

FEBRUARY 24, 2026 | NEWS

Former NFL Executive Frank Hawkins Joins Shumaker's Sports Law Team

TOLEDO, OH — Frank Hawkins, a nationally recognized sports executive and attorney with more than three decades of experience advising professional sports organizations and stakeholders at the highest levels, has joined Shumaker's Sports Law Team.

Frank brings an extraordinary depth of experience across complex legal, financial, media, technology, and governance matters that have helped shape the modern sports industry. His career includes 15 years with the National Football League (NFL), where he served in senior leadership roles and worked directly with Commissioner Paul Tagliabue and President Neil Austrian.

As the NFL's Senior Vice President, Business Affairs, Frank served as principal counsel to the League's Finance, Broadcasting, New Media, and NFL Enterprises Committees. He played a central role in collective bargaining relationships and negotiations, particularly on salary cap matters.

In collaboration with Broadcast Committee Chairmen Pat Bowlen and Robert Kraft, Frank was a leading staff architect in the structuring, negotiation, and bidding processes for the NFL's landmark television and new media agreements in 1994, 1997–98, 2000, 2002, and 2004–05. Those agreements fundamentally reshaped the sports media ecosystem and established new standards for League media strategy and revenue generation.

Frank also worked closely with Finance Committee Chairmen Tom Benson and Al Lerner on some of the League's most significant finance and governance initiatives. His work included the development and implementation of debt ceiling and ownership policies that secured the NFL an A credit rating, oversight of expansion and ownership transfers, club debt financings, structured credit facilities for member clubs, and stadium financing support through the NFL's G-3 construction support program—where he served as a principal architect and rating agency presenter.

"Frank's experience at the highest levels of professional sports is truly exceptional," said Bob Boland, Partner and Hospitality, Leisure & Sports Industry Sector Co-Chair at Shumaker. "He has been directly involved in some of the most transformative media, finance, and governance developments in modern

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sports history. His insight and strategic vision will provide tremendous value to our clients across the sports and entertainment landscape.”

Following his NFL career, Frank co-founded Scalar Media Partners with former NFL CFO Tom Spock and cable industry pioneer and Comedy Channel founder Art Bell. Through Scalar, he advised U.S. and international sports organizations, collegiate athletics programs and conferences, professional sports teams, and technology companies on media strategy, governance, labor matters, sponsorship models, and player performance data strategy.

In addition to his practice, Frank taught Sports Economics and Sports Facility Finance for nine years at NYU’s Tisch Institute for Global Sport. He remains a frequent lecturer in sports law and business courses at leading graduate programs and a sought-after speaker at sports law, media, and entertainment industry conferences.

“Shumaker’s multidisciplinary Sports Law Team and its deep bench across corporate, finance, labor, tax, litigation, and emerging technologies create a powerful platform for clients operating in today’s rapidly evolving sports industry,” Frank said. “I’m excited to join a firm that understands the intersection of sports, media, technology, and governance, and I look forward to helping clients navigate complex opportunities and challenges.”

Shumaker’s national Sports Law practice represents a diverse group of coaches and athletic directors at NCAA member institutions, professional franchise coaches, and other sports figures and entertainers. Lawyers in the group collaborate with clients and their agents, accountants, and financial and other key advisors to create comprehensive career and financial plans.