

News

BASEBALL STARS YASIEL PUIG AND SHOHEI OHTANI NAVIGATE LEGAL COMPLEXITIES IN SEPARATE BETTING CASES

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BCLP Partner Jean-Claude (J.C.) André was quoted in the [Los Angeles Times](#) regarding the legal battles his client, former Los Angeles Dodgers outfielder Yasiel Puig, and current Dodgers pitcher and outfielder Shohei Ohtani face related to sports betting, highlighting the complexities foreign athletes may face when navigating the U.S. legal system.

Initially assured he wasn't a target because investigators were focused on the bookies—not the bettors—Puig now faces federal charges for obstruction of justice and making false statements after his first conversation with the law enforcement. The case serves as a cautionary tale for professional athletes like Ohtani on how witnesses in federal investigations can become targets themselves if they are suspected of veering from the truth, and how foreign athletes—who may be accustomed to other people negotiating unfamiliar cultural or financial situations for them—can face pitfalls within the U.S. legal system.

Puig's attorneys have since argued miscommunication and entrapment, leading to the successful withdrawal of his previous plea deal and the exclusion of statements made in connection with his plea agreement as evidence—a decision now under appeal by prosecutors. Puig's appellate attorney and BCLP Partner J.C. calls the prosecution's claims "preposterous," stating that the district judge appropriately barred prosecutors from mentioning the deal in their case because the judge had yet to accept the plea and had never questioned Puig about his understanding of it at a hearing, which is a standard part of the plea process. "The government should just try the case fairly on the facts, which we are ready to do," J.C. said.

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