

Michael Rueda

PARTNER | HEAD OF US SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT | NEW YORK



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Michael is a corporate partner and head of US sports and entertainment.

Michael's diverse corporate practice focuses on representing companies, venture and other funds, and investors of varying sizes and across industries. He regularly advises on debt and equity financing transactions, investments, mergers and acquisitions, asset sales, fund formation, commercial transactions, and corporate governance matters.

Michael's sports and entertainment practice focuses on advising a variety of companies and investors in the sports and entertainment industries, including live event companies, sports and entertainment agencies and management companies, investors in sports franchises and sports and entertainment properties and assets, production companies, and athletic apparel and equipment brands. He also advises international restaurant groups, luxury car manufacturers, wine, and luxury goods brands. Michael advises athletes, entertainers, influencers, and artists on matters such as brand management arrangements, including licensing, endorsement, sponsorship, and brand ambassador agreements; professional employment or service arrangements, including general employment, coaching, and playing contracts; and personal business and investment activities, including U.S. direct and fund investments, joint ventures, structuring existing and new business entities and holdings, and acquisitions and dispositions of businesses and assets.

Michael is also a regular contributor to Forbes.

Track record

NBA Team Investor and Family Office

Advised a private investor and family office in connection with US \$100M+ investment as part of the consortium purchasing a majority stake in the NBA's Charlotte Hornets from NBA Hall of Famer Michael Jordan.

Loan facility

Advised luxury goods online retailer in connection with loan facility.

Venture capital fund

Serves as outside counsel to venture capital fund in connection with fund formations, portfolio company investments, establishing ancillary businesses.

International wine brands

Advises multiple international wine brands on U.S. corporate and commercial activity.

Former athlete and TV personality

Advised former athlete and television personality in connection with establishing 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

Investment fund

Represented investment fund in its private equity investment in restaurant operator and franchisor.

Andrea Pirlo

Advised Italian soccer player Andrea Pirlo and his agent in connection with his transfer from Juventus FC to Major League Soccer, negotiating on the player's contract and image rights.

Securities counsel

Securities counsel to special purpose acquisition company in connection with its initial public offering of \$64 million of units.

Securities counsel

Corporate and securities counsel to a graphite electrode manufacturing company in connection with its holding company reorganization and \$700 million 'double-dummy' acquisition.

Securities counsel

Corporate and securities counsel to a NYSE listed automotive replacement parts manufacturer and distributor, in its exchange offer for up to \$20,000,000 aggregate principal amount of its outstanding convertible subordinated debentures.

Investment manager and investment fund

Represented investment manager and investment fund in establishing private investment partnership in the US and in compliance with the Investment Advisers Act and exemptions from registration under the Investment Company Act.

Outdoor footwear brand and manufacturer

Serves as counsel to outdoor footwear brand and manufacturer.

Jürgen Klopp

Advised Jürgen Klopp in his negotiations with Liverpool Football Club and its owners Fenway Sports Group over Mr Klopp's appointment as manager of the club.

\$150m IPO

Represented a special-purpose acquisition company in the industrial sector in a \$150 million initial public offering and financing related to its acquisition.

Private equity entity and stockholders

Represented private entity and its stockholders in the closing of the sale of a controlling interest to private equity fund.

Clients



Talks

- 'Dodging Risk - Helping Athletes Play Defense in Life,' Trusted Advisor's 2nd Annual Sports X Miami Summit - October 23, 2024, speaker
- 'ESPN in conversation with Michael Rueda: Managing and monetizing NIL in the US.' The Rob Dibble Show, 97-9 ESPN - January 31, 2023, speaker
- 'ESPN in conversation with Michael Rueda: Managing and monetizing NIL in the US.' The Rob Dibble Show, 97-9 ESPN - December 12, 2022, speaker
- 'Michael Rueda, head of US Sports & Entertainment at Withersworldwide, Sports & Corporate Law.' Life in the Front Office Podcast Presented by Suja Organic - September 2022, speaker
- 'High court hears NCAA appeal on student compensation.' Reuters - April 1, 2021, speaker
- 'Explore Strategies to Help Build Your Brand', Merrill Financial Advisors, New York - December 2019, speaker
- St. John's University School of Law, LL.M. in International Sports Law Practice, New York - November 2015, guest lecturer
- 'Practical Consideration When Bringing Players to Major League Soccer', 2015 World Sports Law Report's Sport Contracts conference, London - November 2015

External publications

'The NFL's private equity era won't be the bloodbath you think - for now.' Front Office Sports - September 12, 2024, quoted

