



# For The Record

The Official Newsletter of the National Sports Law Institute

## INDEX

Financial Fraud Is One of the Biggest Off-Field Challenges to NFL Players

→This article discusses shortcomings in the NFLPA's Financial Advisors Program and provides recommendations to help players avoid problems related to financial fraud

Michigan Supreme Court Holds Releases Signed by Parents Are Unenforceable

→This article examines a recent Michigan Supreme Court case regarding pre-injury waivers for minors and its impact on recreational sports

2011 Charles W. Mentkowski Sports Law Alumnus of the Year: Craig Pintens

Perspectives on the National Sports Law Institute's Sports Law Certificate



Laurence Landsman

## **Financial Fraud Is One of the Biggest Off-Field Challenges to NFL Players**

By **Laurence M. Landsman**, Block & Landsman, Chicago, IL

Talented professional football players earn millions of dollars from their well-honed ability to read an opposing team's plays and react accordingly. Off the field, however, these players face a more elusive and potentially devastating opponent – trusted advisors who are intent on swindling them out of their hard-earned wealth. A major firewall intended to protect susceptible players against such pervasive fraud, created by the NFL Players Association, has become an unintentional enabler for at least one massive investment scam.

In 2002, the NFLPA established the Financial Advisors Program for the express purpose of protecting NFL players from systemic investment fraud. The NFLPA deemed it necessary based on statistics showing that between 1999 and 2002, at least 78 players had been defrauded of more than \$42 million from a wide variety of investment schemes. These scams included a prominent agent, William "Tank" Black, who invested \$15 million worth of players' money in worthless penny stocks, and Luigi DiFonzo, a twice-convicted felon who perpetrated a multi-million dollar Ponzi scheme by recruiting former players as shills to defraud current players. In response to such wide-ranging fraud, the NFLPA created the Financial Advisors Program to register and regulate financial advisors who volunteered to participate in the program.

The Financial Advisors Program was intended to protect NFL players – who enter the league young, financially inexperienced and facing a relatively short time frame for peak earning potential – from being targeted by investment scam artists. Approved financial advisors should have minimum education and licensing qualifications, should agree to comply with laws governing the advisor's professional activities, and should provide quarterly statements to the players, among other program requirements. Rather than stem a cresting tide of financial fraud,

Volume 21, Number 4

October—December 2010

however, the NFLPA's program has existed in an era of investment scams against NFL players which have reached epic proportions. While the intent of the NFLPA's Financial Advisors Program was laudable, it has not succeeded in protecting the players' wealth. According to a 2009 expose in *Sports Illustrated*, by the time they have been retired for two years, 78% of former NFL players have gone bankrupt or are under financial stress.

Although the NFLPA's initial screening requirements may dissuade unqualified advisors from joining the program, having the necessary background does not prevent fraud against the players once an advisor is hired. In 2005, Kirk Wright, the owner of a hedge fund known as International Management Associates ("IMA"), was approved as a registered Financial Advisor under the NFLPA's program. Wright employed a retired NFL player, Steve Atwater, as a client liaison to recruit several current players who ultimately invested \$20 million in the fund. In early 2006, IMA collapsed, and Wright was subsequently convicted of 47 counts of securities fraud and money laundering in a scheme involving more than \$150 million. IMA's use of a retired player as a front to lure in current players resembled the very type of fraud the NFLPA sought to prevent when it first created the program. Yet, the Financial Advisors Program was wholly ineffective in protecting the players victimized by Wright. Ultimately, the players defrauded by Wright, including Atwater, sued the NFLPA for allowing Wright to participate in the Financial Advisors Program. In 2009, the federal district court in Atlanta dismissed the players' lawsuit, holding that the NFLPA bore no responsibility for their losses (189 L.R.R.M. 2812 (N.D. Ga. 2009, *aff'd*, 626 F.3d 1170 (11th Cir. 2010)).

