

## Expanding the Frontiers of Legal Training for Budding Lawyers: A Case for Sports Law

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### **Abstracts**

*The legal profession is one of the most ancient, revered and honourable professions.<sup>1</sup> In contemporary times, it is no exaggeration to assert that the profession of law is the pivot on which modern juridified society is built as law is strategically to be found at every component of human endeavour<sup>2</sup> ranging from sports, politics, governance, administration, commerce, agriculture, health, transportation, communication, InfoTech to mention a few.<sup>3</sup> The lustrous and scintillating relevance of the legal profession presents gladdening prospects and ledge to the aspiring lawyers referred to in this paper as budding lawyers. The thematic preoccupation of this article is to critically examine Sports law as an emerging field of law thereby expatiating on the concept from a global perspective, the relevance of the field, its effectiveness and appropriateness of its study as well as answering the critiques of study of Sports law and at the end eliciting suggestions that will inject new meanings and principles in legal education. Teaching sports law is a grand task which requires serious preparation and reference to wide variety of subjects. This article is designed to provide a springboard for preparing to teach sports law in Nigerian universities and may not be concerned with the various sports law topics and teaching suggestions. Legal training is synonymous with legal education in the context of this paper.*

### **1. History of Legal Profession and Education**

Historically, legal profession dated back as far as 1300<sup>4</sup> and in Nigeria particularly as far back as 1879.<sup>5</sup> The history of legal

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<sup>1</sup> It is believed arguably that law, medicine and priesthood are the three noblest professions.

<sup>2</sup> A. Apara “*The Law is for All*” (4<sup>th</sup> Dimension Despiser: 1982) p 191-3.

<sup>3</sup> N. Tobi, “*The Nigerian Lawyers*” (Law Research and Development Publication, 2003), p. 184.

<sup>4</sup> As of this time, the legal profession had come in to being in England. The history of the profession is in to two periods; the medieval and early sixteenth century. See O. Adewoye, *Prelude to the Legal Profession in Lagos 1863-1880* (1970) *Journal of African Law*, p 98.

education is a little alluring. The education of the Common law lawyers was long left in the hand of the judges and courts which provided little lectures, moots and discussions and instructions to the budding lawyers.<sup>6</sup> In fact, it was the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century judges one can say made the law and the same time learnt the law.<sup>7</sup> It was the representation of narration of 1402<sup>8</sup> and the lamentation that many attorneys were ungrounded and not learned in the law that they were therefore required especially as they want to be on the Roll to be examined by the judges.<sup>9</sup> As the Inns became the centre of education, leaders drawn from the benchers gave the students instructions on law, any student who decides to practice in the court is to be examined by the benchers and if qualified will be called to the bar by his inns. The earliest teaching of the Common law was by apprenticeship not study strictly speaking.<sup>10</sup> However, the proper teaching of law started in 1758 by Blackstone in Oxford University and he later became the first professor of English law.

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<sup>5</sup> The first Nigerian to qualify as a lawyer was Mr. Christopher Alexander Sapara-Williams who was called to the English Bar in November 1879 and enrolled in Nigeria on 11<sup>th</sup> August, 1880. See generally O. Elias, *Makers of Nigerian Law* ( London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1965), p.30.

<sup>6</sup> See for further reading, G. Wilson, *cases and materials on the English legal system*, (London: Sweet and Maxwell 1973), p.153 -160.

<sup>7</sup> The list includes Brocton, Martins, Pateshell and William Raleigh. The judges were recruited from the clergy in the royal and were almost all of the ecclesiastics. There was no professional class of advocate from which they could have been drawn and no teaching of law anywhere. See Radcliffe & Cross, *English legal system*, (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) (London: Butterworth & Co Publishers), p.373

<sup>8</sup> See also O.B. Akinola, “*Principles of Nigerian Law in Practice*” (Enugu: Chenglo limited, 2010), p.3-18

<sup>9</sup> The successful and abler found themselves in to a small exclusive class called as of then sergeant-at-law and the others formed the various Inns of Court. The inns later became the centres of legal education.

