrTyDTeGhe4sBLEMnLmaFUvyTEMmLrM0JHuI6xEv_WOYAkb4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=232.06)):

And that's where I want to bring that to the forefront of this conversation, is for our athletes to learn really taking their role off of the field of not having to think about anything and to dive into this conversation of understanding the business dynamics of being a professional athlete. Before we really dive into the athlete, I would just love to hear... Some of the things I've read online is how you've been so strategic of choosing your guys' revenue or partnership models of making the comments, it's choosing the right partners, you're not going to just slap banner ads all over your guys' website.

Erik Averill ([04:30](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=iv-ArTqyfnciFDClFu7hopmFmxU9JlnQyJO5EG7LH4SWMUif4JTbzCg8Cj0gOQ4XEUkF6SrfiGT2Dpu8QY6aEEnx_Bg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=270.25)):

Can you talk about how you approach who you guys partner with and how you guys are making those business decisions?

Evan Parker ([04:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=RCDlUbDE2o41gjnQa8UdzDkRjkQ7HGPNlM2pphEKcfAfkRU935gUHpwU033V8zCWmvhN2yqCY-c-AD0lNW_3r8jYkKY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=277.41)):

Sure. We're lucky. Our business model is subscription-based. A writer goes out there and they write stories that people want to read, and people are going to subscribe because of that story. And if we do that well, the revenue from our subscription-based business should be the number one thing that matters to the company, the number one revenue driver for us. If we're going to go out and do partnerships, it has to be something that is beneficial to the greater business goal, which is driving subscriptions. We're not going to go do a deal that gets in the way of us selling to subscriber to join The Athletic, we're not going to get in the way of the subscribers' experience.

Evan Parker ([05:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=UV95holmZQHNdX8t2selX79oZ1JPPnhfmIlUUqXJv31OL51ac_a0xv7nA2Feak6JOYfPmRPgzGOTdhVLQsH_5mycNVY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=311.03)):

And so, if you're somebody who consumes a lot of sports content, you're probably used to going to various websites and having auto-play videos and banner ads pop up and brands that pop into your feed that may not make sense from a sports standpoint. And we're lucky, we don't have to do that. If we're going to go do a partnership, we want to enhance everything that we're offering to our subscribers and enhance the offering to our writers, to give them the tools that they need to do the best work. So for us, it's finding partners that are endemic to the space, betting partners that you could take a look at that and say, "Okay, yeah, that's a revenue driver."

Evan Parker ([05:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=rFYQqvMLE7VJxBU7qsFq3faOeTe64wj49CR4YFUyv8phyujY4DYVsAI5t8wRj4wOHbGpPlFISo20_STj-jesf-4Eqtg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=345.53)):

Sure, but it also helps us create good content, because at the end of the day, sports fans, a lot of them bet, that's a world that's exploding, a lot of money coming into it, but certainly a lot of interest. During the NFL season, you can't tell me that it's not a good story to read about who's likely to win a game, what's the over-under going to be? Who's going to do well on the field? It can help you with your fantasy team and it can just help you enjoy the game itself. I live in California, you're not allowed to legally bet online here, but I still want to know, for every event that I'm going to watch, who's likely to win? And what's going to happen on it?

Evan Parker ([06:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Ljc_bbaaMEE4tfYWDgOkVC-_YAmV1T_9kDsL-p4PaHaDSY0rVLFI1_Tdfjoah4K0PPnHsg6uHzZu676hJ8ypkoOhqVI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=376.83)):

And so betting has a way to enhance content without actually needing somebody to actually put a dollar down. So that's the deal that we look at and say, "This actually makes our business better for the reader, regardless of whether or not we're making money off of it, we're going to be writing about this stuff anyways." Ticketing deals, the same sort of thing. We have a deal with a company called ViaSat, they provide internet access in airplanes. So if you're flying from... I know you're LA based, you're flying from here to Chicago for a meeting, and you're sitting on an American Airlines jet and you want to read your sports app, you can get it for free while you're on American through the ViaSat deal, and you can read The Athletic.

Evan Parker ([06:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=gKE1-evhdYvEhyjH4oOUu1eAYZlDOtk8sMgEm8Oe0k0nnCqa3qsL9qmPY_-1U2Bm65A-pTza2Eh23bm1I-ZZqIuLQNw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=412.45)):

For us, that's just getting our product into more hands. And so as we look to do deals, what makes sense for our brand? What makes sense for our subscriber? What makes sense for the product that we built? And try to find as many partners like that just enhance that whole thing. And if we can make revenue off it, amazing, but our end game here is making sure that our current subscribers never leave and the new people find out about The Athletic, sign up, engage with us, stay a long time. So you're unlikely to find like the Subway Footlong Sandwich Play of the Day, and have some brand that get shoved in there that you're like, "This makes no sense. This has nothing to do with the content."

Evan Parker ([07:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ZpFtMICKPgDrzkn4sIAKbFgxFM653CR2niKhmekTs6EEfoS1PiVqWdXgHh1VsZHOffcMx05lFT4tyALzTjpgw-LlZCE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=449.56)):

Luckily, we don't have that pressure. I know a lot of other brands that don't have the subscription revenue have to do deals like that in order to drive their revenue. Right now, that's not our reality, and so the more that we can focus on the core product, the more we can focus on the content and build partnerships that support that, the better off we'll be.

Brandon Averill ([07:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=85zUB7DApukiDU6uaZjzJzUtA4VCVXLI58nj55J0-MbssW2YAL2enMVwOH1AJN44K47kIv1qwX_FCbj_ZkeqBfej1yw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=466.8)):

I think that's really fascinating too. And I'd love to hear you go with that a little bit when you guys have obviously been very thoughtful around the brand that you've developed, you've taken a stance. It's the subscription-based model when that's quite a bit different than the industry had been. And a lot of our athletes, a lot of our clients, they want to build a brand, they want to put something out there. So I guess a couple things, maybe when you take it to an individual or just thinking through The Athletic lens, like building a brand, what would you say are some of the most important things when, if they are fortunate to be in a position like you guys where...

Brandon Averill ([08:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=xg5ysxhoD9_XDHhQyg1ealLcoJSOZCCNb4nFaB-dafagf1mOhUrmtewgQq7pecQoKZQGvsG0FnOFtHmxEiRqRgyQ-3Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=508.28)):

Most of these people don't need the revenue right away, so they can be a little more thoughtful, maybe a little more patient. They don't have to take every little ad and litter their profile with ads, or even you think the simple Instagram posts, they don't have to take every $1,000 post out there, they can be a little more thoughtful about it. I wonder if you could share what your advice would be to people that are actually building that reputation.

