TEAM SCOUT

THE PROGRAM AD SALES PLAYBOOK

MAKE YOUR TEAM A $5K–$10K BUSINESS.

The complete playbook for selling ads in your printed program. Math, rate cards, parent scripts, printer specs, sponsorship upsells, and the renewal system that compounds it year over year. Built from the programs already running this play.

WHY THIS MATTERS

THE SINGLE HIGHEST-LEVERAGE THING YOUR BOOSTER CLUB CAN DO.

Selling ads in your printed program is the most-overlooked revenue lever in youth sports — and the easiest one to start. The conservative math below is a starting point. Programs that run the play well outpace it severalfold.

THE CONSERVATIVE EXAMPLE

25 players × 1 full-page ad ($400)	**$10,000**
Print run — 500 copies, 32 pages, full color	**– $2,000**
Net to your program	**~$8,000**

Numbers verified against current US mid-tier printer rates (Mixam, Gorham Printing). $400/full page is mid-market; many programs charge more.

HOW IT SCALES.

- **Small club team (15 players):** 15 × $400 = $6,000 gross → ~$4,000 net.
- **School team (35 players):** 35 × $400 = $14,000 gross → ~$12,000 net.
- **Multi-team program (60 players):** 60 × $400 = $24,000 gross → ~$22,000 net.
- **Add the back-cover sponsor ($750) and inside covers ($600 × 2) = $1,950 more** with one phone call.
- **Add game-day stadium banners ($500–$2,500/sponsor):** typically 5–10 more sponsors per season.

THE FLOOR AND THE CEILING

Programs already running this play stack ads with banner sponsorships, halftime PA reads, and gate giveaways. In 2026 one of them sold **more than 180 program ads to more than 170 local businesses**, and 113 of its 121 players met their ad requirement. You don't need that to start. The floor (just the ad-sales play, with conservative pricing) is 25 players, $10,000 in sales.

WHEN TO START

SELL BEFORE THE SEASON. PRINT TWO WEEKS BEFORE KICKOFF.

The most common mistake is starting too late. Local businesses budget on a calendar — orthodontists, real estate agents, restaurants all plan their year early. Catch them before the budget gets spent on someone else's sponsorship.

Fall sports

MARCH – JUNE

Football, soccer, volleyball, cross-country. Sell March–May. Design in June. Print first week of August. Distribute at the first home game.

Winter sports

AUGUST – OCTOBER

Basketball, wrestling, swimming. Sell August–October. Design in October. Print mid-November.

Spring sports

OCTOBER – JANUARY

Baseball, lacrosse, track. Sell October–December. Design in January. Print mid-February.

All sports

YEAR-ROUND RENEWAL

Returning sponsors should be confirmed before any cold outreach starts. Renewals are 5× faster than new sales.

PRE-SEASON KICKOFF WINDOW

Block one Saturday in March (or August for winter, October for spring) for the player + parent kickoff meeting. That single meeting is where the program is made or lost.

PRICING

SET THE RATE CARD BEFORE YOU SELL A SINGLE AD.

Most programs use the rate card below as their starting point. Adjust up for major markets or larger programs. Don't adjust down — the price is also a signal of quality.

PLACEMENT	SIZE / NOTES	PRICE
Full page	8.5" × 11" — the baseline ask	**$400**
Half page	8.5" × 5.5" — entry-level	**$200**
Quarter page	4.25" × 5.5" — "I want to support"	**$100**
Back cover	Highest-value placement, full color	**$750**
Inside front cover	Premium placement	**$600**
Inside back cover	Premium placement	**$600**
Patron line (name listing)	"Friends of the team" — under $100 supporters	**$25–$50**

> **FOUNDER NOTE**
>
> These numbers are *illustrative*. The actual rate card should be set by your booster board before kickoff, based on your market. Adjust up if you're in a major metro or affluent suburb. Hold firm — local businesses will pay these numbers.

ADD-ON SPONSORSHIP TIERS (SOLD SEPARATELY OR AS BUNDLES).

- **Game-day banner:** $500–$2,500/season (stadium-side branding).
- **PA reads at halftime:** $250–$750/game or season bundles.
- **Gate giveaway:** $1,500–$3,500 (branded item handed out).
- **Title sponsor:** $5,000–$10,000+ (front-cover placement + everything else).