<sup>10</sup> Right up until 1840, the requirement was attendance at dinners, payment of fees and membership of the inn.

The structure of legal education in Nigeria is in two tiers.<sup>11</sup> In Nigeria,<sup>12</sup> the history of legal education in a few words may be traced to the outcome of the Unsworth committee.<sup>13</sup> As recommended by the committee, the Legal Education Act and Legal Practitioner Act were passed.<sup>14</sup> The Legal Education Act established the Council of Legal Education with the mandate of providing legal education for persons seeking to become members of the legal profession in Nigeria.<sup>15</sup> Today, the Nigerian Law School has graduated over 40,000 students<sup>16</sup> and there are not less than thirty Nigerian universities offering law as course of study.<sup>17</sup> The conventional courses available in Nigerian universities leading to the award of Bachelor of Law include Legal method, Constitutional law, Law of Contract, Nigerian Legal System, Family law, Commercial law, Labour Law, Banking and Insurance, Law of tort, Criminal law, Customary law, Islamic law, conflict of law, Industrial law, equity and trust, Land law, conveyance, international law, human rights law, health care law, oil and gas law, company law, Jurisprudence, Landlord and Tenancy, law of evidence

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<sup>11</sup> They are the academic stage and vocational stage at the Nigerian Law School. This paper is however concerns with the academic stage.

<sup>12</sup> For details on the history of Nigerian Legal Profession, see O. Adewoye, *The Legal Profession in Nigeria 1865-1962* (Nigeria: Longman, 1977), P.15.

<sup>13</sup> The committee was set up to consider and make recommendations among others for the future of the Nigerian legal profession with particular reference to legal education, admission to practice and right of audience before the courts. It was headed by E.I.G Unsworth the then Attorney General of the Federation.

<sup>14</sup> See Legal Education Act 1962 later *Cap 206 LFN 1990* and now *Cap L10, LFN 2004* and presently as Legal Practitioner Act *Cap 207 LFN 1990 cap L11, LFN 2004*.

<sup>15</sup> To this end, the Council established the Nigerian Law School in 1962 and the first set of eight students were admitted in January 1963. Also a Law degree programme was introduced in the university college in Ibadan, now university of Ibadan to enable aspirants to study in Nigeria. O. Doherty, *Legal Practice and management in Nigeria*, (London: Cavendish publishing, 1998), p 5-10

<sup>16</sup> Oluwatoyin, *op. cit.*

<sup>17</sup> The first Nigerian to qualify as a lawyer was Mr. Christopher Alexander Sapara-Williams who enrolled in Nigeria on 11<sup>th</sup> August, 1880. See O. Elias, *Makers of Nigerian Law*, (London: sweet and Maxwell, 1965), p.30.

and of recent entertainment law, intellectual property law, Secured credit among others. At the Nigerian Law School, there are five courses which are; civil litigation, Criminal litigation, Corporate law, Property law and Ethics.<sup>18</sup>

## 2. Nigerian Sport History

Sport activities include both athletics (track and field); Badminton, baseball, Basketball, boxing, chess, cricket, cycling, and football,<sup>19</sup> Gymnastics, golf, handball, hockey, judo, lawn tennis, rowing, shooting, squash racket, swimming, table tennis<sup>20</sup> taekwondo, volleyball, weight-lifting and wrestling to mention a few. For Olympics, Nigeria is participating in soccer (of course), judo, wrestling, boxing, weightlifting, tennis, long jump, triple jump, table-tennis and the sprints.

Nigerian sports, though always exercised, were noted first in the 1950s. Nigeria had its first appearance in the Helsinki Olympic Games in 1952.<sup>21</sup> In 1962, the National Sports Council was set up.<sup>22</sup> In terms of soccer, the Nigerian Football Federation was created in 1945. It was the first year that a competition was organized bringing together clubs from Lagos, Port Harcourt and Calabar. The

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<sup>18</sup> See O.A Adegoke and S.A. Osamolu, *Essentials of Drafting and Communication Skills for Lawyers*, (Abuja: Ben Oketola publications, 2011), p. 293. The Nigerian Law School offers training on the procedural law.

