



Zak D. Welsh

PARTNER

Zak advises on a broad range of complex sports transactions, including large naming rights and sponsorship transactions, foundational commercial and operational agreements for new and existing venues, and M&A transactions.



Industries

Sports
Media & Entertainment
Hospitality

Practices

Corporate & Securities
Real Estate
— Acquisitions & Dispositions
— Equity & Joint Ventures
— Real Estate Finance - Borrowers
— Real Estate Leasing

Education

University of California, Berkeley, School of Law, JD
University of California, Davis, Double BS

Offices

San Francisco

Phone

415.757.5901

Email

zak.welsh@afslaw.com

Zak D. Welsh is a partner in the San Francisco office of ArentFox Schiff LLP and a leading member of the firm's nationally ranked Sports Industry Group. Zak advises clients across the sports industry on a broad range of complex transactional matters. Zak has significant experience in naming rights and sponsorship agreements (including jersey patch agreements) — both on the team/venue side and the sponsor side — and has been centrally involved in many of the industry's largest deals, from SoFi Stadium to emerging next-generation venues such as Nu Stadium.

Zak's work spans a broad range of sports properties and leagues, including NFL, NBA, MLB, NHL, MLS, NWSL, NCAA, and multi-tenant and mixed-use venues. He represents professional sports franchises, leagues, ownership groups, venue developers and operators, corporate sponsors, universities, and media companies across the full lifecycle of sports assets, and is frequently entrusted with lead responsibility on high-profile and market-defining sports transactions.

In addition to naming rights and sponsorship transactions, Zak advises on sports M&A transactions, team and franchise investments, media and content arrangements, and a variety of other commercial agreements. His experience includes a leading role in the high-profile sale by the Buss family of a majority ownership stake in the Los Angeles Lakers to Mark Walter.

Zak also has particular experience in advising on new venue development and getting involved early to structure and execute cohesive foundational commercial and operational agreements. This experience includes designing and negotiating naming rights and sponsorship programs, suite and club seat license agreements, season ticket and ticketing agreements, team license agreements, food and beverage agreements, management agreements, agency agreements, and sponsorship sales agreements. He has led these efforts across a wide range of venue types, from large-scale developments such as SoFi Stadium and Hollywood Park, Snapdragon Stadium, and Etihad Park, to smaller and emerging venues such as CarMax Park, as well as standalone sports properties such as LIV Golf and Pioneer Baseball League clubs, including the Oakland Ballers. His work frequently sits at the intersection of sports, entertainment, hospitality, and real estate, including mixed-use developments anchored by major sports venues.

Zak also advises clients in the broader entertainment venue, hospitality, and real estate industries. His experience includes traditional real estate transactional matters with a particular focus on entertainment and hospitality assets, including acquisitions and dispositions, leasing and sublicensing, licensing arrangements, financing transactions, joint venture agreements and arrangements,

promotional agreements, ground leases, and development agreements.

Zak has been consistently recognized in the sports and real estate industries by leading publications such as *Legal 500*, *Best Lawyers*, and *Super Lawyers*.

Client Work

Sports

Naming Rights

- **Inter Miami CF** in connection with Nu Stadium (MLS) naming rights transaction
- **New York City FC** in connection with Etihad Park (MLS) naming rights transaction
- **Hollywood Park** in connection with SoFi Stadium (NFL) naming rights transaction
- **Hollywood Park** in connection with YouTube Theater naming rights transaction
- **San Diego State University** in connection with Snapdragon Stadium (NCAA/MLS/NWSL) naming rights transaction
- **Richmond Flying Squirrels** in connection with CarMax Park (MiLB) naming rights transaction
- **Q2 Holdings** in connection with Q2 Stadium (MLS) naming rights transaction
- **Total Quality Logistics** in connection with TQL Stadium (MLS) naming rights transaction
- **San Jose Earthquakes** in connection with PayPal Park (MLS) naming rights transaction
- **New York Red Bulls** in connection with Sports Illustrated Stadium (MLS) naming rights transaction
- **New York Red Bulls** in connection with RWJBarnabas Health Performance Center (MLS) naming rights transaction
- **Tampa Bay Lightning / Vinik Sports Group** in connection with Benchmark Arena (NHL) naming rights transaction
- **Fresno State Athletic Corporation** in connection with Valley Children's Stadium (NCAA) naming rights transaction
- **Inova Health System** in connection with Inova Performance Complex (MLS) naming rights transaction
- **Cleveland Brown** in connection with CrossCountry Mortgage Practice Facility (NFL) naming rights transaction
- **Confidential MLB team** in connection with long-term naming rights extension
- **HCN Bank** in connection with HCN Bank Stadium (NCAA) naming rights transaction

