

NEWSROOM

[Home](#) / [News](#) / [2025](#) / [February](#) / Matchmaker, Matchmaker, Bring Me a Coach

MATCHMAKER, MATCHMAKER, BRING ME A COACH

LUTER STUDENT STARTS BUSINESS TO CONNECT YOUNG ATHLETES WITH COLLEGE PLAYERS.

by [Kelli Caplan](#) | February 20, 2025

Read time: about 2 min

Jaya Daniel has always been an accomplished athlete. Now she has dreams of becoming a matchmaker.

But she has no interest in playing Cupid in the traditional sense. Daniel, an All-American goalie for CNU's nationally-ranked [Women's Soccer Team](#), has started a business called [Pioneer Coaching Network](#). It aims to connect young athletes with college players for coaching and mentorship.

It's an idea that has been in her head for some time.

To make it a reality, Daniel, '25 [Marketing and Management](#), sought out the wisdom of her [Luter School of Business](#) professors. She wove together their expertise and the business prowess she developed in her classes to build Pioneer Coaching Network's foundation.

Momentum for the concept picked up when she took Dr. Matt Hettche's graphic design class.

"It played a key role in building my confidence," she said. "It not only helped me to understand how to develop the website itself but also encouraged me to think through a business plan."

From there, she sought advice from Dr. William Donaldson, a management professor who specializes in getting small businesses off the ground. She had never taken a class with Donaldson, but knew about his standing offer to assist enterprising business students.

After meeting with him, Daniel became even more confident.

The professors, she said, infused her plan with optimism. Soon after, Pioneer Coaching Network was born.

"I am excited for it to take off," Daniel said. "There is a need for individual coaching. It is a niche that hasn't been captured yet. There are always people looking for coaches, and there is such a lack of them. I am hoping to change that."

Daniel knows first hand the impact a college athlete can have on a young athlete. As a child with big soccer dreams, she worked with a University of Virginia goalie to improve her game. The one-on-one coaching made an enormous difference in Daniel's life. She now wants to pay that positivity forward.

"I thought that she was so cool," she said. "I definitely learned a lot from her and she grew my love for the sport."

Daniel hopes to replicate that empowerment as she pairs youth athletes with the right coaches to help them advance their skill sets.

She structured Pioneer Coaching Network in a way that is meant to be instructive and rewarding. The company's motto is "Learn From the Best, Play Like the Best."

Initially, the business will be focused on Richmond, Williamsburg and Newport News. She hopes that it will eventually become a nationwide enterprise.

"I would love for this to be my career," said Daniel, who will attend Ashland University next year to earn her Master of Business Administration and to play one more year of soccer.

Daniel has embraced as many leadership, hands-on and classroom learning opportunities as possible at CNU to both boost her strengths and connections and to prepare her for successfully running a small business. She is Director of Operations of [Women in Business](#) and has also interned with [CNU Athletics](#), helping to get the CNU Captains' [Kids Club](#), a program aimed at getting youth involved in college sports, off the ground.

Christopher Newport, Daniel said, has delivered an experience that has paved the way for her and her business ambition to prosper.

"I cannot overstate how pivotal the help has been from professors," she said. "Across the board, they were eager to set aside their own work to support me in growing my vision. It has made all the difference in bringing my ideas to life."