

## Sports & Esports Year in Review

Our Sports & Esports group continued to guide leagues, teams, athletes, brands and innovators through some of the most complex, pivotal matters across the global sports marketplace in 2025. Drawing on deep industry insight and a multidisciplinary approach, we advised on major partnerships, sophisticated brand and IP strategy, high-stakes disputes and key transactions while staying at the forefront of trends shaping the industry—from athlete-driven ventures and NIL expansion to venue development, media evolution and global sponsorships—helping clients advance their business interests with clarity and confidence.

We're honored to have the opportunity to partner with our clients to achieve groundbreaking outcomes. Among this year's highlights, we advised the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee on Salt Lake City's successful bid to host the 2034 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, marking the second time that the city will host the Winter Games and the fifth Winter Games to take place in the U.S.



Across athlete and team representation, we advised NFL MVP Patrick Mahomes on a range of brand and intellectual property matters, including NIL strategy, trademark licensing, enforcement, corporate structuring, and related disputes. We also represented his production company, 2pm Productions, in entertainment related partnerships. Our team also represented Oklahoma City Thunder center-forward Chet Holmgren in several sponsorship and endorsement arrangements, including a deal with Nike. Additionally, we further supported Chicago Bears quarterback Caleb Williams on corporate, intellectual property, estate planning and charitable foundation matters covering multiple aspects of his off field business activities.

These matters are part of a broad range of key moments that defined our work in 2025. Read below for more details on the representative matters and achievements led by our team of dedicated lawyers in the past year.

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## 2025 Representations

### Stadiums and Arenas

- Represented the **United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC)** in connection with Salt Lake City's successful bid to host the 2034 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- Represented a professional sports franchise in connection with the preliminary planning, land acquisition, and strategic partnering for a proposed 100 acre, state of the art, multi use sports, hospitality, retail, and training campus in California, as well as in negotiating a multi year venue partnership with a major entertainment organization for the hosting of nationally broadcast awards ceremonies at the franchise's headquarters.

### Team Acquisitions, Dispositions and Ownership Bids

- Represented **Weidner Sports** in connection with its purchase of the USL defending champion Colorado Springs Switchbacks.
- Represented **Ron Burkle**, owner of the NWSL team the San Diego Wave FC, in the successful completion of the team's sale to Lauren Leichtman and her husband, Arthur Levine, founding partners of Levine Leichtman Capital Partners.
- Advised **Tyler "Ninja" Blevins** in an acquisition of an ownership stake in an expansion team for an up-and-coming new sports league.

### Marketing, Sponsorships and Endorsements

- Represented **Art & Science Partners**, PayPal's marketing agency, in connection with PayPal's multi-year sponsorship and branded integration agreements with the Big Ten and Big 12 college sports conferences, Penn State University, Michigan State University, Rutgers University, FC Bayern, Liverpool FC and college athletes Lauren Betts, Sienna Betts, Olivia Miles, Sam Leavitt and Drew Allar.
- Represented **DraftKings**, an online sports betting, daily fantasy sports, and gaming platform, in a multi-year endorsement deal with NBA legend LeBron James, centered around American football.

- Represented TKO's entertainment companies—**WWE**, **UFC** and Professional **Bull Riders Association**—in a variety of advertising matters.
- Represented a global coffee company in negotiating significant sponsorship, services, marketing, and media advertising agreements with the USOPC and NBCUniversal in connection with Team USA and the broadcast of the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Los Angeles.
- Represented **Sunbelt Rentals**, a leading heavy equipment and tool rental company, in its significant, multi-faceted sponsorship and services agreement with the USOPC for sponsorship and marketing rights, and service obligations, associated with Team USA and the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Los Angeles.
- Represented **Vans** in connection with strategic brand partnerships and content integrations, including its collaboration with Insomniac Productions to relaunch the Vans Warped Tour in the U.S. and Canada, and agreements to integrate Vans products and athletes across multiple video games and online gaming platforms.
- Represented **Rock-it Cargo**, a subsidiary of Global Critical Logistics (GCL) specializing in freight forwarding and logistics, in its multi-year partnership agreement with FIFA, the international governing body of soccer, designating Rock-it Cargo as the Official Logistics Provider for FIFA World Cup 2026™ and the FIFA Club World Cup 2025™.
- Represented **Lenovo** in connection with the company's negotiation of sponsorship agreement with FIFA as a FIFA partner.
- Represented **TikTok** in connection with a sponsorship agreement with Soccer United Marketing.
- Represented **Ford Motor Company** in negotiating the renewal of its naming rights agreement for a major sports venue.

