Sports and Sports Facilities

Companies in the sports industry rely on fierce competitiveness, smart business strategy and seamless collaboration to grow and thrive. They also rely on outside legal counsel they can trust to advise them with respect to various important transactions and other matters. Katten offers legal services to a wide array of participants in the sports industry, including MLB, NBA, NHL and MLS teams, prospective owners, arena and stadium developers and operators, financial institutions, regional sports networks, government entities, universities, NASCAR-related parties and corporate sponsors. Our attorneys' sports industry work includes:

- Purchase and sale of sports franchises
- Debt and equity financings
- Television and radio broadcast agreements
- Arena/stadium construction, financing and operations, including ticketing arrangements, concessions deals, event agreements and suite licenses
- Sponsorship agreements, including naming-rights deals
- Head coach, general manager and executive employment agreements
- Compliance with league rules and developments in league policies
- Intellectual property and internet issues
- Litigation and related investigative matters

A trusted name in sports

Katten has served as outside general counsel for, among other teams, the Chicago White Sox, Chicago Bulls, Golden State Warriors, Sacramento Kings, Seattle Kraken and Philadelphia Union. Other current and former clients include the Dallas Mavericks, Milwaukee Bucks, Atlanta Hawks, Los Angeles Clippers, Memphis Grizzlies, Miami Heat, Oklahoma City Thunder, Phoenix Suns, San Antonio Spurs, Philadelphia Phillies, Detroit Tigers, Miami Marlins, Washington Nationals, Boston Celtics, Detroit Pistons, New York Islanders, Detroit Red Wings, St. Louis Blues,

Key Contacts



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Cleveland Browns, Baltimore Ravens, Real Salt Lake, Chicago Fire and D.C. United, among others.

Our Experience

- Represented Greg and Dawn Williams in their $100 million investment in Spartan Ventures, an entity affiliated with Michigan State University (MSU), as part of their total $401 million commitment to MSU. Spartan Ventures will serve as the revenue, innovation and development arm of MSU Athletics, helping MSU to modernize and scale its approach to athletics program funding.
- Represented Marc Zahr and the Chaifetz Group as significant investors in the buyer group that acquired the Portland Trail Blazers. Negotiated and documented the investment, equity structure and NBA's approval of the transaction.
- Represented the Columbus Crew in the expansion of its 15-plus year partnership with ScottsMiracle-Gro Company for a multiyear stadium naming rights agreement through which the Crew's home stadium in downtown Columbus, Ohio was renamed ScottsMiracle-Gro Field.
- Represented the Chaifetz Group in the acquisition of a minority partnership interest in the San Francisco Giants. Negotiated and documented the acquisition, equity structure and MLB's approval of the transaction.
- Represented the Oakland Athletics in a $500 million minority equity raise in connection with the team's relocation to Las Vegas, Nevada and the financing of its new ballpark. Negotiated and documented the equity raise, investor arrangements and MLB's approval of the transaction.
- Represented a minority investor in the acquisition of the Baltimore Orioles by the ownership group led by David Rubenstein. Negotiated and documented the investment, equity structure and MLB's approval of the transaction.
- Represented a minority investor in the $1.5 billion acquisition of the Minnesota Timberwolves and Minnesota Lynx by the ownership group led by Marc Lore and Alex Rodriguez. Negotiated and documented the investment, equity structure and NBA's approval of the transaction.
- Represented purchaser in acquiring the Dallas Mavericks. Negotiated and documented the acquisition, equity structure, bank financing and NBA's approval of the transaction.
- Represented purchaser in acquiring the Charlotte Hornets. Negotiated and documented the acquisition, equity structure, bank financing and NBA's approval of the transaction.

> ***"Represents a number of key players in the market with respect to sporting arena developments, media rights deals, financing and broadcasting. Also assists clients on regulatory matters such as compliance with league regulations."***
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> ***Chambers USA* 2019 (Nationwide, Sports Law) survey response**

