

Sports & Entertainment

Middle East



Greenberg Traurig is unique amongst global law firms operating in the Middle East by having a Sports & Entertainment practice, exclusively focused on supporting sports and entertainment clients across the region. Our local team forms a key part of our global Sports & Entertainment industry group, which brings together a dedicated team of industry professionals across the United States, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia Pacific, and which legal directories have consistently ranked and recognized for more than 20 years.



Steven Bainbridge
Shareholder; Head of Sports & Entertainment (Middle East)



Omar Hegazy
Of Counsel



Andrew Moroney
Senior Associate



Hannah Fox
Associate

Chambers
AND PARTNERS

The
LEGAL
500

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“Steve Bainbridge’s team are peerless in the region. They know the sports and entertainment legal landscape inside and out. Now with a global platform they are the first stop for legal advice in the Middle East.”

Lorenzo Giorgetti | Board Member, Global Esports Federation

OUR MIDDLE EAST SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT PRACTICE

With deep regional sector-specific experience, our lawyers are at the forefront of the development of the sports and entertainment sector in the Middle East, and our core team offers clients flexible and competitively priced resources across a broad spectrum of legal disciplines.

In addition to being trusted advisers to a diverse range of clients, we are active in pro bono cases and thought leadership, appearing frequently as key contributors at local, regional and international conferences and seminars; in online, print, TV and radio media; and in the design and innovative provision of postgraduate education.

In addition to numerous ad hoc roles on disciplinary, governance and anti-corruption panels, we are especially proud to include within our ranks:

- ▶ COURT OF ARBITRATION FOR SPORTS ARBITRATOR
- ▶ FIFA DISPUTE RESOLUTION CHAMBER MEMBER
- ▶ VICE PRESIDENT OF THE SAUDI ARABIAN FOOTBALL FEDERATION
- ▶ FORMER GENERAL COUNSEL OF YAS MARINA F1 CIRCUIT
- ▶ WORLD ATHLETICS DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL FORMER MEMBER
- ▶ INTERNATIONAL PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE ANTI-DOPING PANEL MEMBER
- ▶ INTERNATIONAL PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE BOARD OF APPEAL OF CLASSIFICATION MEMBER
- ▶ FORMER LEGAL COUNSEL AT THE (ENGLISH) FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION
- ▶ FORMER LEGAL COUNSEL AT THE QATAR WORLD CUP SUPREME COMMITTEE FOR DELIVERY & LEGACY

Our team's wide-ranging sector experience and long-established local connections enable us to serve the individual needs of our clients, which include national and international governing bodies, national Olympic committees, sports rights holders, broadcasters, esports and gaming organizations, investors, venue operators, sponsors, event management companies, athletes, agents and sports clubs. We are committed to the provision of strategic, tailored and innovative commercial legal strategies to further our clients' goals.

Greenberg Traurig has assembled the best legal talent in the Middle East sports sector. Absolutely first class.

David Powell | Chief Strategy and Commercial Officer, Ethara
Former General Counsel, Yas Marina Circuit



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We have critical access to key stakeholders in the sports and entertainment industry and provide clients with the business-oriented legal counsel needed to thrive in today's multimedia sports and entertainment marketplace.

We provide our sports and entertainment clients with cutting-edge sports and entertainment knowledge, as well as global reach and relationships across the Middle East, the Americas, Europe and Asia Pacific. We represent clients in virtually every facet of these industries and apply the broad interdisciplinary skills needed to resolve business issues and disputes that affect clients in these highly competitive marketplaces.

Our Capabilities

SPONSORSHIP

Advising rights holders, brands, event management companies, venue owners, athletes and sports clubs in relation to sponsorship, naming rights, supply rights, title sponsorship and image rights, as well as advising on local advertising guidelines, restrictions and compliance.

BROADCASTING

Advising rights holders, broadcasters and broadcast partners in relation to television, radio, mobile phone and online content production, distribution, management and exploitation.

EVENTS AND VENUE MANAGEMENT

Advising on the execution and commercial optimization of major events, including ticketing, stadium hire, event licensing, media relations, health and safety, insurance, data protection, environmental issues, regulatory requirements of mass participation and public attendance events, facility security, sustainability initiatives and profitability strategies to generate additional revenues before and after events.

