



Lau Kok Keng

Head, Sports Law Practice
Rajah & Tann Asia

Get in touch

E kok.keng.lau@rajahtann.com
T (65) 6232 0765

Lau Kok Keng has been in practice in Singapore since 1990. His main practice areas are sports, gaming, intellectual property, media, entertainment and technology law. He heads up the Sports Law practice of Rajah & Tann Asia. He has worked with various domestic and international sports governing bodies and federations, football clubs, sports agencies, commercial rights holders, sponsors, television broadcasters, cable operators, sports associations, sports bookmakers, and sports and media personalities. Such work includes handling a broad spectrum of legal issues arising from the hosting of multi-sport regional events like the Beijing Olympics 2008, Asian Youth Games 2009, SEA Games 2015 and ASEAN Para Games 2015, and dealing with brand protection, ambush marketing, commercial licensing, sponsorship and public viewing issues arising from single-sport international tournaments like the FIFA World Cup, the UEFA Euro Championships, the Indonesian Soccer Championship, the IRB Sevens World Series and the International Champions Cup Singapore.

Kok Keng is recognised as a leading lawyer in his fields by following publications such as Asian Legal Business's Legal Who's Who, Asia Pacific Legal 500, AsiaLaw Leading Lawyers, PLC Which Lawyer? Yearbook Singapore and Who's Who Legal Singapore. In addition, Kok Keng has consistently been featured The International Who's Who of Sports & Entertainment Lawyers, placing him amongst the world's pre-eminent lawyers in these fields. Nominees are selected based upon comprehensive, independent survey work with both general counsel and private practice lawyers worldwide.

His work also extends to advising sports bookmakers on various legal and regulatory aspects of sports betting. Uniquely, he helped establish the legal framework governing legalized sports betting in Singapore, first in 2002 for football betting, and subsequently in 2008 for betting on Formula One races.

Apart from being an arbitrator with the Court of Arbitration for Sports and a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, Kok Keng was on the Ad Hoc Panel of Arbitrators for the 29th South East Asian Games that took place in Kuala Lumpur in August 2017, and regularly sits on Committees of Inquiry and disciplinary panels of national sports associations and professional football clubs in Singapore. He also advises sports federations and societies on breach of ethics case, and conducts workshops on sports arbitration for the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators Singapore Branch and the Kuala Lumpur Regional Arbitration Centre in Malaysia. From 2012 to 2015, he served as Vice-Chairman of Geylang International Football Club – a professional football club playing in Singapore's S-League, and handled all of the club's legal and regulatory affairs, including matters brought before the FIFA's Players' Status Committee and the FIFA Dispute Resolution Chamber .

Some of Kok Keng's other notable work in the area of sports law include the following:

- Advising a national sports federation on show cause proceedings against its former President arising from findings of the Ethics Committee of the world governing body for that sport which found the former President guilty of charges of vote buying in respect of the Presidential elections for the world governing body
- Advised a government agency on the funding and sponsorship of a football tournament in Singapore involving top European football clubs
- Advised the owner of the commercial rights in the Indonesian Soccer Championship on a title sponsorship agreement
- Advised an Asian party on its proposed investment in a new professional football franchise
- Advised an Asian party on its discussions with a leading European club to secure a franchise for hotel and F&B operations in Asia
- Represented a global rights management and licensing agency in a claim against a licensee of rights associated with a famous footballer as used in the operation of sports-themed cafes and merchandise
- Advised on grants to a national sports federation to set up a commercial vehicle for the management and operation of a training facility
- Advised a government sports agency on an agreement for the provision of anti-doping support services.
- Advised a government sports agency on a sports science research collaboration with an isotonic drinks manufacturer
- Advised an Asian professional golf tour on a strategic alliance with a European professional golf tour
- Advised a national sports federation on disputes between members over constitutional issues
- Advised Executive Council members of a national sports federation on defamation issues arising from publication of general meeting documents
- Advised a Japanese financial services provider on sponsorship of television broadcasts of World Cup Qualifying Rounds matches
- Advised a pay-television operator on commercial and IP infringement issues arising from the use of set top boxes to receive cross carriage signals of sports broadcasts
- Advised a regional football governing body on its long term commercial rights agreement
- Advised a regional football governing body on a broadcasting licence agreement with a leading Arabic broadcaster
- Successfully represented a bodybuilder in overturning a doping ban on the basis of non-compliance with doping control procedures and the IFBB Anti-Doping Rules
- Advised a leading English Premier League and Champions League winning club with extensive commercial operations and one of the largest fan bases in the Far East to advise on legal issues arising in various jurisdictions in South East and North East Asia.

- Advised state and private online sports bookmakers on legal and regulatory issues
- Advised television broadcasters in connection with the use of live footages of sports events
- Advised a national football association on a team kit sponsorship contract
- Advised on the sponsorship of the national badminton team by a Chinese equipment manufacturer,
- Advised on the sponsorship of Team Singapore athletes by a leading Japanese electronics equipment manufacturer
- Advised sports facilities owners and operators on liability for mishaps occurring at sports venues
- Advised a government agency on various sports-related funding initiatives and schemes, including funding of electronic scoreboard at a football stadium, scholarships for students of a Sports Institute, television coverage and production of S.League matches, and financial support of the Formula One race in Singapore
- Advised an SLeague professional football club on various club and apparel sponsorships with third parties
- Advised a sports equipment manufacturer on title sponsorship of a World Badminton series
- Advised a leading global sports apparel manufacturer on athlete sponsorships
- Advised a local and a foreign sports lottery operator on copyright and database rights in football fixture lists
- Advised a national television broadcaster on the use of television footage of live broadcasts of sports events in news bulletins
- Advised a sports television broadcaster on policies and guidelines for its television presenters, producers and technical crew

Kok Keng's experience in the sports industry extends beyond legal practice, as he has in the recent past, served in the following capacities, amongst others:

- Vice-Chairman of Geylang International Football Club (2012-2015)
- Honorary Secretary to the Football Association of Singapore's Captain's Advisory Panel (2009-2011)
- Member of the National Football Task Force (appointed by SportSG) that was formed to look into raising the standards of excellence for Singapore football (2013)
- Member of the Vision 2030 "Spirit of Singapore" Sub-Committee formed by the Government to use football as the vehicle for community bonding (2011-2012)
- Honorary Secretary to the Steering Committee for the Singapore 9s Masters Football Tournament (2009-2011)
- President of the St Michael's Soccer Academy (2009-2010)
- Member of the Committee of Inquiry set up to determine circumstances that led to the administrative lapse which prevented the use of swimming caps by the Singapore contingent at the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games (2014)

In 2011, Kok Keng co-founded the Legion of Lions, a voluntary movement formed to raise the level of public awareness and interest in Singapore football, and to promote football related welfare programmes

and community causes. In June 2012, the Legion of Lions co-published with The New Paper the “*50 Greatest Moments in Singapore Football*” book – the first of its kind for any sport in Singapore - which served as a vehicle for a Government-supported nationwide School Outreach Programme for aspiring young footballers. Proceeds from the sales of the book were set aside and donated to charitable and other good causes related to football.