Evan Parker ([08:56](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=mUnF4wdVnd_xRCq9qkO6QdhJZsZm9deelY8Nk4ZgDCJYGCMq1Uep5fRP-IX7GVbJDnh-Enc_TeFK7m_4LDJDDbsXi18&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=536.37)):

Yeah. Brandon, I think that's a really good analogy. I look at ourselves like an athlete in the sense that if an athlete is making money off of their contract, then the deals that they should do outside of that should just be things that they want to do to enhance their brand, to give them extra cash, certainly, but it should be stuff that fits in with the brand that they're trying to cultivate or what they want to do with their free time. For us, because we have that subscription revenue, we have an ability to go find partners that enhance our subscription business like it's our revenue from being on contract as an athlete.

Evan Parker ([09:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=niIc_XNiEaoEuofP7WOV83QZpt-S17HKgjNNmA2gs-4Tl_MbdK1Y5H9GazUu7XByWlk3pCJ-uFWbTmisHiydPfjP0fE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=567.08)):

Before I joined The Athletic, I worked eight years at NASCAR, and there's no sport on earth that is more closely aligned from a partnership standpoint than NASCAR is. The teams, because of the revenue pressure on the teams, they'll go out and they'll do deals with businesses that are willing to spend a good amount of money with them. It doesn't always mean it's a good brand fit. So you could have somebody who's out there and they've got a heavy equipment company on their shirt or a mortgage company on their shirt or something like that. And you know it's not something that they necessarily attach themselves to and isn't necessary part of what NASCAR is.

Evan Parker ([10:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=VPTe8tRJDhGuKEgwxPaEvVIZMgvmEDh0pa71PmbwLzHEbm31WGSNpkn34XEYk2oysxF3VWf7dManK4cx01hv-gxRs84&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=605.57)):

But the brands that ended up getting the most out of it, the deals that I always saw, that I felt like were the most performative on that side were the ones where the athlete interacted with the company. Kyle Busch drives for the 18 M&M's Toyota. I think he's got a kid, his kid eats candy, Kyle eats candy, it fits. And that's something that I always think if you're an athlete and you have the ability to pick and choose who you work with, you should be looking for brands that you would interact with. Because if you're trying to build a brand, authenticity is the thing that matters the most.

Evan Parker ([10:38](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=C0ptGwHBjvN4avtiGKpgZioraDk4mM_IXVV8Rxnj0_C8CEXa1rAisu1QhbPwCRAGxeyOXMqEL6GZ9BATer-DLsBPd_Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=638.57)):

So if I use this product and I can look at my fans in the eye and say, "I use this product," people are going to believe it, I think they're going to be receptive towards it, the brand's going to get the value they want out of it, they're going to want to do more deals with you. If you're just taking every dollar that comes, then it's going to diminish the ones that actually matter to you, the ones that you believe in. And it'll make you, I think, a little harder for you to find the brands that you truly care about, believe in.

Evan Parker ([11:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=OG4RV_Y5rET7J9MNuvx4lUsLZz9B57A41v4T35M2R5LYy_YgEW5Hwqciiz5jkisZQCuBSh8BxrzuoL48NyFYf_jXXEM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=661.38)):

And I think it's easier said than done. If you're looking at cash and somebody is like, "Hey, we're going to give you a bunch of money for an Instagram post to say, 'You eat these hair growing vitamins or whatever, these gummies,'" maybe I would take it too if I got that offer. But the athletes that are able to say no to that stuff and say, "You know what? I care about my brand. I'm trying to cultivate this brand for the longterm. I want to have longevity. I'm playing the long game. I want the bigger deals that come because they make sense for me. And I don't have the pressure of having to go do every $1,000 deal because I have revenue coming in through other things, my contract, or whatever."

Evan Parker ([11:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=K-pmJhdwIc_0sWKiQfS7zdKk_nPh9JN0n8kMp9d7l2aZqPUXi1pMhIvfcp_lT6rDl70ynyaQfRUd3SA6AsK7SHgZH98&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=695.32)):

The more people can say no to that and be disciplined, I think the better off they're going to be long-term in terms of building a brand getting really big deals that fit what they're interested in.

Brandon Averill ([11:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=mfiqcoSLMRHCQJeKb1jh4wmSEumkIkE01YHiQRn3p1GyYKKzuv6uVFoMUWbyocmz3PzuLnCSppzcM1k0CSi4Nvuwkdk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=706.4)):

I think, yeah, that's huge. Erik, I'll let you jump in a sec, but one question coming out of that, I think would be interesting is, they're building this brand, and that all is applicable to making themselves very valuable to the sponsors. I'm also curious, you guys have the end reader, that's the person that drives a lot of the value as well too, the sponsor. Have you seen any trends? What are people really resonating with? And if you were an athlete, maybe even break it up, individual sport versus a team sport athlete, what are readers wanting to see from journalists or from athletes? How much of, is it their lives, is it their opinions? What are you guys seeing as far as trends out there?

Evan Parker ([12:36](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6bLoqu8koz1OurKpSLk-0fZtzMvYMuW1KsWgkGt-fbheL1OlpLBhA_RX_uimj5UsLccRUbq8dNRfFRC6qGaI-EZ4u5Q&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=756.62)):

Personal interest stories where you get to know the athlete beyond the game always matters, especially for sports where somebody is wearing a helmet. If you're talking about the NFL, if you're talking about motor sports, things like that, you don't really get that personal connection with an athlete like you do in baseball or basketball or golf, some of those individual sports. And I think it's always harder to connect. You've got people in the NFL, the Tom Brady types that can go do 1,000 deals and it doesn't matter, but the average player or whatever, it's 53 men on a roster, a lot of those guys are completely anonymous to people outside of the hardcore fan.

Evan Parker ([13:13](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=fcY4iTbMKB8DO23Kuwkp4eLWJ8n3vIaj09PcHcX6EHKtGL_-c1Upcs1j7iyoWzpbhYxMUgf0RByZsH-el97D73aFDaA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=793.77)):

They can walk down the street and somebody, other than the fact that they're probably enormous, may not know that they're a professional athlete. And so for us, it's finding those interesting stories about somebody's life, what they like to do outside of the field, how they approach their workouts, how they approach practice, how they approach playing, their past, their interests outside of those things. That personal interest piece always works for us from a content standpoint. But I think it's also how you can resonate with the fans and resonate with consumers.