The importance of meaningful protections for NFL players should cause the NFLPA to reform its Financial Advisors Program in a manner that effectively achieves its purpose. The NFLPA already strictly regulates the relationship between its players and their agents, known as "contract advisors," including mandatory certification and re-certification of such advisors, requiring the use of standard contracts, and restricting the fee the advisors can charge players. The NFLPA should create similarly strict requirements for participation in the Financial Advisors Program in order to protect its players from the serious consequences of investment fraud.

The need for action is urgent as investment fraud targeting NFL players continues at an alarming rate:

- Triton Financial, LLC, employed a former NFL quarterback and Heisman Trophy winners to lure current and former NFL players to its investment products, including the use of a solicitation claiming that Triton's investments in commercial real estate realized a 32% annualized return on investments over a five year period. In December, 2009, the Securities and Exchange Commission filed suit against Triton alleging securities fraud in the sale of limited partnerships and forgery of registration documents filed with state regulators.
- Mary Wong co-owned a Nebraska-based investment firm with three active NFL players. In 2007, she was permanently barred from the securities industry for misappropriation of customer funds. Nonetheless, she used her own investment firm to continue defrauding investors, and in September, 2010, she pleaded guilty to securities violations that carry penalties of up to 20 years in prison and \$1 million in fines. Among Wong's victims were NFL players, including Michael Vick, who were led to Wong by the NFL players who were partners in her investment firm.

- The owner of the now-defunct Louisiana Film Studios pleaded guilty in May, 2010, to charges of selling nearly \$2 million in non-existent film industry tax credits to 27 players, former players and staff of the New Orleans Saints. Several of the victims have filed suit against a former Saints player, who was also a licensed securities broker, for selling them the investments based on fraudulent representations that the film company owned the tax credits being sold.

A common feature of these scams is the use of current or former NFL players to recruit unsuspecting players to invest in fraudulent investment opportunities. Accordingly, one of the first reforms needed is a ban on such players from participating in the investment solicitation process on behalf of any financial advisor unless the current or former players themselves are registered as such with the NFLPA. This requirement would address one of the fundamental problems that led to the creation of the Financial Advisors Program, and inhibit the type of recruitment still being employed by fraudulent advisors.

Additionally, the NFLPA should create and strengthen oversight mechanisms to ensure compliance with the program regulations after an advisor is approved. For example:

- The NFLPA should mandate that registered financial advisors provide quarterly itemized statements setting forth (a) the amount charged to the Player-client for financial advice, (b) the identity of investments made in conjunction with that advice, (c) disclosures provided to the Player-client with regard to the risk of such investments, (d) proof that the Player-client received such disclosures, and (e) an accounting of the performance of such investments. Currently, the NFLPA requires the financial advisors to provide only some of this information, and then only if the NFLPA decides to request it.
- NFLPA registered professionals should review the financial advisors' quarterly statements to ensure they comport with the program requirements, and should provide its findings to the Player-clients.
- NFLPA registered professionals should audit the books and records of all registered financial advisors relating to the services provided to Player-clients on a quarterly basis. Currently, the NFLPA is authorized to do so only in limited circumstances. Additionally, the NFLPA should provide its audit findings to the Player-clients.
- The NFLPA should, on at least a quarterly basis, review the registration history available from the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority ("FINRA") or other appropriate regulatory agency to determine whether the advisors are subject to any civil or regulatory complaints. The NFLPA should inform players of any such complaints that have been filed against the financial advisors.

Perhaps most important, the NFLPA needs a strong and sustained outreach program to educate its members about the pervasiveness of investment fraud and the potential devastation it can bring, and encourage them to use registered financial advisors. By creating effective measures to protect players against investment schemes that threaten their financial security, the NFLPA's Financial Advisors Program can develop into a forceful safe harbor against the ever-present threat of fraud.