Sponsorship Programs

- **Hollywood Park (NFL)** in connection with cornerstone sponsorship agreements for SoFi Stadium, YouTube Theater, and Hollywood Park (including individual agreements with PepsiCo, Google, American Airlines, Samsung, Cisco, Anheuser-Busch, Hyundai, Ticketmaster, Square, Toyota, Uber, Visa, Ball Corp., Cedars-Sinai, Mastercard, and Verizon)
- **San Diego State University (NCAA)** in connection with founding partner sponsorship agreements for Snapdragon Stadium (including individual agreements with Qualcomm, Toyota, Sycuan, Quidel, Kaiser Permanente, Anheuser-Busch, Dos Equis/Heineken, and Cox)
- **New York City FC (MLS)** in connection with founding partner sponsorship agreements for Etihad Park
- **Miami Heat (NBA)** in connection with major sponsorship agreements for the Miami Heat and Kaseya Center (including with AT&T, BMW, Betway, JBL, and UKG)
- **LIV Golf** in connection with league-wide sponsorship program
-

- **4 Aces (LIV)** in connection with team sponsorships
- **Legion XIII (LIV)** in connection with team sponsorships
- **Bay FC (NWSL)** in connection with founding partner sponsorship agreements (including individual agreements with Sutter Health, Visa, Bank of America, Lyft, PNC Bank, and Trader Joe's)
- **Richmond Flying Squirrels (MiLB)** in connection with founding partner and team sponsorship agreements (including with CarMax, PepsiCo, Dominion Energy, Atlantic Union Bank, Genworth and Woodfin)
- **Innovation Baseball Partners (Pioneer League Baseball)** in connection with team sponsorship program for Oakland Ballers, Yuba-Sutter Freebirds, and Long Beach Coast
- **Carolina Panthers (NFL)** in connection with development of founding partner sponsorship program
- **Westcourt** in connection with founding partner sponsorship program for Westcourt Orlando, a mixed-use development adjacent to the Kia Center, home of the Orlando Magic
- **Major Sponsorships & Jersey Patch Agreements**
- **Credit Karma** in connection with jersey patch sponsorship with the Houston Rockets (NBA)
- **Inter Miami FC** in connection with jersey patch sponsorship with Nubank (MLS)
- **GAME 7** in connection with jersey patch sponsorship with the New York Rangers (NHL)
- **Tampa Bay Rays** in connection with jersey patch sponsorship with Webull (MLB)
- **New York City FC** in connection with front-of-kit sponsorship with Etihad Airlines (MLS)
- **Miami Heat** in connection with jersey patch sponsorship with UKG (NBA)
- **Zenni Optical** in connection with jersey patch sponsorship with Chicago Bulls (NBA)
- **Bay FC** in connection with front-of-kit sponsorship with Sutter Health (NWSL)
- **Bay FC** in connection with jersey patch sponsorship with Sixth Street (NWSL)
- **Credit Karma** in connection with jersey patch sponsorship with the Oakland Roots (USL)
- **Oakland Ballers** in connection with jersey patch sponsorship with Columbia Bank (Pioneer League Baseball)
- **Golden 1 Credit Union** in connection with sponsorship with the Oakland Athletics (MLB)
- **Wyndham Hotels** in connection with league-wide sponsorship with Minor League Baseball (MiLB)

M&A

- **Buss Family / Los Angeles Lakers (NBA)** in connection with sale of majority ownership stake in the Los Angeles Lakers to Mark Walter
- **Stuart Sternberg / Tampa Bay Rays (MLB)** in connection with sale of majority ownership stake in the Tampa Bay Rays to ownership group led by Parick Zalupski
- **Paragon Marketing Group** in connection with formation of the National Interscholastic Basketball Conference (NIBC)