Evan Parker ([13:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=KHRj-sBoS6CudePD-yRFBMgtpoOLJZn4MQgtQYWuTUhnjOwKbPQOBz9bGcHAOz8kxIjsKvOoS0BJeqqHvp_3_YZotO8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=822.89)):

If you're able to connect to them something other than your 40-yard dash time or how high you jump, you need something else for people to want to go buy your gear. And using Tom Brady as an example. Sure, he's one of the best, if not the best quarterback football players, athletes to ever live, but I think what makes him unique is the fact that he's able to relate to people, that he's able to show himself. I was joking about Subway, but there's a Subway commercial running all the time now where the end bit is Brady joking about how whole we eat bread because it's commercial.

Evan Parker ([14:13](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=r71iBQsKk82D0vtVvK0wWg8DdDe8YyPlDiesmacCTo5dBMy_Xpl1bTfMkLC_Pw51F21yrbXAnykwPcjmJpwR5LzQKgU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=853.12)):

And I think that gives people this side of him that makes him relatable, that makes him interesting, that makes them want to say, "Well, Tom Brady does this, that's cool." And you have to take people behind the curtain. The athletes that just approach everything like, "This is a job. I'm just going to say my piece and get out of here. Whatever the line is in the commercial, I'm going to read it and I'm going to move on." If you haven't shown your personality, if you haven't shown your authentic self, it's really, really difficult for people to care about you beyond your stat line.

Erik Averill ([14:41](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=pOzQZiAY1HimvkFpMCHAmbCyvcaYaSdaagHJ3VzPeIGpenhcVOrwOgDka6e5x5Ieo1HXPD6v1_hE5b_bR5FhDye_WHk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=881.2)):

Very, very, very helpful. One of the things, in it's still staying on this trend, you working in partnerships and the experience at NASCAR, and I think I had heard on a previous podcast that you'd maybe worked at an agency previously. One of the things that us being business owners realize is business is done when there's a value exchange. And a lot of times when we talk to our athletes that are maybe frustrated with the lack of deals coming in, we like to ask them a question, "Well, what value are you providing to your partners?"

Erik Averill ([15:22](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=3ABHibPFLjfLd6RRD0CJfIKHtKq4zfPBvGA-0btB3S5syNOhHVs0NHNRkPLBaHja-3jCzFL4gKcr9WdzTaG-pkW1wIo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=922.11)):

I would love to hear your opinion or advice on, for an athlete, what does it mean to be a good partner? And what are things that they could do to start to build a reputation and probably relationships for being known as a great partner, that it's not just a money exchange for an Instagram post?

Evan Parker ([15:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=oesi5LqfLcvxWiTdDalCgQYZoIl1gW2MRWgD6dKRo0e9UUsAVq0MLsJJnTyQ3rIbg-fr0cQdWusyBoANjCFrioCSsEs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=945.23)):

I love the question. When I was agency side, when I was at NASCAR, I spent a lot of time working with athletes on brand deals and with brand partners. And you can always tell the ones that care, the ones that truly believe in the partnership, the ones that use the product, the ones that actually want to do more partnerships and don't feel like it's a nuisance to them to have to show up to a TV set for a commercial shoot or for a photo shoot or whatever. It's that simple, you have to care. You have to understand that these people are paying you money, and so you've got to do the song and dance a little bit, you have to act like you want to be there, and that it's not a nuisance to you to show up for somebody to hand over a check for what's really a pretty easy day work.

Evan Parker ([16:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=7PWbAhsXCfyEeBhdnvFy_g4fWWUtm8tFHhwasM2M0f0IQWeh6j1DNaa88gHZsp68_F5penWViJteDLOShB_jHksD_eE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=984.43)):

The amount of times that I did deals with athletes that they'd show up and they'd just be a pain in the ass from the minute they got there until the minute they left, and you wonder, "Why am I paying you money? Or why are we giving you all this cash to do something when you clearly don't want to be here?" Most athletes don't have that ability, they're not such big names that they can come in and be jerks and people are going to be so thankful for their time and then want to do another deal with them. It's just not the reality of it.

Evan Parker ([16:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Jc_jXMcHVeOVPDa0dSbG8wsEFSKT5CLmz3x4dpq2_NXFo4mnfeJN-XEckJmVIHAfry2tuQtqwZ0LCcSYZvDXhwXoFA8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1006.87)):

And the athletes that are easy to work with, that are excited, that when they show up, they're like, I want to be here. Oh yeah, we can take an extra two minutes to do another take because that one wasn't perfect. Or I'm going to go talk to the CMO's kid and sign a few autographs and go and work the room and make people feel valued." A lot of these deals at the end of the day are not just for the consumer, but they're the people who are involved there, want partners that they like to work with, they want to feel that connection. Every time when I was on the agency side, we'd bring our clients out to these shoots.

Evan Parker ([17:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Aom2ejPnv5Avzn4gaBvRBdo2B1n36kbshlKCr-j7VoqaVEfP7XO1jNWL9QPuCsyKfTT1E2ps2Ng1zHZpEdUVCUP493c&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1038.69)):

The people who are going to be paying the money, signing the checks, you're like, "Come on out, sit down there in video village, watch the shoot go on and just be a part of this thing." And you want the athlete to come over there and act like they give, act like they actually want to be there. And the ones that did, the athletes, and I've got a list in mind of people that I've worked with over the years that you're like, "You know what, that person, if I ever get to recommend a deal to be done for this client," or when I was at NASCAR, if there was an athlete that we worked with and we had a choice and said, "You can look at all the guys in the garage. Who are we to do this assignment with?"

Evan Parker ([17:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=K9s0u3EB0neNhTvphFFKLpHLO-wDOZCdNibxIamwruX1RE82pnE4na3rey60YXOO56I1j6GyxAmky4kEppquWaSO1rw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1070.42)):

You say, "Well, that guy is always easy to work with. He's always a pleasure. People always like him. He's going to make us look good. He's going to make the client feel happy. And he's also going to sell whatever the product is." Everybody can sell the product. You get a production company out there, take photos, give a good script. It doesn't really matter who's on the other end of the thing, what sets the good athletes apart from just the okay ones are the ones that go that extra step and really want to develop a relationship.

