



## UNIVERSITY AND PROFESSIONAL ATHLETICS

### Game Plan

The level of scrutiny – and the need for transparency – in amateur, collegiate and professional athletics has never been higher. The issues that athletics faces are increasingly complex and addressing them is mission-critical at every level, which requires a focus on both day-to-day management as well as the profound educational, social, and cultural issues that lie at the heart of sport.

Barnes & Thornburg's University and Professional Athletics group is an experienced, laser-focused group of attorneys, former major athletics senior executives and administrators, and outside specialists, all organized to provide proactive consultation and solutions across the athletics business sector.

Our team brings decades of experience in the oversight, management, and delivery of advice and counsel to collegiate athletic departments, major and minor collegiate conferences, professional teams and leagues, amateur sports organizations, and the providers of the third-party services crucial to the business of sports – sponsors, advertisers, builders, financiers, media partners, fundraisers, licensors, licensees, and the health and wellness sector.

Our University and Professional Athletics attorneys regularly advise on matters involving Title IX compliance, name, image and likeness (NIL), strategic planning, and more. We advise universities of all sizes, with experience focused on those competing in Division I through Division III.

### College Athletics

The firm's University and Professional Athletics group, in collaboration with our robust Higher Education group and full array of legal professionals, delivers a collaborative powerhouse developed to assist colleges and universities of all sizes. We assist institutions of higher

### Why Barnes & Thornburg?

Finding new ways to help clients identify solutions and new business opportunities, across industries, is at our core. We are, at times, more than lawyers, we are advisers bringing new ideas to light. We understand what keeps you up at night and work collaboratively to find practical and creative solutions, at the heart of business.

### RELATED PRACTICES

Colleges and Universities

Compliance and Monitorships

Education

education in monitoring, maintaining and protecting their institutional integrity, essential education mission, and the health, wellness and future of their student athletes.

We go to bat for university and collegiate athletic departments, executive leadership, athletes and staff, collaborating with them to design and implement best practices for athletic department functions and their structure, staff duties and responsibilities, reporting, communications, personnel issues, fundraising, revenue generation, and external business relationships. We have deep experience developing and consulting on risk avoidance and crisis management protocols focused on preventing potential crises – and managing them when they occur.

## **University and Professional Athletics Legal Matters**

Our group provides an array of services, including:

- Conducting organization and institution-wide audits and reviews
- Establishing NIL policies and procedures, negotiating NIL agreements, and litigating NIL-related matters
- Administering Title IX compliance audits and assessments
- Delivering insight and recommendations with respect to management, operating structure, and reporting protocols
- Reviewing and analyzing institutional brand and identity, market positioning, policies and marketing and sales strategies
- Evaluating third-party contract and service relationships, league and conference membership, media matters, licensing agreements, and medical and training standards
- Assessing an organization's compliance with its membership and governing bodies – leagues, conferences, as well as state and federal law and regulation
- Assessing athletic facilities and evaluating future facilities planning
- Reviewing crisis prevention and management and public relations strategies
- Providing a full review of college and university institutional academic standards and management, including admissions, monitoring and progress

## **Professional Sports**

Professional sports is at a similar crossroads. Teams, leagues and the enterprises they oversee are crucial economic and commercial drivers, and we assist with a variety of legal and organization matters.