*{Laurence M. Landsman is a partner at the Chicago law firm Block & Landsman where he concentrates his practice in the area of investment fraud and securities litigation. Mr. Landsman represents athletes as well as other professionals who are victims of investment fraud.}*



Alexander Pendleton

## Michigan Supreme Court Holds Releases Signed by Parents Are Unenforceable

By **Alexander T. Pendleton** and **William E. Fischer**, Kohner, Mann & Kailas, S.C., Milwaukee, WI

---



William Fischer

On June 18, 2010, the Michigan Supreme Court issued its long-awaited decision in *Woodman v. Kera*, holding that under Michigan law waiver-of-liability forms signed by parents on behalf of minors are unenforceable.<sup>1</sup>

Key to the court's decision was the holding that under the common law in Michigan a minor lacks the capacity to enter into a pre-injury waiver, and that the minor's parents also lack the legal capacity to bind their child to such a contract.

The decision affirms a 2008 decision of the Michigan Court of Appeals, which held that virtually all waiver-of-liability agreements signed by parents on behalf of their children are unenforceable (the very narrow exception being if the parent had first obtained a court's permission to sign the waiver of liability).<sup>2</sup>

The seven-justice Michigan Supreme Court issued an unusually splintered decision in the case, with five of the seven justices writing separately. (A copy of the full decision is available online at [www.courts.michigan.gov/supremecourt](http://www.courts.michigan.gov/supremecourt)). The lead opinion (the holding of which was joined by four other justices) was written by Justice Robert Young, Jr., who is normally characterized as a member of the court's conservative wing. Key to Justice Young's decision is his view that, while there may be good reasons why the common law should be changed so as to permit parents to enter into waiver agreements on behalf of their minor children, such arguments are better presented to and resolved by the legislature, than by the courts.<sup>3</sup>

As a result of *Woodman*, it is likely that the Michigan legislature will proceed to consider a bill originally introduced before the Court's decision, a bill designed to reverse the effects of the court of appeals' decision. Michigan House Bill 4970,<sup>4</sup> if passed, would allow the parent or guardian of a minor child to provide a written release from liability before the child participated in a recreational activity. Michigan's adoption of such a law would be consistent with the actions of legislatures in other states have done (most notably in Colorado), after courts in those states have held as void waivers signed by parents.<sup>5</sup>

The reasoning of the majority was vigorously opposed by two justices (Corrigan and Markman), who pointed out that no prior Michigan court decision had invalidated parental waivers.<sup>6</sup> To these two

---

1. *Woodman v. Kera LLC*, 486 Mich. 228 (2010).

2. *Woodman v. Kera, LLC*, 280 Mich. App. 125 (Ct. App. Mich. 2008).

3. *Woodman*, 785 N.W.2d at 9-16.

4. 2009 Michigan House Bill 4970.

5. See Colo. Stat. § 13-22-107 (adopted in a statute which permits parents on a pre-injury basis to waive a minor's future negligence claim, legislatively abrogating the holding in *Cooper v. Aspen Skiing*, 48 P.3d 1229 (Colo. 2002)).

6. *Woodman*, 785 N.W.2d at 18-45.

justices, the field was therefore an open one; to them, there were many good reasons why the Michigan Supreme Court (rather than the legislature) should “clarify” Michigan common law, so as to make it clear that the law in Michigan allows parents to enter into valid pre-injury waivers on behalf of their children. In blunt judicial language, Justices Corrigan and Markman criticized the majority’s reasoning, and predicted dire consequences regarding youth sports and recreational opportunities in Michigan (increased litigation against recreational providers, increased costs, fewer volunteers, fewer civic organizations willing to become involved, and sharply diminished recreational opportunities for minors).