GOVERNANCE, REGULATION, AND INVESTIGATIONS

- Conducting international "best practice" benchmarking analysis of sports and entertainment regulations.
- Designing and drafting bespoke sports and entertainment regulatory frameworks.
- Advising on anti-doping, match-fixing corruption, and governance issues.
- Conducting investigations into safeguarding, discrimination and health and safety incidents.
- Advising governing bodies and athletes in respect of disciplinary matters.
- Challenging the decisions of governing bodies.
- Drafting sporting rules, regulations, and policies.



STAKEHOLDER CONTRACTS

- Drafting athlete, manager, coach and agent service contracts, representation agreements, image rights agreements, transfer agreements, and termination agreements.
- Educating athletes on social media usage and other forms of “new media” communications.

BRAND PROTECTION AND EXPLOITATION

- Merchandising, licensing and distribution arrangements.
- Anti-ambush marketing and anti-counterfeiting strategies and enforcement.
- Advertising regulations and restrictions.
- Trademark advice and registration.
- Copyright protection and exploitation.

DATA

- Advising clients on the exploitation of data rights in the sports and entertainment context.
- Advising clients on all aspects of local and international data protection legislation.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Representing sporting bodies, athletes, agents, managers, sports clubs and other sporting stakeholders before national, regional and international dispute resolution forums, including the FIFA Dispute Resolution Committee, the Tennis Integrity Unit, the FIA International Court of Appeal, the Emirates Racing Authority Appeal Panel, the AFC Disciplinary Committee and the Court of Arbitration for Sport, in relation to disputes spanning commercial, intellectual property, player, reputation management, corruption and regulatory issues.

ESPORTS AND GAMING

Advising publishers, tournament organizers, teams, sponsors and other industry stakeholders on the full spectrum of support related to their Middle East operations.

MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS

Our team has vast experience supporting clients acquire and dispose of sporting entities and assets. We provide the full range of banking and securitization capabilities to assist clubs and investors with revenue-generation and cash-flow issues and provide advice on the planning and construction of stadia and training facilities.

STRATEGY AND ELITE PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT

Advising governing bodies and public authorities on the sustainable delivery of key strategic objectives such as: public health initiatives; increasing grassroots participation; establishing elite performance pathways and talent hubs; and restructuring competitions and leagues to increase competitiveness, sustainability and financial compliance.

MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT LITIGATION

GT's international Media & Entertainment Litigation Practice helps clients resolve litigation and problems arising in the media, entertainment, and sports industries. Members of the group have represented clients in a wide range of sophisticated and complicated disputes.



Representative Experience* Includes:

KSA HERITAGE MEGA PROJECT

Retained to baseline, benchmark, design and draft a comprehensive sport, events and entertainment regulatory ecosystem for one of the world's largest and oldest heritage sites.

PIF-BACKED SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT GIGA PROJECT

Advised in relation to a highly strategic naming rights agreement with a globally renowned blue-chip company relating to key sports and entertainment venues.

KSA GOVERNMENT ENTITY

Advised on the corporate and sporting regulatory aspects connected with the landmark privatization of a number of elite sports clubs.

PIF-BACKED GLOBAL GOLF TOUR

Retained to advise on the tour's global commercial legal issues, including the acquisition of a separate golf tour and the delivery of its calendar of global events.

FORMULA ONE ETIHAD AIRWAYS ABU DHABI GRAND PRIX

Retained by the venue operator in respect of the annual F1 race and the numerous other events and initiatives held at the iconic Yas Marina Circuit facility, including triathlons, walkathons, 10-kilometer runs, motorsports endurance races, drag racing events, Formula Drift competitions and various auto manufacturer product launches and bespoke recreation packages.

EXPO 2020 DUBAI

Provided commercial and regulatory legal advice in connection with the delivery and legacy aspects of the world's largest trade fair.

INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE (IPL)

Advised the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on issues connected to the staging of IPL matches in the UAE, as well as advising the title-sponsor in respect of applicable sponsorship regulations.

