



Jack Porter

RECRUITING, RETENTION AND RECREATION

Making More Meaningful Spaces for Your Players

CREATING PLAYER SPACES THAT SUPPORT THE OVERALL VISION OF YOUR ATHLETIC PROGRAM HAS NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT.

These spaces need to serve multiple purposes, promoting development, recovery, team chemistry, culture building and recruiting.

We recognize that college athletic programs are under more pressure than ever before to compete, win, recruit, and

to deliver for their team and their school. And it's a constant treadmill of stress thanks to conference realignment, name, image and likeness rules, and the transfer portal.

How do you recruit the best and keep them returning year after year? It's a matter of making continual progress, because if you're not keeping up with the competition, you risk becoming irrelevant. These spaces are no longer just a place for student

athletes to shower and change. They hold the potential to transform an entire program, for better or for worse.

Let's take a closer look at these player spaces, including how they are used, how they can be transformed, how improvements can occur in phases, some representative examples, and potential return on investment.

WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY 'PLAYER SPACES?'

Today, the most successful programs plan their player spaces around the entire student-athlete experience.

We break it down into three categories of experiences and spaces, the combination of which can create truly remarkable places that make a deep and lasting impression:

1

ATHLETIC ADVANCEMENT These are areas specifically designed to support student athletes outside of game day. These include locker rooms and showers, but also include strength and conditioning, rehabilitation and recovery, team meeting rooms, and nutrition stations to entire dining halls. The key is creating these spaces to work together seamlessly and design them to reflect the organization at a higher level than ever before.

2

CULTURE AND CAMARADERIE The biggest advancement in team spaces might at first seem to have little to do with athletics. But areas that foster a team's culture and sense of camaraderie pay priceless dividends come game day. These areas include team lounges with gaming systems, ping pong, pool and foosball tables. They also might include outdoor areas such as fire pits to gather round, mini-golf courses, beach volleyball or half-court basketball. It's all about creating a supportive team environment outside of pressure-packed competitions and practices.

3

GAME DAY ENERGY This is all about the hype. Getting players energized, elevated and ready to win. It's a special place that can serve as a source of pride and inspiration. These spaces are an essential piece of a winning game-day formula, making it clear to athletes why they're there and what they need to do.



WHY ARE PLAYER SPACES SO IMPORTANT TO A PROGRAM?

