


Luca Ferrari


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Luca is a partner in our Italian corporate team and heads the sports practice worldwide.

He established his professional practice as an advisor to private companies active in global markets, acting often as trusted advisor in relation to strategies for structuring and growing an international business. Over the years, his practice has spanned the core sectors of the Italian economy, such as fashion, design and especially wine, an industry in which he has gained a reputation as one of the most experienced lawyers acting for Italian household names in foreign markets.

As a business lawyer with an international education and background, from the beginning of his professional career Luca has dedicated himself to sports law and the sport industry. In addition to assisting corporate clients, such as sports teams, sponsors, manufacturers of sportswear and equipment, sports marketing agencies and media companies, Luca has become a trusted advisor to prominent athletes, coaches, managers and agents.

As the firm's global head of sports, Luca leads a team of lawyers based in Withers' main offices in Europe, the USA and Asia, offering highly specialised sport-related regulatory, commercial, corporate and tax expertise in relation to high-profile transactions, including sponsorships, international transfers of players, playing contracts, management contracts, direct investments and licensing of audio-visual rights.

He was included in Sport Business International's "World's 20 most influential lawyers" feature and in the top three ranking of the 'top 20' feature of the same directory.

In 2020 Italian legal directory, TopLegal, recognised him as 'Lawyer of the Year - Sports Practice' at the TopLegal Industry Awards.

In 2018 Legal directory, Chambers and Partners (High Net Worth Individuals Practice) describes Luca as follows:

'Luca Ferrari is held in extremely high regard for dedicating his practice to advising clients in the sports industry, including athletes, coaches, managers and agents. Fellow legal professionals report that 'he's very versatile, and he's really able to pull everything together'. Market insiders unanimously agree that he is 'very strong in sport'. Latest in 2024 Luca was ranked by Chambers HNW in private wealth law as "a very smart and brilliant lawyer and well known on the market".

In 2018 and 2015 he received the "Lawyer of the Year - Sports Law" Award at the LegalCommunity Labour Awards.

Luca is a Recommended Lawyer in the international directory Legal500 EMEA.

Track record

Summer transfer window 2021

Advised on domestic and international transfer of several footballers, the most recent ones being: Brahim Díaz extending his contract with AC Milan for two more seasons, defender Omar Richards with his transfer to FC Bayern Munich, Rodrigo Muniz's transfer to Fulham FC, Sydney Van Hooijdonk to Bologna FC, MLS Philadelphia Union midfielder Jack de Vries loan to Venezia FC and Brandon Soppo transfer from Rennes to Udinese FC.

Assistance to Wasserman Group with football player transfer

Assisted the international talent agency Wasserman with the transfer of Chelsea FC striker Tammy Abraham to AS Roma. The deal is worth £34 million, including a £68 million buy-back clause for Chelsea which can only be triggered after the player has completed two seasons with Roma.

Coaches and managing directors transfers

Advised on transfers of coaches and managing directors, including: Maurizio Sarri and Massimo Rastelli as new head coaches for Lazio and Pordedone, respectively, as well as former Juventus FC managing director Fabio Paratici with his employment with Premier League team Tottenham Hotspurs FC.

Sports stars and brands

Advises sports personalities and brands in various jurisdictions. He has assisted, amongst others, Wojciech Szczesny, Ilkay Gündogan, Manolo Gabbiadini, Alexandre Pato, Fabio Borini, Mario Gómez, Pavel Nedved, Jürgen Klopp, Roberto Donadoni, Alberto Zaccheroni, Andrea Mandorlini and Roy Hodgson. He acts as global legal counsel to Novak Djokovic.

Advice to corporate clients

Amongst his corporate clients, Luca is counsel to Santa Margherita, one of the leading wine producers in Italy; Arena, a major Italian swimwear manufacturer; Gruppo Umana, leader in staff leasing services, Adidas and the Italian maison, Krizia.

Talks

- Luca is regularly interviewed by sports newspapers and radio programs.
- "Wine Calling: Strategies for investing in US wineries," Withers presentation for select Italian clients - January 27, 2022, co-presenter

External publications

Luca has authored over 50 articles on sports law and sports management, including analysis on sports image rights and football transfer deals and contributes frequently to major Italian newspapers, such as 'Il Sole 24 Ore', 'Corriere della Sera' (including 'Corriere Economia'), 'Milano Finanza', 'Italia Oggi' and online magazines. Amongst his publications:

Italian football and betting: a tough math on "Swedish Sport & Law Annual Review 2024" (2024)

English Premier League foreign players – blowing the whistle of the "non-dom" regime on "Sports Law and Taxation June 2024, co-authors Monte M., Martin R., and Wren D. (2024)

Legal solutions for multi-club owners on "Eprivate client", co-author Wren. D (2024)

Football players and image rights on "Sports Law and Taxation December 2023", co-author Molinari F. (2023)

A guide to Serie A's new collective bargaining agreement on "LawinSport", co-author Calandrelli V. (2023)

'Sports Law Manual' - ('Manuale di Diritto Sportivo') - Chapter on image rights, Giappichelli, 2020'

Sportlervermittlung & sportlermanagement', Stämly - Beck, Mainz, co-author

'Sports Image Rights in Europe, Player's Agents Worldwide - Legal Aspects' and 'TV Rights and Sport - Legal Aspects', T.M.C. Asser Institut, The Hague', co-author

Admissions

Italy, 1997

Education

University of Padua, Degree in Law, LLB equivalent

University of Padua, post-graduate program in international trade law

University of California, full scholarship EAP

Languages

English

Italian

Memberships

Listed in the Qatar Sports Arbitration Foundation list of arbitrators as a lawyer specialised in sport law

Milan Bar

Key dates

Year joined: 2014

Year became partner: 2014

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