'Podcast pay dirt: why top hosts like Joe Rogan, Kelce Brothers, Alex Cooper are landing big-buck deals.' Variety - September 11, 2024, quoted

'Opinion: Private Equity Suits Up to Own Some of the NFL. What Could Go Wrong?.' The Washington Post - September 3, 2024, quoted

'Podcast Stars are Inking Massive Nine-Figure Deals. Here's Why Companies are Writing the Big Checks.' CNN - August 31, 2024, quoted

'A Big Day Arrives for the NFL and Private Equity.' Sportico - August 15, 2024, quoted

'How Sports Went From Private Equity Punchline to Coveted Asset Class.' Front Office Sports - July 6, 2024, quoted

'States Want Tax Reform As Ohtani's Deal Deferrals Stir Controversy.' Front Office Sports - April 15, 2024, quoted

'Did NIL Play a Part in Alabama Coach Nick Saban's Shock Retirement?.' MarketWatch - January 11, 2024, quoted

'How Shohei Ohtani's deferral-heavy, \$700 million contract could impact baseball industry.' The Sporting News - January 4, 2024, quoted

'Dodgers, Ohtani got creative with \$700 million deal, but both sides still have some risk,' Associated Press News - December 16, 2023, quoted

'NIL law changes face of college athletics,' North Carolina Lawyers Weekly - September 18, 2023, quoted

'NIL law changes face of college athletics,' South Carolina Lawyers Weekly - September 18, 2023, quoted

'NIL New to College World, But Not Novel,' Missouri Lawyers Media - September 13, 2023, quoted

'Money Talks as Sovereign Funds Aim to Play in US Sports,' Law360 - August 14, 2023, quoted

'The NCAA's position on not paying athletes is worse than tone deaf,' The Washington Post - May 22, 2023, quoted

'Lamar Jackson Turns Contract Chaos Into Self-Marketing Machine,' Sportico - March 27, 2023, quoted

'Scrutiny Of Snyder May Lead To Big Money Commanders Sale,' Law360 - November 2, 2022, quoted

'Ex-Commanders Workers Blast Letter From Owner's Lawyers,' Law360 - October 7, 2022, quoted

'Corporate, Public Outrage Is Antidote To Bad Sports Owners,' Law360 - September 19, 2022, quoted

'Nike is the latest company to file suit over NFTs as brands get serious about the marketplace,' Fortune - February 7, 2022, quoted

'Paige Bueckers, a College Athlete Who's Cashing In,' Bloomberg News - December 1, 2021, quoted

'5 Big Questions as NCAA, States Open NIL Floodgates,' Law360 - July 2, 2021, quoted

'NCAA's Move on Athlete Image Rights Raises Enforcement Questions,' Bloomberg Law - July 2, 2021, quoted

'Now That It's Time for NIL To Go, How Much Money Will Flow?' The Associated Press - June 30, 2021, quoted

'NCAA's NIL Decision Changes the Game for Student-Athletes,' Reuters - June 30, 2021, quoted

'Brands Prepare to Woo College Athletes After NCAA Loosens Rules,' Bloomberg News - June 30, 2021, quoted

'Supreme Court's NCAA Ruling Puts Athletes on Legal Path To Getting Paid,' The Washington Times - June 21, 2021, quoted

'Can elite club owners transform European soccer?,' Forbes - April 20, 2021, author

'Business Leaders Unite To Oppose Voting Restrictions,' Forbes - April 16, 2021, author

'NCAA plays defense in U.S. Supreme Court athlete compensation case,' Reuters - April 1, 2021, quoted

'Two Soccer Clubs Fight It Out in Trademark Dispute,' Sports Litigation Alert - March 26, 2021, co-author

'Why college athletes must prepare for the name, image and likeness era,' Forbes - February 11, 2021, author

'Supreme Court To Hear Dispute Over NCAA's Athlete Compensation Rules,' The Hill - December 16, 2020, quoted

'How Marcus Rashford's Free Meal Campaign Highlights The Evolving Landscape Of Athlete Philanthropy,' Forbes - November 3, 2020, author

'Why sports focused SPACs are more than a current trend,' Forbes - October 23, 2020, author

'Why Senator Loeffler's Comments On WNBA's Black Lives Matter Support Fall Flat,' Forbes - July 24, 2020, author

'NCAA Amateurism Under Fire As 9th Circ. Opens Door To Pay,' Law360 - May 22, 2020, quoted

'NCAA Suffers Another Blow To Current Amateurism Model' Forbes - May 21, 2020, author

'Leading to, and Leaning into, the New Normal,' CEO World - April 14, 2020, co-author

