

Sports Law Taskforce

Powering the Business of Sport



Sports Law

Sports law is a specialized and rapidly evolving area of legal practice that governs the rights, responsibilities, and relationships of the diverse stakeholders that comprise the global sports industry. These stakeholders include athletes, clubs and teams, leagues, governing bodies, coaches, managers, agents, sponsors, broadcasters, investors, event organizers, and sports marketing agencies.

As a multidisciplinary field, sports law encompasses a broad range of legal disciplines, including contract law, employment and labor law, intellectual property law, corporate and commercial law, dispute resolution, regulatory compliance, immigration, data protection, etc. As sport continues to grow into a sophisticated global industry, the legal and commercial issues faced by industry participants have become increasingly complex, driving greater demand for specialized legal expertise.

The Stakes Are High

Legal awareness and effective legal protection are essential for all stakeholders operating within the sports industry. In an increasingly commercialized and globalized sporting landscape, athletes, clubs, teams, leagues, governing bodies, sponsors, agencies, broadcasters, and investors must navigate complex legal, regulatory, and commercial relationships that can significantly impact their operations, reputation, and long-term success. As the business of sport continues to evolve, access to specialized legal expertise has become increasingly important in helping industry participants manage risk, protect their interests, and capitalize on opportunities in both domestic and international markets.

Many sports-related disputes stem from poorly drafted agreements, inadequate legal advice, or a lack of understanding of the legal and commercial implications of contractual arrangements. Whether involving athlete contracts, sponsorships, media rights, intellectual property, governance matters, or commercial partnerships, such disputes can lead to significant financial, operational, and reputational consequences, highlighting the importance of proactive legal support throughout the sports ecosystem.

Contractual Protection is Critical

The importance of well-drafted legal agreements in the sports industry cannot be overstated. Contracts governing relationships between athletes, clubs, teams, sponsors, agents, broadcasters, and other commercial stakeholders often form the foundation of both sporting and business operations. However, these agreements frequently contain complex legal and commercial provisions that require careful consideration. Poorly drafted contracts, ambiguous clauses, or inadequately negotiated terms can expose parties to significant financial losses, operational challenges, reputational risks, and costly disputes.

Accordingly, stakeholders across the sports ecosystem should seek specialized legal advice before entering into any significant arrangement. Experienced legal counsel can help identify potential risks, protect commercial interests, and ensure that contractual rights and obligations are clearly defined and appropriately balanced. This is particularly important in relation to matters such as compensation structures, sponsorship and endorsement rights, intellectual property, performance obligations, regulatory compliance, dispute resolution mechanisms, and termination provisions.

Key Contractual Aspects Stakeholders Should Know

Athletes should know and understand several key aspects when reviewing their contracts to prevent unpleasant surprises

- » **Terms and Conditions:** The rights, obligations, and responsibilities of each party should be clearly defined in the agreement. Ambiguous provisions can lead to disputes and uncertainty, making it essential that key commercial and operational matters are expressly addressed to ensure clarity and effective risk allocation.
- » **Contract Duration:** The contract should clearly specify its commencement and expiry dates, as well as any provisions relating to renewals, extensions, termination rights, or opt-out mechanisms. Clear duration clauses help avoid disputes, unintended extensions, and uncertainty regarding the continuation or termination of the contractual relationship.
- » **Performance Targets:** Contracts often contain performance-based provisions that may affect compensation, incentives, sponsorship benefits, or other contractual rights. It is important that such obligations are clearly defined and understood by the parties, as failure to meet specified performance criteria may have significant financial and commercial consequences.
- » **Termination Clauses:** Contracts should clearly set out the circumstances under which either party may terminate the agreement, whether for cause or convenience. Particular attention should be given to provisions relating to performance, injury, breach of contract, regulatory issues, and any applicable notice periods or financial consequences. Well-drafted termination clauses help protect the parties' interests and reduce the risk of disputes arising from an early or unexpected termination of the contractual relationship.
- » **Financial Terms:** Contracts should clearly set out all financial arrangements, including compensation, bonuses, incentives, commissions, reimbursement mechanisms, and any applicable deductions. If sponsorship, endorsement, or other commercial arrangements are involved, the agreement should also specify the relevant payment terms, performance requirements, and conditions applicable to such benefits. Clear financial provisions help ensure transparency, manage expectations, and reduce the risk of future disputes.

By proactively addressing these contractual elements, athletes can significantly reduce their legal and financial risks, ensuring that they can focus on their performance rather than dealing with legal disputes. Athletes must understand the importance of these contracts, as they are pivotal not just to their short-term financial well-being but also to the long-term success and sustainability of their careers.



Cross-Border Expertise Serves Stakeholders Worldwide

Sports law is not a static field. As the global sports landscape continues to evolve, with new issues emerging around image rights, digital media, and international sponsorship deals, legal expertise in this area becomes increasingly important. Many contracts include a cross-border angle, requiring a thorough understanding of multiple legal systems. Oftentimes, tax laws in multiple jurisdictions will need to be applied. Whether navigating global broadcasting deals or protecting intellectual property rights, the role of legal counsel is indispensable to ensuring that athletes remain protected and empowered.

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| 1. Player/Athlete Contracts & Employment Law | 5. Merchandising & Licensing Protection |
| 2. Sponsorship & Commercial Partnerships | 6. Broadcasting & Media Rights Licensing |
| 3. Mergers & Acquisitions / Club Ownership | 7. Governance, Regulatory & Disciplinary |
| 4. Intellectual Property (IP) & Brand Protection | 8. Agents & Intermediaries Regulation Compliance |



The global reach you need from the local firm you trust.

Globalaw's new Sports Law Taskforce is a dedicated advisory group comprising more than 20 member firms worldwide, offering specialized legal counsel and representation for athletes and stakeholders across all areas of sports law. From negotiating and drafting athlete contracts, sponsorship agreements, and marketing deals to providing expert counsel on intellectual property rights, endorsements, tax advice and dispute resolution, our cross-border advisory group is equipped to handle all legal aspects of the sports industry, ensuring that our clients receive top-tier support and protection in their careers and business ventures

To learn more, please contact any of the firms listed below.

We offer a 30-minute free-time policy, allowing you to get answers to your questions and better understand potential legal pitfalls. With our extensive network, we will guide you wherever your journey takes you, coaching you every step of the way.

APAC

[Abacus Legal Group \(India\)](#)
[Abdullah Chan & Co \(Malaysia\)](#)
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[Bagus Enrico & Partners \(Indonesia\)](#)
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