



John Mehrzad KC

Call 2005 | Silk 2020

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John Mehrzad KC specialises in sports law, employment and commercial disputes, across the fields of litigation, domestic and international arbitration as well as cross-border matters.

He was appointed as a silk after only 12 full years' practice - the fastest barrister appointee of the 2019 competition. More recently, he was listed in The Lawyer's "Hot 100 2023", and he has been described in the legal directories as "exceptional and a true heavyweight in his field" with the recommendation that "if you want to win you want him on your side before the opposition snaps him up". He was nominated as 'Sports Law Silk of the Year' by The Legal 500 in 2022 and 2023.

John is regularly instructed in injunction applications, trials and appeals in employment and commercial disputes, often involving restrictive covenants, duties, confidential information, economic torts and conspiracy allegations.

He is also recognised for conducting independent reviews and investigations. For example, he was the only lawyer on the cultural review of British Cycling and chaired the governance review of the British Equestrian Federation and the review into UK Athletics' handling of allegations relating to Alberto Salazar.

John also frequently acts in sports regulatory disputes, including disciplinaries, equalities and discrimination, safeguarding, selection, classification and doping charges.

He is a Governing Bencher of the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple and a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators.

Recent Highlights

Carlo Ancelotti v Everton Football Club (Comm Ct) (2023)

Breach of contract claim.

Credico Marketing Limited v Lambert [2023] EWCA Civ 262; [2022] EWCA Civ 864; [2021] EWHC 1504

Trial of claims for breach of restrictive covenant in a commercial agreement and misuse of confidential information.

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Create Financial Management LLP v Lee & Scott [2021] 1 WLR 78 (QB); [2020])ZUI EVVIIL ZU 4 0 (U	·D
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Interim springboard relief based on breach of contractual obligations in consultancy agreements.

Antonio Conte v Chelsea Football Club (Premier League Arbitration & Employment Tribunal) (2019)

Arbitration of claim for breach of contract and tribunal claim for unfair dismissal.

Bourne Rail v Ashton [2018] EWHC 73 (QB)

Trial of claims for conspiracy, breach of confidence and inducement.

Expertise

Employment

John has specialist experience at the crossover between commercial law and employment law and is described in *The Legal 500* as being "extremely sharp and an exceptional advocate, who excels in the most high-profile, high-stakes employment litigation".

He is regularly instructed in injunction applications, trials and appeals concerning contractual obligations (including bonuses), restrictive covenants (employment and commercial), confidential information, directors' and shareholders' rights, fiduciary duties and related tortious claims.

John also appears in multi-day Full Hearings, Preliminary Hearings as well as before the EAT and the Court of Appeal, representing both claimants and respondents in cases involving all aspects of employment law, including unfair dismissal; breach of contract/unauthorised deduction of wages; all forms of discrimination; "whistleblowing"; TUPE; and jurisdictional issues/practice and procedure. He has a particular expertise in City-related disputes with past cases involving Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan, Merrill Lynch, Credit Suisse, Morgan Stanley, Deutsche Bank and other financial institutions or funds.

Notable Employment cases

Credico Marketing Limited & Anor v Lambert & Anor [2023] EWCA Civ 262; [2022] EWCA Civ 864; [2021] EWHC 1504

Acting in a successful claim following a seven-day trial for breach of restrictive covenant in a commercial agreement.

Geobear v Scott (2021) QB (HHJ Howells KC and HHJ Coe KC, sitting as Judges of the High Court)

Acting in successful interim applications for a non-compete injunction.



Create Financial Management LLP v Lee & S	Scott [2021] 1 WLR 78	3 (OB): [2020)] EWHC 2046	(OB) (Morris J.)

Acting in relation to a successful application for interim springboard relief based on alleged breach of contractual obligations in consultancy agreements.

Wolseley UK Ltd v Alsem & Ors (2020) QB (Chamberlain J., Lavender J., Master McCloud, Deputy Master Bard)

Acting in relation to successful applications for interim injunction relief, specific disclosure, a confidentiality ring order and contempt arising from claims for misuse of confidential information, breach of duties and conspiracy.