Evan Parker ([18:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=TXnAwkAj8gSTypb62lo5ICVSUoybFAuEk3eqxmEXbqE4rcVLGWkSf88BRnQE2GUxSf1lNu-0Y5-OdiGXtDpirvi_1bI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1095.63)):

And I also know through my career, a lot of athletes who as their careers started to dwindle kept getting deals, because the people on the other end were like, "You know what, that person is somebody I want to work with, that person is going to come here, give their all, and I know we're going to get the best out of them. So we're going to keep giving them deals. We're going to keep doing these PSA's because at the end of the day, this person is going to bring it for us, versus these other people who might be more relevant, but frankly could be a pain in the ass or really not do what we need them to do in order to be successful."

Erik Averill ([18:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=_Mniz40lAvPoH82RefKpeFhpRqvRlphcEjGabRGiW3yo-FQClSKlgeXPE9fr935oEdqNBeShlG20yrF3HICeqxpifPQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1125.44)):

As a follow-up question, where you sit in your role in the front office, the business, you're probably not handing out dollars or partnerships based off of some affinity, there's analytics, there's business sound principles behind it. I think one of the things that athletes are coming to the realization of is their competition isn't necessarily the guy across the field from him for that marketing deal, it's the influencers, it's really anybody today. Can you talk a little bit about what type of, I guess, business awareness or education, if you were sitting down with an athlete who's thinking through this, how do they find their niche? What are the ways that they've got to deal with this reality of just being an athlete?

Erik Averill ([19:41](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=2_Wb9rSUIMeSbYe2PJvbJylZuCbbfdnfC6Ts2sJfIb4szm2ZAOkZ5VxFKlP0xt3iUNNuiPu9MaSLTyPnQNg_pjy3-t8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1181.65)):

Yes, it's going to produce some opportunities, but it's probably not going to make you that valuable in today's sports economy.

Evan Parker ([19:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=YxYQrtcgz102ZoeuG5CGxFe_GlZ613CLscFrFlVDw5ztH2_n4gA56GZD3mObvKM43sRZD1bGJrkNWPHORKXEhFRP7bg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1189.68)):

It's a great question. And competition today is different than it's ever been before. You'd say, "Oh, The Athletic, your competition is ESPN and CBS and Bleacher Report." No, it's those guys, but it's everybody with a TikTok account, it's The New York Times, it's going to the movies if you're able to do that. It's anything that takes your time and attention, anything that takes your money because we're all competing for the same finite resources. Every human being has got 24 hours in the day, everybody's got a certain amount of dollars in their pocket, and every single decision, they're not just comparing you with something else that's similar. Like the old days you'd say, "Well, like a Ford, the competition for a Ford is a Chevy or a Toyota."

Evan Parker ([20:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=CXsQgZ_VSdBs2x5vYqRE6G2gg4iR39omdgcD0xrllwmlKRZI4ZKiDT-e7vzeLVydAfdSbWBlDVC-yH1w_DlcRcrBmxE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1228.11)):

I guess if you're just looking for a car, that's true, but if you're saying, "I've got money to spend and I got time to dedicate to something, you're comparing that dollar and that minute with everything else that that dollar a minute can go towards. And I think for athletes, you see often athletes, if you look at their feeds, that they're only posting about brand deals. You could tell that they've got somebody holding their phone or that they've been told, somebody in their ears saying, "Hey, you've got to make sure that put out that sponsored thing and it says ad."

Evan Parker ([20:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=v94CzBr0nfLujwTw1Fojy2EYAnWbnUq8hNXEDybcNpeRVmO8otHnQr6m9Ed5smOo4cubZZqwvixDB36l7uCborzln9w&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1257.86)):

That's fine if that's how you want to operate your own channels, but the ones that I always gravitate towards to and the ones that I think have the best ability to generate revenue for themselves long-term are the ones that are always showing their personality, who are always active, especially now. Content is something that an athlete can create and monetize on their own. As much as I want them to be sending all their good stories through us, as much as I want our writers to be breaking every piece of news, they have access to a lot of people. LeBron James with his phone can put out a tweet that will be seen by more people than if he goes to ESPN and he asks them do a piece on him for SportsCenter. It's just the reality of it.

Evan Parker ([21:36](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=h8i9G-6z3m2CNzu9Xw96U0qK2NV0bDyVsfCEBnQd_9eZXTMvP1_cx27gOU2FzMRDNML-UDqxdjrIPyEg4sxe8F16TYE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1296.58)):

And so athletes have to know that they've got this power, but the only way that they can access or harness that power in the biggest way is if they're always creating content that people are interested in. When I say content, I don't mean getting a big shoot, going on with hair and makeup and a script. It's just, "This is what I'm doing now. Oh, I thought this was interesting. Check out this video that somebody else did that I loved. That game was great." It's just interacting with people and making them feel like that they have this connection with you, because you're in their phone and you're talking to them all the time.

Evan Parker ([22:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=k3082CvmV8FlNqlFQkdwFrS1VRudZG0jqMeWv4jwzUlGNyamzEl28tWA4Uo-tQ4VL2drj2IMm6PVV0J8YXWr_VPUW0s&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1321.54)):

So the fans out there feeling like, "I got this access to LeBron James," or whoever it is that's out there. That's really, really powerful, and athletes that don't take advantage of that, but then want to get deals on the side, I feel like you're giving away the one thing that can make you incredibly valuable. It's not what you're doing on the field, it's how you're interacting with people. Grow that platform, grow that engagement, talk to people all the time, and then when you do have something to sell them, they're going to pay attention.

Brandon Averill ([22:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Ti5RmsmDOIXU6Hi-ZP4miaRct2Y6QbJeFKqJAOPnfsct1_om1hSs5vqwd1-gOuBUCdTA7FR3XfnHc4cwRZSmCqKkWT8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1348.84)):

Yeah, I think that's so valuable. I'm curious, as we often hear when you go... You've brought this up several times in the conversation so far, and I don't know that you use this word, but strategy. And so often when we meet with the athlete, it's like, "Oh, I want a brand, I want a logo. Let's get the logo going, let's get the colors going. I need these assets to be able to put the social," which is violating the rules that you just talked about. I'm curious, what advice you would give, all that stuff seems like it's secondary, it needs to be more strategy.

Brandon Averill ([23:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=REo1Pnnv449Ao_T3IWQkqJyzDzMyO0emm_DJ4vB5lpgxtazQryMjSibF30qj0QXUZXzNHQR7wD2gYCIOizFeY0FzQ7c&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1385.4)):

What advice would you give to an athlete? What are the starting points to figure out, I guess, what is the purpose of this? Why am I doing it? How do I build out a strategy? Do you have any advice on what they should be considering as they start that process?

