

CLAY AWARDS | MAY 6, 2026



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ANTITRUST CLASS ACTION

Saveri Wins \$375 Million for UFC Fighters in Decade-Long Antitrust Battle

LE ET AL. V. ZUFFA LLC

JOSEPH R. SAVERI, KEVIN RAYHILL, CHRISTOPHER K.L. YOUNG,
ITAK MORADI, AARON CERA, SAVERI LAW FIRM

Even for a veteran antitrust litigator, the case was a significant challenge: represented by Joseph R. Saveri, more than 1,100 mixed martial arts fighters alleged that their employer, Ultimate Fighting Championship (operating as Zuffa LLC), engaged in anticompetitive conduct that seriously undercompensated the fighters.

"Not many antitrust cases involve labor and the labor markets," Saveri said. After years of litigation and negotiations he settled the case for \$375 million shortly before trial and obtained final approval in March 2025.

As Saveri explained, the litigation proceeded through largely uncharted territory: "Our firm and co-counsel brought this nearly unprecedented action in 2014 after more than a year of investigation; won a motion to dismiss in the UFC's backyard, Las Vegas, in 2015 with an opinion issued in the following year; doggedly pursued fact discovery for several years; con-

ducted a seven-day, seven-witness class certification hearing in August 2019; ultimately, won class certification of a class of UFC fighters, defeating Zuffa's motions to exclude plaintiffs' economic experts under Daubert."

Saveri continued: "We then beat back the UFC's 23(f) petition to appeal the class certification order; successfully moved to strike Zuffa's second attempt to exclude plaintiffs' economic experts as trial approached; defeated summary judgment; and then won critical motions in limine, such as motions to strike inadequately disclosed witnesses and to preclude the introduction of new evidence."

The case was a marathon. "It took a decade, with the pandemic in the middle," Saveri said. "Our clients really put their careers on the line to take on their employer, Zuffa, and our willingness to bring these big antitrust cases to trial pushed the settlement over the line." *Le et al. v. Zuffa LLC*, 2:15-cv-1045 (D. Nev., filed June 3, 2015).

The gross settlement amount of \$375 million represents nearly 70% of the total compensation that the UFC paid to its entire roster of fighters during the class period, and more than 40% of single damages—more than any prior settlement of a Section 2 class action targeting single-firm monopolization of labor markets.

Under the court-approved allocation plan, the recoveries by the fighters are significant with an anticipated average distribution to the fighters of \$250,000. Thirty-five fighters would net over \$1 million; nearly 100 fighters would net over \$500,000; more than 200 fighters would recover over \$250,000; over 500 fighters would net more than \$100,000.

"I didn't know much about mixed martial arts when we went into this," Saveri said. "I'm more of a traditional boxing guy. But I've become very fond of and close to these fighters. It's been a great case for us."