United First Partners Research v. Carreras [2018] EWCA Civ 322 (Underhill, Bean, Asplin LJJ)

Acting in a matter regarding the proper approach to identification of a PCP and the reason for resignation. Upholding EAT decision below.

Middlesbrough FC v Birmingham FC & Ors. (QBD) 2018 (Warby J.)

Acting in relation to a team move, involving a speedy trial application.

Bourne Rail & Ors. v Ashton & Ors. [2018] EWHC 73 (QB) (HHJ Forster KC sitting as Judge of the High Court)

Successfully acted for corporate defendants in resisting claims of conspiracy/common design, breach of confidence and inducement to breach contract.

Brown & Ors. v Neon Management [2019] IRLR 30; [2017] EWHC 2137 (QB) (Choudhury J.)

Acting in relating to issues surrounding bonus payments and a restrictive covenant in a breach of contract claim.

WRG v Sawyer & Ors. (QBD) 2017

Acting in a matter involving springboard relief, conspiracy, confidential information, restrictive covenant, breach of contract injunction and a damages claim.

British Transport Police Authority v Hill & Ors. (QBD) 2017

Acting in a dispute surrounding the delivery up / deletion of confidential information and restraint on the use of materials in concurrent proceedings injunctions.

Kintetsu v Jeffery & Ors. (QBD) 2016

Acting in a dispute involving conspiracy, confidential information, restrictive covenant, breach of contract, injunction,



damages claim. Smith v Huertas [2015] All ER (D) 221 (Dec) (Cooke J.) Acting in a dispute regarding the jurisdiction of the Commercial Court to enforce a judgment by French courts. Elcom Funding Solutions Ltd. & Ors. v Crossflow Payment Solutions Trading Ltd. (QBD) 2015 (Sweeney J.) Acting in a matter regarding the delivery up/deletion and affidavit injunction. HMA (Holdings) Ltd. & Ors. v IDL Plastics Ltd. & Ors. (QBD) 2015 (Supperstone J. & HHJ Gore KC) Acting in a matter surrounding the jurisdiction of the High Court to injunct a party in New Zealand. Ideal Industries Ltd. v Harrison (QBD) 2015 Acting in a non-competition injunction. Hamell Communications Ltd. v Edmunds (QBD) 2015 (Edis J. & Patterson J.) Acting in a confidential information injunction. Mostell Ltd & Or. v Camilleri & Costello & J Sykes & Sons (Manchester) Ltd (QBD) 2015 (Dingemans J.) Acting in relation to a non-competition/non-solicitation/non-deal/delivery up/deletion of confidential information/affidavit injunction. Randstad Ltd. v Bridge & Bridge Education & Training Ltd. (QBD) 2015 (Green J.) Acting in relation not a non-solicitation/non-deal/delivery up/deletion of confidential information/affidavit injunction. Berry Recruitment Ltd. v Hall & Career Caterer Ltd. (QBD) 2015 (Dove J.) Acting in relation to a non-competition/non-solicitation/non-deal/deliver up/deletion of confidential information injunction. Game Retail Ltd. v Laws UKEAT/0188/14/DA (HHJ Eady KC) Acting in a dispute surrounding social media misconduct.