With five justices writing separately in the case, the decision is lengthy and it is clear that there are several points in this area of the law about which the justices in the majority continue to disagree amongst themselves. For example, one disagreement that is potentially important to Michigan recreational opportunity providers is Justice Young’s comment in a footnote that, even if a parent cannot bind his minor child to a contract, the parent can contract on the parent’s own behalf to indemnify the defendant for any losses arising from injuries the parent’s child suffers while participating in a recreational activity offered by the defendant.<sup>7</sup> However, other justices expressly disagreed with Justice Young’s comment.<sup>8</sup>

It should be noted that the outcome in the *Woodman* case is contrary to the outcomes in cases in other Midwestern states in which courts have enforced parental release agreements (such as Wisconsin, Minnesota and North Dakota),<sup>9</sup> and to decisions in California.<sup>10</sup>

Based on the ultimate holding in *Woodman*, the implications for businesses, organizations and individuals in Michigan that want to rely on parental waiver agreements are challenging, if not stark. Under the court’s holding in *Woodman*, those agreements are currently void and non-effective. However, because the Michigan legislature is currently considering passing a bill that would reverse the effect of *Woodman*, Michigan recreational providers may want to consider (after conferring with counsel), at least for the time being, continuing to ask parents to sign such agreements. By adopting this approach, if the bill ultimately passed by the legislature contains some retroactive provision and protections, providers that in the interim have continued to obtain releases from parents, might be able to enforce the waiver agreement they have obtained. As noted above, the status of *parental indemnification agreements* in Michigan is also currently unclear, so providers may want to also consider creating (or continuing to use) reasonable and well-drafted indemnification agreements.

---

7. *Id.*, at 16 n.74.

8. *Id.*, at 17.

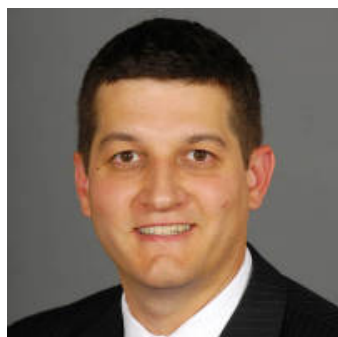
9. While no decision of the Wisconsin Supreme Court has yet addressed the issue directly, see *Fire Ins. Exch. v. Cincinnati Ins. Co.*, 234 Wis. 2d 314, 333 n.10 (Wis. App. 2000) (indicating in *dicta* that “we do not adopt [the position advanced by the plaintiff] that, as a matter of law, a parent may never waive a child’s claim”); *Osborn v. Cascade Mountain, Inc.*, 2002 WL 31478724 (Wis. App. 2002) (unpublished decision) (citing *Fire Insurance* and indicating “It is recognized that a parent may waive a child’s claim.”). As to Minnesota and North Dakota, see *Moore v. Minn. Baseball Instructional School*, 2009 WL 818738 (Minn. Ct. App. Mar. 31, 2009) (unpublished) (enforcing a waiver signed by a parent); *Kondrad ex rel. McPhail v. Bismark Park Dist.*, 655 N.W.2d 411 (N.D. 2003) (waiver signed by parent of minor enforced, issue not directly discussed in the decision).

10. *See, e.g., City of Santa Barbara v. S.C. (Janeway)*, 42 Cal. Rptr. 3d 415 (Cal. Ct. App. 2006).

The *Woodman* decision also highlights the importance of having well-drafted agreements relating to recreational activities, as one of the issues discussed was that the business in this case—an established business that did nothing but provide recreational opportunities to minors—was using a waiver form agreement that, on close inspection, was drafted in a sloppy and ambiguous way. (On this basis alone, even Justices Corrigan and Markman would have found the waiver form in this instance unenforceable.) As such, one lesson of *Woodman* is that carefully crafted agreement terms are essential, if a business, organization, or individual, wants to have any hope of convincing a court to enforce the terms of an agreement containing waiver-of-liability, release, or assumption of risk terms.