<sup>19</sup> It is otherwise called soccer in some places like United States of America. This is the most popular game in Nigeria.

<sup>20</sup> called ping-pong in some other places.

<sup>21</sup> Nigeria had her first international victory in 1954, when Emmanuel Ifeajuna won a gold medal in the high jump at the Commonwealth games in Cardiff.

<sup>22</sup> The aims are: to coordinate and integrate efforts to raise the standard of performance in sports in Nigeria; to encourage the development, organization and participation of sports in Nigeria; to make any arrangements on behalf of the States' Sports Councils for Competitions, technical assistance, recruitment of coaches and for any other matters as the Commission sees fit and to promote physical fitness and general well-being of all persons in Nigeria.

championship was also renamed the Challenge Cup replacing the Governor's Cup as it had been known under their British colonizers. However, the clubs had to wait till 1990 for the professional league to be introduced. Nigeria emerged on the international soccer scene in 1960 when it first entered the World Cup, but failed to qualify for the finals. The Nigerian National League began in 1972 when five teams entered the league.<sup>23</sup> Today, sport in the nation has grown in leap and bound.

Sport activities may be roughly divided into the areas of amateur, professional, and international sports.<sup>24</sup> The distinction between a professional and amateur athlete is somewhat tenuous.<sup>25</sup> So-called "amateur" student/athletes at universities often receive scholarships and other forms of compensation. Also, an athlete may be defined as an amateur by one organization, but considered otherwise elsewhere. A better course may be that an amateur<sup>26</sup> athlete participates in sports as an avocation while professional athlete<sup>27</sup> is involved in sports as a vocation.

### **3. What is Sports Law?**

Sports Law encompasses a conglomerate areas of law brought together in unique ways. It is an amalgamation of several disciplines of law married together in unique way.<sup>28</sup> Sports Law is therefore a

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<sup>23</sup> This grew to 12 teams by 1978.

<sup>24</sup> The major international competitions are the Olympic events, FIFA sponsored football tournaments and the commonwealth games.

<sup>25</sup> R.C. Berry and G.M. Wong, *Law and Business of the Sports Industries: Common Issues in Amateur and Professional Sports*, (2nd ed.), (Praeger Publishing, 1993) available on <http://www.amazon.com/law-business-sports-industries-professional/dp/027593862x/ref=ed oe h/002-7392497-3410460>, last assessed on the 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2011.

<sup>26</sup> Amateur sports are usually for the fun, bodily exercises and or organized intercollegiate competition such as NUGA games in Nigerian universities. In United States for instance the National Collegiate Athletic Association ("NCAA") is the governing body for intercollegiate sports and has over 1000 member colleges and universities.

<sup>28</sup> See for instance, M. Creenberg and J.T. Cray, *To ensure your collective department is run effectively, know your sports law*, FOR. REC, February, 1992, 3-6

combination of contract, tort, entertainment, labour<sup>29</sup>, constitutional and human rights, intellectual property, criminal law, law and practice of disputes resolution, commercial law to mention a few brought together.

The study of sports law requires consideration of multiple areas of law, an interdisciplinary perspective and conflicting yet harmonious provisions. From the onset, it must be mentioned that there is no consensus among scholars as to whether the study of the laws which regulate and govern the sports industries be called “sports law” if it is viewed as distinct body of law or if it is otherwise agreed to be the mere application of general laws without a coherent integration to make a solid area of law and the collection of rules and statutes that apply solely to sports and unrelated all kinds of legal doctrines to the extent those legal doctrines affect sports then, it may better be termed as “law and sports.”<sup>30</sup>

Thus sports law in this looser sense is little more than the application of all of law to sports situations. Regardless of nomenclature, sports law has come to take a legitimate place in a law school curriculum in the law schools of some Western countries<sup>31</sup> and rightly so in our view because of the hilarious issues, multi-faceted

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<sup>29</sup> Employment relations in football are governed by a set of distinct institutional mechanisms: contracts between players and clubs, employment law and a regulatory framework known as the transfer system enforced by the football governing bodies (FIFA and the national associations).