Green & Hillersden Estates Ltd. v Heim (QBD) 2014 (Lewis J.)
Acting in relation to a delivery up/freezing order injunction.
Equity Housing Group v King (Ch.D.) 2014 (HHJ Hodge KC)
Acting in relation to a delivery up/deletion/preservation/affidavit injunction.
Silverson Machines Ltd v Aplin & Ors. (QBD) 2014 (Mitting J.)
Acting in relation to a freezing order injunction.
Charlesworth v Amey Plc & Ors. UKEATPA/0326/13/MC (HHJ Peter Clarke)
Acting in a matter regarding a tripartite employment status.
Tavistock School & Ors. v Richards & Ors. UKEAT/0244/13/SM (HHJ Peter Clarke)
Acting in a matter regarding the timing of assessment of redundancy dismissal and construction of employment contract.
Seaco & Ors. v Buss Capital & Ors. (QBD) 2012
Acting in relation to claims involving conspiracy, confidential information, restrictive covenant, breach of contract and an injunction.
Rubicon LLP & Ors. v Attias & Ors. (Ch.D) 2012 (Sales J.)
Acting in relation to a conspiracy, confidential information, restrictive covenant, breach of contract/fiduciary duty claim, involving £1.2 billion in hedge funds redemptions.
Bullimore v Pothecary Witham Weld Solicitors & Ors. [2011] IRLR 18 (Underhill J., President)
Advising on whether a reference can amount to an act of victimisation.

Malik v Golpeykar & Harrington (Ch.D) 2011 (HHJ Walden-Smith)

Acting in a matter seeking to clarify whether there was a partnership in law.

Stuart v London City Airport Ltd. UKEATPA/1651/11/MAA (Cox. J.)

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Acting in a matter regarding whether a misconduct investigation into alleged criminal act requires heightened level of scrutiny.

Blazevic v Hayashibara International Inc. & Ors. UKEATPA/0738/11/CEA (Langstaff J, President)

Acting in a matter regarding whether a strike out and costs order should have been made.

Odukwe v Partners of Hoare Lea Consulting Engineers UKEAT/0547/10/SM (Underhill J., President)

Acting in a matter regarding statutory dispute resolution procedures and time limits.

Humphreys v Norilsk Nickel International (UK) Ltd. [2010] IRLR 976; [2010] EWHC 1867 (QB) (HHJ Seymour KC)

Acting in a contractual bonus claim.

K2 Partnership Solutions Ltd v. Nina Strauss & Or. (QBD) 2010 (Tugenhat J.)

Acting in a non-solicit/non-compete injunction.

International Arbitration

Acting in a matter surrounding statutory grievance procedures.

John is very experienced in arbitrations and mediations (as arbitrator, mediator and counsel) in commercial, employment, sports and related disputes. He is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators.

John has been appointed an FA Rule K or English Football League arbitrator on several occasions on a sole basis as well as a panellist, determining contractual disputes usually involving financial claims. He has also represented numerous clients (players, agents, clubs) as counsel in such arbitrations and before the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

Media & Entertainment

John has been instructed by major talent agencies in disputes with actors, entertainers and influencers. Those disputes often involve allegations of breach of contract in relation to commission payments, inducements by other agents and conspiracy to cause loss by unlawful means.

John understands the commercial and public relations sensitivities of such disputes, often leading a team in private negotiations or mediations.



Professional Discipline

John sat as an independent FA Discipline Chair (2014-22) and is a current independent British Paralympic Association classification appeal chair.

He advised and represents clients regularly before professional bodies, especially in the sporting context including:

- FA Regulatory Commissions
- FA Appeal Board
- RFU Disciplinary Panels
- RFU Appeal Panels

Such matters often involve players, managers or agents.

He is appointed on an ad hoc basis as an independent chair for disciplinaries and appeals in other sports, including tennis and darts.

Sports

John is recognised by both *Chambers & Partners* and *The Legal 500* as a leading silk in the area of sports law and was nominated as 'Sports Law Silk of the Year' by *The Legal 500* in both 2022 and 2023.

He advises on financial disputes between clubs, managers, players and agents in domestic arbitrations or before international forum, and is also instructed regularly in regulatory disputes. His work also extends to conducting reviews and investigations in sport, as well as for national governing bodies and international federations.

He is regularly appointed FA Rule K or EFL arbitrator (often on a sole basis), is a panellist at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (in English and French), independent arbitrator and pro bono counsel for Sport Resolutions, and an advisor to the League Managers Association and the Professional Cricketers' Association.

John also represents parties in all sporting jurisdictions both nationally and abroad, including the FA, Premier League, RFU, UEFA, FIFA, CAS and international arbitration forum, such as the ICC.