*Alexander “Sandie” Pendleton is a shareholder with the Milwaukee law firm of Kohner, Mann & Kailas, S.C. and is the leader of the firm’s Sports, Fitness and Recreational (S/F/R) Team. William E. Fischer is a senior associate with KMK, and is also a member of the KMK S/F/R Team. A version of this article previously appeared at the KMK S/F/R Team website, [www.ReleaseLaw.com](http://www.ReleaseLaw.com). Amy I. Washburn, J.D., assisted in the preparation of this article.*

---



**2011 CHARLES W. MENTKOWSKI SPORTS LAW ALUMNUS  
OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER:**

**CRAIG PINTENS**

The 2011 recipient of the Charles W. Mentkowski Sports Law Alumnus of the Year Award is Craig Pintens. The Mentkowski Award is given annually to the alum who best exemplifies the following characteristics: dedication to the Sports Law program at Marquette University Law School while a student; contributions to the Sports Law Alumni Association and the field of sports law in general; and support of the NSLI and Sports Law program.

A graduate of the Class of 2001, Craig is in his second year as Assistant Athletic Director of Marketing at LSU after serving as the Associate Athletic Director of Marketing and Sales at Marquette University from 2004-2009. At Marquette, Craig was responsible for external efforts of the department and served as the sport administrator for men’s soccer. While at Marquette Craig established attendance and revenue records in both men’s and women’s basketball ranking in the top ten nationally in men’s basketball attendance.

Prior to Marquette, Craig served as the Marketing Coordinator at the University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA) from 2002-2004, where he managed all sales, promotions, marketing and game day operations while serving as member of athletic department executive (senior) staff. Craig was instrumental in record corporate sales numbers and successfully negotiated the first ever-Spanish radio broadcast of Bronc Athletics.

Craig has also worked with the Milwaukee Brewers, Beloit Snappers, and the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater Athletic Department.

The National Association of Collegiate Marketing Administrators (NACMA) has honored Craig with awards twelve times in the areas of season ticket campaigns, advertising, ticket sales, new media and corporate sponsorship. He has been a featured speaker at various conferences throughout the country in the areas of marketing, revenue generation, new media and game atmosphere.

Craig received his Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing cum laude from the University of Wisconsin at Whitewater and his J.D. degree from the Marquette University Law School. He is a member of the State Bar of Wisconsin, serves on the Board of Directors of National Association of Collegiate Marketing Administrators and is a member of Ticketmaster's University Client Services Committee.

As an alum Craig has spoken with students at career panels and lunches, visited classes, worked with student interns, judged moot court teams, and supported the Sports Law program in many other ways through its golf outing, tours of the McGuire Center and coordinating ticket packages for Marquette games. Craig has also advised countless students on careers within collegiate athletics. Craig is truly a deserving recipient of the Alumnus of the Year Award.

---

## THE NATIONAL SPORTS LAW INSTITUTE'S SPORTS LAW CERTIFICATE

As the National Sports Law Institute settles in to its new home in Eckstein Hall, one of our focuses for the fall 2010 semester was to celebrate the creation of the NSLI's Sports Law Certificate. First awarded in 2000, as of the fall of 2010, 182 Marquette University Law School students have earned the Certificate. As our curriculum has expanded the Certificate program has continued to be the most rigorous program of its kind at a U.S. law school. The following perspectives are from Marquette University Law School alumni who have received the Sports Law Certificate.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Sports Law Certificate in conjunction with the Sports Law program provided me with an overview of an area of law that interested me. In keeping with my desire to practice some aspect of sports law I chose to work for the National Labor Relations Board. I made this decision with the knowledge that at that time, most if not all of professional sports were unionized. Therefore, what better way to learn about labor law than with the federal agency that regulates it? After five years working for the federal government, I wanted to spread my wings and enter the private sector with an eye towards working in the sports arena. Today, I'm fortunate to work for a large entertainment company that provides me with the opportunity to work in the entertainment and broadcast industries, including the sports broadcast industry.