THE LIST

LOCAL BUSINESSES WHOSE CUSTOMERS ARE PARENTS.

This is the entire framework. If a business sells to a local parent — they're a candidate. Start with family. Move outward.

TIER 1 — THE WARMEST LEADS.

- Family + extended family who own a business (uncles, aunts, cousins)
- Parents' employers (often have a marketing budget allocated)
- Past sponsors / parents who've since left the program
- Family friends + church community
- Anyone who's ever said "let me know how I can help"

TIER 2 — BUSINESSES THAT SELL TO LOCAL PARENTS.

- Orthodontists, dentists, pediatricians
- Lawyers (family law, estate planning, personal injury)
- Insurance agents (State Farm, Farmers, Allstate locals)
- Financial advisors + CPAs
- Real estate agents
- Mortgage lenders
- Auto dealers + auto repair + tire shops
- Restaurants (especially family + casual dining)
- Ice cream + frozen yogurt + bakeries
- Sporting goods stores + gyms
- Pediatric/family medical practices
- Photographers (family portrait, senior photos)
- Tutoring services + music studios
- Sports academies + private coaches

TIER 3 — LOCAL TRADES + SERVICE PROVIDERS.

- General contractors
- Roofers + HVAC + plumbers
- Landscapers + lawn-care services
- Painters + flooring specialists
- Cleaning services
- Pest control
- Pool services
- Pet groomers + veterinarians

HOW TO PRIORITIZE

THE 60/30/10 RULE.

Don't treat the list above as a flat sweep. Most successful programs follow a 60/30/10 split — and finish ad sales 4× faster than programs that just "start cold-calling local businesses".

60%

FROM PLAYER + PARENT NETWORKS

Family, friends-of-family, parents' employers, parents' own clients. The "warm ask" is dramatically easier than the cold ask — and the close rate is 5–10× higher.

30%

FROM RETURNING SPONSORS

Anyone who advertised last year. Email them in February before their budget moves elsewhere. Renewal close rate: 60–80%.

10%

FROM COLD OUTREACH

New local businesses, walk-ins, neighborhood. Close rate: 10–20%. Lowest yield — but it's how next year's warm leads get built.

★

ALWAYS-WARM — THE PLAYER ASK

Even if a player doesn't personally know a business owner, their parents do. Push the ask through the family network first.

THE "ONE AD PER PLAYER" RULE

Every player commits to selling **one full-page ad ($400 minimum)**. Parents who don't want their player making the ask can **buy their way out by writing the check directly** — a $400 family contribution that funds the team. Either way, the program clears $10K with a 25-player roster.

THE COACH'S JOB

THIS WORKS BECAUSE THE COACH CALLS THE SHOT.

Ad sales doesn't belong on the booster president's plate. It belongs in the same locker-room meeting where the coach sets the season's standards. The coach's buy-in is the difference between an empty program and a full one.

THE THREE THINGS THE COACH HAS TO DO.

1. **Set the standard:** "Every player on this team sells one full-page ad." Make it part of the season expectations, same as attendance and conditioning.
2. **Create the competition:** Top-3 sellers get team gear, hoodies, a captain's patch, a callout at the first home game. Cheap rewards, massive motivation.
3. **Celebrate weekly:** A 30-second leaderboard announcement at every practice. The coach reads names. That's it.

WHY THIS WORKS.

- The coach has more authority over a player than the booster board.
- Players want to do well in front of teammates — leaderboards drive sales.
- The ask coming from the player is more effective than the ask coming from a parent.
- Family-network sales (Tier 1) are easiest when the player makes the ask themselves.

> **FOR PARENTS WHO DON'T WANT THEIR KID ASKING**
>
> Always offer the "buy-out" option from day one. Some parents prefer to write the $400 check directly. That's a win — same revenue, zero awkwardness. Make sure that's on the table in the kickoff meeting so no one feels cornered.

THE PARENT SCRIPT

YOU'RE NOT ASKING FOR A DONATION.

The single biggest reframing in this entire playbook: this isn't a fundraiser. **You're offering a local business a marketing opportunity** — one that helps a kid as the side effect. That framing is what makes the ask easy to deliver and easy to say yes to.