Notable Sports cases
Appointed as investigator for an international federation concerning governance issues.
Appointed investigator for a national sporting body concerning historic discrimination allegations.
Representing Carlo Ancelotti in his High Court dispute against Everton FC.

Acting in a CAS appeal against a FIFA DRC decision concerning a termination agreement and waiver between Nigerian player and Israeli football club.





Acting in an FA Arbitration concerning an alleged breach of a representation contract between an intermediary and a Premier League player.
Acting in an EFL Arbitration concerning an alleged breach of contract and counterclaim for alleged breach of warranty arising from a loan transfer agreement.
Acting in a Premier League Managers Arbitration about wrongful dismissal and a counterclaim for breach of contract.
Acting in cross-jurisdictional High Court and Employment Tribunal claims between a rugby player and a Premiership club concerning alleged breach of contract and discrimination.
Acting in a FIFA Dispute Resolution Committee case about entitlements arising from incomplete player transfer.
Acting in an EFL Arbitration about alleged 'buy-out' clause.
Acting in an FA Arbitration about alleged breach of contract and inducement to breach, and cross-jurisdictional issues.
Acting in an EFL Appeals Committee matter about the jurisdiction of the EFL Player Related Disputes Commission.
Acting in an EFL Player Related Disputes Commission arbitration about the registration and scholarship offer to an academy player, and the entitlement of compensation to a football club.
Middlesbrough FC v. Birmingham FC & Ors. (QBD) 2018 (Warby J.)
Acting in a dispute concerning a team move, involving a speedy trial application.
Acting in an EFL Disciplinary Commission arbitration about a disciplinary sanction to a former officer of a football club.
Appointed as chair of an FA Arbitration on issue of non-payment related to an oversees transfer and the application of foreign law principles.
Acting in an FA Arbitration on the jurisdiction of Rule K to determine a dispute concerning an overseas transfer.

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Commissioned by UK Sport, the BEF, Sport England to Chair an Independent Review into allegations and the leadership of the British Equestrian Federation (administered by Sport Resolutions).
Acting in a CAS case on termination for just cause, liquidated damages and compensation mitigation principles, and sporting sanctions.
Acting in an FA Arbitration on the jurisdiction of Rule K where a representation contact is signed and alleged breach occurs overseas.
Sidibe v CSKA Sofia
Acting in a FIFA Dispute Resolution Chamber claim for non-payment of wages and bonuses.
RFU v Fenton-Wells
Acting in a reduced RFU disciplinary sanction for making contact with the eye or eye area.
Commissioned by UK Sport and British Cycling as the only legally qualified panel-member on the first-ever independent review into the climate and culture of an Olympic and Paralympic world class programme, namely that of British Cycling.
Acting in a non-selection appeal, resulting in the athlete being re-selected by the governing body to pre-Rio 2016 World Championships (via Sport Resolutions and the British Athletes Commission).
Acting in an FA Arbitration about non-payments by a player under a representation contract.
Bristol Rugby v Borthwick v RFU
Acting in an injunction application to prevent the RFU poaching a club's coach.
Appointed as a selected advocate for the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games.
Acting in an FA Arbitration on whether Rule K applies to a representation contract between a player agent and an overseas player.
Acting in a CAS case on non-payments to a football agent by a Middle Eastern club following a player transfer.



UK Anti-Doping v Bilton	
Acting in relation to mitigation and sanction for a doping of	fence under overlapping 2009 and 2015 WADA Codes.
Appointed as a selected advocate for the Glasgow 2014 Co	ommonwealth Games.
Acting in an FA Arbitration relating to when a replay should	d be ordered if club fields an ineligible player.
Providing advice on a liquidated damages clause in a Premi	er League manager's contract.
Acting in an FA Arbitration on breach of a representation a	greement and fiduciary duties.
Acting in FIFA and CAS cases on agent's commission, jurisc compensation.	liction clauses, non-payments to a player, "just cause" and
Acting in an FA Appeal about interpretation of FA Rules an	d Regulations concerning relegation.
Acting in classification and non-selection appeals by a Paral (via Sports Resolutions).	lympic champion and to Sochi Winter Games respectively
Advising in relation to the take-over of Leeds United.	
Advising on George North's contract with Northampton Sa	ints.
Acting in a High Court claim relating to FA Cup Final tickets	S.
Acting in a Premier League Managers Arbitration about a te	ermination payment.
Jones v Cardiff City	
Acting in a claim for unpaid salary and bonuses.	
Acting in a cross-border image rights dispute.	
Allardyce v Blackburn Rovers & Kean	