- Represent the Los Angeles Clippers in various agreements related to the development, financing, use, operation and management of the team's proposed new arena (the Intuit Dome), as well as obtaining NBA approval of the arena project and arena construction loan. Also represent the team and arena in sponsorship agreements (including naming rights agreement for the arena and jersey patch deal for the team), concessions agreement and ticketing agreement.
- Represented the United States Soccer Federation in its broadcast rights agreement with Warner Media for broadcast of U.S. Men's and Women's National Team soccer matches on TNT, TBS and HBOMax.
- Represented owners of the Utah Jazz in the sale of the team and operating rights to the Delta Center. Included negotiating and documenting the sale and NBA's approval of the transaction.
- Represented purchaser in acquiring the new NHL team in Seattle (Seattle Kraken). Negotiated and documented the expansion agreement, equity financing, debt financing and various agreements related to the development, financing and use of Climate Pledge Arena, including the arena joint venture and team lease agreement, and a construction loan for development of the Kraken's new practice facility, as well as the NHL's approval of the transactions. Represent the team in sponsorships, premium seating, telecast and radio broadcast rights agreements and merchandise agreement, as well as the purchase of, and the Kraken's affiliation agreement with, an AHL team in Palm Springs (Coachella Valley Firebirds) and agreements related to the financing and use of Acrisure Arena.
- Represented the Phoenix Suns in their naming rights agreement with Footprint Center.
- Represented the Milwaukee Bucks in various agreements with the Wisconsin Center District, City of Milwaukee, County of Milwaukee and a financial institution related to the design, construction, development, financing, use, operation and management of the team's new arena (Fiserv Forum), parking facilities and practice facility, as well as obtaining NBA approval of the arena project and arena construction loan. Also represent the team in sponsorship agreements (including naming rights agreements for the arena and practice facility) and acquisition of Gatorade League (formerly known as NBA Development League) team (Wisconsin Herd) and the arena in its concessions agreements. Represented the Bucks in new rights agreement for the broadcast of its games on Bally Sports Wisconsin, debt financing and equity transactions.
- Represented the Miami Heat with respect to sponsorship agreements and the Atlanta Hawks with respect to its arena renovation and parking agreements.

- Represented purchaser in acquiring a significant minority interest, and then a controlling interest, in the New York Islanders. Negotiated and documented the acquisition and joint venture with the seller as well as the lenders' and NHL's approval of the transaction. Also represent the controlling ownership group and the team in equity and debt transactions, respectively.
- Represented purchaser of a minority interest in Charlotte Hornets, Atlanta Hawks and Phoenix Suns (and the sale of such interest in the Suns) and seller of a minority interest in the Memphis Grizzlies.
- Represented purchaser in acquiring the Sacramento Kings. Negotiated and documented the acquisition, the equity structure, the debt financing extension and the NBA's approval of the transaction (as well as the NBA's approval to keep the team in Sacramento and, therefore, rejection of relocation of the team to Seattle proposed by a competing bidder). Represent the Kings in new head coach's and other basketball and non-basketball operations personnel's employment agreements. Represented the Kings in a new long-term rights agreement for the broadcast of its games on a regional sports network. Represent the team and its affiliates in various debt financing transactions, sponsorship agreements and suite licenses. Represent the team in its new arena (Golden 1 Center) and mixed-used development activities, including negotiating and documenting land acquisition, arena and tower construction loans, various agreements with the City of Sacramento and others related to the design, construction, development, financing, use, operation and management of the new arena, and NBA approval of the arena project, as well as the arena's naming rights agreement, concessions agreement and refinancing the bonds related to the team's former home arena. Represented the team in the acquisition of an expansion Gatorade League team (Reno Bighorns) and the Sacramento River Cats minor league baseball team.
- Represented purchaser in acquiring the Golden State Warriors. Negotiated and documented the acquisition, equity structure, bank financing and NBA's approval of the transaction. Represent the Warriors in a new long-term rights agreement for the broadcast of its games on a regional sports network, new head coach's and other basketball and non-basketball operations personnel's employment agreements, participation in NBA's League-Wide Credit Facility, other debt financing and raising equity. Represented the team in the acquisition of Gatorade League's Dakota Wizards and its relocation to Santa Cruz. Represent the team in its major sponsorship deals and new arena (Chase Center) and mixed-use development activities, including the new arena's naming rights agreement, concessions agreement, land acquisition financing, construction loan, retail financing, team use agreement and arena membership program, NBA approval of the arena project, and the team's joint

venture with Uber and Alexandria Real Estate Equities for the development of two office towers.

- Represented note purchasers in refinancing loan for Los Angeles Chargers' relocation to Sofi Stadium.
- Represented note purchasers in refinancing construction loan for BMO Stadium (home of Los Angeles FC).
- Represented lead minority investor in the New York Mets in negotiating, documenting and obtaining MLB and bank approval of equity financing and related equity transactions.
- Represented the Boston Celtics in negotiating, documenting and obtaining NBA approval for a new long-term rights agreement for the broadcast of the team's games by a regional sports network, an extension to a sponsorship agreement with the network and agreements related to an ownership stake in the network.
- Represented the Detroit Pistons and Palace of Auburn Hills in the sale of the team and the arena. Negotiated and documented the sale, retained equity, indebtedness and NBA approval of the transaction. Represent sellers in post-closing matters.
- Represented purchaser in acquiring the Oakland Athletics. Negotiated and documented the acquisition, equity structure, bank financing and MLB's approval of the transaction. Represented the As in participating in MLB's League-Wide Credit Facility, refinancing its bank credit facility and a new radio broadcast agreement, as well as a change in control transaction (including documenting the transaction and obtaining MLB approval). Represented the As in a new long-term rights agreement for the broadcast of its games on a regional sports network. Represent the As in issues related to proposed new home stadium, other capital structure issues, mixed-use development activities and executive employment agreements.
- Represented owners of the St. Louis Blues and the Savvis Center in various day-to-day business matters and the sale of the team and operating rights to the arena. Included negotiating and documenting the sale, the redemption of bonds used to finance the construction of the arena, and the NHL's approval of the transaction. Represented the team in new rights agreement for the broadcast of its games on Fox Sports Midwest.
- Represented the Chicago White Sox in naming rights deals with U.S. Cellular and Guaranteed Rate for the team's home stadium in Chicago and its radio broadcast agreements. Represented the White Sox, and worked closely with counsel for the Los Angeles Dodgers, in negotiating and drafting documents related to the development and use of the new two-team spring training facility built by the City of Glendale, Arizona. Represented the White Sox in early termination of its spring training deal with Pima County in order