SAMPLE SCRIPT — PHONE OR IN PERSON

"Hi Mr. Smith, my son [Name] plays for the [Team Name]. We're putting together our season program — a printed booklet that goes out to every family and gets handed out at every home game. We're offering local businesses ad space inside the program. A full page is $400, half-page is $200, and the back cover is $750. The program reaches about [number] of local families across the season. Would you like to be part of it?"

SAMPLE SCRIPT — EMAIL / TEXT

"Hi [Name], hope you're doing well. Quick ask: my son plays for the [Team Name] this year, and we're building our season program book. We're looking for local sponsors and I thought of [Business] right away. A full-page ad runs $400 — reaches every team family across the full season at home games. Worth a 5-minute call to chat through it?"

WHY THIS WORKS.

- **Specific:** exact prices, exact reach, exact ask.
- **Personal:** "I thought of [Business] right away" — they're not on a generic list.
- **Low-pressure:** "Would you like to be part of it?" beats "Will you sponsor us?"
- **Tangible:** a printed booklet feels more concrete than an Instagram shout-out.

PUSHBACK & WHAT TO SAY

THREE OBJECTIONS THAT COME UP — AND HOW TO HANDLE THEM.

"WE DON'T REALLY ADVERTISE."

Response: "That's totally fair. A lot of our sponsors don't see this as advertising — they see it as community support that happens to come with a logo on a page. The program goes home with every family, so it's in 100+ households all season. If a smaller placement makes more sense, the half page is $200 or the quarter is $100."

"CAN I SEE THE PROGRAM FIRST?"

Response: "Absolutely — last year's program is here, take a look. We're using the same design for this year. The deadline to be included in the print run is [date] — so I'd love to lock in your spot once you've had a chance to review."

"$400 IS MORE THAN WE'D NORMALLY SPEND."

Response: "I get it — let me show you the half-page at $200 or quarter-page at $100. Both reach the same families. A lot of first-year sponsors start with the quarter or half and go bigger in year two."

THE TWO THINGS NEVER TO DO.

1. **Never apologize for the price.** The price is fair — it's also what funds the program. If you flinch, they flinch.
2. **Never accept a "maybe" without a deadline.** End every conversation with: "The deadline to be in the program is [date]. Can I follow up on [specific day]?"

PRINTING

WHAT A REAL PRINT RUN ACTUALLY COSTS.

The single biggest variable in net revenue is the print bill. Most programs overspend by 30–50% on their first print run because nobody showed them the actual numbers. Here's what to budget.

PRINT RUN	SPECS	APPROX. COST
500 copies	32pp, 8.5" × 11", full color, saddle-stitched, 80lb cover	**$1,500 – $2,500**
750 copies	32pp, same specs	**$1,800 – $2,900**
1,000 copies	32pp, same specs	**$2,200 – $3,400**
500 copies (24pp)	Same specs, fewer pages	**$1,200 – $2,000**

RECOMMENDED PRINTERS.

- **Mixam** (mixam.com) — best online per-unit price, fast turnaround (5–7 business days), beginner-friendly upload tool.
- **Gorham Printing** (gorhamprinting.com) — US-based, mid-tier, excellent for small print runs. Strong quality for the price.
- **Local commercial print shop** — best for relationship pricing in year 2+. Many will sponsor a quarter-page in exchange for the print contract.

> **TIP**
>
> Quote three printers your first season. The price spread is often $1,000+ for the same job. Lock in a relationship for year 2+ once you know what you want.

PRINT SPECS

WHAT TO SEND THE PRINTER.

Most first-time programs lose two weeks at the printer because the files were submitted in the wrong format. Use this checklist exactly.

Trim size	8.5" × 11" (US letter)
Page count	32 pages (must be a multiple of 4 for saddle-stitch)
Binding	Saddle-stitched (2 staples in the spine)
Color	Full color, CMYK (not RGB)
Cover stock	80lb gloss or matte cover
Interior paper	70lb or 80lb gloss text
Bleed	0.125" (1/8 inch) bleed on all sides
File format	High-res PDF — print-ready, fonts embedded
Resolution	300 DPI minimum on all images

PAGES TO PLAN FOR.

1. Front cover (sponsor logo + team brand)
2. Inside front cover (premium sponsor)
3. Welcome letter from head coach
4. Team photo + roster
5. Coaching staff bios
6. Player profile pages (1/4 page each, 4 per page)
7. Season schedule
8. Sponsor ads (the bulk of the book)
9. "Friends of the team" patron list
10. Inside back cover (premium sponsor)
11. Back cover (top-tier sponsor)

SPONSORSHIP LADDER

ONCE THEY SAY YES TO AN AD — SELL THEM THE REST.

