

DAILY REPORT

King & Spalding Partner Helps Bring Super Bowl, World Cup to Atlanta

By Thomas Spigolon

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What You Need to Know

- For the second time in nine years, a King & Spalding partner is leading the legal work involved in hosting the Super Bowl.
- Justin King is directing a team of lawyers from the Am Law 50 firm that will be working to organize the game and related events.
- The NFL recently chose Atlanta to host Super Bowl LXII in Atlanta's Mercedes-Benz Stadium.

Corporate lawyer Justin King is leading King & Spalding to help Atlanta play host to some of the world's most-watched sporting and entertainment events.

The NFL announced the selection of the city for Super Bowl LXII at its Fall League Meeting in Atlanta on Oct. 16, following a vote by the league's team owners.

For the second time in nine years, King is leading a team of lawyers from the Am Law 50 firm that will be working on the legal aspects of hosting the game and related events in and around Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta in 2028—just as he did prior to Super Bowl LIII in 2019 at the same location.

"We've been at the forefront of that and hope to continue to do so," King said in an interview. "I think it's overall a signal of the broader



Photo: John Disney/ALM

Mercedes Benz Stadium, home of Super Bowl LXII in 2028.

relationship that we have with the various sports entities throughout the city."

After the NFL approached Atlanta about hosting the game, King & Spalding represented the city's Super Bowl Host Committee and worked closely with the Atlanta Sports Council and AMB Sports and Entertainment, which is the parent company of the NFL's Atlanta Falcons and Mercedes-Benz Stadium, the firm said.

King led the Atlanta-founded firm's team that worked on a pro bono basis to begin assisting

Atlanta sports officials around May of this year in developing the terms of an agreement that was approved by owners. The team also included tax partner Abraham “Hap” Shashy Jr. and associates Andrea Demick and Kevin Hilton.

King is co-leader of the firm’s fintech group and a member of its public company, private equity and technology industry teams. He said the effort by him and colleagues gives King & Spalding exposure for the support it gives to the city’s efforts to attract major sporting events.

“It’s for the greater good of the city,” King said. “We realize that, as a key member of the fabric of this city, that we need to give back to the city in a meaningful way, and a lot of what we do for these major events is pro bono.

“We have relationships with all these entities outside of this work, as well, so it’s a continuation of the work that we already do,” King said. “These events are important to the city, but the budgets are also tight for these types of events.”

It also typically gives associates like Demick and Hilton the chance to gain experience with contracts and other agreements for a major event, according to King.

“We work together, just like we do on all projects,” he said. “They’re negotiating those documents with the NFL and negotiating those documents with the various constituents throughout the state and the city. It’s high-profile stuff that they’re always thrilled to be a part of.”

Big-Game Experience

The King & Spalding partner, whose clients include the Falcons and Major League Soccer team Atlanta United, brought years of experience with pro sports and large-scale events to this latest effort.

He led a team of lawyers that advised the host committee leading up to Atlanta hosting its most recent game, Super Bowl LIII, in 2019, which was

Tom Brady’s final Super Bowl as quarterback of the New England Patriots.

King also worked closely since 2018 with the host committee, AMB and others before soccer’s world governing body, FIFA, announced in February that Atlanta was chosen to host eight matches of the 2026 World Cup, including a semifinal match at Mercedes-Benz Stadium.

King noted the NFL in 2018 changed its selection process for Super Bowl host cities from one in which owners selected a city from a list of bidders in a public vote broadcast on the NFL Network cable channel.

League officials now approach a city’s leaders to see if they want to consider hosting the game and can meet the logistical and site requirements needed for the security and safety of participants, ticket holders, pre-game event attendees and media from around the world.

Events like the Super Bowl, World Cup and NCAA football playoff title game, scheduled for January 2025 in Atlanta, bring national and worldwide exposure and millions in tourist dollars to the city, officials have said.

In the coming three years, the King & Spalding team will work with city and state governments, civic leaders, the NFL and others on the legal aspects of everything from security and transportation, to intellectual property protection and data privacy, King said.

He said the team will work to help organize the game, as well as a series of related events that, according to information from the NFL, will include NFL Honors, the Super Bowl Experience, Super Bowl Opening Night and “countless” other pre-game opportunities.

King said the firm and Atlanta are “on the five-yard line with 95 yards to go” to host the event.

“There was a lot of work to secure the Super Bowl, and there’s a lot of work now to put it on,” he said.