

## Press Release:

# Couchmans Plays Key Supporting Role in Liverpool Takeover

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Couchmans LLP, the market-leading specialist sports law firm, acted for Liverpool FC Chairman Martin Broughton in relation to the recent sale of the Club to New England Sports Ventures ('NESV'). Couchmans, brought in by Broughton as his personal advisors upon his appointment in April 2010, worked initially on the complex corporate governance arrangements between Royal Bank of Scotland ('RBS') and former owners Tom Hicks and George Gillett which gave Broughton the power to deliver a sale of the Club. Couchmans then continued in a central advisory role throughout the 6-month sales process and the tumultuous events of the last few weeks, which culminated in the legal battles with Hicks and Gillett in the High Court and in Dallas, and the eventual completion of the sale of the Club to NESV on October 15<sup>th</sup>.

The deal also involved UK magic circle law firms Slaughter and May and Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, representing the Club and RBS respectively, and US giants Shearman & Sterling representing NESV.

Satish Khandke, Partner and Head of Sports Ventures, led the Couchmans team. *"It was a privilege to work at close quarters with a businessman of Martin's calibre"* said Khandke. *"As the individual with ultimate responsibility for both finding the right buyer for the Club and executing a sale to them, Martin had the key role in the entire process, and as his lawyers we were therefore advising on all of the key decisions and strategy throughout. Speaking for the firm, I was especially pleased with the way we were able to adapt and deal with the broad range of issues involved as the matter transformed quickly from a corporate transaction into high profile and complex multi-jurisdictional litigation. This project illustrates clearly an increasing trend - that there is a vital role to be played, even in the biggest of corporate transactions, for specialist firms with genuine sector expertise."*

*Martin has rightly emerged from this extraordinarily difficult process with enormous credit and we are delighted to have played our part in helping him to secure the future of Liverpool FC."*

Martin Broughton, Chairman of Liverpool FC, said *“As Chairman, it was vital to me that I had trusted experts alongside me who not only had the technical legal know-how to handle the complex issues involved, but were also well-versed in the nuances and politics of football. Satish and his team worked tirelessly throughout and the best compliment I can pay them is that, even at the most testing times, I always had confidence in the advice I was being given. I have been working with Couchmans for some time on different projects and I have found their particular mix of legal skills and strategic capability allied to in-depth knowledge of the sports industry not only of immense value to me but unique in the marketplace.”*

### **Note to Editors**

**Couchmans LLP is a commercial law firm based in London offering specialist legal advice to the sports and sponsorship industries across 25 sports internationally. The leading independent legal directories say the following about the firm:**

*“The UK’s leading sports boutique”* (Legal 500)

*“If you want someone who knows the sports business inside out, these are the guys to call”* (Chambers & Partners)

*“Formidably strong line-up ... the firm dominates the commercial side of the sector”* (Legal 500)

*“A phenomenal sports practice ... there is clear, blue water between Couchmans and rival boutique sports firms ... the firm acts for some of the best known names in the sports industry”* (Legal 500)

*“The premier sporting boutique ... extremely commercial, increasing the value of every deal with the knowledge it brings”* (Chambers & Partners)

*“Remarkably successful at a time when other firms have been looking to exit the sports market ... winning business model”* (Legal 500)

*“The achievement of this firm is incredible ... the country’s number one sports boutique”* (Chambers & Partners)

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