COCA-COLA ARENA

Retained by the venue operator in connection with the launch of Dubai's premier multipurpose sports and entertainment arena, including on naming rights, sponsorship, ticketing, data protection and venue hire matters.

MAJOR ESPORTS PUBLISHER

Retained by a Tier 1 esports publisher in respect of all legal aspects of its Middle East operations, including employment, corporate structuring, local regulations and the hosting of online and offline tournaments in the UAE and KSA.

LEADING MIDDLE EAST ESPORTS TEAM

Retained in respect of all legal aspects of its Middle East operation, including in respect of M&A, employment and sponsorship.

MAJOR ESPORTS TOURNAMENT ORGANIZER

Advised a major TO in relation to its holding of online and offline tournaments in the UAE and KSA.



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RCS SPORTS AND EVENTS

Retained to provide full legal support in connection with the UAE Tour cycling, Abu Dhabi Marathon and RAK Half Marathon, including on event management, sponsorship, broadcasting, HSE, permits and ambassador agreements.

RETIRED LEGENDS T-20 CRICKET TOURNAMENT

Provided legal support in connection with the first retired international legends T-20 tournament held in Sharjah and Dubai, advising on player auction processes, franchising structure and negotiations with the Emirates Cricket Board on licensing matters.

AFC ASIAN CUP

Retained by the Asian Football Confederation and the Local Organizing Committee on a broad range of issues, including IP protection and enforcement and legislative analysis.

RAS AL KHAIMAH TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Advised on commercial and licensing matters relating to the world's longest zip-line at Jebel Jais and the inaugural European Challenge Tour event hosted by the Al Hamra Golf Club.

MATCH-FIXING

Represented a number of tennis players accused of match-fixing at hearings brought by the Tennis Integrity Unit.

DUBAI OPERA

Negotiated a high-profile venue sponsorship agreement.

GCC TOURISM ENTITY

Advised government regulator in respect of potential gaming regulatory framework and coordination of global best practice with local law requirements.

GCC MOTORSPORTS FEDERATION:

Conducted an international benchmarking exercise of national motorsport regulations.

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE UAE EXHIBITION MATCH

Advised on the venue hire and match hosting agreements related to an exhibition match between Chelsea v Aston Villa held in Abu Dhabi.

ACQUISITION OF MOTORSPORTS SERIES

Advised the investor on the potential acquisition of the entire shareholding in a major motorsports series, including strategic advisory, due diligence and negotiations.

ASIAN CRICKET COUNCIL

Advised a regional cricket board in relation to a complex cross-border digital collectibles/NFT agreement.

NON-SPORTING EVENTS

Routinely advise non-sporting clients on venue management issues, governmental licensing and permit requirements, supplier contracts, security arrangements, leasing options, health safety and environmental preparation and insurance coverage for a wide range of clients, including semi-governmental entities on matters ranging from the largest single MICE event hosted in the UAE (more than 10,000 delegates) to gala media awards, hotel launch events, concerts and corporate conferences.

** Experience either at the firm or our team members' previous firms.*

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OUR SAUDI ARABIA OFFERING

Local Team in Saudi Arabia with the Resources of International Firm

Khalid Al-Thebity Law Firm has been operating in Saudi Arabia for more than 25 years and serves government, international and local interests in the public and private sectors. Having recently entered into a fully integrated affiliation with Greenberg Traurig (GT), this significantly expands GT's collective capabilities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and across the GCC region.

Our team includes lawyers fluent in Arabic and English, and well-versed in local Saudi laws and customs. We are connected with government, uniquely placed to advise on the practical application of statutory frameworks and work seamlessly with our network offices to advise on complex domestic and cross-border matters.

Working closely with our local and global specialty teams, you will have access to lawyers who have been involved in advising on a wide array of matters in the Kingdom and across the world.

