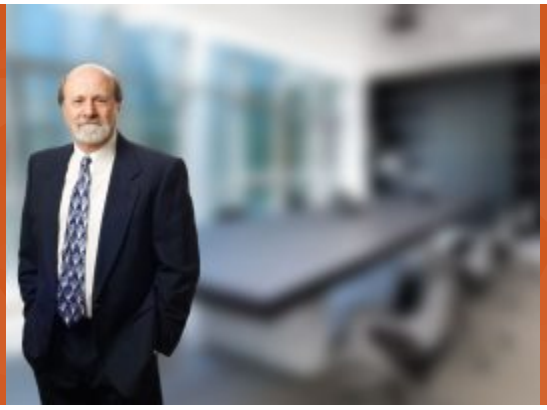
Sports, Bowls and Brands

Does Anyone Own the Trademark "SUPER BOWL"?

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It should come as no surprise that SUPER BOWL is a federally registered trademark and that the owner is *mostly* the NFL (and various affiliates).

But you probably did not know that there are *8 live registrations*, covering such diverse goods as football helmets, cell phone covers, mouse pads, DVDs, jewelry, watches, bumper stickers, stuffed animals, balloons and Christmas ornaments.

And those are all under *one Registration* (Reg. # 3138590).

Other registered NFL SUPER BOWL marks cover: clothing (such as pajamas, ties and bibs); TV broadcasting services; an annual series of musical and comedy performances; a board game; and, of course, "football exhibitions."

You probably also did not know that the earliest of these registrations dates back to 1968 (the first Super Bowl took place January 15, 1967 – kudos to their speedy trademark lawyer!).

So can anyone besides the NFL use the term "Super Bowl" for a sports event? Well, there is a registration for "SUPER BOWL OF GOLF." But don't get too excited: it's owned by National Football League Alumni, Inc.

On the other hand, Poker Central LLC was able to register "SUPER HIGH ROLLER BOWL" and "SUPER HIGH ROLLER BOWL 2015" for various poker-related services, including a continuing program about poker, entertainment in the form of live poker games, and organizing poker tournaments. However, these are registered on the Supplemental Register – i.e., Poker Central couldn't persuade the Trademark Office that these names are distinctive, rather than descriptive, though they tried to argue this didn't make sense in light of the many registered BOWL marks.

And that leads to a final point:

- Yes, SUPER BOWL is largely the NFL's exclusive mark, which it has been vigilant in policing: at the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board alone, the NFL has brought 32 opposition actions against parties seeking to register names such as SUPER BOWL PORTABLE RESTROOMS (Serial # 75578081) for "rental and leasing of portable restrooms, sinks and holding tanks" and SUPERB OWL (Serial # 86339567) for "organizing, arranging and conducting running events."
- But the term "BOWL" (sans SUPER) has been used and registered by many others for various sports events and competitions, including SOCCER BOWL (Reg. # 4485483), SOUL BOWL (Reg. # 2412287), COLLEGE BOWL (Reg. # 1191378), GRAMMAR BOWL (Reg. # 3987236) and HEALTHBOWL (Reg # 4290969) – which, surprisingly enough, is for "athletic competitions and games in the field of football."

In short, if you want to run a sports competition, don't call it a "SUPER BOWL." But you may still be able to dub your event a "BOWL," as long as you can avoid stepping on another Bowl's toes and marks.

P.S. I'm from Massachusetts. If you're interested, "NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS" is also federally registered for a wide range of goods and services, including jewelry, ornaments, and collectibles; toys and games; sporting goods; paper goods; clothing; and of course, (since 1974) "entertainment services in the form of professional football games and exhibitions."

For more information about trademarks, please contact a member of our Trademark Team.