

NIL Star Crowns Bella Calvanese First-Ever Champion as Inaugural Competition Reaches More Than 50 Million People

Sacred Heart University women's lacrosse student-athlete earns the \$10,000 grand prize after receiving more than 475,000 votes

FAIRFIELD, CT, UNITED STATES, July 22, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- After generating millions of fan votes throughout its inaugural competition and reaching more than 50 million people nationwide, [NIL Star](#) has crowned its first-ever champion.



NIL Star Crowns First Champion!

NIL Star, produced by www.NILTV.com, garnered millions of votes and engagement through its Instagram channel, @NILStar and streaming platform.

And now, history has its first NIL Star.

Bella Calvanese, a student-athlete on the Sacred Heart University women's lacrosse team, captured the inaugural title after earning more than 475,000 fan votes throughout the competition. She takes home the \$10,000 grand prize as the first-ever champion of the nation's first singing competition created exclusively for college student-athletes.

[Click here](#) to see Bella's winning reel.

NIL Star was designed to showcase the extraordinary talents of student-athletes beyond their sport, giving college athletes from across the country a national stage to demonstrate their musical abilities while building their personal brands in the Name, Image and Likeness era.

The inaugural competition featured student-athletes representing colleges and universities nationwide, with contestants advancing through multiple rounds of competition before fans ultimately selected the first-ever NIL Star champion.

"From the very beginning, our vision for NIL Star was to show the world that student-athletes are

far more than the sports they play," said Emily Cole, NIL TV co-founder and former NIL athlete. "The response to our inaugural competition exceeded every expectation. Millions of votes were cast, more than 50 million people were reached, and Bella's victory represents the beginning of what we believe will become one of the premier platforms celebrating the incredible talents of college athletes."

Building on this momentum, NIL TV is already set to expand the franchise with the launch of NIL RAP STAR on August 1, 2026. The new competition, the nation's first rap competition exclusively for college student-athletes, will continue the mission of showcasing the extraordinary talents of student-athletes beyond the game.

Calvanese, an attacker for Sacred Heart University's Division I women's lacrosse program, impressed fans throughout the competition with her vocal performances while balancing the demands of being a collegiate student-athlete. In addition to the \$10,000 grand prize, she will be featured across NIL TV's platforms as the inaugural NIL Star champion.

The overwhelming response to NIL Star's first season demonstrates the growing demand for opportunities that celebrate student-athletes beyond athletics. By combining the excitement of fan voting with the opportunities created through Name, Image and Likeness, NIL Star has introduced a new national platform where college athletes can showcase talents that extend far beyond the field, court, track or pool.

About NIL Star:

NIL Star is the nation's first singing competition created exclusively for college student-athletes. Produced by NIL TV, the competition celebrates student-athletes' talents beyond sports by providing a national platform to showcase their voices while growing their personal brands in the Name, Image and Likeness era. Through millions of fan votes, nationwide participation and a social media reach exceeding 50 million people during its inaugural season, NIL Star is redefining how college athletes connect with audiences beyond competition.

Connect with NIL TV and NIL Star:

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