

REMINDER: DON'T TRY TO "COMPETE" WITH THE STRENGTH OF THE OLYMPIC TRADEMARKS

While the world may see new champions take home the gold, our counsel at Armstrong Teasdale remains the same year after year... Please remember to avoid using Olympic-related trademarks and indicia in all advertising, including social media posts and digital marketing.

The U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) have warned businesses that, unless a business is an official sponsor of the Olympic Games (Games), it should not deploy advertising campaigns, including social media posts, that are Olympic themed, feature Olympic trademarks, include games imagery, or even congratulate Olympic performances/performers. Unless a company's primary business is disseminating news and information, a company's social media platforms are considered commercial in nature serving to promote the company (e.g., increase sales). Thus, the USOPC will be keeping a particularly close eye on digital marketing and social media posts that reference the Olympics.

Historically, the USOPC has prioritized protection of the quality and integrity of its intellectual property. In an effort to safeguard and increase the value of its brand, the USOPC will continue to monitor and, if warranted, challenge commercial entities that use any Olympic properties; including trademarks, graphics, video clips, and imagery of the athletes, without receiving official permission (which can be requested [here](#)). Not surprising, violators will be asked to remove the offending content from the ad, or they may become the subject of legal action.

Of particular note, federal law prohibits the simulation or transformation of the trademarks OLYMPIC and PARALYMPIC and other Olympic indicia into commercial-themed words or designs, such as turning the Olympic rings into a business's goods (tires, pizzas, etc.), or creating a portmanteau of any of the marks (e.g., "AQUALYMPICS" or "BROLYMPICS"). Moreover, the USOPC is particularly sensitive to use of or references to any individual athlete competing in the Olympics. Even if businesses have an existing affiliation or partnership with a particular athlete, they must follow certain guidelines if they desire to encourage or congratulate their sponsored athlete in advertising. For

PEOPLE

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SERVICES AND INDUSTRIES

Trademark

Intellectual Property

Sports, Media and Entertainment



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instance, the ads may not include any Olympic properties (trademarks, graphics, imagery, video clips) and may only run before or after the Games but not during.

Note that these restrictions do not apply to personal social media accounts (non-business related). [Additional guidelines about Olympic brand usage can be found online.](#)