

Women of Impact: How Santia Deck Is Changing The Game Of Impact Investing

In a world where women in sports often struggle for recognition and support, Santia Deck has emerged as a beacon of hope and inspiration. Her journey from a young girl with big dreams to a successful entrepreneur and advocate for women athletes is not just remarkable, but also a testament to the kind of determination and resilience often seen among top athletes.

The Early Training Days

Born and raised in Houston, Texas, Deck grew up in a household where education and sports were two of the most important things. "I grew up in a household where it was: God, education, and then sports," Deck says. "Growing up in that environment pushed me to be a very, very ambitious person."

With a twin brother by her side, Deck chose to embrace athleticism and was a self-admitted tomboy. Her sports career started early. At the age of four she started playing tennis, and only three years later started track and field. At eight she declared she wanted to one day become an Olympic athlete - a dream that she would one day have a chance to achieve. And in 2020 at the age of 29, her reputation as a top athlete paid off when she was offered the [largest contract ever](#) to play in the Women's Football League Association. But while her explosive athletic career has been the foundation of her success, she is now pursuing something even more notable: using her brand and money to invest in other female athletes.

A Strong Female Starting Line

Deck's path to her current success wasn't without its challenges. Despite her undeniable talent and drive, she faced barriers common to many female athletes: limited opportunities, unequal pay, and a lack of resources and guidance. Luckily, Deck had a mother who advocated for her every step of the way. "She never made me feel like 'Oh, you're a girl.' In summer, I would go to the camps and sometimes it said they were for boys only, and my mom would say, 'Well, she's coming. I don't care.' She made me feel like there are no limits."

Later, Deck's mother would become her manager, and the driving force behind Deck starting her shoe company, [Tronus](#). And when it came time for Deck to create her first online profile and she wanted to title it "Princess of Abs," her mother suggested "Why be a princess when you can be a queen?" Seeing that kind of strong female support and role modeling inspired Deck, and she now hopes to give back in the same way through her company, Winning Her Way.

The Game-Changing Moment

Throughout college, Deck continued to run track and cross country. But it wasn't until her friend challenged her to an Instagram contest to see who could get the most followers that Deck started getting involved in social media and growing her aforementioned Queen of Abs page. It was the early days of Instagram, but she started posting content about her workout routines and healthy eating tips and by the time she was a junior she had 60,000 followers.

The turning point for Deck came when she reached out to a fellow Instagram user. “I kept seeing this one girl, she was always posting clothes and shoes and bags. And one day I asked her, ‘Hey, are you getting paid for this?’ And she said, ‘Yeah, I’m making like \$50 a post.’”

Due to rules and regulations surrounding college athlete compensation at the time, Deck knew she couldn’t get paid for promotional content. But she was contacted by a Hawaiian clothing company who offered her a free shirt in exchange for exposure, and in her words, “Oh my gosh, that changed my life.”

“And then after that, life just took off. I graduated. I filmed a talk show. I had a fitness DVD. I had a supplement line.” Along the way, her parents, both entrepreneurs themselves, helped her. “They instilled a mentality of: if you want to go out and create your own destiny, your own business, and your own dream, do it.”

Advancing To The Next Round

Though during her college career Deck was immensely successful by all comparison, it wasn’t until her post-collegiate introduction to flag football that she was set on her current trajectory. From that team she was scouted and invited to become part of the Olympic rugby team. But due to unforeseen circumstances and being in the right place but at the wrong time, Deck’s Olympic dreams did not come to fruition. However, she considers that “a blessing in disguise.”

Deck channeled the energy she had been previously using to train for the Olympics into building her personal brand. She was working as a brand ambassador for a shoe company when their designer came to her and suggested they collaborate to create her own signature line. Just the mock up of the shoe received an overwhelming response, going viral on both LinkedIn and Instagram. It was then that her mother suggested she not just do a signature line, but create a whole company of her own.

That’s how Tronus, a shoe company that “empowers individuals to recover today and win tomorrow with resilience and determination” came to life. Though they launched during the pandemic and faced supply chain issues, they made it work. In their first year, they sold almost half a million dollars of shoes. But her success made her realize something: she needed to be using her influence for something more impactful.

Scoring With Purposeful Investment: Winning Her Way

Deck created Winning Her Way with the mission to uplift female athletes and redefine their place in the sports industry. “To me, when it comes to what I’m going to invest my money in I always consider: is this actually going to impact the world in some way? I don’t believe in investing selfishly. I don’t believe in starting businesses because it’s cool. There has to be a reason and it has to be bigger than me.”

Deck aims to help women athletes through a multitude of approaches. Winning Her Way has a talk show that highlights the athlete’s story on and off the field. It has also created an online marketplace where female athletes can sell their merchandise (as they are not always included

on other popular sports merch sites). Through industry connections, it works to create sponsorship deals for female athletes. And it is currently working on creating a way for women to invest in and have equity in sports teams.

With the rise in popularity of female athletics right now, specifically the WNBA with Caitlin Clark and Angel Reese, Deck believes this is the perfect time to be capitalizing on and investing in female athletes and women's athletics. She considers the mission and purpose of Winning Her Way to be much bigger than just her. Which is why she is encouraging others to consider investing in the company.

At the heart of Winning Her Way lies a commitment to impact investing - a philosophy that prioritizes social and environmental returns alongside financial gains. According to Deck, "you know that you're going to get a good ROI when you're impact investing."

By bridging the gap between athleticism and entrepreneurship, she aims to create lasting change that transcends sports and uplifts women. Deck's personal story serves as a reminder of the untapped potential within the realm of women's sports. With impact investing and women helping women at the forefront of her mission, Santia Deck is not just changing the game: she's rewriting the rules.