to start playing at the new Glendale facility in 2009. Represented the White Sox in financing provided to a minor league affiliate, participation in the MLB League-Wide Credit Facility and extension of concessions and novelties agreements. Represent the team in its major sponsorship deals and equity transactions.

- Represent the Chicago Bulls and United Center, and work closely with the Chicago Blackhawks, in their major sponsorship deals, including extension of arena naming rights, telecommunications, beer and credit card sponsorship deals, and the Bulls' jersey patch sponsorship. Represented the Bulls in its radio broadcast agreements. Represented the Bulls in its participation in the NBA's League- Wide Credit Facility, new head coach's employment agreement, and acquisition of an expansion Gatorade League team (Windy City Bulls) and its entrance into a lease for its home venue.
- Represented ownership that acquired the operating rights for the then-new MLS expansion team in Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Union. Negotiated and documented the expansion agreement with MLS and the purchaser's equity structure. Represented the Union and its stadium in their first founding sponsor agreements, naming rights agreements, jersey sponsorship, television broadcast agreement and youth development agreement. Represented the team and stadium in debt financing transaction with a cable network and entrance into stadium management, event booking, concessions and ticketing agreements with network affiliates. Represented the team in stadium issues, acquiring a USL team (Harrisburg City Islanders) and developing an MLS NEXT Pro team (Philadelphia Union II), and the new head coach's and other soccer and non-soccer operations personnel's employment agreements. Represent the team with respect to raising capital, bank debt financing and acquisition and development of a training facility, sports complex and mixed-use development.
- Represented the Chicago White Sox and Chicago Bulls, and worked closely with counsel for the Chicago Blackhawks and Chicago Cubs, in the formation of a regional cable sports network. The teams were owners of, and licensors of games to, the network, which began broadcasting in the fall of 2004. Also represented the White Sox and Bulls in their over-the-air television agreements with WGN. Represented the White Sox and Bulls and worked closely with the Blackhawks in their new broadcast rights agreements and regional sports network joint venture that commenced in fall of 2019.
- Represent the San Jose Earthquakes in stadium lease, equity transactions and debt financing.
- Represent a financial institution in providing debt financing for several NBA teams.

- Represented a financial institution in providing debt financing for an NHL arena.
- Represented minority owners joining the purchaser group that acquired the Denver Broncos.
- Represented the owners of Kansas City Royals in the sale of the team. Included negotiating and documenting the sale and MLB's approval of the transaction.
- Represented purchaser of a majority interest in D.C. United and the operating rights to Audi Field. Negotiated and documented the equity financing, debt financing, acquisition and MLS approval. Representing D.C. United in debt financing transactions.
- Represented the Atlanta Hawks, Miami Heat, Oklahoma City Thunder, San Antonio Spurs, Miami Marlins, Detroit Tigers, Detroit Red Wings and Los Angeles Kings in negotiating, documenting and obtaining League approval for new rights agreements for the broadcast of the teams' games by the applicable Bally Sports (Diamond/Sinclair) regional sports network.
- Represented the Barclays Center with respect to its ticketing agreement with SeatGeek.
- Represent the Philadelphia Phillies in connection with equity, partnership and real estate matters. Represented the Phillies in negotiating, documenting and obtaining MLB approval for a long-term rights agreement for the broadcast of the team's games by a regional cable sports network, a short-term rights agreement for the broadcast of the team's games by an over-the-air station, a new long-term sponsorship agreement with the network and agreements related to an ownership stake in the regional cable sports network.
- Represented note purchasers in refinancing construction loan for Levi's Stadium (home of the San Francisco 49ers).
- Represented noteholders in providing debt financing to several MLS teams.
- Represented purchaser of a minority interest in new MLS team in Austin (Austin FC).

Recognitions

Recognized or listed in the following:

- *Best Law Firms*
  - Sports Law
    - National, 2027
      Chicago, 2027
  -

- *Chambers USA*
  - Sports Law
    - Nationwide, 2012–2026
- Hackney Publications
  - "100 Law Firms with Sports Law Practices You Need to Know About," 2026
- *The Legal 500 United States*
  - Sport, 2014–2026