

Winston Scores in Soccer Bribery Case with Complaint Sustained

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On January 26, 2018, Winston & Strawn scored a major victory on behalf of client GoITV Inc. The U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida sustained the soccer channel's complaint against Fox Sports Latin America and other defendants alleging that Fox Sports bribed officials of Conmebol, the South American soccer federation, to obtain the rights to televise soccer matches.

Winston serves as plaintiffs' counsel to GoITV, Inc. and Global Sports Partners in a case in which plaintiffs allege violations of the civil RICO statute, tortious interference with prospective economic advantage, and civil conspiracy. The claims are against a group of sports marketing companies and television networks, the principals of those companies, and high-ranking officials of Conmebol. GoITV and Global Sports have alleged that representatives of the marketing companies engaged in a fraudulent scheme to pay bribes and kickbacks to top-ranking officers of Conmebol in exchange for the exclusive rights to broadcast prestigious South American club tournaments in an effort to exclude plaintiffs from the marketplace. As a result of defendants' misconduct, Conmebol rejected plaintiffs' superior offers for the broadcasting rights, thereby causing plaintiffs hundreds of millions of dollars in damages.

In her decision, U.S. District Judge Cecilia Altonaga denied in part and granted in part Fox Sports' motion to dismiss, sustaining GoITV's claims for violations of civil RICO and for tortious interference with prospective economic advantage, while dismissing related antitrust and state law claims. The Court's order follows the criminal convictions of two former Conmebol officials in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York for related RICO violations.

GoITV is represented by Winston Partners Seth Farber, George Mastoris, and Marcelo Blackburn.

Coverage of this victory has been published in various outlets, including *The American Lawyer*, *Iberian Lawyer*, and Law360.

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