

KLUTCH vs. KLUTCH – A Cleveland Trademark Battle

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Klutch Sports Group is a well-known sports management company that was founded in

his home city by Cleveland native Rich Paul and that represents – most famously – LeBron James (also born and raised in Ohio). Klutch Sports owns a family of trademarks for the KLUTCH name, as well as rights in various KLUTCH logos, including:



Since its founding in 2012, Klutch Sports has continued to grow, expanding not only across the United States but internationally as well. In 2019, for example, Klutch Sports entered into a partnership with United Talent Agency, LLC, a large global talent agency, and by 2025, Forbes listed Klutch Sports as the fifth most valuable sports agency. Despite this growth, the company and its founder remain deeply rooted in their Ohio origins.

That’s probably why Paul and Klutch Sports took particular offense when an Ohio cannabis company – founded only in 2020 – not only named itself “Klutch Cannabis,” but is also using the same black-and-gold color motif and a virtually identical font as Klutch Sports. The following comparison shows just how similar the companies’ branding is:

Klutch Sports	Klutch Cannabis
	
	

Doesn’t exactly look like a coincidence, especially when the companies are from the same state.

Klutch Sports first sent Klutch Cannabis a series of demands that Klutch Cannabis stop using the mark. When that didn't work, on March 16, 2026, Klutch Sports filed a [complaint](#) against Klutch Cannabis in federal court in the Northern District of Ohio, alleging trademark infringement and related claims. The complaint noted that both companies sell apparel, including sportswear, that prominently feature the KLUTCH mark:



Moreover, as one would expect, both companies use the KLUTCH mark on packaging, on social media, and in other forms of advertising and marketing.

The complaint also alleges both likelihood of confusion – and actual confusion. It notes that professional athletes and sports celebrities “routinely invest in, own, and publicly endorse cannabis brands.” As a result, according to Klutch Sports, consumers are accustomed to seeing a connection with sports, professional athletes, and their agents, and cannabis companies, and thus confusion in the marketplace is likely.

The complaint also references a few examples of what it claims is actual confusion. In one instance, someone commented on a new article announcing the opening of one of Klutch Cannabis's dispensaries: “Is there any connection between Klutch Cannabis and Klutch Sports Group?” In another example – and to add insult to injury – when Rich Paul himself visited a Klutch Cannabis dispensary in Cleveland, someone recognized him and informed Mr. Paul that he was planning to buy Klutch Cannabis's sweatshirt, apparently under the impression that Klutch Cannabis was affiliated with Klutch Sports. Finally, the complaint alleges that multiple individuals have contained Klutch Sports under the mistaken belief that Klutch Sports owns or operates Klutch Cannabis.

How is this dispute likely to play out? Well, on the one hand, Klutch Cannabis could try to argue that it sells products to different customers than those of Klutch Sports – and that in general there isn't a lot of product overlap. But given the geographic proximity, the identical use of “Klutch” (with a “K” no less), and the similar color motif and font, consumer confusion does seem to be fairly likely. And given the Klutch Cannabis's use of a similar mark is almost certainly not an accident, it's probably not going to win this battle.