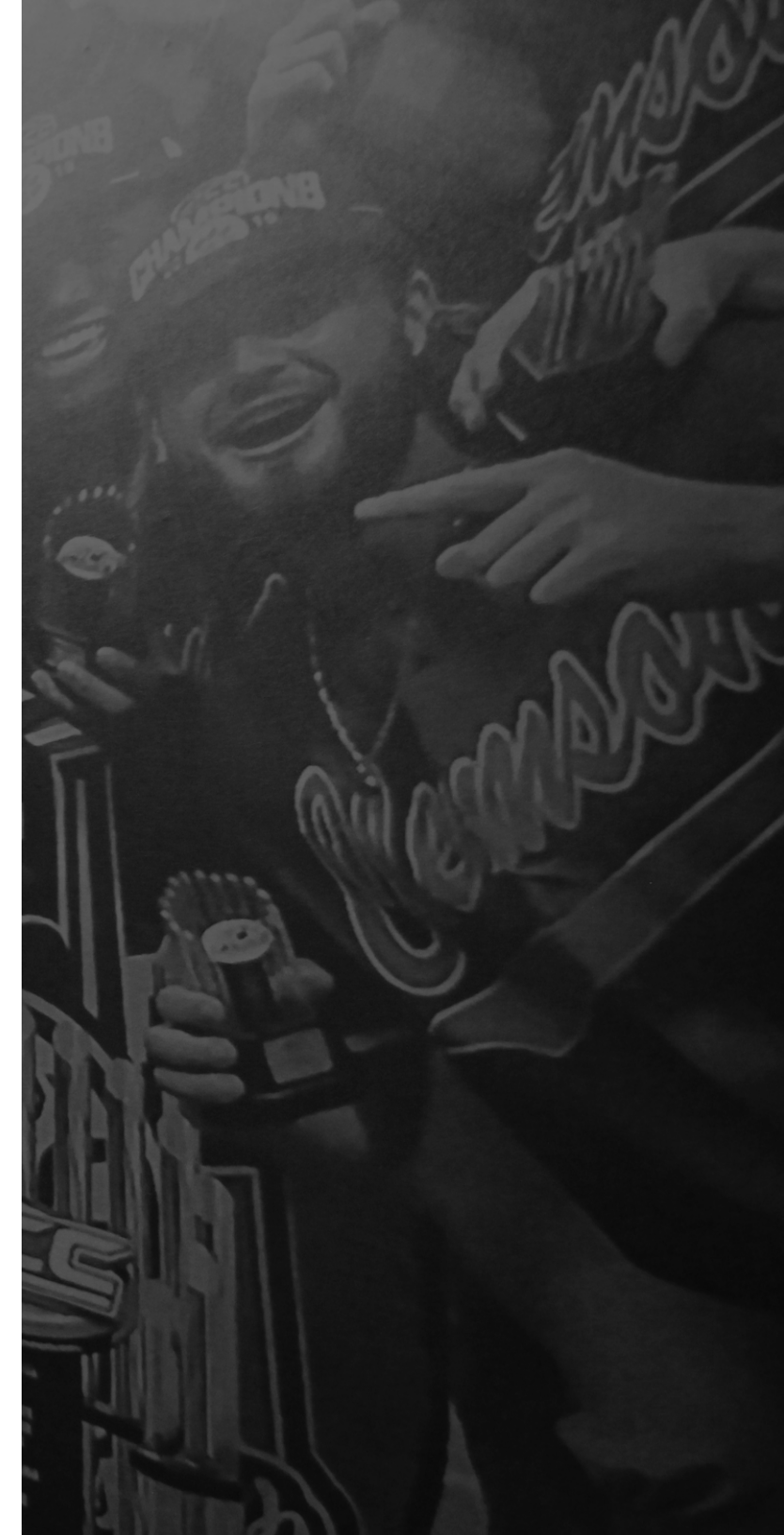
Now that you have a sense of the various types of player spaces we design, you need to understand just how critical they are to your program's success.

The primary reason for developing quality player spaces is to demonstrate your level of commitment to your current players. When they see you care about them and their experience, they are dedicated to being the best they can be. When they are surrounded by state-of-the-art

facilities they want to be in, they are getting all they can out of their time there.

Additionally, top-tier player spaces help attract first-rate talent when it comes to recruiting season. If your spaces are better than the competition, your program increases its odds of landing higher-caliber players. And if your spaces accurately and attractively demonstrate what your institution stands for, you have a better chance of drawing in the players who best align with your vision.

And finally, special spaces create their own center of gravity. They are, as we like to say, like Velcro. They have a stickiness that makes athletes want to return week-in and week-out, year after year. And when they are in those spaces, they are bonding with their teammates, building cohesion and chemistry.





RECRUITING AND RETAINING TOP TALENT TO DELIVER ROI

As you well know, the recruiting process has changed dramatically given the conference realignment, the transfer portal and new NIL rules and deals. The upshot is that you have to work doubly hard every year to not only find and secure new talent but retain existing players.

Special player areas don't guarantee you get every five-star recruit and keep your all-stars every single year. But lackluster player spaces make it extremely

difficult to compete with the schools that emphasize a positive and rewarding player experience.

For a recruit, it doesn't feel right if there's a disconnect between what the organization stands for and how the space actually feels when they're in it. Your environment needs to support that.

How do you attach a dollar figure to all of this? There is no simple equation, but consider this:

What is the value of getting a team-changing recruit? What is the value of retaining your

top player? Or reducing your churn rate from 20 percent to 10 percent year over year?

Another way to evaluate ROI is to imagine what your program might look like over the next several years if you didn't make that investment. Will you be able to maintain your trajectory, keep the players you have and attract others who could take your team to the next level?

PHASE YOUR PLANS TO CREATE CONTINUAL PROGRESS

Programs often come to us with the desire to create special player spaces but they lack the vision and occasionally the resources required. Neither of those issues should prevent you from pursuing something better.