Operational, Agency, and Media Agreements

- **San Diego State University** in connection with MLS team license agreement with San Diego FC (MLS) for use of Snapdragon Stadium
- **San Diego State University** in connection with NWSL team license agreement with San Diego Wave FC (NWSL) for use of Snapdragon Stadium
- **New York City FC** in connection with food and beverage agreement with Legends Hospitality for Etihad Park (MLS)
- **Chicago Fire FC** in connection with food and beverage agreement with Levy for new stadium (MLS)
-

- **Richmond Flying Squirrels** in connection with food and beverage agreement with PSC for CarMax Park (MiLB)
- **New York Red Bulls** in connection with food and beverage agreement with Delaware North for Sports Illustrated Stadium (MLS)
- **New York City FC** in connection with sponsorship and hospitality sales agreement with Klutch Sports for Etihad Park (MLS)
- **Chicago Fire FC** in connection with sponsorship and hospitality sales agreement with Excel for new stadium (MLS)
- **San Diego State University** in connection with pouring rights agreement with PepsiCo for Snapdragon Stadium (NCAA)
- **Richmond Flying Squirrels** in connection with pouring rights agreement with PepsiCo for CarMax Park (MiLB)
- **Eventellect** in connection with venue use agreements for the playing of high-profile international soccer friendlies (including at Ohio Stadium and Notre Dame Stadium)
- **Just Women’s Sports** in connection with podcast distribution agreement with iHeartMedia
- **Confidential NBA Lottery Pick** in connection with NIL Agreement (NBA)
- **San Diego State University** in connection with multimedia rights agreement with JMI Sports (NCAA)
- **University of San Diego** in connection with multimedia rights agreement with JMI Sports (NCAA)
- **Fresno State Athletic Corporation** in connection with multimedia rights agreement with Learfield (NCAA)
- **San Diego State University** in connection with management agreement with OVG360 for Snapdragon Stadium (NCAA)

Real Estate & Hospitality

- **ASM Global** in connection with real estate transactions, corporate sponsorships, master services agreements, joint venture and investment arrangements, and arena development and renovation projects
- **Buccini/Pollin Group** in connection with the acquisition, disposition, and financing of numerous hotel properties across the United States
- **BMO N.A.** in connection with sale of bank branch property to adjacent property owner
- ***Confidential Hotel Owner** in connection with sale of two hotel properties (~\$150 million each)
- ***Los Altos School District** in connection with \$155+ million acquisition of school site (Mountain View, California)
- **Corten Real Estate Partners** in connection with hospitality investment transactions (Ace Hotel Brooklyn, Margaritaville Palm Springs, Sheraton Imperial)
- ***Confidential Developer** in connection with lease of 432,000-square-foot office tower to Facebook
- ***Confidential Technology Company** in connection with portfolio leasing and subleasing matters across North America
- ***Confidential Data Storage Company** in connection with sale of 400,000-square-foot office campus to Google
- ***Confidential Investor** in connection with joint venture for acquisition and development of metaverse real estate assets

* Matters occurred prior to Zak joining ArentFox Schiff.

Awards & Recognitions

-
- **Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch in America** — Entertainment and Sports Law; Real Estate Law (2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026)

The Legal 500 United States — Ranked Attorney, Sports Industry (2023, 2024, 2025)

— **Super Lawyers** — Northern California Rising Star, Entertainment and Sports Industries (2022, 2023)

Previous Work

Before joining ArentFox Schiff, Zak practiced as a transactional associate at a large international law firm in San Francisco.

He earned his JD from the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law, where he served as Executive Editor of the *California Law Review* and Managing Editor and Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the *Berkeley Journal of Sports and Entertainment Law*.

He holds dual bachelor's degrees in Managerial Economics and Environmental Science and Policy, *cum laude*, from the University of California, Davis.

Zak also served as a legislative aide to U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein and as a judicial extern to the Honorable Jon S. Tigar of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California.

Prior to law school, Zak worked for the San Francisco Giants for six seasons in the Baseball Operations department as a Clubhouse Assistant.

Bar Admissions

[California](#)