Invariably I am asked how I ended up practicing traditional labor law and my answer is always the same. I practice traditional labor law because of the Sports Law Certificate and the Sports Law Program. Without them, I don't believe I would have focused on labor law as my area of practice. Having the background that I do, along with the Sports Law Certificate, greatly enhanced my credibility as I moved to the entertainment and broadcast industries. That is the most valuable aspect of the Sports Law Certificate to me. It provides you with exposure to different areas of law that are represented in the realm of sports law, as well as an awareness of and opportunities to work in the sports arena. The opportunities are not always direct but they are there and can be seized. I am a perfect example of that because I am certain that the Sports Law Certificate and my experiences with the Sports Law program helped me land my current job and set me apart from other traditional labor lawyers.

*Eryn Doherty, Class of 2000, Assistant General Counsel, Labor Relations, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Los Angeles, CA*

The Sports Law Certificate program was an excellent addition to the sports law experience at Marquette. By streamlining the process and establishing a set of criteria for the Certificate, it really shined the spotlight on those students who dedicated themselves to the program. However, the Certificate is merely a piece of paper or something you can put on a resume. The experiences and friendships established through the requirements of the program are the true value of the certificate.

*Craig Pintens, Class of 2001, Assistant Athletic Director/Marketing, LSU Athletics, Baton Rouge, LA*

\*\*\*\*\*

As I reflect on the Sports Law Certificate program at Marquette, I do so happily and with gratitude for the valuable role that the program played in my personal law school experience. As a first year student entering Marquette Law School entirely unsure what path I hoped to pursue after graduation, the Sports Law Certificate program provided much needed structure in my law school curriculum that would provide broad-based exposure to a variety of legal topics that I might never have otherwise chosen to tackle during law school. Although the selection of my elective courses during my second and third years of law school was primarily made to satisfy both the law school's graduation requirements and the Certificate program's requirements, my focus was hardly narrowed to pursuit only of sports related topics. On the contrary, the sports law and other substantive legal courses I took to satisfy the Certificate program's requirements helped me to think about numerous practical legal issues while inspiring intellectual inquiry into their relationship with the sports industry. Building upon this foundation with the addition of internships and participation as a member of the *Marquette Sports Law Review* furthered my learning to the eventual point of discovery of a passion for my future career. I proudly consider my Sports Law Certificate to be a badge of honor and recognize with each passing day that continued growth in my career in intercollegiate athletics can be directly traced back to my decision to undertake the pursuit of earning the Sports Law Certificate. I am certainly not alone in remaining forever grateful for the opportunities that this program has provided and for the help and guidance of Professors Matt Mitten and Paul Anderson along the way.

*Brent Moberg, Class of 2004, Director of Compliance, University of Notre Dame Athletics, South Bend, IN*

\*\*\*\*\*

Obtaining the Sports Law Certificate not only made law school more enjoyable, but the knowledge gained while obtaining the Certificate has helped me in my legal career. The courses taken to earn the Certificate exposed me to areas of the law that I would have otherwise not been able to work into my schedule while at Marquette, such as antitrust law and intellectual property. I am by no means an expert on these subjects, but I know when there might be an issue because of my exposure to these subjects within the program.

*Daniel Robert Peterson, Class of 2006, Attorney, The Schroeder Group, S.C.. Attorneys at Law, Waukesha, WI*

\*\*\*\*\*

Part of the Program's value is that it offers students a package of experiences that combine traditional classroom learning with law review and internship involvement all focused on the evolving role of the law in sports. It engages the student on multiple platforms and helps create well rounded lawyers with



the tools to represent both sports and non-sports clients alike. For me, the most rewarding component of the program was the opportunity to participate in law review, both as a member and eventually as an editor, and to publish an article in an internationally respected publication. From a practical standpoint, I continue to use the research skills I developed through my involvement in law review on a regular basis as a practicing attorney.