Acting in a defamation action by Sam Allardyce.
Appointed as a selected advocate for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.
Slough v Milton Keynes RUFC; RFU v Bristol RFC
Acting in RFU disciplinaries into race and biting allegations respectively.
Sports - Investigations
John is recognised by <i>Chambers & Partners</i> as a leader in independent reviews and investigations.
He has been appointed to carry out and draft several high-profile and seminal independent reviews and investigations as either chair of a panel, sole chair or panellist particularly in sports industry and the workplace more generally.
John has lectured and written widely about good practice and procedure in high-profile independent reviews and investigations, including at seminars organised or attended by UK Sport, Sport England, national governing bodies, international federations and Sport Resolutions.
Notable Sports - Investigations cases
Appointed as investigator for an international federation concerning governance issues.
Appointed investigator for a national sporting body concerning historic discrimination allegations.
Commissioned as chair of the independent review into UK Athletics' handling of allegations concerning the Nike Oregon Project and Alberto Salazar.
Commissioned by UK Sport, the BEF, Sport England to Chair an Independent Review into allegations and the leadership of the British Equestrian Federation (administered by Sport Resolutions).
Commissioned by UK Sport and British Cycling as the only legally qualified panel-member on the first-ever independent review into the climate and culture of an Olympic and Paralympic world class programme, namely that of British Cycling.
Tax
John had advised on tax issues relating to employment status in the sporting context, in particular in relation to overseas players playing in the UK on a temporary basis or overseas as part of their employment domestically.



He uses his knowledge of the unique, global sporting regulatory framework to apply that bespoke legal context in advice and conferences to major sports agencies and accountants on issues of tax relating to their clients.

Directory Quotes

"A brilliantly persuasive sports lawyer who knows the business inside out."
Chambers & Partners
"John Mehrzad KC is my first port of call. He is extremely reliable, always available and cuts through the issues."
Chambers & Partners
"Superb advocate and leader on heavyweight business protection employment matters – gets results."
The Legal 500
"His knowledge of sports disputes, in particular football disputes, is second to none."
The Legal 500
"He is full of ideas that are outside the box and he is very commercial." "He is extremely personable, bright, determined, responsive and supportive."
Chambers & Partners
"He is authoritative and incredibly responsive."
Chambers & Partners
"He is incredibly knowledgeable, client friendly, and deals with matters efficiently and promptly. John also provides sound commercial advice to clients. I can't identify any weaknesses, as I have always been 100% happy with the work that John has done, as have our clients."
The Legal 500



Directory Rankings

Chambers & Partners

- Employment
- Independent Investigations
- Sport

The Legal 500

- Employment
- Sport (Tier 1)

Education

- BPP Law School, BVC (2004-05) Very Competent
- BPP Law School, GDL (2003-04) Commendation
- Oxford University, MSt (Modern History) (2002-03) Distinction
- Université de Nantes, DEA (Modern History and International Relations) (2001-02) Bien
- Trinity College Dublin, MA (History & French) (1997-2001) 2:1
- Westminster School (1992-1997)

International Bar / Court Appointments

Legal Aid Panel to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (2018 to date)

Appointments, Memberships and Prizes

- Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (2023 to date).
- Bencher of the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple (2022 to date).
- Chair of Independent Review into decisions taken by UK Athletics in 2015 and 2017 concerning Alberto Salazar/the Nike Oregon Project (2019-2020).
- Panel Member for the League Managers Association (2019 to date).
- Panel Member for pro bono Legal Counsel (French and English) at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (2017 to date).
- Chair of Independent Review into allegations and leadership of the British Equestrian Federation (commissioned by UK Sport, the BEF, Sport England and administered by Sport Resolutions) (2017-2018).
- Panel Member of Independent Review into Culture and Climate at British Cycling (commissioned by UK