Evan Parker ([23:22](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=jHJ7izn0g06JHWE2fj3tbv3n--IlUppZ2QxJcXR3NSds2yhj5hacebAliTgPM3xuNIGN6mffnmxZ6O8EV_6XqibeYjw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1402.63)):

Yeah. When I was at NASCAR, we worked with an agency on some of our influencer work, and they had this saying that you have to do your social media workout every day. So just like an athlete knows that they've got to run their sprints and they've got to lift the weights and they've got to stretch, you have to approach social media in the same way. You wake up every day and you look at your feed, you should interact with a few posts, you should comment on a few things, you should post something, and you should respond to a couple of fans.

Evan Parker ([23:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=zOMPzVtH2uZRE7YlK59ET24zmzzV_Rz6YaHEvyOTccdxd84Wd8v-qqJZX3aE5h-Zz06TVXx_RPAfVxkSg7toDS3vw9A&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1430.9)):

And every single day, you just say to yourself, "All right, Evan, I know I've got to go out there and I've got to do two hours' worth of lifting and endurance training, and I've got to stretch and I've got to go get my massage and my treatment, but I also have to do these things. I'm going to do them periodically throughout the day." It could be scheduled. The fan on the other end doesn't know how formulized all of this is, but you have to have that approach that this is part of your job.

Evan Parker ([24:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=1NgGDH3IOWKLOJU9RcQCbn07m4HnquMwXhrdiUSfVDS2XfNXE_4TfdqrhcWjfZdQ1ZYDOL-wFakknIr29WcT5Lcdi-c&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1456.43)):

And if you do that every day and you just get in the habit of, I wake up and I'm going to spend 10 minutes on my social platforms, and I'm going to engage with X number of things, I'm going to respond to X number of fans. I'm going to post something at this cadence, it then becomes second nature. And by that point, you're starting to build this relationship with people. And you're starting to get into the algorithm if you're talking about Instagram, and if you're talking about Facebook, it's about the algorithm.

Evan Parker ([24:40](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=YB-ldMC-PdAVyRrRL8RlitJlAmDyZErEoAyKuDNOpC_Q-iIYrQ4yjVuAR6gnpJy3N91X2LDSPmfmoaEgpJ19Mp-kC2M&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1480.92)):

It's not just about you posting every day. If you post and nobody sees it, it doesn't matter. So how do I make sure people are going to engage with me? I want them to comment on my stuff. I want them to be debating in the comments about what I just posted, and commenting, and commenting, people liking my stuff and sharing it. And the only way to do that is to be purposeful for it. And I think also athletes reminding themselves that they need to engage with a couple of those fans and getting in there and responding to somebody every once in a while and re-tweeting somebody or shouting somebody out.

Evan Parker ([25:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=GQlSMM_YTw2R1-9Vj8rZq2Krj1VNSvwREWOIRJ4e13ih1rGhFMO-FekVwcs0PWRBpJDXyp5RkagT4nvUvyZ2knH5Mxs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1508.88)):

You don't have to do it to everybody. You can have five million people following you, it's not like you have to do that five million times, but every time you do it, all those other followers notice and they feel like you're relatable and that you care and that you're paying attention. And I think that's the biggest thing. You want everybody who's following you to just assume that you're reading what they say, it doesn't mean you have to engage with all of them, but that you are paying attention, that it's not an agency running it. It's not a manager running, and it's not a brand guy or your cousin, it's the athlete, and it's their authentic voice.

Evan Parker ([25:36](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=0ViA8sspwSuAhenb8bauGcL4aI7hZgRqiwZ7SOFu4Vv6vH0FJkP9XfFwNymsLlh8CKpHhNf__87y3-P5ZvBlniPk4oI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1536.75)):

And I think if people can do that, it opens themselves up to more deals, but it also then starts to feel natural. They actually start to enjoy it because they build these relationships and this cadence that can be addicted because you're now interacting with people who really care about you and want you to be in their lives. It's not something that, I know you guys are athletes, it's not something I see much. Nobody's waiting for me to post on my Twitter feed, I got whatever, how many people are following me. Nobody cares. If I go silent, they won't notice. But if a professional athlete goes silent, that's important to them.

Evan Parker ([26:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=9DrzdsPE7cKoSl-D7jOW5m9IVp2yWEdtiPrZUP-7NtBNi8ad35fTNlFPrRNgkVxWFBfrXtoWYpwADGdX6RsttFW-4Xw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1566.61)):

And so I think athletes today, not everybody can be Kevin Durant and create the Boardroom. Not everybody can be Steph Curry. We've got a lot of these people who are now creating their own production companies. There are only a handful of people in every sport who have the ability to do that. So the rest of the athletes, if you're not going to go out there and create your own production company, then you have your own production company in your hand at all times, and it's an iPhone. Create stuff, talk to people about things. You can do that every single day, and that's the most valuable thing.

Evan Parker ([26:34](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=OBkrB1FguS2oUGDObHtjAu-PHeHc_cdko7SvfarR0CUVXuE1gFotKyBz-15o3bow9acQI9oCclFX990DmWh6I4BR5rE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1594.65)):

It's something that didn't exist even five years ago in the same way that it does now. If you look at all these big names, imagine how big, we talk about Michael Jordan and guys like that. Imagine how big they'd be today if they had the ability to interact with people. I think Michael Jordan may have just given the middle finger to social media regardless, but a lot of big name athletes in the past, couldn't even scratch the surface of what mediocre athletes can do today by building up their brands.

Erik Averill ([27:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=MrcFTtRyAa0riSg27JaEuCMW4lJoto44S6zFQ6PlnN9Hgfj4ruyk030b4Mw1p0umg4ChV4MFpJeRdIxrImeYTTPgWrM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1620.87)):

There's a lot of different avenues. I would love to take that. One of the things I hit on was just the professionalism that I think, as you said, putting this into your daily routine or your daily cadence for your social media workout is what we try to talk to our clients a lot about is you are a professional athlete because of the skillset you have and the work ethic of what you do on the field, to translate that success off the field in the world of business, there are things that you need to do. I joke around with our shared friend, Mr. E.J. who is our chief marketing officer.

Erik Averill ([27:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=k6XX1etxT3donGEiOGvCSVtvQUylNpXMkhC7eVh0qHLe5R0VdYQKZ83_ll54in_sWTZbD6mAU6GQm1unvaWZsZQKAw4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1662.8)):

And he comes from this professional world, and he's getting an introduction to the athlete who no shows on you, cancels the meeting. It's supposed to be you're revealing something really important, and they call you from the car and they've got 15 minutes when it should be an hour dedicated. And I think that that's just a really important thing to talk about is, if you want to be taken serious, there are shared best practices of being a business professional. That was just a side note for the listener.