We regularly counsel programs on how to make progress by designing and building better player spaces in portions and across phases. You don't have to do everything, everywhere all at once. In some cases, that can

be next to impossible without causing major disruptions to a program's schedule and cadence.

Some programs want to build an entire new building, and that can take years. We work with them to leverage what they have while still working toward the future. The important thing is to show players you are making progress. You want to show them some new energy and build on that momentum. A phased approach, designed during the season and implemented during down times, can make all the difference.



BALANCE SHORT-TERM WITH LONG-TERM INVESTMENTS

Before picking a course of action on creating new player spaces, you should take stock of what you currently have. Benchmark yourself against the competition. Consider your budget and timeline. Think about where your program stands today and where you expect or aspire to be in five or 10 years.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Do you currently have enough space?

Is your space efficient or are you wasting time because of poor flow or bad adjacencies?

Can you relocate walls to accommodate the needs of players + staff?

Could you pursue short-term updates while planning for a larger capital project in the future?

Is it time for a more significant construction project?

Whatever you decide, thinking for the long-term is vital. Nothing is totally future-proof, but your plans today should be made with tomorrow in mind. Ideally, you're designing a system where more of the iconic, foundational elements are permanent. They should look like they've always been there and will be there forever.

At the same time, those big, permanent brand moments need to accommodate smaller areas and design aspects so that they can be updated later to evolve over time.



TRANSFORMATIVE PLAYER SPACES

To give you a sense of the kind of special player space projects Jack Porter has designed, here are a few of our favorite recent examples.



MISSISSIPPI STATE FOOTBALL

The football program was inhabiting a building built in the last 10 years, and it had all the facilities to service everything student athletes needed, but it needed a fresh brand experience.

We didn't move any walls, but we pressed them to answer one question: "What is the story you need to be telling today?" It's different from the story they were telling a decade ago. So we worked with them to help tell the story of where their program stands now.

We came up with a plan for the entire building, modernizing it across two phases with a third in store. We did a massive video wall in the front, showcasing the brand larger than life and highlighting the journey some players have had from college to the NFL.