*Jeremy Geisel, Class of 2007, Associate, D'Angelo & Jones, LLP, Waukesha, WI*

\*\*\*\*\*

Being a part of the Sports Law Certificate program allowed me to be exposed to several areas of law within the context of sports law. The overlap of different disciplines of law greatly supported the learning process of becoming a Marquette lawyer. The Certificate program provided a more complete legal education and was one of the best things about my law school experience.

*Sarah Ponath, Class of 2007, Associate Attorney, Nelson Connell Conrad Tallmadge & Slein, Waukesha, WI*

\*\*\*\*\*

Every time I think about where I am in my career, the first thought that comes to mind is, "I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the Marquette Sports Law program." I started the program having a vague idea of what I wanted to do after law school, but for me, the true value of the program was understanding how I could take that specialized education and turn it into a career. The turning point for me was when I was offered an internship with the NCAA Office of Government Relations in Washington D.C. That experience really solidified my choice to work in college athletics. There were two interns that summer, and one of the positions was reserved for a Marquette sports law student. The reputation of the program alone offers so many opportunities to its students. I will forever be happy with my choice to complete the Sports Law program, and I look forward to maintaining a connection to the program throughout my career.

*Alison Fitzgerald, Class of 2008, Assistant Athletics Director for Compliance/Student Services/Special Events, Barry University, Miami Shores, FL*

\*\*\*\*\*

I initially began participating in the Sports Law program for two reasons: my love of sports and because it seemed like a reasonable offshoot of my interest in intellectual property law. I was not necessarily looking for a career in sports; rather, I was looking for something that I would find interesting. The Sports Law Certificate ended up being beneficial to me in more ways than I anticipated. While I still do not have a career in sports, the Sports Law Program prepared me well for my current work in a corporation. The broad range of classes needed to complete the Sports Law Certificate, and the wide range of topics covered in those classes, provided me with exposure to areas of law I might not have been able to study otherwise and that I frequently encounter in my job

*Dirk Vanover, Class of 2008, In House Counsel, Buyseasons Inc., New Berlin, WI*

As a person who had a desire to form a career in sports, but no connection to the state of Wisconsin, I did not know what to initially expect when I initially enrolled at Marquette University Law School for the purpose of earning the Sports Law Certificate. A year after leaving Marquette, I would not only like to give the program high praise, but recommend it to anyone who wishes to earn their legal degree and enter into the world of sports law. As a current NCAA compliance officer that works in a different part of the country, I can attest to fact that the Sports Law Program has earned a glowing reputation nationwide. After going through the program and reflecting on all of the different elements of sports law that were taught to me, it is no surprise that the Sports Law Institute has established this reputation. I cannot understate the value of the diverse and rigorous sports law curriculum that the program offers, as well as the internship and conference opportunities that are available. Simply put, I cannot imagine a more thorough and effective Sports Law program than the one directed by Matthew Mitten and Paul Anderson. I am beyond grateful for having the opportunity to be a part of the National Sports Law Institute, and every month that my career in intercollegiate sports continues, I discover additional benefits that I received from the Marquette Sports Law program.

*John G. Long, Class of 2009, Assistant to the Director of Compliance and Legal Advisor for Rice University, Houston, TX*

\*\*\*\*\*

I believe that the Sports Law Certificate and the process I completed to receive the Certificate was very valuable to my career after law school. While I was looking for work, the receipt of the Certificate was something more that I could add to my resume that interested employers in the sports world and other fields. I accepted a job as an Assistant Professor of Sports Management and I believe that the education I received as a part of the Sports Law Certificate program will be beneficial to my success. I will be a more effective professor because my studies have made me knowledgeable and my experiences within the sports industry are likely to be similar to those desired by my students. Furthermore, the work I did to receive my Sports Law Certificate left me with invaluable contacts that will be undoubtedly beneficial in my future endeavors.