Erik Averill ([28:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=lUYp-6rGgkZ8g91G1Kam7ruBtCBWjdUGnteHILu4hIHucsjX7tuQGCn3rGz_VHIANaWCYhMaI3RiCK2dYWul4tirDpU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1694.76)):

But one of the things I'm interested specifically for the athletic that I find fascinating, here, I read all of these breaking stories and you guys really seem to be the authority on the athlete, yet talking to our clients. It doesn't even dawn on them to ever even try to develop a relationship with someone at the athletic. Is that taboo? It's this interesting relationship between the athletes and the media, how it's historically been done in the Clubhouses and these types of things, you used to have to hire a production company, now I've got it on my phone.

Erik Averill ([28:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=SZ-4rDECZ8gbA-j8ET3Opa9W3tOBpU_4ZiB2zlV9THwog5G0cqDKANh9fZjqvaKP49XePlY3ioiXL9DqPA0XSauZlVU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1734.61)):

We live in a world where you can just reach out and network with anybody. Should athletes have relationships with your writers?

Evan Parker ([29:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ojMSqzqj_uQFlmkWxNa49nOvVJ5yMHrsYulgqDmt5HIbrcN3beaXlo0HsAMZSIVuaEpvcPCnqH56evwo7_FIprQOogY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1744.01)):

Yeah. I'd be curious what our writers and editors would say to that answer. There's might be a little bit different than how I would frame it. Obviously, our integrity is paramount, so we're never going to be able to write something because somebody is feeding us information to get us to write a certain thing in a certain way. We lose all credibility if we do that, and everything else we're trying to build goes out the door if you don't feel like you can read the athletic and get the true take on things. We have to hold people to task.

Evan Parker ([29:30](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=JDXrewT-uvqw9xHfHXQStjBV5ZH_RDYx-Lem30zv3Re8bLUC1wGKBzwuWKHj72hMOPRnlnX-YOqzRwFpgaNyI-KsfvU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1770.61)):

So you can be have a good relationship with an athlete, but if they play poorly on the field, you have to call them on it. We have to say that they played poorly. But we have writers in our newsroom have really, really strong professional relationships with athletes. They're not out there in each other's poker games and flying on vacation with each other, but they get along really well, they trust each other. They talk a lot about things that don't always make it into the athletic about things, "Hey, let's just talk about life and get to know each other off the record."

Evan Parker ([29:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=gI8ycQmZydWsqF3reFVv_jQT5aV10ReFjvayueQ8laWXyPjEknWS--AjAV5fjjR6YaexB9tS2XN3sDaJ6eHwCQfiA0w&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1799.55)):

And I think those are relationships that can be really valuable. And more often than not, our writers are writing about what's going on in the field, on the pitch, on the court, whatever. But if they develop a good relationship with an athlete and the athlete says, "Hey, I got this idea, I've got this new business I'm starting to launch. I've got this partnership that I'm excited about." It's a lot easier to go to a writer that you have a relationship with and pitch them on something that benefits you as an athlete, as a business person, if you built that relationship before based on just being courteous to them in the locker room when they're asking questions up there in post-game and stuff like that.

Evan Parker ([30:36](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=KTWejxn_lN4F5B7pdww-1L826yC2ag-LA6PPZ-VlhoJLc3cxRyJY1-yw80hvpo7X4UjXg81Dym_nQyEPeM8V54Xz6IA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1836.72)):

And so athletes that can build that relationship are able to leverage writers, not just the athletic, but every other sports media company in the world. It's good to know who's writing the articles about you, because people are reading them. And it's such a valuable mechanism for you to get your message out if you've got somebody that is able to write things that you can trust that they'll say it in the right way, you can trust that they're going to treat it the right way. They're not your PR firm, they're not going to do everything you say, but it's hard to go and pitch one of our writers about this business idea that you have when they're in the locker room asking you about how you played last night, you give them the middle finger and you turn your back.

Erik Averill ([31:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vr_FVj-8QHjYmxYC24qFJf-CQiLm8avb1y5n5aAN3mq7g1pdDGUL890vbYYjGG18VtlMs1a1zIQ5Ewycf4ldW8tWE5w&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1875.28)):

Yeah. This might be a controversial question, PR firms. Here's the one thing you'll learn about Brandon and I is, we become more direct about things the more we're in this. So many sports agencies say we do marketing, say we do PR. They don't do marketing, they don't do PR. It's really, they answer the phone call and they accept the inbound calls that are coming in from the players associations, the leagues, they're just traditional deals.

Erik Averill ([31:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=jioYC6U_AGcHIpUYvQFiCT-Q_fl595EHayWhaAgSVP_Nfo4xoYwMn-3eHPO6Sd5eDdtlxs1thZ8S0aG7x-3gb1TA9f8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1907.81)):

Even when you look at some of these iconic athletes and they list out all their endorsements, you're like, "Those are all within the box. There's not a lot of creativity out of there." If you were telling a player or even speaking to an agent, that's not to say critique all agencies, I've had some incredible conversations with agents that are trying to figure out how to innovate, with the new NISL stuff that is showing up, totally going to disrupt their business of how they recruit athletes through the amateur model, they're trying to innovate and really answer this question, what should we be providing from a platform and an expertise to the athlete?

Erik Averill ([32:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Uk5nc0bTwIM0-Cim3Vu_eN_E7UJ2StBHa78wHY6q3sKy7JqjHyf0DOszRZ6zm5u2ZtWvr9OoICSONXplzXeOtRCcqAo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1947.4)):

So this question is helpful for both the agency trying to innovate, and for the athlete. If you're building out your front office or your marketing branding, PR division, who are the important players that they should have access to?

Evan Parker ([32:44](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=AxbKlV2pk91RPER1agyGzGalH0ByuOH3rpeeXhl5wFvIHQ64W6ytsOqaoQ0RZQkA3hw11bKNGsnTH72rtwzLXjDwCHA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1964.66)):

I've said authenticity multiple times, and it's the truth. A PR firm, and I worked at a PR firm, if they send a press release to a bunch of people trying to pitch a story, is less compelling than one of our writers seeing something on an athlete's social feeds and saying, "Hey, that would be a good story." Nobody really wants to be pitched. On occasion, certainly, you're going to get a pitch that's like, "Oh, I never thought of that. That's great. I'd love to write about it." But what writers on our end want is exclusivity on something. They want access that they wouldn't have otherwise.

