

Sports & Events Management: Playing to win across the Middle East

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Welcome to the Sports and Events Management focus edition of Law Update. This edition provides a colourful glimpse of some of the opportunities and challenges our clients throughout the Middle East region are working through in this rapidly growing sector. Year on year we cannot help but note how the sports and events sector has truly flourished. Whether supporting entities, individuals or institutions from the public or private sector, we feel privileged to support clients consistently leading the way. This edition of Law Update gives us a chance to share some of the insights and experiences we have been fortunate to gain in this area over the past year.

We start with a look at issues as diverse as commercial best practices in stadium naming rights – particularly poignant in the context of the recent opening of the industry-leading Coca-Cola Arena – and how statutory guidance can encourage investment and athlete development, as demonstrated by Egypt's Sports Law. Turning to football, we also consider mandatory player registration and a clarification in third party ownership under FIFA's rules as well as requirements in working with intermediaries for player transfers under the Saudi Arabian Football Federation's regulations and the implications of employment law in the sporting context. We offer a comparative look at the rapidly growing field of sports arbitration and its more established cousin commercial arbitration as dispute resolution mechanisms. As if to underscore the theme of a diversifying and multifaceted sector, we step off the pitch to grapple with the tensions between new products and advertising oversight in the context of e-cigarette advertising at sporting events in the UAE and to see how government is taking steps to promote public safety, which could be particularly relevant to large public events, through the development of a much anticipated "Good Samaritan" law. We also take a practical and principled look at the rise of e-sports not only as a competitive sporting discipline but also as a promising economic development in the sports sector.

The media headlines properly go to the athletes, teams and varied competitors we are proud to represent as they chase their dreams across golf, tennis, motorsports, football, cricket, rugby, cycling and so many other sports. It also seems sure that the trajectory of the sports and events sector in the Middle East will ensure the commercial ecosystem of sponsors, suppliers, contractors, broadcasters, governing bodies, regulators, community stakeholders and fans will keep us busy between now and next year's sports edition, so please enjoy this snapshot as we are already working on some great projects for the next one!