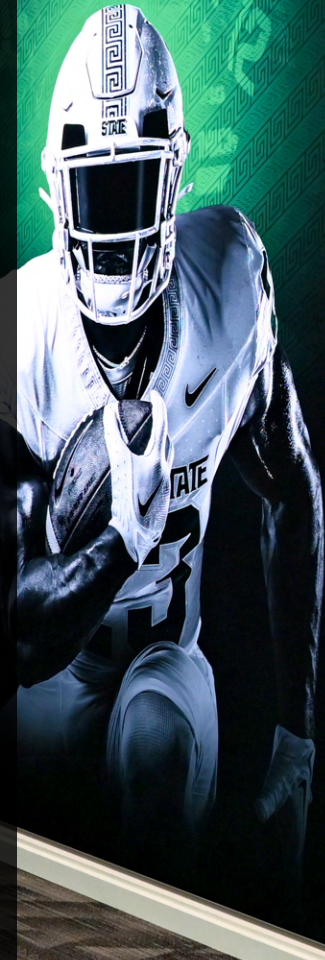
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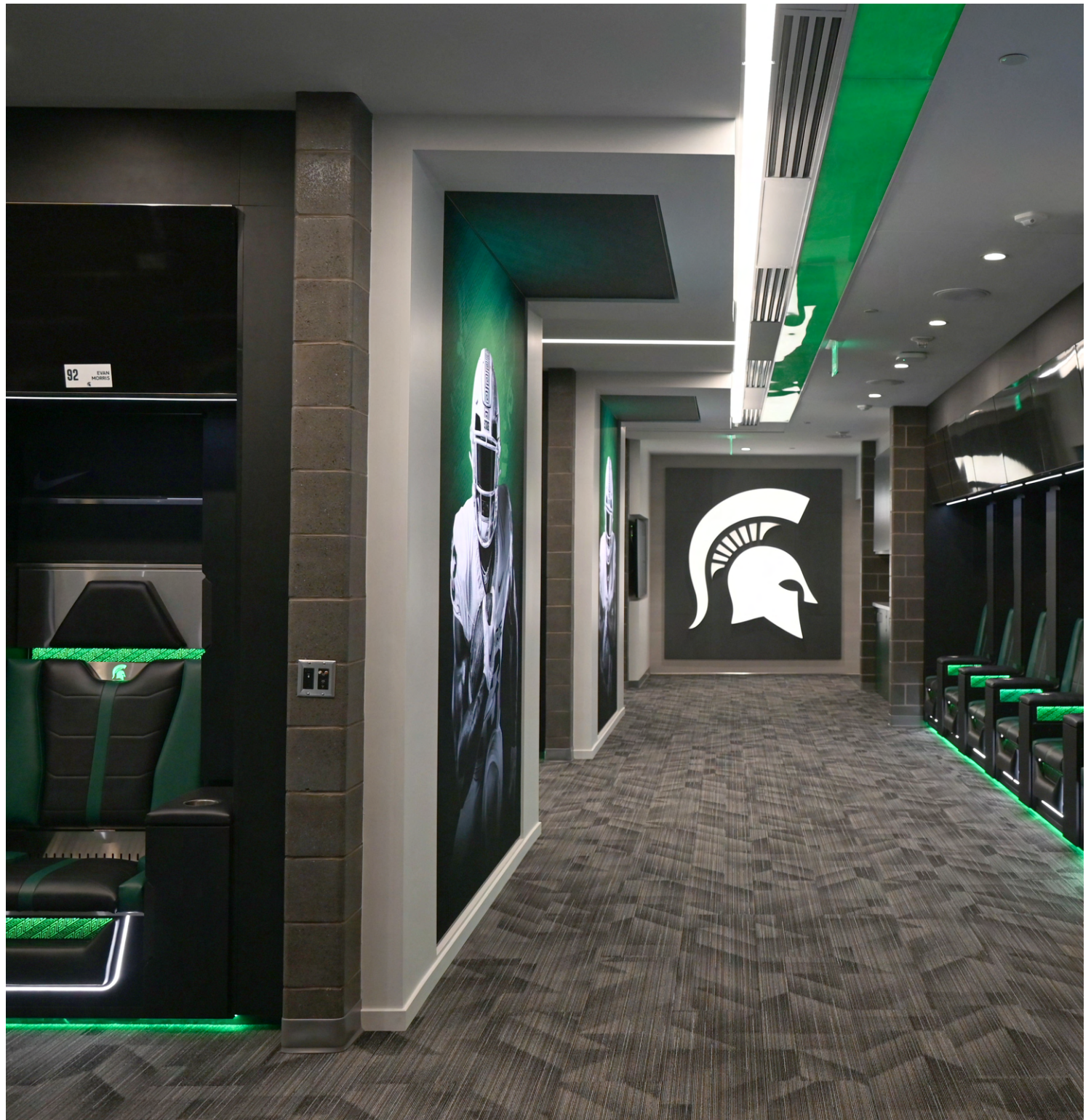


MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL

The football facility had undergone a number of renovations over the years, but none of that work was taking it where it needed to be in 2023. They needed to do a big capital project, and that required surgically removing a part of the building, a substantial addition and significant renovations of existing spaces.

The result? Spaces that are the right size to meet the needs of today's students. We kept an eye on how the space could also be a recruiting tool, and created a more accurate reflection of their program and what they represent at this time. We leaned into their emphasis on player development, inclusiveness, and integrity as well as other unique qualities about the Spartan brand and we designed a one-of-a-kind gear display.







