



Sports & Recreation

We are determined, competitive and hardworking sports lawyers who have as much passion for sports and recreation as we do for the law. We enjoy teaming up with individuals, businesses, leagues and institutions involved in sports and recreational activities, and offering practical legal advice based on decades of experience. We help our clients in many areas including business operations, business structure, employment, finance, acquisitions and sales, real estate, development of stadiums and arenas, intellectual property and litigation.

Our attorneys combine legal skills to serve the business needs of sports and recreation clients with a deep knowledge and appreciation of all facets of the industry. This practical perspective, brought together with institutional knowledge and a collaborative approach, helps us provide clients with a comprehensive understanding of the solutions and opportunities that exist in all aspects of their businesses.

PROFESSIONAL EXECUTIVES AND ATHLETES

Our attorneys represent sports executives in their employment and business opportunities. Our attorneys also work closely with both current and retired professional athletes in their business and philanthropic pursuits. This representation includes contract negotiations and disputes, endorsements, licensing and merchandising, as well as general business and estate planning.

SPORTS FRANCHISE BUSINESSES AND LEAGUES

The Business of Sport®

We are experienced in all aspects of acquiring, structuring and operating a successful sports franchise. We have helped clients with financing of sports teams, league operations, business and tax planning, contract negotiations and dispute resolution, and litigation.

Our attorneys have represented numerous owners and teams in the formation, development, operation, purchase and sale of sports businesses in various leagues and associations including the NHL, NBA, NFL, MLB, MLS, USHL, NAHL and the American Association of Professional Baseball.

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Teams, Leagues and Associations

- Minnesota Timberwolves, Iowa Wolves, Minnesota Lynx. We have served as outside counsel to the Minnesota Timberwolves, Minnesota Lynx and Iowa Wolves for business matters including franchise acquisition, financing and business operations, including league relations, media, travel programs, employment and litigation; and franchise sponsorship, promotion and endorsement matters, and the management of their trademark portfolios. Minnesota Timberwolves have been a firm client since 1996, Minnesota Lynx since 1999 and Iowa Wolves since 2017.
- Kansas City Royals. Since helping the Glass family acquire the Royals in 2000, we have served as outside counsel to the Kansas City Royals. Our attorneys provide legal advice for all aspects of business operations including real estate, media, employment, litigation, sponsorships and intellectual property.
- Minnesota Twins. We represented a joint venture that entered into an agreement to purchase the Minnesota Twins. The transaction was conditioned on the passage of a sales tax referendum in the [City of Saint Paul](#) to finance a new baseball stadium. The transaction was terminated by the joint venture when the sales tax referendum did not pass.
- Cleveland Indians. Our attorneys assisted John Sherman in acquiring a minority interest in the Cleveland Indians.
- Minnesota Vikings. We have served as outside counsel to the Minnesota Vikings for general business matters, including stadium use and license agreements, sponsorship and marketing matters, and agreements and miscellaneous business and corporate matters.
- Minnesota Wild. We acted as principal outside counsel for [Minnesota Sports & Entertainment](#) in connection with its organization and the acquisition of the Minnesota Wild franchise in 2000. This engagement included financing of the acquisition and ongoing business operations of the team, including real estate, media, employment, litigation, trademark development and management, stadium use and license agreements, sponsorship and marketing matters, and agreements and miscellaneous business and legal matters. Since then, we have assisted Minnesota Wild with ongoing legal and business matters.
- Major League Baseball (MLB). We act as special Missouri counsel to Major League Baseball.
- MN United FC. We have represented several investors in their purchase of minority ownership interests in the Major League Soccer club, which included drafting the corporate and personal team ownership applications with MLS.
- Sporting KC. We represent the soccer club in employment matters.
- United States Hockey League (USHL). The USHL is the only Tier 1 junior-level hockey league in the United States as sanctioned by USA Hockey. We have acted as outside general counsel and principal advisor to the USHL since 2001, providing legal and business counsel and managing all legal matters including governance and operation of the USHL, miscellaneous business matters, litigation and

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trademark development and management, and team formation, transfer and termination.

- Minnesota Hockey. Formerly the Minnesota Amateur Hockey Association, Minnesota Hockey conducts ice hockey tournaments and buys, sells, leases and otherwise deals in property to advance youth and other amateur hockey in the state. Our attorneys negotiated their sponsorship agreements, including a three-year sponsorship arrangement with TCF Bank.
- USA Hockey. Our attorneys are actively involved in USA Hockey, with one attorney serving on the Legal Council. Sports facilities are high-profile projects in the community that draw public enthusiasm as well as scrutiny and attention. We have the experience to guide clients through every stage of the development and anticipate issues to resolve them before they become costly or cause delays.
- We represent and counsel real estate groups, business owners and franchisees in the development, financing and management of sports facilities, as well as the negotiation and documentation of development and management agreements (including naming rights agreements) for sports facilities. Clients turn to us for assistance with bond financing, lease agreements, development approvals, design and construction agreements and forming public/private partnerships with incentives and governmental assistance.

