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Barnes & Thornburg Launches University And Professional Athletics Group

New practice delivers legal and consulting services to higher education institutions

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Barnes & Thornburg has joined forces with sports industry veterans, E.T. "Skip" Prince and Steve Pederson, to launch a new University and Professional Athletics practice. Joining the firm's experienced athletics industry attorneys, Prince and Pederson bring decades of experience overseeing, managing, and providing consultation to collegiate athletic departments and conferences, professional teams and leagues, and leading sports-industry service providers.

Intercollegiate athletics will be a point of focus for the new group. Prince and Pederson will collaborate with the firm's robust Higher Education and Entertainment, Media and Sports practice groups while assisting colleges and universities of all sizes in the monitoring, maintenance and protection of their athletic programs and educational missions. The group will provide a broad array of services including:

- comprehensive, multilevel reviews of an institution's operational relationships, policies, procedures, and internal and external communications
- the development and implementation of institution-wide, transparent, best-practice operational procedures and guidelines designed to clarify the interweaving lines of authority within an athletic department and its administration

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- the provision of top-tier industry public relations and communications resources to assist academic and athletic leadership in crisis management and crisis avoidance matters

Prince and Pederson also bring extensive experience at the professional sports level to the firm's existing practice. They have managed teams, leagues and major athletic programs across North America. Additionally, they have negotiated media, licensing, sponsorship, advertising and development agreements nationally and internationally across virtually all levels of sport.

Operating out of Barnes & Thornburg's Washington, D.C., office, the duo will work closely with the office's managing partner, Roscoe Howard, a former U.S. Attorney and former member of the NCAA Committee on Infractions; William (Billy) Martin, seasoned sports attorney and compliance litigator; Christopher Bayh, leader in the firm's Higher Education Practice Group and former Big Ten linebacker; Meena Sinfelt, complex litigation and compliance attorney; and David Frazee, litigator who handled athletics compliance while working at a Big 12 institution.

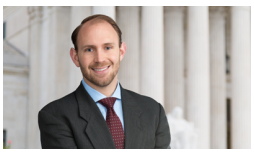
"With Skip and Steve's background in the business of sports, combined with Barnes & Thornburg's sophisticated higher education, investigation, entertainment, real estate and corporate practices, we're building a team that is uniquely equipped to tackle the pressing issues facing athletics," said Howard. The group's focus on collegiate athletics – and in particular on protecting institutional integrity and advocating for the health and well-being of athletes – reflects the sector's challenges with amateurism, antitrust, recruitment, athlete care, fraud and the difficulties inherent in operating a an athletic department with coequal commitments to institutional and academic integrity, excellence on the field of play, and student-athlete care and wellness. Issues of integrity and athlete wellness confront professional sports as well. Throughout the sector, institutional inattention can turn otherwise addressable problems into full-blown crises, with devastating effects.

"We're excited to join Barnes & Thornburg and continue to grow a thriving practice with demonstrated strength in all aspects of sports management so that we can expand and deepen relationships with leading academic institutions, athletic conferences, amateur sports and the professional leagues across the country" said Prince.

Added Pederson: "Barnes & Thornburg's broad national platform, complementary practices and client-centric culture provides a compelling value proposition for our clients. We're thrilled to be joining such a dynamic team."

About Skip Prince and Steve Pederson

Skip Prince, of counsel, has been leading, managing, and advising professional, collegiate and pre-collegiate athletic organizations for over 30 years. He was executive senior associate director of athletics and senior advisor to office of the president at the University of Texas at Austin, His accomplishments include formation and syndication of the Arena Football League; 10 years as senior vice president for the National Hockey League (NHL), overseeing its business development initiatives and launching NHL International; vice president for Anschutz



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Entertainment Group (AEG); chief executive officer of the Montreal Alouettes; commissioner and president of the United States Hockey League (USHL); partner at Chicago-based Gottlieb and Schwartz; and special assistant attorney general for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Prince was founder and senior principal of The Prince Companies, a consortium of industry specialists providing management and consulting services to teams and sports industry entities.

Steve Pederson, sports management advisor, holds nearly 20 years of experience as athletic director at the University of Pittsburgh, leading Pitt into the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), and the University of Nebraska. While at Pitt, he implemented a number of changes that led the program through a period of growth and accomplishment, including securing corporate sponsorships, raising ticket sales and attendance, and building new state-of-the-art training and event venues without incurring any debt. At Nebraska, Steve led efforts toward significant facilities construction, resulting in new football facilities and strength, sports medicine and indoor facilities for baseball, softball, soccer and sand volleyball, as well as a new office complex for women's volleyball, gymnastics and rifle teams. He was also the football recruiting coordinator at the Ohio State University and the University of Tennessee. Steve served as chair of the NCAA Football Issues Committee and provided leadership in three major collegiate conferences: ACC, Big East and Big 12.

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