

THANK YOU TO OUR AWESOME 2022 ANNUAL SPONSORS

GOLD SPONSORS

Fisher Phillips, LLP
Polsinelli, LLC

SPONSORS

Atlanta Business Chronicle
Bondurant, Mixson & Elmore, LLP
Cyber Leadership and Strategy Solutions, LLC (CLASS)
Drew Eckl & Farnham, LLP
Fish & Richardson, PC
Fisher Phillips, LLP
Greenberg Traurig, LLP

Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton, LLP
King & Spalding, LLP
Legal People and The Partners Group
Legility + Consilio
Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough, LLP
Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak & Stewart, P.C.
Parker Hudson Rainer & Dobbs, LLP
Poston Communications, LLC
Smith, Gambrell & Russell, LLP
Squire Patton Boggs (US), LLP
Weinberg Wheeler, Hudgins, Gunn & Dial, LLC
Womble Bond Dickinson (US), LLP
Willenken, LLP

WOMEN'S INITIATIVE

Catalyst Level

Fisher Phillips, LLP
Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak & Stewart, P.C.
Taylor English Duma, LLP

Thought Leader Level

Legility + Consilio
SimpleLegal

ACC BRAVES EVENT

ACC Members Take in Virtual and Real Truist Park for Metaverse Seminar and Braves Game

A tour of the Atlanta Braves' virtual world highlighted an ACC Georgia continuing legal education (CLE) seminar held at the baseball team's actual Truist Park on August 31.

About 50 in-house counsel attended the presentation, during which attorneys from event sponsor Nelson Mullins sketched out the early legal landscape around the metaverse. After the CLE, the group headed to the park's "Under the Chop" space for dinner and a field-level view of the Braves' 3-2 victory over the Colorado Rockies.

Jason Epstein, a Nelson Mullins partner and co-head of the firm's technology and procurement industry group, led off the CLE by urging anyone who wants to understand the metaverse to spend time in it. "You have to participate," he said, to get a sense of what the consulting firm Gartner defines as "a collective virtual space, created by the convergence of virtually enhanced physical and digital reality."

Epstein cited data and predictions from another consultant, McKinsey, to demonstrate why participation may pay off: \$13 billion invested during 2021, with the value of the metaverse reaching \$5 trillion by 2030.

The Atlanta Braves organization is exploring metaverse opportunities, according to Jason Domir, the team's vice president and deputy general counsel, and Greg Mize, the team's vice president for marketing and innovation.

Mize said the Braves started thinking seriously about the metaverse when the COVID-19 pandemic first shut down baseball—and the rest of the global economy—just before the major league season was set to begin in March 2020. They were contemplating how to stay connected with fans and how to help struggling sponsors when, that April, rapper Travis Scott held a concert in the metaverse gaming space Fortnite.

An estimated 12 million fans logged into the 10-minute event, impressing the Braves' marketing team. Two years later, the team unveiled its "digital twin" of Truist Park, created virtually from the architectural plans for the actual stadium.

Right now, the digital ballpark experience can be found only with an invitation from the team, which built its own browser on which to host the site, rather than rent or own space on established platforms. Mize said the team hosted an event for alumni and students at historically Black colleges and universities. Guests were emailed login information to the digital Truist Park, where their avatars could explore the locker rooms and walk onto the field. Pitcher Luke Jackson embodied an avatar through which he'd chat up guests.

The event showed benefits, Mize said, such as making it easy for players to engage with fans without leaving their homes. When the site becomes more accessible in 2023, fans may be able to buy Braves gear for their avatars, follow outfield signage to sponsors and play games to stay engaged. "This is for the fan of tomorrow," said Mize.

Major League Baseball contracts and publicity and privacy rights, among other issues, must be considered before live coverage of real-life games is planned, Domir noted.

After the digital tour, Epstein and colleagues Kevin Tran and Mallory Acheson discussed recent decisions that are beginning to set boundaries for the metaverse, despite some matters still being controlled by mid-20th century case law.

Issues included "gas fees" for nonfungible tokens (NFTs), secondary marketplaces for NFTs, whether a ticket to a digital event could evolve into a government-regulated security and self-executing "smart" contracts.

Other points involved unenforceable contracts, such as one presented to children playing in an online gaming universe, patent questions and even potential claims of false imprisonment stemming from a virtual crowd surrounding a metaverse user's avatar.



Tom Schroeder



ACC members enjoying the Brave game



Kathryn Hutton



Cynthia McCaskill



ACC members cheering on the home team