Our Historic Relationship with the Government of Saudi Arabia

Our Saudi Managing Shareholder, Khalid Al-Thebity, and the team on the ground in the Riyadh office are deeply involved in government matters, having represented the Government of Saudi Arabia on several significant matters of international and local law, during multiple large-scale initiatives, transactions, and projects. Our experience includes advising the following entities:

- The Royal Court
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Defense
- Ministry of Interior
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development
- Ministry of Communications and Information Technology
- Saudi Central Bank
- Saudi Arabian Football Federation
- Public Investment Fund (PIF)
- Ministry of Sport
- The Capital Market Authority
- Ministry of Investment of Saudi Arabia (MISA)
- Higher Education Fund
- King Faisal Specialist Hospital & Research Centre
- King Saud University
- Saudi Exports Development Authority
- National Centre for Privatization
- Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources



“Greenberg Traurig is now our go-to team. They have brought in the top sports lawyers in the region who are unmatched in local law experience and practical guidance for international clients delivering top-tier sporting events in the GCC.”

Michele Napoli | *Managing Director, RCS Sports and Events*



ABOUT GREENBERG TRAUIG

We are an international, multi-practice law firm with more than 2,650 lawyers serving clients from 47 offices in the United States, Europe and the Middle East, Latin America, and Asia. Across the firm, our lawyers collectively speak more than 70 languages, including 21 Arabic speakers. We provide service across time zones and cultures, and staff matters appropriately and tailored to suit client needs and preferences.

An International Firm of More Than 2,650 Lawyers Across 47 Locations



● GT LOCATION

UNITED STATES

Albany	Long Island	Portland
Atlanta	Los Angeles	Sacramento
Austin	Miami	Salt Lake City
Boston	Minneapolis	San Diego
Charlotte	New Jersey	San Francisco
Chicago	New York	Silicon Valley
Dallas	Northern Virginia	Tallahassee
Delaware	Orange County	Tampa
Denver	Orlando	Washington, D.C.
Fort Lauderdale	Philadelphia	West Palm Beach
Houston	Phoenix	Westchester County
Las Vegas		

EUROPE & THE MIDDLE EAST

Amsterdam
Berlin [~]
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia [⊕]
London [*]
Milan ^{>>}
Tel Aviv [^]
United Arab Emirates ^{<}
Warsaw [~]

LATIN AMERICA

Mexico City [†]

Operates as: ⁻Greenberg Traurig Germany, LLP; ^{*}Khalid Al-Thebity Law Firm in affiliation with Greenberg Traurig, P.A. is applying to register a joint venture in Saudi Arabia; [^]A separate UK registered legal entity; [~]Greenberg Traurig Santa Maria; ^{>>}A branch of Greenberg Traurig, P.A., Florida, USA; [<]Greenberg Traurig Limited; [⊕]GREENBERG TRAUIG Nowakowska-Zimoch Wysockiński sp.k.; [∞]Greenberg Traurig LLP Foreign Legal Consultant Office; ⁼Greenberg Traurig Singapore LLP; [⊕]Greenberg Traurig Horitsu Jimusho; ⁺Greenberg Traurig, S.C.



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A MULTIDISCIPLINARY FIRM

Our collaborative approach allows our clients access to a broad array of focused knowledge critical to effective lawyering.

Our lawyers have key knowledge and experience in the following areas, among others:

- Artificial Intelligence
- Banking & Financial Services
- Blockchain & Digital Assets
- Capital Markets
- Corporate
- Corporate Trust Services
- Data, Privacy & Cybersecurity
- Digital Infrastructure, Data Center and Cloud Computing
- Energy & Natural Resources
- Entertainment & Media
- Environmental
- Food, Beverage & Agribusiness
- Franchise & Distribution
- Gaming
- Government Contracts
- Government Law & Policy
- Health Care & FDA Practice
- Hospitality
- Immigration & Compliance
- Infrastructure
- Insurance
- Intellectual Property & Technology
- International Trade
- Labor & Employment
- Latin America Practice
- Life Sciences & Medical Technology
- Litigation
- Marketing, Advertising, Sweepstakes & Promotions Law
- Pharmaceutical, Medical Device & Health Care
- Private Wealth Services
- Public Finance & Infrastructure
- Real Estate
- Regulatory & Compliance
- Restaurant Industry
- Restructuring & Bankruptcy
- Retail
- Sports
- Tax
- Technology, Media & Telecommunications
- Transportation
- Venture Capital & Emerging Technology

Our global footprint is designed to provide our clients both an intensely local and truly global approach. We view our Firm not as a series of separate offices or locations, but as a unified team of lawyers across practice areas, jurisdictions, countries, and continents. We have reach, either directly or through our broad experience and relationships, to all parts of the globe.



