

# THE WORLD'S TOP 20... MOST INFLUENTIAL SPORTS LAWYERS

SportBusiness staff, readers and **Andy Brown** (Editor, World Sports Law Report) nominate the most influential lawyers in the sports industry across the last year and explain why they've made the list.

## **Stephen Sampson**

**(Head of Sports Law group, Hammonds)**

A partner in Hammonds' Commercial & Dispute Resolution department, Sampson acted for Chelsea in both the discharge of the transfer ban imposed by FIFA in the Gael Kakuta case - securing an acknowledgement that the Premier League club was not liable for any regulatory breach over the registration of the former RC Lens player - and in its claim for compensation against Adrian Mutu. He also won a summary judgment for UEFA and BSKyB against a selection of companies to establish the precedent against illegal streaming on the internet.

## **Andrew Osborne**

**(Partner, Lewis Silkin)**

A specialist in football transfers, having worked on a number of high profile international transfers to the UK, Osborne joined Lewis Silkin from Hammonds this year. He has been involved in litigation before the Court for Arbitration for Sport concerning the termination of contracts, as well as advising on feeder club structures in South America and Europe, third-party ownership of players and immigration issues. He has also advised clubs in rugby union, rugby league as well as the British America's Cup bid.

## **Jonathan Taylor**

**(Partner, Bird & Bird)**

Revered as a straight-talker, Taylor is an adviser to international and national governing bodies, event organisers, broadcasters and sponsors with a particular focus on anti-doping. Co-editor of Tottels' Sport: Law and Practice, he is chairman of the International Baseball Federation's Anti-Doping Panel, a member of the British Horseracing Authority's Ethics Committee and

the only UK member of the World Anti-Doping Agency's Working Group on legal matters.

## **Alexandre Miguel Mestre**

**(Senior Associate, PLMJ)**

One of the heavyweights of Portuguese sports law, Mestre was assistant to the Secretary of State of Sports (2003 to 2005) in his home country and holds a Postgraduate degree in Olympic Studies from Loughborough University. Last year he published the acclaimed Law of the Olympic Games, a book which examines the rules and institutions of the International Olympic Committee, including eligibility criteria, legal protection of the Olympic symbol, ambush marketing, athletes' freedom of expression and Olympic boycotts.

## **David Zeffman**

**(Head of Gambling & Sport, Olswang)**

Zeffman is the eminent legal figure in British horseracing. His extensive experience includes the launch of satellite channel At The Races, where he was involved in the acquisition of media rights with dozens of racecourses, and the recent joint venture with Racing UK to establish GBI Racing. He has been hired by leading bookmakers and advised the UK Government on the funding of British horseracing, while he acted for Satellite Information Systems to defend its exclusive media rights for betting shops in England.

## **Max Duthie**

**(Partner, Bird & Bird)**

Duthie has worked on a host of sports from football to tennis and athletics to greyhound racing. A former rugby union player, he acted on the so-called 'bloodgate' scandal on behalf of Heineken Cup organising body European Rugby Cup, where he was influential in exposing Harlequins and Dean Richards. An experienced

advocate, regularly appearing before disciplinary and anti-doping tribunals throughout Europe, Duthie heads up his firm's ticketing practice, leading anti-touting and advisory work for both venues and governing bodies.

## **Nick Bitel**

**(Partner, Max Bitel Greene)**

Bitel has led MBG's work on competition, ticketing and doping. His firm is legal adviser to the London Marathon and works on ticketing issues for events such as Wimbledon, the Six Nations, the Ryder Cup and Cricket World Cup. His impressive client list also includes the European PGA Tour, the English Rugby Football Union and the England and Wales Cricket Board. His work in football includes acting for UEFA and FIFA on enforcement of intellectual property rights and for agents and players in disciplinary proceedings brought by the FA.

## **Robert L Raskopf**

**(Partner, Quinn Emanuel Urquhart Oliver & Hedges)**

A renowned litigator in the US, Raskopf has worked for the National Football League and its member clubs for more than 20 years. High-profile cases have involved the Dallas Cowboys, Green Bay Packers, Cleveland Browns, Baltimore Ravens and Washington Redskins in the fields of copyright and trademark infringement. He made his name by asserting that the Cowboys had the right to be called 'America's Team'. His experience also stretches to the National Hockey League, Major League Soccer and the Mexican Football Association.

## **Jonathan Ellis**

**(Associate, Charles Russell LLP)**

Shortlisted for Assistant Solicitor of the Year in The Lawyer Awards 2010, Ellis acted for the



Left to right: Trevor Watkins, David Zeffman, Paul Chaisty, Nick Bittel

English Football Association on the prosecution of disciplinary charges against Wayne Rooney's agent Paul Stretford, the introduction of its Player Agents Regulations and the drafting of its arbitration rules. Ellis has also been involved in prosecuting doping charges for the Indian Premier League against Mohammad Asif and advised the British Horseracing Authority, UK Athletics, the Mercedes Formula One team and ESPN Star Sports.

**Trevor Watkins**  
(Partner, Clarke Willmott)

Heading up a team working for over a dozen leading football and rugby clubs, five British governing bodies, UK sport and the British Olympic Association, Watkins is also a director of the UK's National Anti-doping Panel. The former AFC Bournemouth chairman, who led the fans' consortium that saved the club in 1997, is highly rated for his in-depth understanding of football, being used as an adviser on the purchase of clubs on both sides of the Atlantic.

