

Contact

Joseph M. Leccese

Chairman Emeritus of the Firm

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Joseph M. Leccese is a past, and the longest serving, Chairman of Proskauer. During his nine years as Chair, the Firm reached more than $1 billion in revenues, dramatically expanded its transactional and trial practices and London office, and implemented a number of innovative talent management and diversity and inclusion programs.

Throughout his term as Chair, Joe remained an active practitioner and co-chair of Proskauer's renowned Sports Group. In those roles he has led many of the most significant deals in sports and media over the past three decades. His broad-based corporate practice emphasizes the representation of professional sports leagues, teams and owners; college conferences; media and marketing companies; and private equity firms, sovereign wealth funds and financial institutions that provide capital to the broad array of transactions that occur in the sports industry. Joe was the first transactional lawyer in the nation rated "Band 1" in Sports by Chambers.

Leagues, Teams and Owners

Joe's sports experience includes numerous matters for the National Basketball Association, National Football League, National Hockey League, Major League Soccer, Big East Conference, Big Ten Conference, Big 12 Conference, ATP Tour, WTA Tour, USGA and various bodies in motor sports, as well as for a number

of teams, owners and media entities that he advises on a continuing basis.

Mergers and Acquisitions

Joe regularly handles matters relating to the acquisition, financing, operation and equity funding of professional sports teams, including the sales of the Denver Broncos, Carolina Panthers and Buffalo Bills and the acquisitions of the Cleveland Browns, Jacksonville Jaguars, Houston Astros, Washington Nationals, New York Jets, Philadelphia Eagles and Chivas USA. He also has represented bidders for many other teams and sports properties across a broad variety of sports, both in privately negotiated sales and in auctions, and has advised leagues and governing bodies on scores of M&A transactions over the past 35 years.

As part of his M&A practice, Joe has represented the NBA, NHL and MLS on numerous expansion transactions (including the most recent NHL expansion to Las Vegas and Seattle).

Private Equity and Institutional Capital

Joe has represented a broad range of private equity, sovereign wealth and institutional investors in mergers and acquisitions and joint ventures across a spectrum of sports and sports-related media transactions

Stadium/Arena Construction and Financing

Joe has been the lead negotiator in multiple stadium and arena deals and financings, including the facilities developed (or renovated) by the Philadelphia Eagles, New York Jets, New Jersey Devils, Orlando Magic, Charlotte Hornets and Carolina Panthers; advised the New York Islanders, Minnesota Vikings and Cleveland Browns on their arena and stadium projects; represented the lenders in connection with a number of facilities-related financings (including the financing for Citi Field); and has advised our league clients on numerous stadium and arena development projects and financings.

Women’s Sports, Joint Ventures and Start Ups

Joe has handled a variety of matters in women’s sports for the WNBA, NWSL and WTA Tour and recently led the legal work on the formation and launch of the PWHL

(Professional Women's Hockey League). He also has handled other innovative sports transactions, including the formation of NBA China, the NBA Development League and Legends Hospitality, and the sale to Providence Equity of an interest in Soccer United Marketing, the media and marketing affiliate of MLS.

College Sports

Joe is very active in college sports. Among other key engagements, he represented the "Basketball Seven" schools in the establishment of the "new" Big East Conference, the addition of three other universities to the new Conference, the negotiation of its television agreement with Fox and the assignment of the Big East Tournament agreement with MSG. Joe also has advised the Big Ten and Big 12 in connection with their recent media transactions and a variety of stakeholders on the broad range of issues and litigations currently facing college sports.

Media and Sponsorship

Joe has broad experience advising rights holders on regional, national and international television contracts with major telecasters, including recent developments in the regional sports market; the exploitation of new media and technology rights; and a variety of matters relating to the exploitation of stadia and arenas, including naming rights, sponsorship agreements, seat licenses and related arrangements.

Joe is a frequent speaker and lecturer on business and legal topics in sports, has twice been named a "Dealmaker of the Year" and was named one of "The 50 Most Influential People in Sports Business" by the Sports Business Journal and one of "New York's 50 Most Powerful People in Sports" by the Daily News.

Practices

Private Equity Transactions, Mergers & Acquisitions, Global Finance

Industries

Asset Management, Private Capital, Sports

Education

University of Virginia Law School, J.D.

Member, *Virginia Law Review*, 1983-1985

Georgetown University, B.A.

cum laude

Admissions & Qualifications

New York

Clerkships

U.S. District Court, Delaware - Hon. Joseph J. Longobardi

Awards & Recognition

Chambers USA: Nationwide: Sports Law, 2026

“Dealmaker of the Year”, NYLJ 2022

“Dealmaker of the Year”, The American Lawyer 2019

Sports Business Journal Power Players: Outside Counsel 2021

Chambers USA: Nationwide: Sports Law (Band 1) 2005-2025

The Legal 500 United States: Industry Focus: Sports 2015-2025 (Hall of Fame 2020-2025)

“45 Rising Stars of the Private Bar” under age 45, The American Lawyer

“The 50 Most Influential People in Sports Business,” Sports Business Journal 2014

“50 Most Powerful People in New York Sports” New York Daily News 2014

Best Lawyers in America 2005-2027

Best Lawyers in America, Lawyer of the Year 2019, 2024

Best Lawyers in America “New York City Sports Law Lawyer of the Year” 2015

The Hollywood Reporter, Top Dealmakers 2020

The Legal 500 United States: Media and Entertainment 2017

Sports Business Journal’s Power Players 2016

Lawdragon 500 “Leading Dealmaker in the Nation”

Lawdragon 500 Leading Global Entertainment, Sports & Media Lawyers 2025

“Forty under 40,” Crain’s New York and Sports Business Journal

New York Super Lawyers 2010-2024