

Charles Oakley Files Lawsuit Against James Dolan and Madison Square Garden

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Charles Oakley in court in April in connection with the Feb. 8 incident in which he was arrested. He has now filed a lawsuit in the case. Alec Tabak/NY Daily News, via Pool

Charles Oakley's battle with his former team resumed on Tuesday when he filed a lawsuit in federal court against the New York Knicks' owner, James L. Dolan; the Madison Square Garden Company, and two other companies that Dolan owns.

The civil suit alleges 10 different causes of action including defamation, assault and battery stemming from an incident at a Knicks game last Feb. 8 when Oakley, a former star of the team, was arrested and led from the Garden in handcuffs after getting into an altercation with security guards.

In a statement, Oakley's lawyer, Douglas Wigdor, said he filed the lawsuit in Federal District Court in Manhattan "out of principle and his desire to hold Mr. Dolan accountable for his actions."

The Knicks did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the lawsuit.

The suit comes just a month Oakley [agreed to a deal](#) with the Manhattan district attorney's office in which the charges filed against him last Feb. 8 will be dropped as long as he isn't arrested in the next six months, and stays away from the Garden for one year.

In the lawsuit, Oakley contends that he did nothing wrong on the night of the incident and that security guards removed him by force after asking, “Why are you sitting so close to Mr. Dolan?” Oakley alleges assault, battery, and false imprisonment against the Madison Square Garden Company, MSG Networks and MSG Sports & Entertainment relating to the ejection.

After the incident and arrest, the Knicks and Dolan made a number of statements the lawsuit says are defamatory, libelous and slanderous. In a [tweet](#) sent out by the team’s public relations account that night, Oakley was said to have “behaved in a highly inappropriate and completely abusive manner.” The statement also said the team hoped Oakley “gets some help soon,” which Oakley contends is a reference to a nonexistent drug or alcohol abuse problem.

Two days after the incident, Dolan went on Michael Kay’s ESPN show [and said](#) that Oakley “may have a problem with alcohol,” as well as anger problems. He also said that Oakley had abused fans and security guards, and had come to the Garden that night with an “agenda.”

In the suit, Oakley also accused the defendants of violating the Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as state and city human rights human rights statutes, as Oakley was banned from the Garden — a place of public accommodation — “based on their perception that he suffers from alcoholism, a disability.”