

E3VB

An athlete's guide to securing a sponsorship or donation

Securing a sponsorship or donation requires a shift in mindset: you are not just asking for money; you are offering a partnership. A business is more likely to invest if they see a disciplined athlete who will represent their brand well.

Here is a step-by-step guide to approaching potential donors.

1. Prepare Your "Pitch Deck"

Before talking to anyone, have a professional, one-page document ready to hand out or email. This should include:

- **Your "Why":** Briefly share your story, your goals (e.g., playing in college, making a national team), and what the sport has taught you about leadership or discipline.
- **The Specific Need:** Be transparent. List the breakdown of dues, travel expenses, and tournament fees.
- **The Value Add:** What does the donor get? (e.g., social media shoutouts, their logo on your warm-up gear, or a thank-you letter to display in their shop).

2. Identify Your Targets

- **Local Businesses:** Start with places you already frequent—your barber, a local pizza shop, or your family dentist.
- **Service Clubs:** Reach out local chapters of the Rotary Club, Lions Club, or Kiwanis. They often have budgets specifically for youth development.
- **Professional Mentors:** Consider individuals in your community who value youth sports and community growth.

3. The Three-Step Approach

Step 1: The Initial Contact

If visiting a business, go in person wearing your team gear (and look professional). Ask the manager or owner. If they are busy, ask for their business card to send an email.

The Script: *"Hi, my name is [Name]. I'm a local student-athlete playing at E3 Volleyball. I'm currently looking for community partners to help support my journey to help my team travel and compete, attempting to earn a bid to the Junior National Championships. Do you have a moment to chat, or could I leave some information with you?"*

Step 2: The Formal Request

If you get a meeting or are sending an email, focus on the **impact**.

- **Don't say:** "I need \$500 for my dues."
- **Do say:** "I am looking for a sponsorship of \$500 which covers my travel to three national qualifiers. In exchange, I'd love to promote [Business Name] to my 500+ followers and provide you with a team photo for your storefront."

Step 3: The Follow-Up

If you don't hear back within a week, send a polite follow-up. Businesses are busy; a gentle reminder shows you are organized and serious.

4. Example Email Template

Subject: Community Partnership Opportunity | [Your Name] – E3 Volleyball [Your Team Name]

Dear [Name of Business Owner/Individual],

My name is [Your Name] and I am an [Age]-year-old athlete playing club volleyball at E3 Volleyball on the [Your Team Name] team. I've been playing volleyball for [Number] years, and it has taught me the importance of resilience, teamwork, and time management.

This year, I have the opportunity to compete at a national level, which involves **[Number]** travel tournaments. To make this possible, I am seeking sponsorships to help cover my training dues and travel expenses.

I am looking for partners who believe in youth sports and community development. In return for a donation of **[Amount]**, I would be honored to:

- Feature your business on E3's social media & updates throughout the season.
- Include your name/logo on my personal equipment or warm-up shirt (if permitted).
- Provide a tax-deductible receipt through our non-profit foundation

I've attached a brief overview of my goals and the season schedule. I would love to schedule a five-minute call to discuss how we can work together.

Thank you for your time and for supporting local athletes.

Best regards,

[Your Name]

[Your Phone Number]

[Your Social Media Handle/Website if applicable]

5. Once the Goal is Met

Always send a handwritten thank-you note. This is the most forgotten step. Donors want to know their money made a difference. Send them an update mid-season with a photo of you in action. This builds a long-term relationship for future seasons.