Evan Parker ([33:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Q2SEsyo4rxrLPpqkDKIjVQoCT1DIOCuQZGuwnvuSFsrPJMVxweHrR01S-YNbEoWcTNZV6jDVqQUIN5g8Y83TEWpntGY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1994.1)):

They want something that is different than what the person at home knows about that athlete. And if I'm a team, if I'm an agency, I'm trying to figure out ways to get my athletes, just to create more content, be more present, so that brands come calling to me, writers come calling, production companies come calling. Just make these guys present and make their feeds so full of themselves, full of life, full of the content that athletes need to be creating in order to create their own brand.

Evan Parker ([33:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=YfBDdO0qmcLav8hRr5oW-TQNLGja_QGAYE1McyRJW6ycbRVVxykyA2Cw57ved7vYBSulpEJd2mSlmnGM6riLQxqmTno&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2022.94)):

And if you're able to do that, you don't need to send the press release and say, "Hey, we got this pitcher, it has this personal services agreement that we would really like want you to write about," it's that they're able to broker those relationships on their own. And I think a lot of these agencies are getting wise to it that they know that it's not about just sending the press release, it's not about treating everything in the same way. 2005, when I was starting out on the agency front, it was media alerts, "We're going to have this person or this thing that's going to be at this time. And come on and ask the questions."

Evan Parker ([34:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6mxndAtRb5hLkzRvrs08eDOYt33lY4GKoY_X-PDcmXZ-7N-rw43t9QccQkbq5Pyydtqk5ntxngguENejZk5AVopkfIo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2055.86)):

It's less like that because now the athlete can go and say all those things to just as many, if not more people through their phones, through their own channels, and you're just trying to help, give the athlete the ammo that they need, the structure that they need, the guidance to say the right thing, to say it in the right way, to take care of their partners and to make sure that people are going to see them on the other end. You almost want people to now be more of a counselor and helping the athlete do more on their own.

Evan Parker ([34:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=eXT-w5rCn1ytS2ZpEyXax_NmH5qyNUKs9oC_DC-zIfsR2La5ZF4l37bVevOUCWFb319W0Ps5mPyDVSNirtoTmg-9ZhU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2083.28)):

You said it the outset, there's nobody who's going to care about the athlete as much as the athlete themselves, not their agents, not you guys, nobody. The athlete is the best asset that they can be for themselves. And so you want to have a good team around you, you want people who can tell you, "Hey, do this, don't do that. This is a better way to do it. Think about this," whatever. That's all valuable. But the most valuable piece is what the athlete can do on their own, and that's interact with people, interact with brands authentically, create a bigger mouthpiece, a bigger funnel that they can go out there and leverage that people are just throwing money at them because they realized, "Hey, this person is doing something interesting."

Evan Parker ([35:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=u_AlSDIxGTitKbuEgvILvdKxqFJcFI4X-uy0POTPBcd1u2qVpPnTDznXoHIizye93HSKQIUdbfLHLAgKA9v_TmRexXE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2119.94)):

I look at the Olympics going on and Simone Biles and mental health and everything, this is somebody who could have gotten any brand deal in the world just based on her performance and what she's done as an athlete. And then now she's opened herself up by talking about her personality, things that are true to her and authentic to her in a different way. And I guarantee you that brands that weren't thinking about Simone Biles last week are thinking about her today and are going to be reaching out to her.

Evan Parker ([35:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=aiFjEOoNIvWHUWpC6mVthgu5lYdpYmj84iTe1TZ3Cc_u1RUOyY0Eha55PZGJDnp9KKSAEXXdEPXxwiHK8SiJgYSN6Mg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2147.75)):

And that's not because she had a PR firm, it's not because she's got a big agency behind her or a brand team, is because she just did what was authentic. She's creating content on our own channels, she's speaking from the heart, she's relating to people in a big way. And that's what consumers at home want. They want that relationship. They don't want just some big name athlete in ivory tower saying, "Buy this car, eat this sandwich." I think that kind of stuff doesn't work as well anymore is feeling like, "Hey, that athlete understands me.

Evan Parker ([36:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=KR0htLZYf1ZT5diYRSyzRa9yXcn90vHP01Du0RkHf0QdlyPW9mj0yqwE-0WI2x6yfBAolIw1MZEIR9VAwFs1ZNKoJpY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2174.9)):

"They're like me, I respect them, I want to be them, I want to be like them, whatever. And when they pitch me something and now I feel this connection to them, and I'm much more likely to go buy that product."

Erik Averill ([36:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=IvkIZ4v4-RPKLQWRuOd57YoGFCiZt2QV-wfgDixhfsWUFHDPgX-Bx0fMzF4Lh9eSN0EnEr2c-BZETMe9MUMbluERvw8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2185.84)):

Very, very, very helpful. Well, I want to be sensitive to time. I have one last question for you. And of course, we'd love for you to think about too, if there's anything you think the athlete absolutely needs to hear, but this is more just a question of where you see the puck going in general in the sports industry of sitting at such an important obviously, media company that you guys are. There's been questions of popularity, of sports and viewership, and distraction, those types of things. Are there certain sports that are, that are trending up that we should be paying attention to?

Erik Averill ([37:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=WVThzQZ3UxkXL5lENXGQPMFgnL_85qzt4tOPC44pt70zmbwUH8oEC2fuTNoQup-0ysHUM3cXuJeIDuwsNCbdKY_LUpg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2224.43)):

Where do you see really the risks lying? We've seen so much private equity money and venture money piling into sports through different mediums. Just love to get your take on what's happening in the industry.

Evan Parker ([37:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=JrHns07n1_NZcfZz2gx8-G90WRC2DDwkfcz1qWEedL-5TAmtSP8rAsmKC7H-YmH6ZI9zsMjdEBzL-3IGR1XpZCVjfro&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2237.31)):

Yeah. I know that the ratings for a lot of sports are down. I'm not a huge believer that that means interest is down. I think people are just consuming the content in a lot of different ways. Rather than watching a 48-minute basketball game or a nine innings baseball game, you can go on your phone and you can get the biggest and best plays that happen. And I think so more people are paying attention to baseball probably than ever before. They may just not be sitting down at Dodger Stadium for the nine innings. They may not be sitting in front of their TV for nine innings, but they're interacting with it.

