



Winston has one of the world’s premier sports law practices. Our work has included some of the most famous legal matters in sports history—including *Alston v. NCAA*, the case that culminated in a 9–0 Supreme Court victory for the college players against the NCAA; the US\$2.15B Los Angeles Dodgers acquisition; *McNeil v. the NFL*, the landmark antitrust jury trial that led to the establishment of free agency in the NFL; the multi-billion-dollar construction and permanent financings for SoFi Stadium; and *Morgan v. USSF*, the case that led to a historic equal pay settlement for the players on the Women’s National Team. Our work is transforming this global, multibillion-dollar industry.

Our client roster reads like a who’s-who list of major professional and amateur athletes, sports franchises and leagues, players associations, financial services firms with sport-industry clients, event promoters and organizers, intellectual property licensees/licensors, media companies, sports agencies and agents, governmental entities, coaches, sponsors, and gaming and e-sports companies. In addition to newsworthy litigation and corporate transactions, we advise clients on antitrust and compliance counseling; team/league acquisitions; stadium and arena finance; sponsorship, advertising, and collective bargaining agreements; player, team, and league contracts; and intellectual property and related Name, Image, Likeness (NIL) protection and optimization.

Key Contacts

[David Feher](#)

[Dave Greenspan](#)

[Jeffrey Kessler](#)

Areas of Focus

Antitrust

Our unique Antitrust Practice—unlike most law firms of our size—provides counseling and litigation services to a balanced composition of both plaintiff and defendant antitrust clients. As evidenced by leading roles in the most high-profile sports antitrust litigations—*Alston v. NCAA*, the case that culminated in a 9–0 Supreme Court victory for the college players against the NCAA; *Relevant Sports v. USSF*, a lawsuit on behalf of a sports promoter challenging FIFA and USSF rules prohibiting in-season soccer games from being played outside of the competing teams’ home countries; *McNeil v. the NFL*, the landmark antitrust jury trial that led to the establishment of free agency in the National Football League; and *North American Soccer League v. USSF*, an ongoing challenge to federation rules restricting the ability of a sports league to obtain a divisional sanction—these extensive capabilities allow our sports law practitioners (most of whom are also members of the antitrust practice) to apply a broad-based perspective to our analysis of antitrust and related issues impacting sports industry clients.

Stadium Project Financing & Sports Facility Development

Winston’s sports, stadia, and entertainment transactional team is among the most active and highly regarded in the industry. Our team has handled transactions involving all types of sports and entertainment venues throughout the United States and abroad, including in Canada and Europe. Our clients include financing parties, developers, sponsors, and other project stakeholders who we represent at every phase of development and financing—including construction and permanent financings and negotiating key development agreements. We have led on some of the most renowned, unique, and sophisticated projects in the current market—including the multi-billion-dollar construction and permanent financings for SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles, the €1B renovation of Santiago Bernabéu Stadium (home of Real Madrid), the US\$2B+ financing of the MSG Sphere performance venue in Las Vegas, and the award-winning financing for the construction of Climate Pledge Arena in Seattle, one of the most advanced and environmentally sustainable arenas of its kind in North America. While novel transactions are what the team is known for, our experience also includes traditional arena and stadium financings—where we provide tremendous value to our clients by drawing from the team’s deep market knowledge to structure innovative transactions that best protect our client’s interests and efficiently coordinate the efforts of a project’s full roster of advisors.

Negotiations & Deals

We regularly structure, negotiate, and close complex and innovative sports-related financial transactions. Our work in this area includes league and team structure and operations; player, team, and league contracts and agreements; complex acquisitions and joint ventures; and restructuring and finance.

Clients we have assisted in this area include e-sports leagues, team ownership groups, lenders and underwriters of team and sports facility debt, intellectual property licensees and licensors, media companies, player unions, professional athletes, sports personalities, sports agencies, and event owners and sponsors, among others.

Arbitration

In addition to our strength in the courtroom, our sports arbitration practice is second to none. Over the decades, we have appeared before the Court for Arbitration for Sport (CAS) on behalf of leagues, teams, and individuals in matters involving commercial disputes, eligibility issues, grievances, and disciplinary recommendations. Our attorneys have represented parties in some of the most significant sports arbitrations, including: Oscar Pistorius in the historic CAS arbitration establishing Pistorius's eligibility to compete in the Olympics and Int'l Amateur Athletic Federation-sanctioned events; the NFLPA and NFL players in arbitrations regarding alleged collusion among NFL teams involving guaranteed contracts offered to players, NFL "lockout" protections in their multi-billion-dollar network television contracts, and myriad headline disputes regarding player discipline and salary cap rules; and Guggenheim Baseball Management and Magic Johnson, as co-counsel, in multiple arbitration and mediation sessions in connection with the US\$2.15B acquisition of the Los Angeles Dodgers.

