



# Athlete Visibility on Social Media

## Vanessa Wolford & Mariah Martin

### Youth Enrichment Services | Annual Research Symposium



## Introduction

Recently, social media has been used as a mechanism to facilitate athlete recruitment, highlight athlete performance and skills, voice political/ social statements, and promote athletic opportunities. Just as individuals engineer messages to reach coaches, interested players, and curious sport consumers, stakeholders concurrently utilize the information to inform their decision-making, interests, and preferences. Despite the rise in social media use, particularly among collegiate and professional athletes, limited research has been done to understand whether social media contributes to the visibility of high school athletes.

## Research Question

How does social media influence the visibility of high school athletes?

## Hypothesis

Social media plays a large role in creating athletic opportunities for high athletes.

## Purpose

The purpose of this project was to investigate the impact of social media on high school athlete visibility. Much is known on the college and professional levels, but not enough is available for HS athletes. This study attempts to identify this context for future studies.

## Targeted Population

Individuals of any age, race, and gender who utilize various forms of social media.

Race	<b>92%</b> African-American (22)
Age	<b>75%</b> 16-20 (18)
Gender	<b>79%</b> Female (19)
Education	<b>75%</b> 9th-12th grade (18)
Household Status	<b>65%</b> Single-parent household (15)
Household Income	<b>50%</b> Uncertain household income(15) <b>25%</b> between \$25,001 and 50,000(6)

Hailey Nader @getfitwithnader · Mar 21  
@serenawilliams is the ultimate girl boss! Thank you for inspiring women like me every single day to embrace being a woman in this world. #UntilWeAllWin #Equality #GirlBoss #FemaleAthletes

Nike @Nike  
@SerenaWilliams has proven time and time again, there's no wrong way to be a woman. #UntilWeAllWin

regina george  
help get me to the Olympics

Nine out of 10 college coaches said their perception of a recruit has been negatively affected by a social media post.

Survey Questions	Responses	Total	Percentage
Are you an athlete?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>17/27</b>	<b>63%</b>
How often do you see athletes on social media?	<b>Always</b>	<b>15/27</b>	<b>56%</b>
What is the main purpose of athletes being posted?	<b>Athlete Highlights</b>	<b>12/27</b>	<b>44%</b>
Does social media help with athletes popularity?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>22/27</b>	<b>81%</b>
What sport do you believe receives the most visibility?	<b>Football</b>	<b>22/27</b>	<b>81%</b>

## Methods

We surveyed a total of 24 people which included student athletes, and coaches. We sent out the surveys via text and social media. We asked 10 study specific questions, all multiple choice, which investigated how individuals perceive social media and athlete visibility. Respondents were asked to think about how often they see athletes portrayed and the social media plays a role in athlete recruitment. From the survey, we analyzed the data created both pie charts and graphs to highlight the difference in survey responses.

## Results

Our study sought to explore how social media is used as a mechanism to create visibility for athletes.

Our average survey respondent was a black female, between the ages of 16 - 20, with an unknown income, advancing toward a bachelor degree. Many of the survey respondents were athletes themselves and believed that social media was an effective platform to highlight athletes. Respondents felt football players were the most highlighted athletes.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings from this study will help athletes strategically promote themselves on social media. It is likely that they will increase their chances for recruitment and voice as an conscious athlete. The results suggest that, overall, many athletes have visibility on social media and that they may receive attention on certain social media applications. Researchers should continue researching athlete visibility and understand how coaches and recruiters view and communicate with athletes in which they are interested. In the following studies, researchers should consider the various types of social media and how they help advance athlete' careers.