akerman

Sectors

Sports and Entertainment Law

Akerman's Sports and Entertainment Sector Team delivers sophisticated counsel informed by broad-based industry knowledge and decades of experience. Industry participants turn to Akerman to protect and assert their rights across the array of business issues encountered in these unique areas of law and culture. From the complexities of purchasing a professional sports franchise to the negotiation of broadcast rights, talent agreements, and litigating disputes involving players' unions, we provide our clients experience and perspective.

Sports Law

Professional sports has grown into a worldwide, multibillion dollar industry with distinct legal challenges. This complex and lucrative field is subject to a range of issues—from regulatory compliance to antitrust considerations, business and financial transactions, facility construction, naming rights, federal, state and local tax, intellectual property prosecution and protection, immigration, facilitating growth in current and emerging areas, litigation and alternative dispute resolution.

With a focus on entities and institutions, our lawyers rely on their extensive experience to provide full-service, strategic counsel to meet each of our clients' unique needs. With a 360-degree perspective on the industry and experience across our firm, we structure transactions, litigate and resolve disputes, navigate regulatory landscapes, protect intellectual

Connect With Us



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Our Team

Related Work

Corporate
Intellectual Property
Intellectual Property Licensing
Intellectual Property Litigation
Litigation
M&A and Private Equity
Patent Litigation
Patent Prosecution and Portfolio Management
Real Estate
Trademarks

property, and serve as trusted legal advisors for participants of every kind in the sports sector.

Akerman is one of the few law firms in the United States with experience in buying, selling, and financing professional sports franchises across most professional sports leagues. We have served as outside general counsel to the Miami Dolphins, Miami Marlins, the Florida Panthers, and their affiliates, along with sports facilities including Hard Rock Stadium and the BB&T Center. We also represent auto racing facilities and tracks, including the International Racing Group's track and facilities. In addition, we have worked closely with the National Football League, Major League Baseball, the National Hockey League, the National Basketball Association, and NASCAR, both in the U.S. and around the world.

What We Do

- Acquisitions and dispositions:
  - Franchise, asset, and brand purchase
  - Ownership structure
  - Management advice
  - Mergers and acquisitions, investing, SPACs
- Regulatory compliance:
  - Sports franchise league rules compliance
  - Operational, management, and tax advice
- Sports facilities:
  - Development, financing, operating, management, and regulatory advice
  - Concessions, security, media, insurance, service contracts, and lease advice
- Litigation and dispute resolution:
  - Sponsorship
  - Commercial disputes

    - League and officiating compliance
    - Premises liability
    - Regulatory investigations and enforcement
    - Internal investigations, audits
- Operations:
    - Contract preparation, review, and negotiations for all operational and business issues of teams and facilities
- Marketing, sponsorships, and endorsements:
    - Business advisory services to teams, facilities, sponsors, advertisers, networks, leagues, financial institutions, and municipal governments
- Intellectual property, brand protection, licensing, and enforcement:
    - Intellectual property management and advice, including the selection and registration of trademarks and copyright
    - Patent litigation
    - Patent prosecution
    - Trademark litigation
    - Draft and negotiate license agreements
- Real estate and land use:
    - Developer-side land use and environmental impact analysis
    - Litigate land use and environmental disputes arising from the development of new and related facilities
    - Federal and state regulatory, environmental, political, and technical issues involved in real estate and out-of-home advertising development and transactions
    - Naming rights
- Broadcast and new media licensing:

    - Broadcasting and media rights as a source of revenue to finance sporting events, refurbish stadiums, and contribute to continued development
- Nonprofit formation and management

Entertainment Law

As innovations in the entertainment industry present new opportunities for content creators and media companies, owners of assets must protect their rights. Industry players – whether creators and their successors-in-interest, producers, distributors, or financiers – need seasoned and creative counsel to advise them on both the law and the business of entertainment.

Akerman delivers a team with experience spanning the multiple channels comprising today's entertainment landscape, including television, film, live events, theatre, music, radio, visual arts, sports, advertising, Internet, multimedia, broadcasting, publishing, and print. Our clients include broadcasters, networks, studios, news publishers, production companies, and advertisers, as well as those engaged in production, financing, and distribution.

Our attorneys are drawn from a cross-section of Akerman's full-service platform and provide coverage in contract law, defamation, First Amendment, privacy, labor and employment, bankruptcy, immigration, securities, agency, advertising, clearance of rights, product placement, tax law, international law, and insurance law.

What We Do

- Litigation and dispute resolution:
    - Defamation, intellectual property, misappropriation of name, image, and likeness, and other litigation

    - Breach of contract and/or confidence
    - Licensing and royalty disputes
- Advise and protect the rights of content creators, publishers and asset owners:
    - Pre-publication and pre-broadcast review
    - First Amendment
    - Assess newsgathering and related protections
    - Clearance of rights
    - Performer, writer, and producer agreements
    - Television and film financing and distribution agreements
    - Music asset valuations for estates and beneficiaries of estates containing such assets
    - Tax efficient planning and structuring
    - Corporate transactions, mergers and acquisitions, investing, SPACs
- Entertainment and media development, production, and financing:
    - Broadcast rights issues
    - State and federal media legislation
    - Negotiate inclusion riders
    - Advice and audit on reduction of risk associated with above-the-line and below-the-line production including reconciliation with union requirements
    - Provide wage and hour employee analysis including determination of close of production cash outs
- Intellectual property:
    - Copyright registration and licensing, recaptures, and litigation
    - Patent prosecution
    - Trademark litigation

    - Drafting and negotiation of license agreements
- Labor and employment
    - Executive employment agreements and separation agreements
    - Day-to-day labor and employment advice and counsel
    - Defend administrative charges and litigation involving employment-related claims for discrimination, harassment, and retaliation
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
    - Audits of policies and practices, training
- Music industry-related issues:
    - Record, publishing, management, distribution, touring, merchandising, corporate sponsorship, licensing, clearance, and media rights agreements
- Real estate and land use:
    - Regulatory, environmental, political, and technical counsel involved in real estate development and transactions