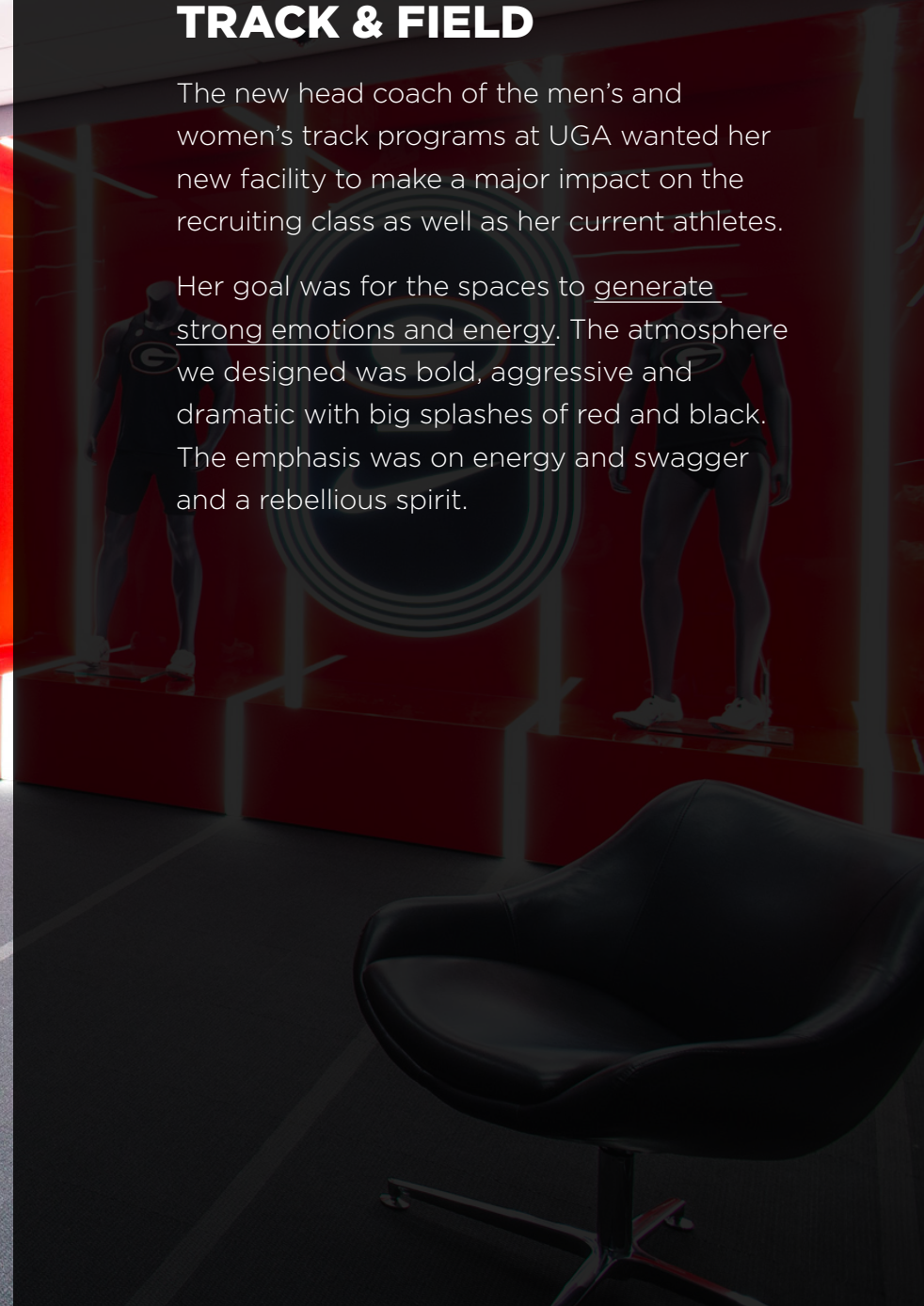
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

TRACK + FIELD + CROSS COUNTRY

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA TRACK & FIELD

The new head coach of the men's and women's track programs at UGA wanted her new facility to make a major impact on the recruiting class as well as her current athletes.

Her goal was for the spaces to generate strong emotions and energy. The atmosphere we designed was bold, aggressive and dramatic with big splashes of red and black. The emphasis was on energy and swagger and a rebellious spirit.





GIVE YOUR PLAYERS A SPACE THEY DESERVE WITH THOUGHTFUL DESIGN

If you think the bar for designing successful player spaces is high now, just wait a few years. It's only rising higher and higher. Increasingly, these amenities are no longer "nice-to-haves," and quickly become "must-haves" in the competitive world of collegiate athletics.

We hope this resource will help you recognize that by prioritizing thoughtful design and aligning spaces with the program's identity, you can elevate your team to new heights by creating a supportive and inspiring environment for student-athletes.

If you'd like to learn more about how Jack Porter can take your player spaces to the next level, [let's talk.](#)





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