

Jeffrey Kessler's Antitrust Advocacy for Athletes Featured in The Huffington Post

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Partner Jeffrey Kessler, who serves as the firm's co-executive chairman, global [Antitrust/Competition Practice](#) chairman, and [Sports Law Practice](#) co-chair, was featured in "[A Trip to the Men's Room Turned Jeff Kessler Into The NCAA's Worst Nightmare](#)," published in The Huffington Post on August 5, 2017. The article recounts the events that sparked Jeffrey's interest in antitrust law within professional sports.

Passionate about sports as well as social justice issues, this niche in antitrust law provided Jeffrey an ideal outlet to combine these areas. "Over the next four decades he would establish a reputation as one of the nation's pre-eminent sports lawyers—a bulldog attorney willing to take up the cause of virtually any athlete who felt he (or she) had been wronged by the league above them," the article explains.

The article highlights Jeffrey's unwavering commitment to fighting for athletes' causes. "Representing players in fights over money and, as he terms it, greater economic rights in their sports, is another front in that battle—'my way of fulfilling my initial goals to do cases that I think are protecting a group of people who are often mistreated.'"

In one of the biggest cases of his career thus far—*Jenkins v. the NCAA*—Jeffrey wants to fundamentally change the model for major college sports. It is a violation of federal antitrust law, he argues, that schools and major conferences do not pay athletes, and his goal is to persuade federal courts to rule accordingly. "If we win, it could make a big difference," Jeffrey notes.

In 2013, Jeffrey led the charge at Winston & Strawn to create a practice focused on legal issues in college sports. "[T]here are good (legal) arguments that Division I football is basically a business, and that students are exploited as workers ... And therefore schools should be free to compensate athletes in any manner that they want to, without NCAA restrictions," Jeffrey reasons. He continues: "The economics here are that basketball and football have become giant businesses ... The total revenue for basketball and football in Division I is greater than the total revenue of the NBA. It's greater than the total revenue of the NHL ... It's the third biggest sport by revenue in this country. The idea that these are not businesses, it makes no sense. And you should allow those who are producing this revenue to be treated in a fairer way."

Perhaps most importantly, the article notes, is that Jeffrey's clients in college sports aren't seeking financial damages: "The point of the case isn't to remedy past wrongs, but to completely alter the relationship between players and the system and prevent those wrongs from continuing."

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