

Sports Litigation

Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan (QE) is the largest law firm in the world devoted solely to business litigation, arbitration and white collar, in a wide range of areas and industries including sports.

QE opened its office in Zurich in 2016 and has quickly established itself as one of the pre-eminent law firms in Switzerland for national and international sports matters.

Our successful representation of FIFA, the international football governing body, in Switzerland, the U.S. and other jurisdictions in what The New York Times described as “*one of the most complicated international white collar cases in recent memory*” has given our Zurich office a substantial head start in the sports area in the Swiss (and global) legal market. Also a result of that representation, QE worldwide, but in particular the Zurich office, is being approached by numerous other international sports federations, sports organizations, clubs, sponsors and even state governments to provide expert strategic and legal advice in relation to their most critical financial disputes.

Beyond our core focus on dispute resolution and white collar-related work, we also advise a number of key players in the sports industry on a broad range of areas and on an ongoing basis. Our sports clients look to us for strategic and long-term advice on important business decisions, for brokering deals and for helping to build and establish contacts in particular markets. Frequently, we support sports organizations in crisis management and in all questions of management, corporate governance and compliance. We also often advise on all aspects of transfers of athletes and players in various sports and contexts and also on all aspects of athletes’ and players’ management arrangements.

While perfectly tailored to the unique characteristics of the Swiss market, we operate as a single, integrated team with the other offices, which enables us to offer optimal solutions to our sports clients, wherever their business activities take place. Our lawyers are registered with the Bar Association of the Canton of Zurich and most are also qualified in another jurisdiction and, have studied or worked abroad.

NOTABLE REPRESENTATIONS

Recently, we have been representing:

- a) Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) as lead counsel in connection with criminal proceedings and investigations by the U.S. Department of Justice and Swiss law enforcement authorities of alleged bribery and corruption in the international football world;
- b) Confederación Sudamericana de Fútbol (CONMEBOL), the South American Football Association, in criminal proceedings and investigations by the U.S. Department of Justice of allegations of corruption in the international football world;
- c) Switzerland’s premier football club, FC Basel 1893, with strategic advice on all kinds of high-stakes matters;

- b) TEAM Marketing, the promoter of the world's most prestigious club football event, the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) Champions League, in connection with certain corporate governance and potential litigation matters;
- c) Hong Kong based Asia League Ltd. in a number of disputes and negotiations with regard to "East Asia Super League", the first integrated international basketball "Champions League" across Asia, including with FIBA, the International Basketball Federation;
- d) a Swiss-based international sports federation in resolving a high-stakes copyright issue;
- e) Swiss based Comosa AG, the organizer of the World Boxing Super Series (WBSS), in several high-profile multi-jurisdictional disputes, including disputes against national federations arising from high-profile international sports events and a dispute against one of the participating boxers (where – quite spectacularly – we successfully obtained an ex parte interim measure from a Swiss court obliging the boxer to fight in his semi-final boxing match), as well as in advising the board of directors relating to important decisions on the future strategic direction;
- e) a government entity in a highly confidential matter related to the IOC Olympic Charter and on strategic and legal issues relating to international and domestic sports policy;
- f) a sports management company in all aspects relating to its activities in motorsports (including in the Formula 1 and in Formula E) and sports in general, and in particular in bidding for a team entry in the Formula 1 Championship and in a contractual dispute between a prospective Formula 1 driver and his former racing team;
- g) Swiss based Vexatec AG, a manufacturer of innovative sports clothing with live data tracking features, on examining numerous strategic options; and
- h) an international online ticket marketplace company as global counsel in connection with regulatory, civil and criminal proceedings.

RANKINGS AND AWARDS

The QE Swiss office has been mentioned in the key business and news media in Switzerland as among the premier firms in Switzerland, and has been described as one of the most innovative and most aggressive firms in its field.

Among others, the QE Swiss office is named as a top law firm in Switzerland and ranked in Tier 1 with "5 Stars" in Sports Law by Bilanz (2019).

Also, QE Swiss office is ranked in Tier 2 in Sports Law by Legal 500.