

Charles Oakley files suit against Knicks owner James Dolan, MSG over February arrest

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By Victoria
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Former New York Knicks star Charles Oakley filed a lawsuit Tuesday against team owner James Dolan for his alleged role in the burly power forward's [February arrest during a basketball game](#).

The 17-year NBA vet is suing for defamation — and discrimination — claiming Dolan and Madison Square Garden violated the Americans With Disabilities Act “based on their perception that he suffers from alcoholism, a disability.”

On Aug. 5, Oakley accepted a dismissal deal for assault charges after he left Madison Square Garden in handcuffs Feb. 8 following a spat with Dolan's security team.

At the time, Oakley, who has maintained his innocence, hinted he intended to fight back.

[Charles Oakley to file civil suit regarding MSG incident: report](#)

On Tuesday morning, in Manhattan Federal Court, he did just that.

The civil lawsuit, which names Dolan as well as MSG, alleges that “Dolan constantly disrespected Mr. Oakley.”



A video shows Charles Oakley on the night he was physically removed from Madison Square Garden in February 2017.

(ESPN)

Court papers claim Dolan failed to show basic manners to Oakley, the 53-year-old fan favorite, by “refusing to make eye contact or shake his hand during meetings, denying him the type of fan appreciation nights given to much less popular and successful members of the Knicks.”

Court papers also claim Oakley suffered another indignity — footing the bill for his courtside seats — “even making

him purchase his own tickets to attend games at the arena he called home for a decade."

Dolan's "animosity" hit a breaking point the night of the arrest, according to the lawsuit.

The 6-foot-8-inch ex-player was seen on video shoving a security guard as multiple security officials swarmed around him in an attempt to escort him out of the arena.

After refusing to cooperate, Oakley was forcibly removed from the Garden in arguably the most embarrassing chapter of the Knicks' disappointing 2016-17 season.

Oakley was taken out of the arena, arrested and charged with assault. After the arrest, Oakley claims Dolan and MSG "launched a coordinated and defamatory public relations campaign against Mr. Oakley, baselessly accusing him of abusing fans and staff, acting inappropriately and struggling with alcoholism," according to the lawsuit.

The papers allege "irreparable harm to name and career" — and claim it amounts to discrimination.

MSG and Dolan "discriminated against him based on the false perception that he is an alcoholic, all in a transparent attempt to denigrate his standing among Knicks fans," Oakley charges.

"Mr. Oakley has never had a problem with excessive anger nor has he ever abused alcohol or any other drug," the suit maintains.

Oakley's lawsuit cites defamation, assault, battery, false imprisonment and abuse of process claims.

He is also suing under the Americans With Disabilities Act, as well as city and state human rights laws, claiming Dolan and MSG "discriminated against (Oakley) by denying him access to the Garden based on their perception that he suffers from alcoholism, a disability."

Calls to Madison Square Garden were not immediately returned. The Knicks did not immediately comment.