

Rising Star: Weil's Arianna Scavetti

By Jade Martinez-Pogue

Law360 (August 2, 2023, 9:19 AM EDT) -- Arianna Scavetti of Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP was instrumental in guiding the National Women's Soccer League Players Association through a first-of-its-kind joint investigation of abusive coaching, earning her a spot among the sports and betting law practitioners under age 40 honored by Law360 Rising Stars.

Her biggest case:

Being a lifelong women's soccer fan and a season ticket holder for years, Scavetti's work to hold abusive National Women's Soccer League coaches accountable in an unprecedented effort that saw the players association and the league working together was a defining moment of her career.



Scavetti served as lead counsel to the players association and, along with her team, negotiated a landmark agreement with the NWSL's counsel to conduct a joint investigation into abusive coaching. She worked directly with players to help them understand the investigation process and feel comfortable sharing their experiences.

The results of the investigation were released in a December report detailing widespread misconduct by club staff in positions of power, leading to a series of suspensions, fines and permanent bans of several former coaches.

"This was a unique opportunity for the players to have a voice and a role in the transformational change that they deserve. Everyone was really committed to looking for the truth, holding people accountable and shaping a better and safer league," Scavetti told Law360. "The joint investigation helped give the players comfort that their interests were being protected and that truth was being sought; it helped build back some trust between the players association and the league."

Her proudest moment:

Scavetti recalls a time after the report of the investigation into abusive



Arianna Scavetti
Weil Gotshal

Age: 34
Home base: Washington, D.C.
Position: Partner
Law school: University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School
First job after law school: Associate at Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP in Washington, D.C.

coaching within the NWSL was released, when former Washington Spirit player Kaiya McCullough spoke about how the report gave her peace and said that she felt vindicated.

"Our goal all along was to give players a voice that they had not had before," Scavetti said. "This made me feel like we really have achieved what we set out to achieve."

Scavetti said that McCullough's speaking out against abuse in the league through an opinion article published in The Washington Post in the summer of 2021 played a "huge role" in ultimately contributing to the joint investigation.

Other notable cases:

Scavetti led the U.S. National Soccer Team Players Association in submitting an amicus brief in support of the Women's National Soccer Team's blockbuster equal pay litigation against its employer, the U.S. Soccer Federation.

The brief called out the federation's historical practice of discrimination against the women's team and demanded better treatment for the players. In February 2022, the federation agreed to pay the women's national team \$24 million in back pay and to equalize pay for women and men across all future competitions.

"It was extremely powerful to have the men's national team players stand with the women and say, 'This isn't us versus them, it is about how all soccer players are treated nationally,'" Scavetti said.

Scavetti said she remembers being at the World Cup finals in Lyon, France, in 2019 when the "whole crowd was chanting, 'Equal pay!'"

What motivates her:

For Scavetti, seeing an increasing wave of athletes speaking out to demand the compensation and conditions that they deserve both inspires and motivates her in her practice.

Seeing female athletes especially moving past the point of "just being happy to be here," to saying that they demand and deserve more, just shows the growth in women's sports, Scavetti said.

"As a woman, I think you see similar challenges in a lot of industries. So when you see female athletes speaking out for what they deserve, that's inspiring to me," she continued. "It's powerful to see these athletes advocate for themselves, and it makes me feel more motivated to advocate for them."

Why she's a sports attorney:

Scavetti said she has been a big sports fan throughout her entire life, so she wanted to bring some of that passion into her practice.

In her earlier days as an associate, Scavetti said that she looked for opportunities to get involved and make connections in the sports world, and that has been a big piece of building her practice.

"Being involved in the women's soccer community and meeting folks through that, I've been able to use my passion for sports and my familiarity with the game and the league to help build my career," she said.

--As told to Jade Martinez-Pogue.

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2023 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,350 submissions. Attorneys had to be under 40 as of May 1, 2023, to be eligible for this year's award. This interview has been edited and condensed.

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