<sup>30</sup> See M. Mathew and O. Hayden: “Sports law: Implications for the Development of International, comparative, and National Law and Global dispute Resolution.” Published in *Marquette University Law School Legal studies Research paper series*, No. 10-31 available also on <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1625919>, visited on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2011.

<sup>31</sup> Some United States universities such as Marquette, Florida coastal and Tulane; Australian universities such as Melbourne Law schools now offer specialized programs of study in sports law as part of their Diploma and masters programmes. Academic study of sports law in leading European countries such as Britain, Germany, France and Italy did not gain momentum till 1990s. Few of such universities have sport And entertainment law journal or reviews. See, E. Grayson, *sport and the law* (London: Butterworths, 1988).

nature, ever growing, intensive interest and practical relevance to the society of today<sup>32</sup>. As far back as 1965, a sub-field of sports economics has developed within formal economics to investigate the somewhat unique economic relationships that have developed with the professionalization of sport as an industry.

The modern practice of sport law either as a sports agent or sports lawyer dates back to early 60s by the notable pioneer lawyer Boston attorney in person of Bob Woolf.<sup>33</sup> He was said to have first appeared for Red Sox pitcher Earl Wilson after the latter was involved in an auto accident in 1962. Six years later, woolf left his criminal practice and devoted his time entirely to representing professional athletes.<sup>34</sup> Before his death in November, 1993, his office<sup>35</sup> had negotiated over 2000 professional athletic contracts estimated at over one billion dollars.

#### **4. Sports Law Knowledge and Content<sup>36</sup>**

Historically, sports law has been lumped in generally with other entertainment representation. Today, with the explosion of sporting events and professional leagues, this area of law is deserving of its own focus. Sport is a big business accounting for more than five percent of world trade. In the European Union, some over five million jobs directly and indirectly related to football alone have been created.<sup>37</sup> In the European Union, it accounts for more than 2% of

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<sup>32</sup> B. Joseph: "Antitrust and Sports: must competition on the field Displace competition in the marketplace" (2006) *Tennessee Law Review*, vol.60, p.263.

<sup>33</sup> L. Shulruff, "The Football Lawyers," *A.B.A.J* Sept., 1985, 45- 46. For further details see *Street & Smith's Sports Business Journal* available at <http://sportsbusinessjournal.com>, visited on 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2011 and

<sup>34</sup> Sports Law Trailblazer Was 65, *Massachusetts Law Weekly*, Dec. 6, 1993 p 2.

<sup>35</sup> Alan I. & Holden W. "Anatomy of an NFL Sports Agent" *Entertainment & Sports Law Journal* (1998) pp 58 -74, p58

<sup>36</sup> See generally, L. Halgreen, *European Sports Law; A Comparative Analysis of the European and American Models of Sport* (2004) pp 23-32, p. 24.

<sup>37</sup> I. Blackshaw, "The Court of Arbitration for Sport: An International Forum for Settling Disputes Effectively within the Family of Sport" available at <http://www.tab-cas.org>, visited 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 2010. In Africa, there seems to

their combined Gross National Product.<sup>38</sup> It has even been said that a country that wins the World football cup will have her GNP increased by four percent.<sup>39</sup> Sport is recognized further as a big business even by World Trade Organization (WTO).<sup>40</sup>

Sports law knowledge will provide the insight in to the specialized areas of law with general application outside the sports industry (e.g. antitrust, labour, intellectual property, federal disability discrimination laws, etc.) and develop contract negotiation, business planning, and transactional skills. It will guide on how several related areas of law combine to govern a complex industry and how courts resolve competing policy concerns when different bodies of law intersect and conflict. Virtually all of the knowledge and skills developed by students in sports law courses and internships are readily transferable and useful in serving clients in other industries.<sup>41</sup>

Budding Lawyers need to learn more and appreciate how amateur, professional, and Olympic sports are regulated by legal systems, which will enhance their ability to make comparisons with the legal regulation of sports in countries and of the world while also appreciating the key historical, sociological, economic, and public policy issues underpinning and influencing the development of sports law.

