

REED AND RHOBACK

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The story of an all-star collab

What started as a primarily golf-focused brand in 2016 has become dynamic and evolving, elevating the digital footprint of many athletes and heavily influencing the NIL, or name, image and likeness, sphere.

Rhoback, a company based in Virginia, is an activewear brand with programs designed to boost the digital presence of collegiate athletes.

Shalen Moore, athlete relations lead for Rhoback, handles a multitude of different involvements. With a fairly small team of about only 70 people, Moore also gets to work with Rhoback's product side, marketing side, and finance side.

"On a day to day basis, that means taking care of logistical ends on either the external or internal for either Rhoback or external parties," Moore said. "That could look anywhere between negotiating contracts for the athletes, for the brand, to making sure deliverables within that set contract are met from the athlete, the creator, the podcast, whatever we're working with."

Rhoback operates with the focal point of building up athletes' brands and focuses on giving back to what NIL stands for.

"Our overall program that we do have with our athletes is called the Rhoback U Program," Moore said. "Our pillar athletes are the ones that are ... the highlight of the program to bring in more athletes to that and showcase the program for what it is. The overall program in itself has spoken to more than 5,000 athletes across the country at a multitude of different universities."

Rhoback at its core is a brand that embodies enthusiasm and positivity, Moore said. They look for these same attributes in the athletes they work with and heavily take into account their character, personality and presence within their

respective communities.

"All of our athletes stand for that same mantra," Moore said. "They're the most active focus that we can kind of rely on ... They really embody it from a day to day basis where they're as enthusiastic as possible about who they are, their brand that they represent, their sport that they play, their family name."

All Rhoback athletes embody these traits, notably the No. 10 quarterback you know and love, Marcel Reed. Rhoback recently teamed up with Reed in representing their 2025 A&M-Rhoback collection. With Reed's leadership within the Aggie community, athleticism and character combined, Moore said they knew he was the perfect fit for their Rhoback U program.

"We kind of knew since day one: he had such a vibrant character," Moore said. "He's such an enthusiastic, outgoing person that really just wants to uplift his community. We saw he was doing a ton of community-based projects when he had the availability to do so. ... [We knew] he's very athletic on the football field, someone that was kind of a game manager. He was definitely someone that was going to take over the game, not just with his voice, but with his play."

With their own internal media house, Rhoback crafts content for its athletes and helps them build their presence and digital footprint. They've built a robust program around football athletes, Moore said, but also engage with a wide range of other

sports.

"We offer those guys digital marketing assets – ad assets – that is ran across thousands of email subscribers, and we take that and do it on the social side as well," Moore said. "Our presence on YouTube, our presence on Instagram, things of that nature. We're building a resume for these guys to truly hone in on as their digital footprint."

Rhoback hopes to be a small part of what Reed has built here at A&M, Moore said. They hope to craft content Reed can look back on in the future, even when his time here in Aggieland is over.

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"I want him to be proud of the stuff that goes out when he has a social collab with us on Instagram," Moore said. "Truth be told, I want his parents to see the content and be like, 'This was really cool. We love Rhoback, we love the stuff you guys have helped on and helped shape his digital footprint.'"

The deals not only highlight the athletes, but also cater to their respective communities. Within the last two years, Rhoback has been intentional about taking the licensing approach and has now reached more than 50 schools.

"Every athlete that we do work with ... we give them a commission aspect to their deals. They're able to give back to not only the community with a discount toward the gear, but it also gives them an option to receive some additional revenue back for the sales that they generate."

Rhoback not only cares about supporting athletes, but also providing

quality products for their respective campus communities.

"We're trying to make sure that through licensing, we can speak to the community in a fun and engaging way," Moore said. "So a lot of that stuff for us will look like polos, quarter zips, hoodies that are uniquely tied back to the university. As we continue to grow and as Reed will take his leap into the NFL and his future endeavors, it's our job to still speak to the community."

Moore said the hope is that the products will resonate with all Aggies near and far.

"We hope that we embody the 12th Man through the gear and the collection," Moore said. "When you think of the 12th Man and you think of gear that you want to wear on your game day, we hope that our collections with the university speak toward that."