BRIAN L. DUFFY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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KEY CONTACTS



Steven Bainbridge

SHAREHOLDER | Sports and Entertainment | Steven.Bainbridge@gtlaw.com

Steve Bainbridge has deep experience in the sports sector, advising clients on matters including sports investment and rights acquisition, governance and regulatory issues, endorsement agreements, venue naming rights, league and franchise establishment, player contracts, broadcasting, anti-ambush marketing strategies, merchandising and licensing dynamics, disciplinary issues, and sports-specific venue management agreements.

He advises sports governing bodies, teams, athletes, governmental entities, other law firms, institutions and a broad array of commercial entities in relation to commercial aspects of sports including motorsports, horseracing, triathlons, mixed martial arts (MMA), rugby and football, cycling, golf, tennis and cricket amongst others. In addition to the past 15 years based in the GCC, Steve has top tier law firm experience in both North America and Japan.

In addition to Dubai, Steve is qualified in New York and multiple provinces in Canada, he is a Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) Arbitrator and, prior to that, was a World Athletics Disciplinary Tribunal member for 5 years.



Omar Hegazy

OF COUNSEL | Sports and Entertainment | Omar.Hegazy@gtlaw.com

Omar Hegazy is an of counsel of the Khalid Al-Thebity Law Firm in affiliation with Greenberg Traurig, P.A. Omar has 20 years' experience advising on varied commercial and regulatory matters across the Middle East. With almost half of his legal career in-house, he brings an invaluable 360-degree view and commercial nous.

He regularly advises corporates and government clients on complex venue projects, events management, sponsorships, policy, privatization of sports assets, and more. Previously, as a director with Pearson plc's legal team (the world's largest education publisher), Omar led a team providing legal support to the Middle East and Africa operations and advised leadership and C-suite stakeholders on regulatory matters, commercial transactions, risk management, and anti-bribery and corruption compliance.

Before moving in-house in 2012, Omar practiced in the corporate and commercial group of the largest law firm in the Middle East.



Andrew Moroney

SENIOR ASSOCIATE | Sports and Entertainment | Andrew.Moroney@gtlaw.com

Andrew is exclusively focused on the sports and entertainment sector and has wide-ranging experience counselling clients spanning football, golf, tennis, motorsports, cycling, esports, and horseracing on commercial, regulatory and disputes matters across the Middle East.

The core focus of his practice covers sponsorship, broadcasting, merchandising, ticketing, player contracts, intermediary issues, athlete endorsement, disciplinary issues, governance, regulatory matters, event management, image rights and sporting disputes. He currently serves as an arbitrator for the International Paralympic Committee, is a former Legal Counsel of the English Football Association and has undertaken long-term secondments to CAA Sports and Yas Marina Circuit.



Hannah Fox

ASSOCIATE | Sports and Entertainment | Hannah.Fox@gtlaw.com

Hannah is exclusively focused on the sports and entertainment sector and has wide-ranging corporate commercial experience counseling clients on event hosting, sponsorship, broadcasting, supply chain and venue management agreements.

Of particular note, Hannah was Legal Counsel to the Supreme Committee of Delivery and Legacy (the Qatar government body organizing the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022). In this role she worked on high-profile agreements relating to the preparations for, and hosting of, the largest sporting event hosted in the Middle East, including the contractual framework for the music fan festivals throughout the tournament (including performer agreements), blue-chip sponsorship agreements, ambassador agreements with sporting celebrities, broadcasting agreements, venue operation agreements, multinational sports venue transportation deals and overseeing the adherence and implementation of regulations from sport's governing bodies such as FIFA.

“They are highly professional, with significant special knowledge on the issues but also, importantly, on the desires of sporting governance. They cut to the heart of the issue, give clear advice and put things into layman’s terms.”

Chambers & Partners

Khalid Al-Thebity Law Firm
IN AFFILIATION WITH
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GT_Law



GT_Law

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