

LITIGATOR OF THE YEAR

WINNER

WILL STUTE

ORRICK, HERRINGTON &
SUTCLIFFE


By ALM Staff



As a nationally recognized trial lawyer, Will Stute has obtained numerous wins during his career. But in the last year alone, his record for client the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) was particularly noteworthy. With tens of millions

of dollars at stake for the NCAA during each trial and their business model and reputation on the line, Stute succeeded in beating multiple claims involving sports-related injuries.

In the case *Gee v. NCAA*, which was the first trial in the nation that involved claims that



the NCAA was responsible for concussion-related consequences from playing football in college, Stute and the NCAA were able to prove that the former football star's medical condition and death later in life could not be linked to actions the organization could have taken. The jury handed up a complete defense win. This case set a precedent for hundreds of cases like it that were pending in the country. Then in a similar case just a few months later, Finnerty v. NCAA, Stute secured another complete defense verdict, this time for the second concussion case to reach trial in the nation, which involved a star quarterback from the early 2000s.

Prior to these two cases, Stute and his team also secured a high-profile win for the

NCAA in Brenner v. NCAA. This case from May 2022 was brought by a former football player who was seeking over \$125 million in damages from injuries that occurred during "extreme workouts" during his time at the university. The case could have posed a major threat in the NCAA's position in college sports, potentially putting the organization at risk for liability for every injury at every university that occurred at every practice or workout across the country. After a four-week long trial, the jury found the NCAA did not cause the injuries of this player. During these difficult cases, Stute went above and beyond to protect his client from being sued for what would have been well over \$200 million in damages.