



NEWS RELEASE

# DICK'S Sporting Goods Opens 2026 Varsity Team Applications with Plans to Expand Roster Size

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DICK'S Sporting Goods has officially opened applications for the 2026 DICK'S Varsity Team roster! Now in its second year open to the public, the social-first ambassador program is calling on content creators who are passionate about sports and hold influence with their online communities to apply. Selected members will have an opportunity to partner with DICK'S Sporting Goods and other top national brands to create original social content for a wide range of campaigns and digital platforms.

**Since opening DICK'S Varsity Team to external applicants in 2025**, the program has seen tremendous success, creating over 2,500 pieces of social content, generating 40 million+ impressions, and being featured in over 20 campaigns for both DICK'S and its top brands like adidas, New Balance, On and Hoka. These results have led DICK'S to grow its Varsity Team roster in 2026. Beyond expanding the total number of Varsity Team members, DICK'S is enhancing its year-round programming by giving its creators more chances to connect in person and collaborate on content across a variety of campaigns.

"Today's creator economy is driven by authenticity, and the DICK'S Varsity Team has quickly become a defining space for athletes and creators to bring their passion for sport to life through real, first-person storytelling," said Mark Rooks, Vice President of Creative, Sponsorship & Entertainment at DICK'S Sporting Goods. "As one of the leading sports ambassador programs, we're excited to expand this community and deepen our shared connection to sport."

Once again, DICK'S will leverage Team Captains to serve as leaders for the 2026 DICK'S Varsity Team, mentoring the incoming class as they embark on their journey. What started as a short-term mentorship in 2025, will grow to a longer-term partnership with four athletes who blend athletic achievement with powerful social influence. This year's Team Captains welcome back **Tara Davis-Woodhall and Hunter Woodhall** (Olympic and Paralympic Track & Field Athletes) and introduce **RobertAnthony Cruz** (Savannah Bananas Player and 2025 Varsity Team member) and **Emily Harrigan** (Former Collegiate Soccer Player and Sports Reporter).

"Social media has given us a chance to pursue our dream; specifically, because of those who have supported our content and careers," said the Woodhalls. "Without our community, none of this would be possible. When we started, we didn't have many mentors and no financial support, but we put ourselves out there and figured it out along the way. Luckily, so many believed in us from the beginning. So, when DICK'S Sporting Goods reached out for us to be Team Captains of an amazing program that helps others do the same, we were psyched. DICK'S Varsity Team is all about working with creators, athletes, and coaches—people growing their sport and telling their stories. What a blessing to share our experience and learn from everyone there."

Selected members of the 2026 DICK'S Varsity Team will receive:

- A paid contract for creating content and posting to their social media channels
- An exclusive, all-expense-paid 4-day Orientation experience in Tampa, Florida. This kickoff event is where Varsity Team members meet the DICK'S team, connect with fellow creators, attend training sessions and receive access to industry experts. A recap video from the 2025 DICK'S Varsity Team Orientation can be found **HERE**
- Quarterly 'Trend Boxes' featuring the latest products from the hottest brands at DICK'S and opportunities for DICK'S gift cards to purchase product for content creation
- The opportunity to be featured on DICK'S social media channels, website, brand videos and photoshoots, instore signage and more
- Early access to select product launches, VIP events, celebrity appearances and more
- An opportunity to participate in "Coaches Corner," sessions where members connect directly with DICK'S internal influencer marketing team and influencer agency, **Fohr**, for industry insights, trends, and hands-on guidance

"After joining the DICK'S Sporting Goods Varsity Team last year, I've seen firsthand how intentional this community is about supporting the next generation of athletes and creators," said RobertAnthony Cruz. "It is a tremendous honor for me to step into the role of team captain, and I'm excited to continue promoting a love of sport through mentorship and content."

"I'm thrilled to be a DICK'S Varsity Team Captain this year, DICK'S has been woven into my story as an athlete, a

coach, and a creator,” said Emily Harrigan. “It’s a brand that has supported my love for sports at every stage and continues to reflect the passion, purpose, and creativity that guide my journey.”

The 2026 DICK’S Varsity Team application opens today and closes on Tuesday, Feb. 3 at 11:59 p.m. EST. Additional information, including application criteria and a submission link can be found at [\*\*www.dicksvarsityteam.com\*\*](http://www.dicksvarsityteam.com).