

## **TRENDS IN SPORTS LAW TO WATCH OUT FOR**

As with any other area, the sports arena has changed over time and will keep changing. Initially, humans participated in sports as a pastime but over time sports have become big business especially with its commercialization and the ability to unite people from different cultures and backgrounds.

### **Ticketing**

With the world going digital on many aspects, the concept of ticketing has also changed over time. A lot more tickets are availed through mobile ticketing which enables a fan to purchase the ticket digitally. The value of data exchanged through ticket transactions presents a greater opportunity to learn more about fans, creating a marketing edge.

### **Fan Engagement**

The entry of social media in the sports arena has definitely increased interaction of fans with their favourite teams and players. Fans can actually keep up with their teams' day to day activities and their personal lives as well as get all content related to them on all their devices and across all social media platforms.

Increasingly, fans use and post a lot more on their social media while watching sports and games. This makes them feel more engaged. This led to the development of platforms such as *Fantasy Sports and Broadnet* are use by millions of fans to engage deeper with their teams. More teams have created Apps where fans pay a premium fee to get more access to the players, team merchandise, training schedules and team news.

It has been suggested by some tech manufacturers such as Foxtel Alert that by 2020, the company will create a shirt that enables fans to feel the sensations of their favourite player during a game. Teams and leagues are certainly going to do more to ensure that they keep their fans happy and make themselves accessible.

### **Trade marking Names and Slogans**

A growing trend among professional and high-profile athletes is seeking trademark protection of their names, slogans, or catch phrases associated with them. Players use the benefits of trademark law to generate extra revenues by licensing the use of these marks on all types of commercial products and services. Lawyers who handle intellectual property matters for athletes say that the practice of trade marking names and phrases has accelerated recently as athletes seek to extend their brands

into the entertainment world. An example of this in Kenya would be the use of the word *Sirkal* to refer to the popular football team, Gor Mahia.

### **Athletes' use of Social Media**

With athletes being paid millions of dollars in some cases to endorse products and brands, their use of social media has to be regulated. Any negative social media activity by an athlete may easily reflect negatively on the brands he represents and cause loss of revenue. What may seem to be an 'innocent' social media post could result in financial loss or gain for a company and/or the league/team. As such, more athletes have monitored social media efforts and a dedicated social media team to ensure that the athlete uses the platforms responsibly.

### **The Role of Women in Sports**

The sports arena has for long been dominated by men. However, with the increased campaigns for inclusivity and diversity, there is a growing interest and participation of women in sports. This will of course have a spill over effect into other areas such as marketing and commercial ventures in sports. There will be need to reach the next generation of sportswomen and fans; women. As such, industry players will need to prioritize this as part of their target audience.

### **Big Data**

The issue of data and how to use it has trended in the world now for the last few months especially with major data companies admitting to harnessing consumer data to influence trends. For sports scientists, nutritionists, and medical personnel, data collected will drive sports in a very different direction. As this sophisticated weapon slithers into every arena of life globally, it will certainly affect sports.