

Cannabis Helped Greta Gaines and Ricky Williams Find New Purpose

Greta Gaines and Ricky Williams Forge New Paths in Cannabis After Athletic Retirements

In an era where athletes are expanding their influence beyond their sports careers, Greta Gaines and Ricky Williams stand out for their transformative journeys into cannabis advocacy and entrepreneurship. Both athletes, who achieved remarkable success in their respective fields, found new callings in the burgeoning cannabis industry after abruptly ending their successful sports careers. Through their passion for marijuana reform and activism, they not only helped push the boundaries of cannabis acceptance but also launched their own cannabis brands, paving the way for future athletes and advocates.

Greta Gaines: From Snowboarder to Cannabis Advocate

Greta Gaines, the first woman to become a world champion in snowboarding, has long been a trailblazer in her sport. After winning the world championship at just 25, Gaines retired from competitive snowboarding, finding her new purpose in cannabis advocacy. Over the years, she has become a national authority on cannabinoid law and has worked extensively with the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), advocating for better access to cannabis for patients and consumers alike.

Gaines' passion for cannabis deepened as she shifted her focus toward treating terminally ill patients. Based in Tennessee, she now works as a clinical herbalist and serves as the CEO of the Love + Hemp skincare brand. In her new role, cannabis is central to her practice, helping her provide natural and plant-based remedies for those who need them the most.

Gaines, explaining that her work revolves around learning everything she can about the plant's therapeutic properties. She emphasized that her focus has evolved from general cannabis advocacy to offering healing solutions to terminal patients. In particular, she seeks to use cannabis to help people during the most critical moments of their lives, bringing comfort and relief where traditional treatments may fall short.

Ricky Williams: From NFL Star to Cannabis Entrepreneur

Ricky Williams, the Heisman Trophy-winning running back who had a standout career in the NFL, took a similar path after his athletic career. After retiring from professional football, Williams launched his cannabis lifestyle brand, *Highsman*, in 2021. His journey into the cannabis world began years earlier when he first retired from the NFL after testing positive for marijuana. During his year-long hiatus from the sport, Williams dove into yoga, astrology, and the healing properties of cannabis, all of which contributed to his personal growth and understanding of the plant.

Williams became a vocal advocate for cannabis reform, using his platform to lobby for federal legalization and to push for greater access to cannabis in all states. His activism took him to Capitol Hill in April, where

he worked to promote the rescheduling of marijuana in federal law, an initiative that had reached a major milestone with a December 2 hearing regarding the plant's reclassification.

"I've been pushing for federal legalization," Williams said, noting that his advocacy work has grown even more important as cannabis legislation evolves. He sees the plant as a vital tool for personal well-being and mental health, noting that his own experience with cannabis has not only helped him lead a healthier life but also enabled him to find deeper meaning in his post-football years.

Cannabis in Wellness and Recovery

Both Gaines and Williams are deeply invested in showing how cannabis can play a role in wellness and recovery, particularly for athletes. This week, they will join other prominent figures in the cannabis space, including former NBA player Al Harrington and NFL lineman Eugene Monroe, to speak at MJBizCon, one of the largest cannabis trade shows in the U.S. The panel will explore how athletes are changing the narrative around cannabis, emphasizing its benefits for physical recovery, mental health, and overall wellness. They will also discuss the opportunities for cannabis brands within professional sports, as many sports leagues are beginning to adopt more cannabis-friendly policies.

For Gaines, cannabis has long been part of her personal wellness routine, particularly during her snowboarding days. She recalls using cannabis to help calm her nerves before navigating the steep, perilous drops in extreme competitions. The use of cannabis allowed her to focus and enter a mental zone where fear and anxiety were kept at bay. "I needed something to help me forget what could happen," she said, reflecting on how the plant gave her the courage and calm necessary to push the limits of her sport.

Similarly, Williams sees cannabis as a powerful tool for meditation and self-awareness. His journey into yoga and mindfulness helped him to reconnect with his body and mind, and cannabis played a major role in that process. His connection to cannabis has grown from recreational use to a deeply spiritual and mental wellness practice. At MJBizCon, Williams will lead a yoga session, showcasing how yoga and cannabis can complement each other in promoting physical and emotional health.

Gaines and Williams: Expanding Beyond Cannabis

Both Gaines and Williams have proven to be multidimensional figures, with pursuits extending far beyond their athletic careers. Gaines has made her mark as a performer, preparing to release her eighth studio album next year. She is also an avid fly fisherman, a sport that allows her to spend time outdoors with her father, Charles Gaines, an influential figure in bodybuilding and the creator of paintball. For Gaines, cannabis is not just a wellness tool—it harmonizes her experiences in nature, helping her focus and find tranquility in the moment. "It just helps me in the moment and slows my breathing down," she said, describing how cannabis enhances her connection to the river and the natural world.

Williams, too, has used his time after football to explore new passions and opportunities. His *Highsman* brand reflects his desire to combine his passion for cannabis with a lifestyle that promotes wellness, healing, and spirituality. Williams sees cannabis as an essential tool for connecting with others and creating meaningful experiences, both for himself and his community.

Changing the Game for Athletes and Cannabis

As both Greta Gaines and Ricky Williams continue to push the boundaries of cannabis advocacy and entrepreneurship, their work is changing the way the world views athletes and cannabis. Their success shows how athletes can pivot from their sports careers into meaningful activism and business ventures, using their platform to advocate for a cause they believe in. In doing so, they are not only helping to normalize cannabis

in society but also ensuring that future generations of athletes have access to the plant for wellness and recovery.

Through their efforts, both Gaines and Williams are leaving a lasting impact on both the cannabis and sports industries, helping to create a more open-minded and health-conscious future for athletes, patients, and consumers alike.

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