

Research Paper Outline — Blaze Sports Intel (BSI)

BUL 5582: Legal Issues in Sports — Week 2 (2.7 Assignment)

Austin Humphrey

Full Sail University

Legal Issues in Sports (BUL 5582)

October 12, 2025

Company Description

Blaze Sports Intel (BSI) is a multi-sport analytics platform that unifies live feeds from league data sources into a single, real-time decision system for coaches, scouts, and front offices. The platform provides a navigable analytics dashboard, sport hubs (MLB, NFL, NCAA Football and Basketball), and an AI Copilot that answers natural-language questions with citations to underlying stats. The current live implementation focuses on Major League Baseball (MLB), with other sports in a demonstration state pending endpoint validation.

Technically, BSI integrates live game feeds (e.g., MLB Stats API, ESPN API, and SportsDataIO), updates scores and injury reports during games, and normalizes standings, schedules, and box scores across leagues. Historical comparisons and multi-filter search enable pattern detection across seasons and player cohorts. The system also supports statistical projections, including Pythagorean win expectancy, and powers interactive 3D visualizations for communicating insights.

BSI's roadmap extends beyond team and league data. The repository includes a biomechanics vision capability for 3D pose ingestion and real-time feature extraction (e.g., hip-shoulder separation, pelvis rotation velocity, and landing stability indices) that maps to an internal performance model. This positions BSI to support scouting, player development, sports medicine risk reviews, and NIL-era evaluation workflows across professional and collegiate programs.

Five Potential Legal Issues for BSI

1) Data Access, Scraping & API/ToS Compliance (CFAA/Contract)

Definition. Definition: Accessing data beyond authorization or in violation of a website's or API's terms can trigger claims under the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act (CFAA) or contract-based restrictions.

BSI Exposure. BSI aggregates scores, standings, and player data from third-party APIs and public websites. If BSI accesses endpoints without authorization or in a manner barred by terms, it risks CFAA and breach-of-contract claims, as well as cease-and-desist demands affecting business continuity.

2) Right of Publicity & Use of Player Identifiers

Definition. Definition: The right of publicity restricts commercial use of a person's name, image, likeness, or other identifiers without consent; tension arises where uses involve newsworthy facts or public-domain statistics.

BSI Exposure. BSI displays player names and statistics, and may juxtapose them with commentary and graphics. Although raw stats are factual, combined presentation in promotional materials could invite publicity claims depending on jurisdictional standards if it implies endorsement or exceeds fair reporting.

3) Biometric Privacy (Facial Recognition, Pose & Motion Data)

Definition. Definition: State biometric privacy laws, most prominently Illinois' BIPA, regulate the collection, storage, and disclosure of biometric identifiers (e.g., face templates) and require informed consent, data retention policies, and secure handling.

BSI Exposure. If BSI ingests facial or body-based motion data for biomechanics analysis, any capture involving Illinois residents (or teams traveling through Illinois) could trigger BIPA and similar state laws, creating liability without proper notice, consent, retention schedules, and data minimization/security.

4) Defamation Risk from AI Copilot or Editorial Outputs

Definition. Definition: Defamation is the publication of a false statement of fact that harms reputation. Public-figure plaintiffs (e.g., professional athletes, coaches) must show “actual malice” (knowledge of falsity or reckless disregard for truth).

BSI Exposure. BSI's AI Copilot may generate scouting narratives or risk assessments. If statements about athletes' character or alleged conduct were presented as fact without support, defamation exposure could arise—especially given the public-figure status of many subjects.

5) ADA Digital Accessibility (Title III)

Definition. Definition: Title III of the ADA requires places of public accommodation to provide equal access to goods and services. Courts increasingly recognize that websites and mobile apps that connect to physical services must be usable by people with disabilities.

BSI Exposure. BSI's web platform serves organizations and potentially the public. If dashboards or sales pages are not screen-reader accessible, lack keyboard navigation, or fail WCAG-aligned practices, accessibility claims and injunctive relief are plausible.

Relevant U.S. Court Cases (One per Issue)

Data Access / CFAA & Terms — hiQ Labs, Inc. v. LinkedIn Corp., 31 F.4th 1180 (9th Cir. 2022)

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit (2022). LinkedIn sought to block a third party from scraping public profile data. On remand after the Supreme Court's decision in Van Buren, the

Ninth Circuit concluded that scraping publicly available data likely did not violate the CFAA, though separate claims (e.g., breach of contract, trespass to chattels) could still apply. The opinion signals that authorization barriers hinge on access controls and contractual terms rather than mere public visibility.

Right of Publicity (Player Stats) — C.B.C. Distribution & Marketing, Inc. v. MLB Advanced Media, L.P., 505 F.3d 818 (8th Cir. 2007)

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit (2007). A fantasy baseball operator used player names and statistics without licenses. The Eighth Circuit held the use was protected by the First Amendment because the data were matters of public interest and the players' privacy interests were minimal. The decision recognized that factual sports statistics reside in the public domain.