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be no accurate data but it is however not doubtful that a good proportion of the youth are gainfully employed in trade relating to football both in the continent of Africa and outside the continent.

<sup>38</sup> See for instance, Ian Blackshaw, “Fair Play on and off the Field of Play: Settling Sports Disputes through the Court of Arbitration for Sport” (2006) *International Sports Law Journal*.

<sup>39</sup> In the UK, annual consumer spending on sport has reached a colossus sum of \$ 12 billion as of 2002. See the Report of the UK Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) published in December 2002. In Africa, there seem to be no accurate data for now. It is however not in doubt that a substantial percentage of the youth are involved in football or sport related job.

<sup>40</sup> Under the WTO rules service classification list, the business of football is recognized as Recreational, Cultural and Sporting services.

<sup>41</sup> See for instance <http://www.paralegalsubstantivelaw.com/miami>, visited on the 25th January, 2011.

Sports law knowledge will enable practitioners to appreciate different internal processes for regulating amateur, professional, and Olympic sports within the country, continent and other jurisdictions especially dispute management and understand how various areas of Nigerian public law, particularly antitrust, intellectual property law, labour law, criminal law and others shape and constrain the internal regulatory authority of private sports leagues and organizations. This will enable budding lawyers<sup>42</sup> to be able to use this knowledge effectively in matters involving Nigerian sports organizations, leagues, and athletes and understand the international legal environment applicable to sport. They will identify and understand policy issues affecting the legal regulation of sport and resolve legal problems from both a theoretical and practical perspective.

The globalization of sport has moved the focus of legal regulation increasingly onto international sports federations. Sport organizations control and govern national sports and are in turn governed by the international federation sometime with impunity to national sovereignty. They have rulebooks and constitutions. They take decisions that can have profound effects on the careers of thousands and that have overreaching economic consequences on individual corporate bodies and even nations. Yet, they claim or are autonomous and are independent of national governments.<sup>43</sup> How are they governed and how their activities are regulated are key questions that should merit academic discourse.<sup>44</sup>

Also, Sport as it is today has grown from activities of mere pleasure, enjoyment and fun to complex and commercialized

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<sup>42</sup> The roles of lawyers in modern democratic society cannot be over-emphasised. See for instances, O. Oko, "Consolidating Democracy on a Troubled Continent; A challenge for lawyers in Africa" (2000) V and J of Trans Law p. 575.

<sup>43</sup> See a quotation attributed to the vice-president of the IAAF (International Amateur Athletics Federation), explaining why they refused to recognize the US courts, in *Reynolds v IAAF* [1992] 841 F. Supp 1444, 1452 (S.D. Ohio). Quoted in J.B. Jacobs and B. Samuels: "The Drug Testing Project In International Sports: Dilemmas In An Expanding Regulatory Regime", (1995) *Hastings International & Comparative Law Review* 18, 557, 583.

<sup>44</sup> K. Foster, "Is There a Global Sports Law?" (2003) Frank Cass, London, *Entertainment Law*, Vol.2, pp.1-18.

activities. Nigeria and most countries have experienced litigation explosions in what is supposed to be a game and instrument of societal integration. There are disputes relating to doping, corruption,<sup>45</sup> team coach and club transfer,<sup>46</sup> hard tackle and bodily harms, sponsorship and endorsements,<sup>47</sup> licensing systems and merchandising, release of player for national assignment vis-à-vis club engagements,<sup>48</sup> ownership of club, sale of television rights and broadcasting arrangements,<sup>49</sup> image rights, grievances and election disputes.<sup>50</sup> These disputes are sometimes compromised, arbitrated, litigated and or negotiated; whichever way they are resolved, they must agitate the learned minds and “provoke” further academic discourse.