Every sponsor who buys an ad is a candidate for the broader sponsorship ladder. Bring it up *after* they've committed to the ad, not before — the close rate doubles when the relationship is already established.

THE SPONSORSHIP LADDER.

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GAME-DAY STADIUM BANNER

$500–$2,500/season. Vinyl banner mounted at the field. 8–10 sponsors typical per season. Add a "we'll have a banner made for you" service line ($75 cost, build in $200).

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PA READ AT HALFTIME

$250–$750/game, or $1,500–$3,000 for the full season. 15-second read by the PA announcer. "Today's halftime brought to you by [Sponsor]."

+

90-SECOND HALFTIME SPOT

$1,500–$3,500/game. Sponsor brings a representative on the field for a quick promotion + giveaway. Limit 1–2 per game.

+

GATE GIVEAWAY

$1,500–$3,500. Branded item handed out at the gate (rally towel, magnet, foam finger). Sponsor pays for the item production + placement fee.

+

TEAM SOCIAL MEDIA SHOUTOUTS

$250–$500 per season. Sponsor logo + tag on Instagram/Facebook recap posts. Low-cost add-on for digital-first businesses.

+

TITLE SPONSOR

$5,000–$10,000+. Front-cover logo, jumbo banner, every PA read, on-field activations. One per season. Usually a returning Tier-1 sponsor in year 2+.

BUNDLE MATH

A sponsor who pays $400 for a full-page ad + $750 for a banner + $500 for season PA reads = $1,650 from a single relationship. Five sponsors at that level = $8,250 on top of base ad sales.

TRACKING + ACCOUNTING

WHERE THE DOLLARS ACTUALLY GO.

The most common reason programs *stop* running ad sales is they can't track where the money went, who sold what, and who needs to be renewed next year. Solve that problem on day one and the play compounds for a decade.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO TRACK.

- Every sponsor (business name, contact, address, deal size, placement).
- Every player credit (which player sold what — for leaderboards + recognition).
- Payment status (invoice sent, paid, outstanding).
- Renewal flag — every sponsor should be reached out to in the same window next year.
- Artwork status (received, approved, sent to print).

THE MINIMUM VIABLE TRACKING SYSTEM.

If your booster club doesn't use Team Scout yet, a shared Google Sheet with these columns gets the job done for one season. Beyond that, the renewals fall through the cracks and you lose the compounding.

SPONSOR	SOLD BY	TIER	AMOUNT	STATUS	RENEWAL DATE
Smith Orthodontics	J. Davis	Full page	$400	Paid	Apr 2027
Lakeside Realty	M. Garcia	Half page	$200	Invoiced	Apr 2027
Downtown Auto	R. Patel	Back cover	$750	Paid	Mar 2027

IF YOU RUN THIS THROUGH TEAM SCOUT

Every row above lives in the sponsorship module. Leaderboards build themselves. CSV export hands the booster treasurer everything they need for the books. Next-season renewal reminders fire automatically. No spreadsheet drift.

THE PLATFORM THAT PAYS FOR ITSELF

THE WHOLE PLAY, IN ONE PLACE.

Team Scout's sponsorship module was built specifically for this play — because it's the play that pays for the platform. Every dollar your booster club raises through ads stays with the program.

WHAT YOU GET WHEN YOU RUN THIS THROUGH TEAM SCOUT.

- **Sponsor database** — every sponsor, every placement, every renewal date.
- **Player leaderboards** — auto-generated. The coach reads them at practice.
- **Invoicing + payment** — Stripe-powered. Sponsors pay by card or ACH directly.
- **Renewal automation** — next-year reminders fire on the right day.
- **CSV exports** — booster treasurer's books, ready every month.
- **Artwork tracking** — who sent it, who approved it, what's missing.

THE PLATFORM THAT PAYS FOR ITSELF.

If your booster club lifts program-ad revenue by just **$3,000**, it covers a full year of Team Scout — every year. The conservative math above covers it many times over. The expansion math covers a decade.

Start free at **teamscout.co** — Community tier is free forever. Signature is $129/mo when you're ready for the full sponsorship + ad-sales suite.

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