



Contact

Joseph M. Leccese

**Chairman Emeritus of
the Firm**

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Joseph M. Leccese is the immediate past, and 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 Hockey League, Major League Soccer, PAC-12 Conference, Big East Conference, ATP World Tour, WTA Tour, USGA and NASCAR, 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 sale of the Buffalo Bills and the acquisition 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 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 25 years, including advising the NBA on the recent \$2 billion sale of the Los Angeles Clippers.

Joe represented the NBA in its grant of expansion franchises to Charlotte, Toronto, Vancouver, Miami, Minnesota and Orlando; the NHL in its grant of expansion franchises to Atlanta, Columbus, Nashville and Minnesota; and MLS on many of its expansions and transfers.

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 Minnesota Vikings and Cleveland Browns on their recent 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 arena development projects and financings.

Joint Ventures and Start Ups

Joe has handled a variety of joint ventures and other innovative sports transactions, including the formation of NBA China, the WNBA, 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 has advised the Pac-12 Conference in connection with a number of matters, including its television agreements with ESPN and Fox and the establishment of the Pac-12 Network. Joe also advises both the Pac-12 and the Big East on the broad range of issues and litigations currently facing college sports.

In the M&A space, Joe represented Learfield, one of the leading companies in college sports marketing and sponsorship, in the sale of a strategic equity interest to a private equity fund affiliated with Shamrock Capital Advisors.

Media and Sponsorship

Joe has broad experience advising rights holders on regional, national and international television contracts with major telecasters; 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 recently advised NASCAR, the USGA and MLS in their respective telecast rights agreements.

Joe is a frequent speaker and lecturer on business and legal topics in sports 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.

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Practices

Private Equity Transactions, Mergers & Acquisitions, Finance

Industries

Asset Management, 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

Sports Business Journal Power Players: Outside Counsel 2021

Chambers USA: Nationwide: Sports Law (Band 1) 2005-2022

"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 "New York City Sports Law Lawyer of the Year" 2015

Best Lawyers in America, Lawyer of the Year 2019

Best Lawyers in America 2005-2023

The Hollywood Reporter, Top Dealmakers 2020

The Legal 500 United States: Hall of Fame 2020-2022

The Legal 500 United States: Leading Lawyer 2017-2019

The Legal 500 United States: Industry Focus: Sports 2015-2022

The Legal 500 United States: Media and Entertainment 2017

The Legal 500 United States: Media, Technology & Telecoms: Transactional 2013-2014

The Legal 500 United States: Finance: Bank Lending (National) 2009-2010, 2013

The Legal 500 United States: Mergers, Acquisitions and Buyouts - M&A: Large Deals 2013

Sports Business Journal's Power Players 2016

Lawdragon 500 "Leading Dealmaker in the Nation"

Lawdragon 3000 "Leading Lawyers in America" 2010

"Forty under 40," *Crain's New York and Sports Business Journal*

Best Lawyers in America 2005-2015

