

## Rising Star: Gibson Dunn's Matthew Schwartz

By Elliot Weld

*Law360 (August 13, 2024, 2:02 PM EDT)* -- Matthew Schwartz has been counsel to the disruptive upstart golf circuit LIV Golf Investments since its inception in 2022, and as a current partner at Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP guided the New York Yankees and Dallas Cowboys in a set of acquisitions by a premium experiences company the teams are shareholders in, earning him a spot among the sports and betting attorneys under age 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

### The biggest case of his career:



Schwartz cited his role as active chief legal officer to LIV Golf Investments as the biggest case of his career since its inception — and even before it was announced to the public.

"Unlike a normal M&A deal where people want to do a deal, they bring you in, you help them understand how to implement the deal and you go through the transaction closing, this is more like an active, ongoing representation from an outside counsel and now inside counsel perspective," Schwartz said. "I think the high-profile nature of LIV Golf, that's probably been the most challenging project."

Schwartz said his work with LIV Golf involves dealing with transactions, litigation, corporate work and that he advised the tour on its structure, launch and acquisition of its initial players and contracts. LIV Golf was met with some pushback upon its announcement, as some have criticized its ties to the government of Saudi Arabia. Additionally, the league is the subject of ongoing governmental review for a proposed merger with the PGA Tour.

LIV "received negative publicity from a number of places in connection with its launch" but also received positive publicity from others, Schwartz said.

"I think it's brought a lot of disruption and change to golf in a really positive way," Schwartz said. "But certainly from a legal perspective



**Matthew Schwartz**  
Gibson Dunn

**Age:** 39  
**Home base:** New York City  
**Position:** Partner  
**Law school:** University of Chicago  
**First job after law school:** Associate at Simpson Thacher & Bartlett

when you're helping your client think through the problems you're solving, understanding that those problems are going to be potentially front page-of-the-paper news just adds a whole other element of consideration that you need to help think through."

**His proudest moment as an attorney:**

Schwartz said being elected a partner at Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP was the proudest moment of his career and one that he wished his father, who was also an attorney, could have seen before he died.

"The fact that I can call myself partners with the bench of just spectacular partners I work with here, it's amazing to me," Schwartz said. "Because I still look up and around me, and I'm surprised I get to call these folks my partners."

**What drew him to the sports practice:**

Schwartz began his law career working in private equity and said he was always attracted to the sports practice area. He saw a trend of private equity capital beginning to take a larger role in the sports industry and said he was excited to have a skill set that deviated from typical private equity work.

Parties involved in sports transactions are not always purely seeking a profit on an investment, Schwartz said. Many are interested in owning something fun or are interested in winning trophies, he said. Schwartz represented a group of investors who helped start the Seattle Kraken, which began playing in the National Hockey League in 2021. Part of what motivated that group was that "they could bring something to their city," Schwartz said.

"As a lawyer, to have a broader skill set, and not just be doing necessarily the pure investment part of this advisory but also dealing with those other aspects was exciting because it just meant when I wake up in the morning, the scope of the challenges and the problems my clients are seeking to solve are that much broader," Schwartz said.

Schwartz said he "always enjoyed" sports and played football and baseball in high school and a bit of rugby in college. He is a fan of the New York Yankees and helped advise the team, along with the Dallas Cowboys football team, when Sixth Street Partners invested in Legends, a premium experiences company. The Yankees and Cowboys are investors in Legends as well.

"I believe the day after that deal closed they inked DJ LeMahieu's extension," Schwartz said, referring to the Yankees star infielder. "So I'm sure my role was very, very de minimis in terms of making that happen but I always like to think I had a small hand in helping that out."

**How he thinks the sports practice area will evolve over the next 10 years:**

Schwartz believes one of the changes that will occur in the sports industry and associated legal practice over the next decade will be a continuation of a current trend: the value of sports assets increasing generally. There will also be more continued participation from not only extremely wealthy individuals but funds and other sources of third-party capital, Schwartz said.

Another shift Schwartz sees is where leagues get their revenues. Leagues currently make a large amount of their money from media rights deals that are currently being rocked by cord-cutting customers, a trend Schwartz thinks is accelerating.

"How the change in where people consume media rights and how that cuts through the sports industry is going to be a very interesting trend to see evolve," he said.

*--As told to Elliot Weld. Editing by Michael Watanabe.*

*Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2024 Rising Stars winners after reviewing nearly 1,200 submissions. Attorneys had to be under 40 as of April 30, 2024, to be eligible for this year's award. This interview has been edited and condensed.*

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