

# Jason Krochak

Partner, Proskauer

- ▶ **AGE:** 36
- ▶ **BORN:** Manhasset, N.Y.
- ▶ **EDUCATION:** University of Michigan, B.A., sports management, with highest distinction (graduated in three years); University of Michigan, Ross School of Business, Master of Accounting; Harvard Law School, J.D., cum laude
- ▶ **FAMILY:** Spouse, Carly; children, Lila (6), Mia (3)

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**IT'S HARD** to overstate the impact of Lionel Messi's arrival to the United States. The Argentine star's signing with Inter Miami FC last July was transformational for the team and Major League Soccer at large, with huge boosts in attendance, viewership and merchandise sales quickly following.

Getting that deal across the finish line, however, was no easy job. Among those tasked with ironing out the details of a remarkably complex transaction was Proskauer's Jason Krochak, who represented Major League Soccer.

Krochak said the deal was on a "very, very accelerated timeline" in order to ensure Messi could play in the newly expanded Leagues Cup, which features teams from MLS and Liga MX (Krochak also had previously represented MLS in its launch of the tournament property). He was party to complicated negotiations related to Messi's image rights and helped navigate how MLS would manage the soccer star taking an equity stake in Inter Miami, becoming perhaps the first active athlete in a U.S. league to own a stake in the team for which he plays.

Krochak's work on the Messi deal is a clear highlight in a sports law career full of accomplishments, and it's one that even Krochak allowed himself to enjoy.

"You're really sort of deep in the weeds and you forget how public everything you do is and the impact [you have]. But with the Messi deal, that was the first time I sort of took a step back when the deal signed, and it really hit me," Krochak said. "I was like, 'I'm going to really enjoy this one.' I'm a big soccer fan, and obviously MLS has been a client for a long time, but that was the first time where it was sort of a pinch-yourself moment."

Krochak knew from a young age that he

wanted to work in sports, and that goal remained a North Star throughout undergrad at the University of Michigan — Krochak graduated in three years — and law school at Harvard. Along the way, Krochak had interned for NBC during the 2008 Olympics, which earned him a trip to Beijing, and in the legal department of the New Jersey Nets in the last year before they moved to Brooklyn. Krochak now says the latter served as a critical crash course for his future sports law career. "I feel like I learned more in those three weeks than I did practically in all of law school," Krochak said.

He's been at Proskauer since 2012 and has worked exclusively in the firm's sports division since 2015. Krochak was named partner in 2020 at the age of 33. The Messi signing is far from the only landmark deal with his fingerprints on it.

Krochak has worked on multiple record-setting team M&A transactions in the NFL. He represented a limited partner in the ownership group that acquired the Washington Commanders for \$6 billion, and before that represented the Patrick D. Bowlen Trust in its sale of the Denver Broncos for \$4.65 billion. He also advised on the 2018 sale of the Carolina Panthers for \$2.275 billion.

Beyond the NFL, Krochak has extensive experience in nearly every facet of the sports business landscape. He's been involved with the sale of the Miami Marlins, the Madison Square Garden Sports spinoff, Bruin Capital's acquisition of Full Swing and AEW's media rights deal with WarnerMedia, just to name a few. He advised OL Groupe on its 2019 acquisition of the NWSL's Seattle Reign for \$3.5 million, and he's now representing the same company in its ongoing sale of the team to the Seattle Sounders and Carlyle for \$58 million.

Krochak, who remains a go-to legal resource for MLS, also has continued to expand his practice in sports betting, which has been a key area of focus since 2019. His sports betting clients have included the Cleveland Browns, Columbus Crew, FanDuel, the PGA of America and the Washington Nationals.

The sheer breadth of Krochak's legal work and expertise is stunning, but he wouldn't have it any other way.

"When I started at Proskauer, I never in a million years could have predicted that I'd still be here in 12 years," Krochak said. "But as the years went by, I realized how much I actually enjoyed doing what I do, and that I really enjoy the sophistication of the deal work that we do. ... The fact that our practice is so varied, and you constantly have to be innovating and finding new angles, whether it's sports betting or otherwise, that's really what I enjoy most about the practice." — CHRIS SMITH

▶ **Advice to my 20-year-old self:** Don't change anything (no regrets).

▶ **What my friends/family think I do all day:** Calls and documents (it's accurate).

▶ **How I deal with stress in the workplace:** Exercise and eat.

▶ **Cause supported:** I serve on the advisory board of Legal Outreach, an organization that prepares urban youth from underserved communities in New

York City to compete at high academic levels by using intensive legal and educational programs as tools for fostering vision, developing skills, enhancing confidence and facilitating the pursuit of higher education. I created and lead an annual "Sports, Business and Law" clinic in partnership with Legal Outreach, where eighth-grade students from underserved communities in NYC attend Proskauer for a day and

participate in a mock NBA Expansion Workshop.

▶ **Apps I use most:** SiriusXM and Spotify.

▶ **First social media platform I signed up for:** Facebook.

▶ **Social media platform I use/follow most today:** LinkedIn (other than Instagram for pictures of food before I go to a restaurant).

▶ **Most pivotal decision in my career:** Accepting an offer from Proskauer, where I met my wife.

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