ESPORTS, SPORTS TECHNOLOGY & WAGERING

Our Stinson team is uniquely qualified to address the complex and dynamic needs of our Esports and Sports Technology clients. We offer the experience necessary to provide full-service legal counsel to stakeholders throughout the esports ecosystem, including mobile gamers, leagues, franchise owners, broadcasters, advertisers, publishers, agencies and promoters, distributors, sponsors, investors, banks and other leading corporations and individuals. [Learn more.](#)

SPORTS FACILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Target Field (Minnesota Twins ballpark). On behalf of Hennepin County, we provided legal counsel in the development of the Minnesota Twins Ballpark in Minneapolis, including negotiating and drafting the design and construction agreements for the 40,000 seat, \$400 million baseball stadium that is now Target Field.
- Minneapolis Community Development Agency. On behalf of the City of Minneapolis, we represented the Agency in the original development, construction and financing of Target Center, the Minneapolis home of the NBA's Minnesota Timberwolves and WNBA's Minnesota Lynx. We also represented the Agency when it purchased the Target Center in 1995.
- Minnesota Sports and Entertainment. We represented Minnesota Sports and Entertainment in the lease, construction and financing of Xcel Energy Center, the Saint Paul home to the NHL's Minnesota Wild. We were involved in the lease agreement and bond financing with the City of Saint Paul and State of Minnesota, the contract with the Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission, construction agreements

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and financing.

- University of Minnesota TCF Bank Stadium. We provided legal counsel to the University of Minnesota in the development of the TCF Bank Stadium, including the negotiating and drafting of the development, design and construction agreements for the 50,000 seat, \$250 million Big Ten football stadium.
- Sprint Center. We represented AEG in its development of the \$276 million Sprint Center arena located in downtown Kansas City, Missouri, in construction and operations issues under multiple contracts with the City of Kansas City.
- NASCAR; Sporting Park. We represented the Unified Government of Wyandotte County in the negotiation of agreements to develop a new \$165 million major league soccer stadium for Sporting KC and a 600,000-square-foot class A office campus for approximately 4,000 employees of the Cerner Corporation. This project featured a public/private partnership with a unique incentive structure and the stadium was financed primarily with STAR Bonds. We also represented the United Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas in all phases of legal work for the \$250 million International Speedway Corporation's 75,000 seat NASCAR autorace track facility constructed in Kansas City, Kansas.
- KC Urban Youth Academy. Our attorneys represented Major League Baseball and the Kansas City Royals in the formation and development of its Urban Youth Academy.
- Sports Arena. Our attorneys assisted a tribal enterprise in connection with the naming rights and sponsorship assets relating to an arena and a NBA G-League team.

RECREATION

We are proud of our longstanding relationships in the outdoor recreation industry. We represent some of the most well-known brands in the market. From litigation to corporate governance, labor and employment and intellectual property, our multidisciplinary teams have deep knowledge of the issues affecting our clients and decades of experience partnering with businesses to help them meet their goals.

Our attorneys are active advisors to various outdoor recreation companies. In fact, one of our attorneys was previously the Assistant General Counsel for several privately-held companies, most notably Quality Bicycle Products, Inc. (a global manufacturer and distributor of bicycle products) and SmartEtailng, Inc. (an e-Commerce service provider for the bicycle and outdoor industry).

- Garmin. We represent the multinational creator of innovative GPS technology which is utilized in diverse markets - including aviation, marine, fitness, outdoor recreation, tracking and mobile apps - with all facets of its corporate governance and general securities needs.
- Bombardier Recreational Products, Inc. We represented BRP in a series of patent enforcement and defense actions in Minnesota. Based in Valcourt, Quebec, BRP designs, builds, and markets recreational vehicles and power sports engines under the Ski-Doo, Sea-Doo and Can-Am brands.

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- Polaris. Our attorneys assist Polaris, one of the world's largest power sport companies, with product liability and employment matters.
- Cobalt Boats. We represent Cobalt Boats in connection with its intellectual property matters. Of recent interest, we represented Cobalt Boats in its patent infringement lawsuit against Brunswick Corporation d/b/a Sea Ray Boats. After an eight-day jury trial, our client obtained a \$2.7 million verdict with a jury finding of willful infringement. The District Court further awarded Cobalt Boats enhanced damages and attorneys' fees.
- Gander Mountain. Prior to its bankruptcy in 2017, we represented Gander Mountain, one of the largest chains of outdoor specialty retailers in the U.S., in the acquisition, development and leasing of stores across the nation.
- National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA). We serve as outside general counsel and co-chairman of the national rules committee for NICA, the governing body for interscholastic mountain biking programs for student-athletes across the United States.
- Krueger Outdoors. We represent Krueger Outdoors, which includes Advocate Cycles and Terrene Tires, on a wide variety of legal matters including intellectual property disputes, regulatory compliance, contract drafting and negotiation, and corporate governance.
- Jenson USA. Our attorneys serve as outside general counsel to Jenson USA's brick-and-mortar retail shops and online store (which is one of the original online bike shops in the world).
- Hed Cycling. We serve as outside general counsel to Hed Cycling, a privately-held, woman-owned, global manufacturer of premium racing bicycle wheels and components.
- Stinson represented a major sporting goods manufacturer in relation to all aspects of intellectual property protection and enforcement including in relation to patent and trademark litigation, cease and desist communications, freedom to operate opinions, patentability searches, patent and trademark prosecution worldwide, joint development agreements, license agreements, confidentiality agreements and idea submission programs.
- Stinson represents a number of golf courses and country clubs on various matters including employment issues, reorganizations, real estate, construction and general corporate advisory.
- Stinson represents outdoor product manufacturers in connection with their product warnings, labeling, warranties and user's manuals. We specifically help companies selling into California with the state's recently amended Prop 65 statute.