- Represented a major alcohol brand in negotiating a variety of sports marketing deals, including sponsorship agreement with Brisbane Bears-Fitzroy Football Club Limited; sponsorship agreement with the Detroit Lions; sponsorship agreement with the Detroit Tigers; sponsorship agreement with the Miami Dolphins; sponsorship agreement with the Kansas City Chiefs; sponsorship agreement with the Philadelphia Eagles; sponsorship agreement with the Minnesota Vikings; sponsorship agreement with Major League Baseball; sponsorship agreement with PGA Tour; and sponsorship agreement with Tampa Bay Buccaneers.
- Represented **Cox Communications** and **Cox Enterprises** in negotiating sponsorship agreements with a broad range of professional sports teams, leagues, tournaments, and collegiate athletic programs across the NBA, NHL, NFL, MLB, PGA Tour, and NCAA, including major franchises, marquee golf tournaments, and multiple universities nationwide.

### Litigation and Dispute Resolution

- Represented former Northwestern football coach **Patrick Fitzgerald** in 26 lawsuits related to allegations of hazing in the football program. Successfully resolved the allegations through voluntary dismissals and a global settlement agreement.
- Represented **Vanessa Bryant**, the widow of L.A. Lakers superstar Kobe Bryant, and Bryant family entities with respect to several rights issues and legal disputes.

### Professional Athlete Representation

- Represented numerous professional athletes—including **Dwyane Wade**, **Reggie Bush**, **Viktor Hovland**, **Ludvig Åberg**, **Dylan Harper**, **Zach Lavine**, **Naomi Osaka** and **Rose Zhang**—in endorsement deals, commercial transactions and investments, and general corporate advice .
- Represented NFL MVP **Patrick Mahomes** in strategic brand and IP matters, including NIL and trademark licensing, enforcement, corporate structuring, and related disputes, as well as representing his production company, 2pm Productions, in entertainment partnerships.
- Represented Oklahoma City Thunder **Chet Holmgren** in a variety of sponsorship and endorsement deals, including with Nike.

- Represented **Caleb Williams** in connection with corporate, intellectual property, estate-planning and charitable foundation matters.
- Represented **Tyler “Ninja” Blevins** in media, brand ambassador, endorsement, sponsorship, and esports agreements, including licensing of his right of publicity and brand for projects such as the Blevins Bros. Sports Show and a branded “Fortnite” map in Gamefam’s Infinite Zonewars.
- Represented five-time NBA All-Star **John Wall** in his contracts with Monumental Sports and Amazon Prime Video, where he will join the NBA on Prime Video as an NBA analyst.
- Represented **Life Sports Agency**, a professional athlete management company, in connection with sports and related corporate and commercial matters .
- Represented a professional tennis player in connection with sports and commercial matters.

### Brand Protection and Intellectual Property Licensing and Enforcement

- Represented high-performance golf and equipment company **Parsons Xtreme Golf (PGX)** in connection with a variety of corporate, licensing, distribution and IP matters.
- Represented high-performance golf and equipment company **True Linkswear** in connection with a variety of corporate, licensing, distribution and IP matters.

### Technology and Innovation

- Represented a fan engagement technology platform in connection with corporate, e-commerce and intellectual property matters in the US.
- Represented MLS Club in connection with a multi-year ticketing partnership involving platform services, data integration, and related fan commercial rights.

### NIL Matters Involving College Athletes

- Represented **Cavalier Futures** in connection with NIL collective on House settlement implementation, NCAA regulations and commercial agreements.
- Represented several college athletes in NIL matters.
- Represented **Range Sports Media** in NIL matters.
- Represented **Alignd Sports** in NIL matters.

## Estate, Tax and Charitable Planning

- Representation of athletes and coaches in estate planning matters.

## Financing

- Represented global banking institutions and borrowers in connection with the financing and purchase of ownership interests in several NFL teams.
- Represented **More Better Industries (Rob McElhenney)** in sports investments, including Wrexham-adjacent business opportunities.
- Represented **Horizon Sports & Experiences (HS&E)**, a New York-based full-service agency, in its acquisition of Strategic, a leading sports, lifestyle and entertainment marketing agency. Represented **Superfly**, a renowned live experiences company, in its acquisition by Range Sports, a diversified marketing and production company spanning film, television, music, sports, digital, gaming, culinary and more.
- Represented **Xtep International Holdings Limited**, a leading multi-brand sportswear company listed on the Main Board of the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, in the disposal of KP Global Investment Limited, owner of the K-Swiss and Palladium brands, to the controlling Ding family for US\$151 million.

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