

NBA Hall of Fame Player Sues Over Unauthorized Use of Image

Gonzalo E. Mon

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Dominique Wilkins is an NBA Hall of Fame basketball player known for his acrobatic slam dunks and, after retirement, for his commentary during televised Hawks games. Wilkins also suffers from diabetes and has been an advocate for the treatment of the disease and its symptoms. As part of his advocacy, Wilkins has worked with Genesis Performance Group to promote PeptideVite, a supplement that helps with the side effects of diabetes medication.

AmeriHealth Partners was a distributor of PeptideVite. Earlier this year, the company allegedly started using a picture of Wilkins to promote PeptideVite. Although Wilkins had authorized Genesis to use that particular picture, he claims that AmeriHealth does not have authorization to use it. In March, he sent the company a letter asking them to stop using his name, image, and likeness.

When Wilkins didn't get a "substantive response" to his letter, he filed a lawsuit against AmeriHealth. The lawsuit alleges that the company's unauthorized use of his name, image, and likeness constitutes false endorsement and false advertising under the Lanham Act and that it is a violation of his common law right of publicity in Georgia. Wilkins seeks damages in an amount of no less than \$250,000.

We only have one side of the story and it's too early to tell how this one will turn out, but the lawsuit is a good reminder that companies need to ensure that they have permission before using a celebrity's name, image, or likeness for commercial purposes. Failure to do that can have significant consequences. Some cases - like [this one](#) involving 50 Cent - settle quietly behind the scenes but others - like [this one](#) involving Michael Jordan - make headlines with multi-million dollar verdicts.