'Will College Soccer Move Into The 21st Century,' Forbes - March 25, 2020, author

'Why Kobe Bryant's Second Act Was On A Trajectory To Become As Successful And Impactful As His Basketball Career.' Forbes - February 15, 2020, author

'Global Sports Stars, Entertainers, And Citizens Rally In Support of Wildfire Relief And Demand Action On Climate Change,' Forbes - January 14, 2020, author

'Why The NCAA Should Act Swiftly And Meaningfully On Allowing College Athletes To Profit On Their Name, Image, and Likeness,' Forbes - December 17, 2020, author

'How Gaming Star and Influencer Andrew "Nasher" Telfer is Growing the Sport of Hockey,' Forbes - October 30, 2019, author

'Why Coach Alberto Salazar's Suspension Doesn't Mean the end of Nike's Elite Oregon Project.' Forbes - October 8, 2019, author

'California becomes first state to allow college athletes to be compensated.' U.S. News & World Report - September 30, 2019, quoted

'Athlete-Pay Bills Force NCAA To Rethink Amateurism Stance.' Law360 - September 24th, 2019, Quoted

'A Failure to Lead.' Forbes - August 10, 2019, author

'Yael Averbuch West Is Paying It Forward.' Forbes - August 1, 2020, author

'U.S. Women Chase World Cup Title While Changing The World Around Them.' Forbes - June 12, 2019, author

'NASCAR Driver Parker Kligerman Comes Full Circle With Esports Team Ownership.' Forbes - May 24, 2019, author

'NCAA Keeps Ball In Its Court With Review of Publicity Rules.' Law360 - May 20, 2020, quoted

'Crashing the Board.' Forbes - April 18, 2019, author

'How NBC Sports Analyst Kyle Martino is Shaking Up the American Soccer Culture.' Forbes - March 22, 2019, author

'How a Brand Built Around Lacrosse Launched an Athlete Entrepreneur.' Forbes - February 27, 2019, author

'Sports Cases To Watch In 2019.' Law360, January 2019, author

'NCAA corruption convictions may put schools in hot seat.' Law360 - November 2, 2018, quoted

'How did we get here? All the background you need on the saga surrounding Kevin Ollie's UConn contract.' Hartford Courant - September 29, 2018, quoted

'What are the obligations on footballers to conduct media activities? A comparison of the rules in UK, USA, Spain and Belgium,' __ LawInSport - September 28, 2018, co-author __

'Athlete activism is changing partnerships with brands.' - September 26, 2018, co-author

'NCAA reforms fail to fix basketball's corruption problem.' Law360 - August 17, 2018, quoted

'What's next for Kevin Ollie and UConn? We asked lawyers to weigh in.' Hartford Courant - August 8, 2018, quoted

'Planning to win: How athletes can protect their future finances.' World Sports Advocate - July 2018, co-author

'With states free to legalize sports betting, do the pro leagues deserve a cut?' The Washington Post - May 17, 2018, quoted

'Olympics bring trademark considerations for athletes.' Law360 - February 5, 2018, author

'SEC halts alleged initial coin offering scam endorsed by Evander Holyfield.' Withers article - January 31, 2018, co-author

'NFPLA announces continuing education requirements.' Withers article - January 30, 2018, co-author

'Cleveland Indians taking Chief Wahoo logo off uniforms but maintaining trademark.' Withers article - January 29, 2018, co-author

'NBA seeking 1 percent of every bet made on games if gambling legalized.' Withers article - January 26, 2018, co-author

'Minnesota Vikings quickly move to trademark phrases 'Minneapolis Miracle' and 'Minnesota Miracle.' Withers article - January 24, 2018, author

'4 ways tax reform may affect the sports world.' Law360 - January 2, 2017, co-author

'Sports legislation and regulation to watch in 2018.' Law360 - January 1, 2017, quoted

'Newest peer pressure in American soccer: Going pro at 16.' Sports Business Journal - December 8, 2017

'Getting in on the ground floor.' Private Asset Management - March 2017, co-author

'Lessons learned from a highly successful proxy contest defense.' Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance and Financial Regulation - December 18, 2015, co-author

'Day two of player contracts.' World Sports Law Report - November 5, 2015, quoted

'Moving in the right direction: 2015 MLS collective bargaining agreement.' Global Sports Law and Taxation Reports - September 2015, co-author

Admissions

State of Connecticut, 2006

State of New York, 2007

Education

Suffolk Law School, cum laude, J.D.

University of Connecticut, B.S.

Languages

English

Spanish

Memberships

New York State Bar Association

Hispanic National Bar Association

Key dates

Year joined: 2015

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