

## Rising Star: Covington's Robert Gianchetti

By Elaine Briseño

*Law360 (August 5, 2025, 4:05 PM EDT)* -- Robert Gianchetti, special counsel at Covington & Burling LLP, has helped several National Football League teams navigate the legal ramifications of relocating and guided exercise equipment company Peloton in fighting off a lawsuit by its investors, earning him a spot among the sports and betting practitioners under age 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

### Why he's a sports litigator:

Gianchetti said he finds it rewarding that his work has a tangible impact on how sports are managed, adding that he spends most of his time outside of work involved with or watching sports, and that his law school thesis examined the powers of league commissioners in sports.

"Sports is among my greatest passions," he said. "It marries my personal interests and knowledge and fandom."

It was sports that inspired him to attend law school, he said, explaining that he was a referee for the Special Olympics and liked the feeling of being able to give back to his community. He knew being a lawyer would help him further that goal.

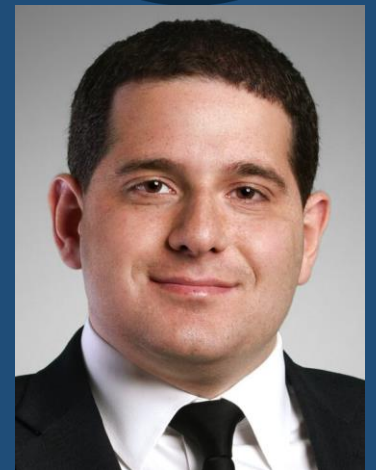
"I achieve tangible goods for my clients," he said. "I make an impact on substantial things. The things I'm working on have real-world impact."

### Biggest cases of his career:

Gianchetti, a commercial litigator, co-led a Covington team representing the NFL in lawsuits filed when the Rams, Raiders and Chargers initiated moves to different cities. These were not only the biggest cases of his career, but the most challenging because of differing state laws, he said, noting that the lawsuits received intense media scrutiny and that the plaintiffs were seeking a large amount in monetary damages.

The case over the Rams' move from St. Louis to Los Angeles settled not

2025



**Robert Gianchetti**  
Covington & Burling

**Age:** 33

**Home base:** New York City

**Position:** Special counsel

**Law school:** New York University  
School of Law

**First job after law school:** Law clerk  
to U.S. District Judge Colleen  
McMahon of the Southern District of  
New York

long before trial, but Gianchetti and the Covington team succeeded in getting the Raiders and Chargers lawsuits dismissed at the pleading stage.

"St. Louis was a tough forum," Gianchetti added.

The Missouri lawsuit was filed in 2017. The NFL and Rams reached a \$790 million settlement with the city of St. Louis in 2021.

In that state, the court found the NFL's relocation policy amounted to a contract, and authorities could seek to enforce that contract in court, teeing up the lawsuit for trial. The San Diego and Oakland courts, he said, reached the opposite conclusion and dismissed the claims against the NFL.

When the Chargers moved from San Diego to Los Angeles, San Diego resident Ruth Henricks sued the team. Gianchetti drafted the motion that ultimately led to the lawsuit's dismissal.

In 2018, the city of Oakland, California, sued the Raiders and the NFL in California federal court alleging antitrust violations and breach of contract related to the team's planned move to Las Vegas. The Rams officially relocated in 2020, but the lawsuit continued.

The federal district court dismissed the lawsuit in April 2020, and a Ninth Circuit panel affirmed that decision in December 2021, saying the dispute was not rooted in an antitrust but rather the ability to afford a franchise. The city, the appellate panel said, was priced out of the market for an NFL team. The Supreme Court denied certiorari in October 2022.

Still hoping to secure a win, Oakland filed suit in California state court, asserting breach of the NFL's relocation policy. That, too, was unsuccessful, with Judge Craig D. Karlan dismissing the lawsuit in April 2021 and a California state appeals court affirming his decision.

#### **The most interesting case he's worked on lately:**

Gianchetti helped lead Peloton's current and former executives to a win in a lawsuit by investors accusing the company of overstating the safety of its products before 2.2 million of its bikes were recalled for a seat defect.

U.S. District Judge Margo K. Brodie dismissed the lawsuit in New York on Feb. 14, stressing that investors had not pointed to any materially misleading statements or omissions made by Peloton's top brass. The investors filed an amended complaint April 11.

"Fortunately the court adopted our arguments," Gianchetti said. "It's a very interesting and ongoing matter."

#### **His proudest moment as an attorney:**

Early in his career, Gianchetti was sworn into the bar by U.S. District Judge Colleen McMahon of the Southern District of New York, whom he had long admired. His first job out of law school was working as a law clerk for Judge McMahon.

"I will always remember the personal swearing-in inside her chambers," he said. "It's not every day a federal judge swears you in."

*--As told to Elaine Briseño. Editing by Amy French.*

*Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2025 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,100 submissions. Attorneys had to be under 40 as of April 30, 2025, to be eligible for this year's award.*

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