

Jeffrey Kessler: The Last Line of Defense for Player Rights

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Firm Co-chairman and Sports Law Partner Jeffrey Kessler was featured in *The Buffalo News* article "[Jeffrey Kessler: The Last Line of Defense for Player Rights](#)" published on September 20, 2015. The article reviews Mr. Kessler's illustrious career in representing professional athletes and his particular impact on the National Football League.

The article describes Mr. Kessler as one of the most influential people in sports history and characterizes him as the last line of defense in protecting athletes and players associations from litigious, high-powered professional sports leagues.

"When you talk about where the NFL players have come from 1993 until now," said kicker and 14-year NFL Players Association (NFLPA) representative Jay Feely, "I don't think there's anybody who's had more of a positive impact on NFL players and what we've achieved than Jeffrey Kessler."

"I would disagree with Jay on that," Mr. Kessler responded. "At the end of the day, I feel like I've been a good contributor with a lot of other people who've made strides for player rights."

The article recaps Mr. Kessler's many wins in the sports industry and also mentions his current high-profile representation of college athletes in their quest to free the schools in Division I men's basketball and football to be able to decide for themselves how to compensate their athletes for the large revenues which they generate.

"It's fair to say that, over the last two and a half decades, Jeff's had a massive influence on many of the high-profile sports law cases in this country and internationally," said Gabe Feldman, director of Tulane University's sports law program.

Mr. Kessler graduated from Columbia Law School in 1977 with a passion for antitrust law. The article explains that Mr. Kessler's early antitrust work kept crossing into the world of sports law with various cases against leagues, leading him to becoming a go-to resource for players' unions early in his career. He has since represented the NFLPA in numerous cases defending players' rights.

"The one common theme was the players won over and over again because, in each case, a different decision-maker said to the league, 'You just can't do this. You just can't make up the rules,'" Mr. Kessler said.

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