- Sport, British Cycling and administered by Sport Resolutions) (2016 2017).
- Board Director of the British Association of Sport and Law (2015-2018).
- Member of the FA Chairman's anti-discrimination panel of independent chairman, hearing football disciplinary cases concerning acts of discrimination (2014 to 2022).
- Nominated as FA Rule K arbitrator on several occasions (2012 to date).
- Member of pro bono advocates panel for Sports Resolutions, the independent domestic sports appeals/arbitration service (2012 to date).
- Selected by the Law Society of Scotland, Faculty of Advocates and the Management Committee of Sport Resolution as advocate to the Glasgow Commonwealth Games (2014).
- Selected by the Bar Council, Law Society and British Association of Sport and Law as advocate to the London Olympics and Paralympic Games (2012).
- Member of Equality and Human Rights Commission panel of barristers (2011 2015).
- Inner Temple GDL and BPTC Scholarships Panellist (2016 to date).

Publications

- "Going Down or Not: Review of recent EFL decisions concerning relegation", LawInSport.com, 24 August 2020.
- "Project Restart' or a false start: can professional sports clubs compel their players to return to the pitch and waive health and safety liability?", Lexology, 20 May 2020.
- "Remedies for clubs if leagues are decided against their wishes", Littleton, 18 May 2020.
- "Legal Realities of an 'extension' to the football season", Law Society Gazette, 7 April 2020.
- "Who has jurisdiction over International Football Transfer Disputes", LawInSport.com, 2 September 2017.
- "The selection of athletes and the grounds for challenges", World Sport Law Report, January 2016 (co-authored with Edward Wheen, Partner, Hewitson Moorhead LLP)
- "Moral Damages for Terminating a Football Player's Contract", LawInSport.com, 20 August 2015.
- "'Wild West' or 'Brave New World': The new FIFA and FA Intermediaries Regulations", LawInSport.com, 27 March 2015.
- "Match-Fixing, Betting and Corruption", Sports Arbitration Handbook 2015-2016, Sport Resolution, March 2015.
- "New Guidance on How Clubs Should Treat Social Media Misconduct by Footballers", LawInSport.com, 3 February 2015.
- "Ched Evans: Release, Retribution and Rehabilitation", LawInSport.com, 28 November 2014.
- "Player Contracts: FIFA Regulations on Working With Intermediaries: analysis", World Sports Law Report, November 2014.
- "Restraint of Trade in Player Contracts", LawInSport.com, 3 September 2014.
- "Why Suarez's CAS Appeal may succeed", LawInSport.com, 8 August 2014.
- "Could Liverpool sack Suarez?", LawInSport.com, 23 June 2014.
- "David Moyes' Sacking and Legal Rights", LawInSport.com, 22 April 2014.
- "State Intervention into Football", LawInSport.com, 22 April 2014.
- "The Post-DJ Campbell World of Football Governance", LawInSport.com, 11 December 2013.
- "Age and Disability issues in Playing Contracts", World Sports Law Report, January 201.3
- "Fixed Term Contracts in Sport", World Sports Law Report, November 2012.
- "A study of Eurosceptic Groups 1990-97", The European Journal, August, September and October issues



2006.

- "A good pint by way of Dickens, Disney and the Dictionary", The Times, Law section, 10 June 2006.
- "The Schuman Plan", The European Journal, March/April 2006.
- "Let's Raise a Glass to Old Traditions", The Times, Law section, 11 October 2005.
- "A Supreme Court for the UK; A Flawed Necessity", BPP Obiter, May 2004.

Languages

- French (working knowledge)
- Italian (basic knowledge)
- German (basic knowledge)
- Farsi (basic knowledge)

Awards