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TEAM

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RELATED CAPABILITIES

Private Business

NEWS

Private Equity, Corporate M&A Attorney Ethan Mark Returns to Stinson in Minneapolis

04.04.2024

Frantze's Involvement with KC Current, First Stadium Built for Women's Sports Team Highlighted in *Law360*

03.13.2024

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Quinlivan Recognized by *Minnesota Lawyer* as a Top M&A Attorney

01.25.2024

Naima Starks' Next Chapter with Stinson Highlighted by *Law360*

09.27.2023

Sports Law and Employment Investigations Attorney Joins Stinson in DC

09.20.2023

Sharma Selected to Leadership Minnesota Class of 2024

09.20.2023

Scot Hill Named to Inaugural Sports & Entertainment POWER List

09.13.2023

Law360 Highlights Larson's Return to Stinson

08.29.2023

Dwight Larson Returns to Private Practice, Joins Stinson in Minneapolis

08.22.2023

Stinson's Sports and Entertainment Attorney Aalok Sharma Highlighted in *Minnesota Lawyer* Article

05.22.2023

Legal Hurdles in Esports Wagering Detailed by Sharma in the *Hennepin Lawyer*

04.13.2023

Molins, Sanders Discuss Tax Implications of NIL Collectives as Nonprofits in *Forbes* Article

01.31.2023

Christina Arnone, Bill Everding and Sarah Lintecum Struby Recognized as Up & Coming Attorneys by *Missouri Lawyers Weekly*

08.22.2022

Stinson Partners Micah Revell and Aalok Sharma Recognized as Up & Coming Attorneys by *Minnesota Lawyer*

08.02.2022

Cosentino, Flores Author E-sports Article for *Sports Litigation Alert*

05.10.2022

David Frantze Discusses Role with KC NWSL Team Owners with *Kansas City Business Journal*

03.04.2022

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Leadership Council on Legal Diversity Selects Stinson Attorneys for 2022 Fellows and Pathfinder Program
02.17.2022

Dave Frantze Discusses Stinson's Involvement in Kansas City's NWSL Stadium with Hackney Publications
12.07.2021

Stinson Represents KC NWSL in Lease Negotiations to Build the First Stadium for a Women's Sports Team
10.29.2021

Best Lawyers Recognizes 21 Stinson Attorneys as "Ones to Watch"
08.20.2020

Aalok Sharma's Sports Practice Featured in *Hennepin Lawyer*
07.09.2020

Aalok Sharma's Innovative Sports Practice Featured in *Minnesota Law*
06.02.2020

PUBLICATIONS

In Florida and Elsewhere, Officials Target Latest Fantasy Sports Games
04.29.2024

On Your Mark: Strides in Trademark Infringement on Sports Merchandising
04.29.2024

Marketing Partnerships with Olympic Athletes: Is it Worth the Effort for Cannabis Brands?
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Decentralized Autonomous Organization Laws Across the U.S.
10.04.2023

Generative AI
10.04.2023

A New Type of Face Painting - The Use of Facial Recognition Technology in Sports Venues
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Update: HF100, the Legalization of Adult-Use Cannabis in Minnesota
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FTX Fallout: How Sponsorship Partners are Moving Forward
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Running a Legal Sweepstakes or Contest in the Esports and Online Gaming World

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Esports Teams Face Enemy Fire from State Talent Agency Acts

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A Dollar and a Dream: Student-Athlete Compensation in the Aftermath of U.S. Supreme Court's *Alston* Decision

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Biometrics in the Ballpark - How Teams and Leagues Can Mitigate Data Collection Risk

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The First Circuit Rules that the Wire Act Applies to Sports Betting Only

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Morality Clauses in Contracts are Escape Hatches for Streaming Sponsors

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Privacy 2021 - Preparing for the CPRA

01.22.2021

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What's Loot Got to do With It?

11.11.2020

Should Investors be Wary of Esports Arenas? Traditional Stadium Litigation Hints at Risk

11.11.2020

An Overview: Colorado's Expansion into Legalized Sports Wagering

11.11.2020

DMCA Takedown Notices: A New Opponent for Streamers

10.15.2020

There is a Price for Athlete Data

08.17.2020

Revisiting the Federal Wire Act on Appeal

08.17.2020

Supreme Court Confirms Trademark Defendants' Profits are in Play Even Without Willfulness Showing

04.24.2020

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