

HOUSTON, Sept. 26, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- Thousands of current and former NCAA student-athletes have reached a landmark settlement with video game giant EA Sports and the Collegiate Licensing Company (CLC) over the unauthorized use of their names and likenesses – an agreement that is poised to change the business model for major college athletics.

The settlement with California-based Electronic Arts Inc. (EA Sports' parent company) and Georgia-based CLC was negotiated on behalf of the student-athletes by veteran sports law attorney [Eugene R. Egdorf](#) of [The Lanier Law Firm](#) in Houston and attorneys [Tim McIlwain](#) of Hoboken, N.J., [Rob Carey](#) and [Steve W. Berman](#) of Phoenix-based [Hagens Berman Sobol Shapiro LLP](#) and [Michael D. Hausfeld](#) of Washington, D.C.

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[Hausfeld LLP](#)

"Today's settlement is a game-changer because, for the first time, student-athletes suiting up to play this weekend are going to be paid for the use of their likenesses," says Mr. Egdorf. "We view this as the first step toward our ultimate goal of making sure all student-athletes can claim their fair share of the billions of dollars generated each year by college sports."

The parties submitted a notice announcing their agreement to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California on Thursday. According to the notice, the settlement terms will be submitted to the court soon for approval. The NCAA is not part of the settlement and remains as a defendant. Earlier in the day, EA Sports announced on its website that the company will not produce a college football game next year.

EA Sports was sued over its unapproved use of students' likenesses and physical descriptions in the company's popular "NCAA Football" and "NCAA Basketball" video games. CLC faced similar claims based on the sale of items branded with college athletes' names. Based on this settlement and other recent court rulings, EA Sports has agreed to change the way it develops future games featuring NCAA athletes in order to protect the rights to their likenesses.

In August, Mr. Egdorf joined Mr. McIlwain in his representation of former Rutgers University quarterback Ryan Hart, who originally filed his claim against EA Sports in 2009. Mr. Carey represents former West Virginia University running back Shawne Alston, former Arizona State University and University of Nebraska quarterback Sam Keller and other student-athletes in the long-running litigation. Mr. Hausfeld represents former University of California at Los Angeles basketball star Ed O'Bannon, former University of Cincinnati and professional basketball great

Written by Australian Business

Oscar Robertson
, and others.

In May, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in New Jersey reversed an earlier district court ruling by denying EA Sports' attempt to dismiss Mr. Hart's lawsuit based on claims of First Amendment free speech protections. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in California similarly rejected EA Sports' claims for First Amendment protections in Mr. Keller's case with a ruling handed down in July.

Earlier this year, The Lanier Law Firm was one of only four firms in the country named "Top Tier Firms" for class-action mass tort cases in the 2013 edition of *The Legal 500*. Firm founder [Mark Lanier](#) also was recognized in 2013 as one of the nation's Top 10 trial attorneys by *The National Law Journal*, and he previously was honored as the top class-action lawyer in Houston by the publishers of *The Best Lawyers in America*.

With offices in [Houston](#), [Los Angeles](#) and [New York](#), The Lanier Law Firm is committed to addressing client concerns with effective and innovative solutions in courtrooms across the country.

For more information, please contact J.D. Cargill at the Lanier Law Firm at 281-866-6886 or jdc@lanierlawfirm.com.

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