Proskauer

Law360 MVP of the Year:

Bradley Ruskin

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Proskauer Rose LLP partner Bradley Ruskin successfully defeated antitrust allegations against Major League Soccer and the U.S. Soccer Federation, and guided the NBA and NFL in rebuffing a request for sensitive information from racing teams suing NASCAR over an alleged monopoly, earning him a spot as one of the 2025 Law360 Sports & Betting MVPs.

His biggest accomplishment this year:

Ruskin represented Major League Soccer and U.S. Soccer after the now-defunct North American Soccer League accused the organizations of monopolizing elite soccer in the United States and conspiring to exclude the North American Soccer League from the Division I and II markets.

"The case went before the jury this year, and in 96 minutes they came back with a complete defense verdict," he said. "The lawsuit really was a challenge to the way MLS and U.S. Soccer operated. The fact is that they did nothing wrong. And defeating those claims was critical for our client."

On Feb. 3, a New York federal jury rejected NASL's $500 million lawsuit, answering "no" when asked whether NASL had proven a market existed for Division I and Division II men's soccer in the United States. NASL teams played in Division II, while MLS is Division I league.

Discovery had revealed that NASL Chairman Rocco Commisso was posting negative comments about MLS and U.S. Soccer under a secret burner account on the social media platform then known as Twitter with the handle of "GlobalSoccerFan." One post called MLS Commissioner Don Garber the Harvey Weinstein of U.S. Soccer. Bringing that evidence to trial made for some dramatic testimony, Ruskin said, because it pointed to Commisso's character.

Commisso and NASL made a bid for a new antitrust trial, but a New York federal judge denied the request in May.

His biggest challenge in the past year:

Ruskin said his biggest challenge was keeping up with the speed at which artificial intelligence is changing things. But he called it a fun challenge and said he turns to ChatGPT daily for personal use. Professionally, AI helps the firm be more efficient for their clients, he said, with a caveat.

"It's not a substitute for humans," he said. "It's a stimulator."

What motivates him:

Ruskin said spending every day with smart and interesting people keeps him motivated.

"Most people don't get to do that," he said. "A lot of people have to deal with mediocrity in different ways. I'm incredibly lucky."

Seeing former Proskauer attorneys go on to careers in sports also provides satisfaction in knowing the firm was part of the road there. More than 80 alumni have become commissioners, in-house attorneys or taken other roles for major sports leagues, Ruskin said.

Other notable cases:

Front Row Motorsports and 23XI Racing, which is owned by NBA legend Michael Jordan and stock car racer Denny Hamlin, issued subpoenas this year seeking highly confidential business and financial information from the NFL and the NBA to support their damages analysis in their North Carolina federal lawsuit against NASCAR. Most of the parties subpoenaed turned over the information, Ruskin said, speculating that they were unwilling to take the risk of going to court and losing.

"Both my clients were willing to draw the line in the sand and say 'This just isn't right,'" he said. "We prevailed."

New York U.S. District Judge Edgardo Ramos ruled June 30 that the teams had failed to show how the NBA and NFL are "reasonably comparable or similar" to NASCAR for the purposes of creating a benchmark in their damages model. He also noted the plaintiffs could find publicly most of the information they were seeking for the analysis.

Ruskin is also representing ATP Tour Inc. in an antitrust suit in New York federal court that accuses the organization and other Grand Slam tournament organizers of operating an illegal cartel. The suit was filed March 18 by the Professional Tennis Players Association union and 14 professional tennis players, alleging the defendants manipulate pay and rankings, force unsafe playing conditions, and expose players to unfair investigations and discipline.

Ruskin said that when he was younger, he was a pretty serious tennis player, and he is thrilled to now be involved in a high-profile tennis case that is "very meaningful" to the people involved and has widespread implications.

"If they had asked me to do this when I was a young tennis player, I would have said 'Sign me up! You don't have to pay me a penny. I'm in,'" Ruskin said.

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- **Bradley I. Ruskin**
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