In addition, our attorneys serve as outside counsel for the National Basketball Players Association, negotiating collective bargaining agreements and establishing free agency for NBA players, and represent the Major League Baseball Players Association in major arbitrations and litigation.

Marketing, Promotions & Sponsorships

Our sports practice includes attorneys who regularly advise all major brands and industry players in connection with matters related to marketing, advertising, promotions, and sponsorships. Our experience includes multi-million-dollar NFL sponsorship agreements, venue partnerships, event contracts, broadcast programming, arena naming rights, agency-client agreements, talent agreements, endorsements, and sponsorship agreements.

Equal Pay & Civil Rights

We are leading the charge on equal pay and civil rights issues in today's sports landscape. Our attorneys have been fiercely defending the rights of athletes around the world facing hardships related to equal pay, discrimination, working conditions, and eligibility, among others. The most iconic example is the landmark equal pay settlement we obtained on behalf of current and former United States Women's National Team players, a triumph in the battle against gender discrimination.

General Litigation

Our attorneys also excel at sports-industry litigation involving wide-ranging subjects in addition to those reviewed above. Just a few of these cases include *WTA Tour v. Super Slam Limited*, representing the owner of the Madrid Open tennis tournament in disputes regarding scheduling issues under tour rules and contracts; *Excel Group v. William Morris Endeavor (WME)*, defending tortious interference claims regarding alleged "poaching" of high-profile agent employees; and *Players1st Sports Management Group-SMG v. NFL, et al.*, defending the NFLPA in federal court in a dispute involving federal law preemption as applied to regulation of certified player agents.

Counseling

We serve as general outside counsel to sports agencies, leagues, teams, players, federations, and other entities operating in this sector. We advise on all aspects of their businesses, including matters relating to pre-litigation counseling; transactional due diligence; compliance and corporate governance; employment, benefits, and compensation; tax; charitable foundations; and privacy and data security.

“Winston's Sports Law group is one of the best in the business.”

Client quote, *Chambers USA 2024*

Related Capabilities

Antitrust/Competition

Appellate & Critical Motions

Class Actions & Group Litigation

Commercial Litigation & Disputes

Labor & Employment

Project Finance

Media & Entertainment

Resources

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Related Insights & News

RECOGNITIONS

Winston & Strawn Recognized in *The Legal 500 U.S.* 2025

JUNE 12, 2025

IN THE MEDIA

Landmark Antitrust Class Action Settlement for College Athletes Receives Final Approval

JUNE 10, 2025

PRESS RELEASE

Professional Swimmers May Be Eligible for Money Damages From a Class Action Lawsuit Going to Trial in January 2026

JUNE 9, 2025

RECOGNITIONS

Jeffrey Kessler Named to *Crain's New York Business*' 2025 Notable Litigators & Trial Attorneys List

MARCH 24, 2025

RECOGNITIONS

Winston Team Recognized in *The Am Law Litigation Daily's* Litigator of the Week Column

MARCH 21, 2025

RECOGNITIONS

Winston Attorneys Featured on the 2025 *Lawdragon* Leading Global
Entertainment, Sports & Media Lawyers List
MARCH 7, 2025

IN THE MEDIA

Jeffrey Kessler Featured on *The Intersection Podcast: Where the Court of Public Opinion and Court of Law Collide*

FEBRUARY 21, 2025

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENT

Neha Vyas Speaks on the “New Era in Collegiate Athletics” at UVA Law Symposium

FEBRUARY 21, 2025

RECOGNITIONS

Winston & Strawn’s Antitrust Work Shortlisted for Three GCR Awards 2025

FEBRUARY 5, 2025

RECOGNITIONS

Winston Attorneys Featured on the 2025 *Lawdragon* 500 Leading Global Antitrust & Competition Lawyers List

JANUARY 30, 2025

RECOGNITIONS

Richard Weber Recognized With the 2025 Sport Integrity Global Alliance (SIGA) Anti-Corruption Award

JANUARY 27, 2025

RECOGNITIONS

Winston & Strawn Wins Three 2024 Law360 Practice Group of the Year Awards

JANUARY 20, 2025