*Lauren McCoy, Class of 2009, Assistant Professor, Sports Management, University of Wisconsin-Parkside, Kenosha, WI*

\*\*\*\*\*

The value of obtaining the Sports Law Certificate through Marquette University Law School's NSLI cannot be quantified. Not only was the experience of fulfilling all the requirements for the Certificate beneficial in law school, the advantages of being able to articulate issues arising in sports law in my profession is priceless. Sports entities, whether corporate, amateur, or professional in nature, recognize the unmatched value NSLI students add to the sports industry. I am extremely satisfied with my choice to pursue, and attain, the Certificate while in law school, and happy to know I will always be able to look back on my law school experience and know the three years of hard work will bring a lifetime of hopeful success in the sports industry.

*Andy Shiffman, Class of 2009, Assistant Video Coordinator, University of Memphis Tiger's Basketball Team, Memphis, TN*

During my time in the Program, the directors made it a point to give me varied opportunities with internships. I felt that they were there to find a position for me, but at the same time, I could not just sit back and wait for something to happen. I have consistently brought up in interviews, and just normal conversation, that the contrast of opportunities that I had on both the professional and collegiate side of athletics led me to realize my passion for working in college sports. Working with Brent Moberg (L'04) at Northern Illinois University allowed me to get my foot in the door, and without that opportunity, I am positive I would not have pursued the University of Wisconsin position, which lead to the position with Ohio State, and then lead me to my current position with the University of Miami.

In pursuit of the Certificate, I realized that the burden is on the individual to make the most out of the opportunities presented. Though I may not have been an elite performer in the classroom when compared to other Certificate recipients in my graduating class, I know that I put forth a great effort with the internships I had, and those experiences and opportunities are what have shaped my work ethic and mentality to this day.

More specifically, my employers have mentioned that a major reason for their hiring me was the experience that I had. The fact I have the Sports Law Certificate is something I include in the first paragraph of my cover letter, and It has been a topic of discussion during several different interviews.

I also think that having a law degree carries a certain weight when a co-worker or colleague asks a question. The Certificate adds to that built-in respect and cache by being concentrated in sports specifically. Over the past two months I have had several people stop by my office and ask what the Certificate is, what it means, how I achieved it, and what it means to me.

To be honest, the pursuit of the Certificate is the sole reason I chose to study at Marquette. When I reflect about the choice to uproot myself half way across the county to pursue more of an idea than a specific goal, I put a lot of faith in the Sports Law program. I have been rewarded with a career I enjoy that I'm driven to succeed in, and that I know I would not have had access to were it not for the Sports Law Program.

I know I've said it many times before, but thank you for all your help during my time at Marquette, I would not be where I am today without you pushing me to work as hard as I could to become who I am.

*Dan Raben, Class of 2009, Assistant Compliance Director - Eligibility, University of Miami Athletics, Coral Gables, FL*



The National Sports Law Institute of Marquette University Law School, Eckstein Hall, 1215 West Michigan Avenue, P.O. BOX 1881, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201-1881, publishes **For The Record** 4 times per year. Address corrections should be sent to the NSLI at this address.

**For The Record** is a forum for sports law, business, and ethical issues. It endeavors to provide current, practical information as well as public policy and scholarly viewpoints that are of professional and academic interest to NSLI members and interested parties.

Requests for permission to reproduce or republish any material from **For The Record** should be addressed to Paul M. Anderson, **For The Record** editor. Submissions for publication should be sent by email to Paul Anderson at paul.anderson@marquette.edu in Microsoft Word of any format.

The opinions expressed in **For The Record** are solely those of the individual authors and do not represent the opinions, policies, or views of the NSLI, Marquette University Law School, or Marquette University.

**For The Record** editors:

*Matthew J. Mitten*, NSLI Director.

*Paul M. Anderson*, Editor & Graphic Designer, NSLI Associate Director.

*Peter Prigge*, NSLI Research Assistants.

© 2010 Marquette University. All rights reserved.



National Sports Law Institute  
Marquette University Law School  
Eckstein Hall, room 138A  
1215 West Michigan Avenue  
P.O. Box 1881  
Milwaukee, WI 53201-1881