

Share: [f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [✉](#) [📱](#) [🔒](#)

A A A

Start a new college business now? DiFebo says yes

By Michael Smith
April 13, 2020

As the country's economic shutdown brought sports to a near halt, Matt DiFebo faced a dilemma: Should he delay opening his new college consulting firm until after the coronavirus crisis had run its course or stick with the plan he had first dreamed up in 2012 and had been working toward since late 2019, which would mean launching the fledgling shop in the midst of a global pandemic?



For DiFebo, what might have appeared to be a difficult choice wasn't that difficult at all.

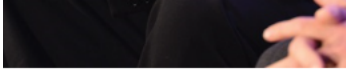
"Athletic departments need help now more than ever," he said. "That much is clear. So, I'm actually OK with the timing of the launch."

DiFebo, a veteran of the college space from his days at Central Florida and IMG College, has started introducing his new consultancy, FanSummit, to athletic directors across the country, with sports events at a total standstill on campus.

CAA
WORLD CONGRESS
comes to you
APRIL 22
11:45AM-3:00PM (ET)
REGISTER NOW

MOST POPULAR

- 1 **Coronavirus economy testing strength of sports partnerships**
- 2 **Colleges trying new ways to reach fans, sell tickets**
- 3 **NFL presses toward new media deals, with formal negotiations near**
- 4 **No play but still pay?**
- 5 **Olympics on hold**
- 6 **Major colleges brace for revenue adjustments**
- 7 **NBA an example of revenue impact**
- 8 **Wait of the World**
- 9 **Disruption of Olympics would mean a steep cost**



DiFebo is pushing ahead with FanSummit to help schools "need help now more than ever."

: COURTESY MATT DIFEBO

FanSummit, which is positioning itself as a sports marketing firm, will work with schools on an array of revenue-generating issues, including ticket sales, data analytics, building staff and creating return-on-investment strategies.

DiFebo had been traveling until the sports world shut down last month. Now, adjusting to a sports landscape changed by the spread of the coronavirus, he's meeting with ADs to talk FanSummit via video conference.

To make the most of that time, DiFebo sends questionnaires to senior-level administrators to get their feedback on their biggest needs and challenges before each video call.

"I never want to make any false assumptions about what an athletic department needs," DiFebo said. "I always prefer to meet in person when possible, but for now video is what we've got."

Towson, an NCAA Division I school in the Colonial Athletic Association, is DiFebo's first college client. He is working with the school on a comprehensive revenue strategy to help distinguish the Tigers in a pro sports marketplace just north of Baltimore.

FanSummit also is launching with Major League Lacrosse as a client.

But most of his conversations about new business are happening with ADs in the college space. If there's a reason why the timing does make sense to start a consulting firm now, it's that schools will emerge from the pandemic with hearty revenue needs after missing March Madness and spring sports and with football likely affected. Helping schools make the most of the post-COVID-19 days presents opportunities for DiFebo.

"Let's face it, tickets, that's the core of it," Towson AD Tim Leonard said. "Everything spirals up from there. Traditionally, that's been a struggle at Towson to capture a piece of this marketplace."

Leonard first knew DiFebo when both worked at UCF. DiFebo went on to start his own ticketing business, which was acquired by IMG College 10 years ago. Even though DiFebo stayed with IMG College just a few years, the ticketing business formed the basis for what is now Learfield IMG College Ticket Solutions.

While DiFebo's reputation is deeply rooted in his ticketing expertise, his vision for FanSummit is to work with schools on more of a comprehensive revenue strategy.

"This is what I've been wanting to do since I was at IMG College," DiFebo said.

"Schools need help with sales strategies and not all of them have that expertise on their staff. This has been years in the making, and the time is right."

10 Brand awareness offers mixed results for official NFL sponsors

SBJ/SBD Tweets

A Twitter list by [@sbjsbd](#)

Latest tweets from Sports Business Journal/Daily staff

Sports Business Journal
[@sbjsbd](#)

NEW this AM from [@Ourand_SBJ](#): Longtime former Turner exec and former Nets CEO David Levy has joined The Raine Group as a senior adviser. More details (open for all) [🔗](#)

[🔗: sbjsbd.biz/34io8gh](#)



14m

Sports Business Journal Retweeted

Bespoke Sports
[@BespokeSE](#)

We hope you can join our [@Mike_Boykin](#) and [@sbjsbd](#)'s Abe Madkour for our first Charlotte Sports+Business virtual event this Thursday.

[Details/Registration](#)

[Embed](#)

[View on Twitter](#)