Also, there are international institutions regulating sports in the international scene. The Court of Arbitration for Sport was

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<sup>45</sup> For instance in Nigeria, there was the recent impeachment of the trio of the top officers of NFF; Alhaji Sani Lulu, Taiwo Ogunjobi, Amanze Uchegbulam and they are currently facing prosecution for offences bordering largely on corruption and misappropriation of fund. See for further reading “EFFC Quiz Maigari for Eight Hours” in *Complete Sports* vol. 16, no 022, Wednesday July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

<sup>46</sup> Again in Nigeria we have the imbroglio between the NFF and Coach Berti Vogts, see for further reading, “Vogts Reports Nigeria to FIFA Again” *Punch newspaper*, Friday march 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

<sup>47</sup> In Nigeria there was a problem between the NFF and telecommunication giant Globacom the major sponsor of the Nigerian league who opted out in the 2009/2010 season. There was acrimony in respect of outstanding sum due under the endorsement and sponsorship deals.

<sup>48</sup> Take for instance the incidents that happened at the eve of Nigeria preparation for the Olympic especially the football event which involved Taiye Taiwo of Olympic Marseilles of France and Chinedu Obasi.

<sup>49</sup> There has been this ugly competition between SuperSport and HITV in respect of acquiring the rights to broadcast live matches of the English Barclay Premiership matches in Nigeria.

<sup>50</sup> The election of the Nigeria Olympic Committee was nullified and a rerun was ordered. See “Badare Drags NOC to CAS” *The Nation Newspaper*, Wednesday, August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010. The Football industry was not spare too, recently the election conducted by the NFF was nullified by the High Court sitting in Lagos and a contempt proceeding was brought against the elected officials.

formed in 1983 and became operational in November 1984,<sup>51</sup> then the International Olympic Committee, World Anti-Doping Agency, Federation of International Football Association.<sup>52</sup> These organizations, institutions and or bodies promote sports, have a rule making power especially in the issuance of players' license and regulate even economic activity that is peripheral to the sporting activity and touching on fundamental freedoms. For instance; Football is a big business accounting for more than five percent of world trade. In the European Union, it accounts for more than 2% of their combined Gross National Product<sup>53</sup> and some five million jobs<sup>54</sup> directly or indirectly related to football contracts have been created.<sup>55</sup> It has even been said that a country that wins the World football cup will have her GNP increased by four percent.<sup>56</sup> Football is recognized further as a big business even by World Trade

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<sup>51</sup> It seats in Lausanne, Switzerland, created by international Olympic Committee and known by its French title as *Tribunal Arbitral du Sport* (TAS) it has two branches in Sydney, Australia and New York, USA. During the Olympic Games and FIFA Tournament it operates an *ad hoc* Division which was first set up on 28<sup>th</sup> September, 1995.

<sup>52</sup> FIFA was founded in 1904. It is otherwise called *federation internationale de football Association* in French.

<sup>53</sup> See for instance, I. Blackshaw: "Fair Play on and off the Field of Play: Settling Sports Disputes through the Court of Arbitration for Sport" (July – October, 2006) *International Sports Law Journal*.

<sup>54</sup> Related jobs include coach, sport trainer, physiotherapist, lawyer, sport analyst, radiologist, physician, journalist, event organizer, marketing consultant, advertising agent, guard, psychologist, professional players, referees, masseur, kits' manufacturer and host of others.

<sup>55</sup> See for further reading, I. Blackshaw, "The Court of Arbitration for Sport: An International Forum for Settling Disputes Effectively within the Family of Sport" (2010), available at: <intt: // [www.tab-cas.org](http://www.tab-cas.org), visited on 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 2010.

<sup>56</sup> In the UK, annual consumer spending on sport has reached a colossus sum of \$ 12 billion as of 2002. See the Report of the UK Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) published in December 2002. In Africa, there seem to be no accurate data for now. It is however not in doubt that a substantial percentage of the youth are involved in football or sport related jobs.

Organization<sup>57</sup> (WTO). It is therefore imperative that academic "touch light" be beamed on such ground-breaking and colossal enterprising field.

