

CLIENT SUCCESS



Winston Achieves Landmark Settlement for World Cup-Winning U.S. Women's National Team in Their Fight for Equal Pay

APRIL 12, 2021

We prosecuted a landmark gender-discrimination class action on behalf of **current and former U.S. Women's National Team (USWNT) members** against their employer, the U.S. Soccer Federation (USSF), for equal pay and working conditions. Despite being the USSF's economic engine, plaintiffs and class representatives Alex Morgan, Megan Rapinoe, Carli Lloyd, and Becky Sauerbrunn alleged that the USWNT players are paid substantially less than the U.S. Men's National Team (USMNT) players by the same employer (USSF), in violation of Title VII and the Equal Pay Act. The complaint sought both damages and injunctive relief for all USWNT members and similarly situated players, so that this unequal treatment would finally be stopped.

In May 2020, the case suffered a setback when summary judgment was granted against the equal-pay claims; however, the court scheduled a trial on the working-conditions claims. The players and USSF reached a settlement of the working-conditions claims, which the court approved as final on April 12, 2021. On April 14, 2021, the players immediately filed their notice of appeal of the summary judgment against the pay-discrimination ruling. With less than two weeks to go before the appellate oral argument, after we obtained the amicus support of, among others, the EEOC and the USMNT, the USSF capitulated.

After a six-year legal battle, we reached a widely reported, historic settlement for equal pay going forward, as well as US\$24M in past damages. We earned an *Am Law* "**Litigator of the Week**" **Runner Up** recognition for this historic settlement.

IMPACT

This legal battle for equal pay dominated world headlines since the USWNT's amazing 2018 World Cup win and remained in the public eye as an inspirational story in the global fight for equal pay. The case became an icon in the battle against gender discrimination, and the subject of *LFG*, a CNN-HBO documentary named for the team's rallying call, in which Winston attorneys Jeffrey Kessler and Cardelle Spangler appear prominently. ***The settlement, along with the payment of US\$24M in past damages, has been hailed by many as a turning point in the fight for gender pay equality.*** It already has inspired similar demands for equal pay by women's national teams around the world and has been publicly praised by President Biden and numerous other political leaders.

(Alex Morgan, et al. v. United States Soccer Federation, Inc. (Case No. 2:19-cv-01717, U.S. District Court for the Central District of California))

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