**Nic Couchman**  
(Chairman, Couchmans)

Couchman has been at the forefront of UK Sports Law for nearly 20 years. He has advised on a vast range of issues, but is best known for his work on global rights strategies, international events, intellectual property and image rights structures, exploitation and protection. Clients have included the International Olympic Committee, Formula One Management, Rugby World Cup, Ascot, Six Nations rugby, International Tennis Federation and World Professional Surfers amongst many others.

**Greg Nott**  
(Managing Partner, Dewey & Leboeuf)

From a background of international corporate

transactions and cross-border dispute resolution, Nott's work on the Caster Semenya case has been rated as groundbreaking. Through 10 months of negotiations with the International Association of Athletics Federations, Nott ensured that Semenya could compete again. His efforts have led to the definitions of gender accepted by many sporting associations and federations to appear outdated. He was recognised as Lawyer of the Year by Legal Business this year.

**Paul Chaisty QC**

Chaisty is a vastly experienced litigator who was given the accolade of Lawyer of the Week by The Times newspaper in July after his successful defence of a claim by Proactive against Wayne Rooney. He previously worked for West Ham United on the Carloz Tevez affair and the Alan Curbishley compensation claim and for sportswear giant Umbro. He has a reputation of being a "fighter" at the bar: Chambers & Partners have described him as "a powerful and punchy advocate with a mind like a stiletto."

**Mike Morgan**  
(Sports Law Group, Hammonds)

Morgan is much in demand with a lengthy list of high-profile clients. He has drafted disciplinary rules to advise on anti-doping investigations and disciplinary proceedings to become a renowned expert on the subject. He has successfully worked for both athletes and federations in the High Court and the Court of Arbitration for Sport. Morgan spoke on doping issues at the World Sports Law Report Tackling Doping in Sport conference earlier this year.

**Dr Tassos Kaburakis**  
(Professor, Southern Illinois University)

Kaburakis organised the first International

Sports Law & Business conference in Istanbul this year and, as a sports lawyer, has advised the Greek Basketball Federation and the International Basketball Federation on legal and policy matters. He is very well respected in the academic world; Kaburakis has published articles and presented research on International Comparative Sport Law and NCAA Compliance and serves as an advisor for various international sport consulting firms. He has also coached basketball at junior and professional club levels.

**Michael Murphy**

A former partner at Bowman Gilfillan and one of South Africa's most able sports lawyers, Murphy specialises in football. He was the lead lawyer in the Coetzee ruling, which redefined the way that football transfers were conducted in South Africa back in 2001. His success led to Bowman Gilfillan's appointment as arbitrators to FIFA's international dispute resolution chamber. Murphy has been the lead lawyer in many of the disputes that have shaped the development of sports law in South Africa. He also consults associations and clubs at all levels.

**Miguel Remmer**  
(Partner, Estudio Becar Varela)

An Argentine who works for one of the top sports law firms in South America, Remmer has addressed international conferences on the often complex matter of football player ownership in South America. His services have been in demand in the wake of the controversial Carlos Tevez/Javier Mascherano transfer to the Premier League in 2006 and his knowledge has made him a world authority on the subject of third party ownership. Remmer, 38 this month, is a rising star on the Latin American legal scene.

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**3. Sam Rush**  
**(International Chief Operating Officer, Wasserman Media Group)**

Rush holds the double position of influential lawyer and agent having joined Wasserman in 2006 following the acquisition of SFX Sports Group (Europe), the company made famous by its connections with David Beckham. His broad range of experience includes running Clear Channel Entertainment's European legal and business operations, while previously he was a hotshot lawyer at Bird & Bird and SJ Berwin.

There is little doubt that Rush is a man of huge influence through his directorships of the British Association for Sport and Law and Association of Football Agents. The Times newspaper named him in its top 100 influential people in sports in both 2009 and 2010.

**2. Luca Ferrari (Partner, CBA Studio Legale e Tributario)**

Ferrari is co-head of his firm's international strategic committee. He provides legal advice to celebrities, athletes, agents, coaches, managers, clubs leagues and federations. During over a decade of legal experience in professional football, he has guided clients through a variety of national and international transactions.

He oversaw Serie B's split from Serie A and its subsequent sponsorship to become the Serie Bwin - a first naming rights deal for a gambling company to a sporting league in Italy. He was President of Serie Bwin for a time. He has published numerous articles on image rights and sports law throughout Europe. He is much sought as a speaker at international media and sports law conferences.



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**Bob Mitchell (Partner, Harbottle & Lewis)**

Mitchell's place as a central figure in British football was cemented by his involvement in securing three major sponsorship deals. His vast experience in the sector was put to use in his role in the teams that negotiated Barclays' renewal of its sponsorship of the Premier League, Standard Chartered Bank's shirt sponsorship of Liverpool and npower's sponsorship of the Football League. In addition he has been a key player in drafting a number of sponsorship deals for the London 2012 Olympic Games.

All this followed the Sports Group he heads being awarded the title Team of the Year in 2006 by Legal Business for their work in sports sponsorship.

Mitchell is far from being a one-trick pony; His expertise extends to the exploitation and protection of sports people's image rights, he was behind the creation of the England cricket team's Team England Player Partnership, and he has been legal adviser to the PGA European Tour for close on two decades.

Whether it be rights owners, multi-national corporate sponsors or high-profile sports stars Mitchell has invariably been on the scene. His track record of delivering a deal is second to none.