Evan Parker ([37:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=uRI8Oy4jqv-9uEGxPx-rK7oOGOmorFu1fxJmXDJRvBvSudi0GR4RRL5T_JE7TuQR_SwH7UcCNssjJ7iSIDmiYBb18ts&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2268.5)):

They're following the athletes, they're paying attention to the highlights. That's valuable. So I think it's a changing of consumption habits more than it is a lack of interest in sports. And there are a lot of sports that are growing, the PLL is something that didn't exist a couple of years ago and is picking up a lot of momentum and people are paying attention to lacrosse in a way that they never did before. Women's basketball is as hot right now as it's ever been and is only going to continue to grow. What's going on with the MBA and college basketball, those sports are exploding in a big way.

Evan Parker ([38:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=yvcaYw9BfJ6yGJN7-Vz8tMIFIu651s5vv_RIK74kI8d8jcmx8-_txbKjwwzwA1UYSzVsflYonRiP3P8qHyG5r7BAxIw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2298.96)):

The Olympics gives opportunities for people to pay attention to sports that they wouldn't otherwise. Skateboarding getting to be on Primetime, NBC and showing these 13-year-old girls who are out there winning metals. That means that these people are going to have decades long relationships with their fans that they built when they were little children. That's so powerful. That doesn't mean that everybody's like getting to their house at six o'clock to turn on the TV and everybody's watching the exact same thing at the same time, but I guarantee you that more people know the names of the biggest same baseball players than they may have 10 years ago when the ratings were up because they're interacting with those athletes in different ways.

Evan Parker ([38:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=JDreVh1QieeaEbng7qc1hmBBrvBqrNbGXGNVfOXlHo8yYsSkpXqsV5O0a6DWtR2J_4uk2-J26lzGs7WC0mpYBpxve-4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2335.21)):

So I think sure, if you're an ad sales guy for Fox, or NBC, or ESPN, you're probably not feeling great about the way the ratings look like, but I think if you're in our world and you're looking at athletes being able to become bigger and bigger stars and have the ability to interact with more people on a global scale than ever before, there's never been a time that I'm aware of where athletes have had this much power, where sports has been this important and athletes have the ability to sway people's thinking. Social justice and things like that, where an athlete can say what's on their mind and what they believe in and interact with millions and millions of people around the world on behalf of that platform.

Evan Parker ([39:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=bXv0PHM8PRi7y78qZyteWsuVUEzkUIfWvGdTmuGSJbTAei_oYPIEhsxzPJoFT9KIM-myC1_zGWWrTDYp6R3i_KtqXYM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2377.03)):

Even when you're talking about the types of deals athletes can do, if you're somebody who... I always recommend everybody, it doesn't matter if you're an athlete, have hobbies, have interests outside of your job and outside of the things you do, if you're somebody who likes putting together puzzles, there's a brand out there that probably wants to do a deal with you. There's no shortage of brands out there who would do deals if they just knew what you're interested in. The Olympics, I keep referencing it, but there's, I think his name's Tom Daley, the British divers understands crocheting, he could probably turn that into a personal services deal if he wanted to.

Evan Parker ([40:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=N7ij2829maIYg8bwNUnOK_gt_iFI79rWj2VLUgpGPDA-DYkcsf-6I1Hw0oCGPFhO27LxaCgRvv4SBdVEQn8qK99zhsw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2410.36)):

And maybe at the last Olympics, that wouldn't have been possible because it wouldn't have spread like wildfire fire through social media. Everybody has things that they're passionate about, you just have to find them, you have to talk about them, and you have to find your community. Whatever that community is, they exist, nobody is alone. I think that that's what social media has taught all of us, that there are millions of people all over the world that like the same things that we like no matter how weird or how esoteric.

Evan Parker ([40:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=VsjvxupjRVLWL-4CqWa4I_NfOXvBbnxesYrWMJH5LrseaGmjf-xTBIzYTPMHuA0ZJgjsUls_a_t_-j0P24tppQh50wE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2432.77)):

You can find somebody else who cares about it, you can find a brand that's willing to invest in it. You just have to show yourself, you have to have interests, you have to be willing to talk about them, and you'll find people out there who want to do deals with you, who want to work with you, who want to follow you. And that's so, so valuable. So yeah, ratings might not be as high for the Olympics as they once were, MLB has got their struggles, MBA. Everybody's looking at the ratings points. But I think if we looked at the collective following, the collective attention span put towards these sports, they probably had never be higher.

Evan Parker ([41:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=xm6Btyc6wvMkVOeA3Z2idmC5rGIXpYkK5Q2HzPFuR_fE-4jekAzEnyq6m7g50A4uTLOl6ECrF5hYZHyv1PpwI1sdmU8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2463.4)):

There's more competition than there's ever been. So it's not like you come home and you only have one thing on your TV that you have to watch. No wonder ratings are down if you've got 50 things you can do with your time. But I think a lot of people are spending seconds here and there that make up a significant amount more attention span given towards sports than if they were only watching one thing because that was the only thing on their TV, and that was the only way to consume content.

Erik Averill ([41:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=CydCDHGOJJIeDfi5RG1HMOUtbbEDARDngqyyrYlSbdiEogr4k2PKrYFQX0j_p78Gsf0dRVdXF2GiLtOK7BpCFm-uLHE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2488.53)):

Yeah. Thank you so much for that. And I really hope our athletes and individuals have listened this far. And of course, we'll splice it up and make sure that they don't miss the importance. One of the things you just hit on the end was, I know it was so important for you guys at The Athletic, it is here for AWM is really, this is about impact. This is about discovering what is your mission and what is something that you want to commit your life to or your vision and say, "This is not the way things are supposed to be. Here's the impact I think I can make."

Erik Averill ([42:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NskTk_MykwaK8rfVdPuQh9qLnePIFXCZZ7wUlun6sOnESvJShih8C0LqohRNEBVRdiwW8bCQl17Wx6fX_oCr9gaDUOk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2522.62)):

And that there's a tribe that will join you on that, and that's that authenticity. And so just the encouragement for the athlete or just anybody listening, we call us in the business world, your value proposition, your differentiator. Nobody can do you like you. And I think that's the important of your human capital being your greatest driver of net worth. And so Evan, thank you so much for investing the time. Obviously, your knowledge, your skills, your expertise, we love the work that you're doing with The Athletic. And so thanks for being on the podcast.

Erik Averill ([42:36](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=BjADvC-Fz2hLHeZWMP_iPZqBN5x8Ao6hwU7PNYdaCxYCoGPTpkMu-QxbXONg2PUdVXItUA9RVkObOrHpmCoz0pKuIo4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2556.36)):

And for our listeners, thank you guys, always for your attention. If you head over to athleteceo.com, you can access everything in the show notes. And until next time, own your wealth, make an impact, and always be a pro.