Biometric Privacy (BIPA) — Patel v. Facebook, Inc., 932 F.3d 1268 (9th Cir. 2019)

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit (2019). Users alleged Facebook's face■template creation violated Illinois' BIPA. The Ninth Circuit held that BIPA protects concrete privacy interests and that alleged violations can confer Article III standing. The opinion underscores that collecting or storing facial templates without consent can create exposure even absent separate harm.

Defamation Standard (Public Figures) — New York Times Co. v. Sullivan, 376 U.S. 254 (1964)

U.S. Supreme Court (1964). The Supreme Court established that public officials (and later public figures) must prove actual malice to recover for defamation: knowledge of falsity or reckless disregard for the truth. This high standard shapes risk for media and analytics outputs discussing well■known athletes or executives. Subsequent decisions have left Sullivan intact.

ADA Website & App Accessibility — Robles v. Domino's Pizza, LLC, 913 F.3d 898 (9th Cir. 2019)

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit (2019). A blind plaintiff alleged Domino's website and app were inaccessible. The Ninth Circuit held Title III applied because the online tools connect customers to the goods and services of physical restaurants; it remanded to decide compliance details. The opinion catalyzed broader enforcement of digital accessibility obligations.

Initial Mitigation Plan (Preview of Week 4 Paper)

- 1 Data Access & Terms: Use only licensed/provider■approved endpoints; memorialize API data rights in signed agreements; respect robots.txt and rate limits; implement contractual audit logs; and add a kill■switch that disables any source upon notice.
- 2 Publicity / Player Identifiers: Use stats and names as factual reporting with non■endorsement framing; avoid commercial implications in marketing without consent; for NIL content, use school/league style guides and obtain releases where needed.
- 3 Biometric Privacy: Adopt opt■in consent flows; capture written consent and retention policies; geofence collection in Illinois and other biometric■law states; minimize, anonymize, and encrypt biometric/pose data; restrict access and implement deletion SLAs.
- 4 Defamation Controls: Require AI Copilot to cite data for athlete claims; treat character assertions as opinion with clear disclaimers; add human■in■the■loop review for sensitive outputs; implement a takedown and correction policy.
- 5 ADA Accessibility: Align site with WCAG 2.2 AA; provide alt text, focus states, keyboard navigation, captions, and sufficient contrast; add an accessibility statement and feedback channel; conduct quarterly audits with automated and manual testing.

Business Model Canvas (One■Page Summary)

The following page provides a one■page Business Model Canvas for Blaze Sports Intel. It aligns to BSI's live MLB implementation and multi■sport roadmap with AI Copilot and biomechanics modules.

| Key Partners | Key Activities | Value Propositions |
|---|---|--|
| SportsDataIO; MLB Stats API; ESPN Data Studio | Data gathering, CB normalization & live reporting | Reporting, Accountability, Data Security, National |
| Customer Relationships | Customer Segments | Channels |
| Account management; Training; Enterprise sales team | Consulting, Custom Solutions | Diversified, Multidisciplinary, Agile, Networked |
| Key Resources | Cost Structure | Revenue Streams |
| BSI codebase & models; Data license | Data, AI, ML, Cloud, Security | Technology, R&D, Sales & Eng, Custom inter |

References

- C.B.C. Distribution & Marketing, Inc. v. MLB Advanced Media, L.P., 505 F.3d 818 (8th Cir. 2007).
<https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/appellate-courts/ca8/06-3358/063357p-2011-02-25.html>
- hiQ Labs, Inc. v. LinkedIn Corp., 31 F.4th 1180 (9th Cir. 2022).
<https://cdn.ca9.uscourts.gov/datastore/opinions/2022/04/18/17-16783.pdf>
- Patel v. Facebook, Inc., 932 F.3d 1268 (9th Cir. 2019).
<https://cdn.ca9.uscourts.gov/datastore/opinions/2019/08/08/18-15982.pdf>
- New York Times Co. v. Sullivan, 376 U.S. 254 (1964).
<https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/ll/usrep/usrep376/usrep376254/usrep376254.pdf>
- Robles v. Domino's Pizza, LLC, 913 F.3d 898 (9th Cir. 2019).
<https://cdn.ca9.uscourts.gov/datastore/opinions/2019/01/15/17-55504.pdf>
- NCAA v. Alston, 141 S. Ct. 2141 (2021).
https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/20pdf/20-512_gfbh.pdf
- Blaze Sports Intel. (2025). Championship analytics platform and demo pages.
<https://blazesportsintel.com/> ; <https://blazesportsintel.com/demo> ; <https://blazesportsintel.com/mlb/>
- Humphrey, A. (2025). BSI GitHub repository. <https://github.com/ahump20/BSI>
- Use of AI: Portions of drafting, formatting, and citation compilation were assisted by OpenAI GPT-5 Pro; all sources and cases were verified against cited opinions.