### 5. Critic of Sports Law as a Field

Sports law is exactly what its critics arraign: incoherent, emergent, undeveloped, underwritten and scattered principles of law. Some further argued that Sports law is not a separate and intellectually coherent body of law.<sup>58</sup> But then there may be no "sports law" today because no one's done the work to adequately develop it. More so, the current plight does not suggest that no coherence and rationality is possible. Secondly to argue that sports law is and will remain a discrete series of issues resistant to abstraction, conceptionalisation and generalization will be conceited and rash. This is because the same might have once been said of the law of commerce, law of the environment, intellectual property law, labour law, law of contracts, oil and gas law to mention a few. Sports leagues and competitions entail a unique blend of cooperation and competition and thus might deserve a unique set of legal doctrines.

The argument in support of the need for sports law in legal curriculum is further strengthened and reinforced by the recent clamour for specialization. Specialization is a term often used to denote a substantial concentration of activity within a particular field of practice.<sup>59</sup> With globalization and the emerging world order, the era of being a jack of all trades and master all (or none) is over. In

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<sup>57</sup> Under the WTO rules service classification list, the business of football and other sports is recognized as Recreational, Cultural and Sporting services.

<sup>58</sup> For an overview of this critic and further thought on nature of sport law and whether the area displays the unique and coherent characteristics of a discreet body of law, see Timothy Davis, *what is sports law?*, (2001) 11 Marquette Sports Law Review 211

<sup>59</sup> See generally, W. Babalakin: "The Aim of Specialization is to rescue Legal Profession from the Doldrums", 2003, a paper presented at the 2003 Annual National Conference of the NBA at Enugu, published by *the Guardian Newspaper* on 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 2003.

order to be relevant in the unfolding global trend, there is urgent need for every professional, a *fortiori* lawyers to urgently discover their areas of strongest interest and trail blazer or expand the frontiers.<sup>60</sup>

## 6. Conclusion

We have discussed sports law, its relevance in this era and we have as well considered the argument of critics of the emerging sports law as a course of study. A total overhauling of the Legal education curriculum will do a lot of good as well as continuing legal education to update lawyers in legal practice in order to keep in touch with the dynamism of the profession and ever growing modern economics.<sup>61</sup> The options available for our universities are to either introduce sports law as part of undergraduate work or in the alternative fashion out a sports law certificate programme or a post graduate master of sports law for lawyers that may intend to specialize in sports and entertainment law.<sup>62</sup> Contrary to the assertion of a learned author that no one comes through the front door in to academic sports law,<sup>63</sup> we must deliberately and consciously expand the frontier of our legal training in order to make Nigerian budding lawyers relevant beyond the continent of Africa.

As Nigerian lawyers, we are part of the global market place for legal services especially in multi billion dollars growing sports industry. We must realize that whether we can fulfil the obligation placed on the legal profession socially, economically, politically and culturally depends largely on our legal education. The growing sport industry will no doubt need lawyers, the fun associated with sport and sports law class, current international dimension to sports and the need for professionalism<sup>64</sup> all together sum up the desire of this

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<sup>60</sup> Babalakin, *loc. cit.*

<sup>61</sup> Justice M. Bello, "The Challenges to legal practice, the need for continuing Legal Education" (June 1989) an address delivered at the inaugural lecture organized by CLEAN.

<sup>62</sup> E. Adams: "The fundamental of teaching of sports law" (2007) *Willamette sports law journal*.

<sup>63</sup> See, *the Sports Law Professor*: "Why study sports law", available at: [www.why-profess-sports-law.html](http://www.why-profess-sports-law.html), visited on the 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2011.

<sup>64</sup> Professionalism is in proficiency of knowledge which in the context of this paper is academic knowledge of law. The ability to demonstrate vast

author to see sports law as formal part of legal training. Universities must not be too rigid, traditional, habitual and inertia in developing their curriculum to take care of sports law and other new areas of law such as communications law, computer and cyber law, personal and corporate insolvency law, Antitrust<sup>65</sup> etc.

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proficiency knowledge is what distinguishes profession from a craft. See S. Ronen: “Nation building and Colonialism: the case of Jewish Lawyers in Palestine” (2001) 8 *international journal of Legal Profession*, 109 at 113.

<sup>65</sup> See also F. Oditah: “Legal Education and the Challenges of National Development in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Nigeria” (2003) a lecture delivered at the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Nigerian Law School, Abuja.