



Gareth Graham

Year of Call: 2006

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Sports law

Gareth chairs disciplinary hearings for:

- World Rugby
- European Professional Club Rugby (EPCR)
- Rugby Football Union (RFU)
- British Horseracing Authority (BHA)
- British Cycling
- The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA)
- British Canoeing.

He has also been appointed to the Sport Resolutions Panel of Arbitrators and Mediators.

Gareth has been a member of the RFU disciplinary panel since 2014 and has chaired a significant number of disciplinary hearings and appeals in the professional game. He is also a chairman for World Rugby, Six Nations, EPCR and the Army Rugby Union.

The matters Gareth has been involved with include:

- Conduct prejudicial to the interests of the Game
- The full gamut of acts of foul play, including match official abuse
- Betting (including the RFU case of betting by a sports agent which resulted in a 22-month ban)
- Anti-doping
- Governing Body Endorsement visas
- Relegation into lower leagues
- Offences relating to age restrictions and ticket allocation infringements.

This includes the following hearings:

- Alapati Leiua (Bristol Bears, Gallagher Premiership, 28 February 2019)
- Nathan Hughes (Wasps, Gallagher Premiership, 10 & 17 October 2018)
- George Smith (Bristol Bears, Gallagher Premiership, 11 September 2018)
- Danny Cipriani (Gloucester Rugby, Gallagher Premiership, 22 August 2018).

Gareth also sat as a panel member for British Gymnastics in the case involving Louis Smith following allegations that he had acted in breach of British Gymnastics' standard of conduct.

He recently completed a formal review of an investigation into various allegations (including safeguarding issues) on behalf of a British Olympic organisation and a wide-ranging investigation over a period of four months into allegations of abuse, bullying, harassment and discrimination against a coach within a British Olympic organisation.

Recommendations

"engaging and candid."

Honourable Mr Justice Langstaff, former President of the EAT, reported case of Vodafone Ltd v Miss A Nicholson UKEAT/0605/12/SM.

Gareth Graham is highly experienced in discrimination law and unfair dismissal. He is widely respected for his strategic approach to complex cases. He acts for NHS trusts, transport and hospitality clients across the country as well as a number of high-profile private employers. He has notable expertise in discrimination claims and whistle-blowing.

Strengths: "Getting Gareth on board helped clarify the issues and he was really excellent at the final hearing."

"Gareth is brilliant with clients and in making a case feel like a team effort. He is decisive and responsive, and assimilates information quickly."

"Gareth approaches each case with an incredible enthusiasm and energy. He has obtained some incredibly successful and well-received outcomes for our clients."

"I am always impressed with how well Gareth manages the client and witnesses while also still ensuring the instructing solicitors are kept updated."

Chambers UK 2025/Employment/Western Bar

Strengths: "Gareth gives extremely practical and commercially focused advice."

Chambers UK 2024/Employment/Western Bar

Strengths: "He presents his arguments in the tribunal in a concise and logical way, he is always polite and composed."

"He explains points clearly, is very patient and the clients are always impressed by Gareth's abilities."

"Gareth is very popular with our clients. He explains points clearly and is very patient, and the clients are always impressed by his abilities. He presents his arguments in the tribunal in a concise and logical way."

"Gareth was commercial and very good at handling the client and their needs."

"Gareth is extremely knowledgeable and provides robust, practical advice. He is very responsive and his approach is solutions-driven. Gareth is very popular with clients of the firm, which I believe is due to his commercial approach and ability to put witnesses and decision makers at ease."

Chambers UK 2023/Employment/Western Bar

Strengths: "He is an excellent barrister who is very good with clients and he knows how to manage the client's expectations in a friendly and personable way. He is very good at putting himself in the client's shoes rather than just dealing with the legal issues." "He is very pragmatic and personable, he is very good at building relationships with clients and he can inspire confidence. He is not afraid to tell you what his view is rather than sitting on the fence."

Recent work: Successfully defended BAE Systems in a claims of disability and sex discrimination, whistle-blowing and unfair dismissal. The claims were withdrawn following cross-examination.

Chambers UK 2022/Employment/Western Bar

Strengths: "He is straightforward, no-nonsense, quick to respond and very bright. Clients love him."

Recent work: Successfully represented the respondent, Babcock International Group, in a claim for age discrimination and unfair dismissal.

Chambers UK 2021/Employment/Western Bar

Strengths: "Gareth is very hands-on and approachable, and provides excellent commercial advice."

Recent work: Defended the Co-operative Group against claims of race discrimination, victimisation and unfair dismissal. The case generated a number of appeals in the Employment Appeal Tribunal and Court of Appeal.

Chambers UK 2020/Employment/Western Bar

"He's very robust, very thorough and good with clients and witnesses." "He's very easy to work with and really responsive. He's a good team player and helps to deliver training to give us a team approach."

Recent work: Defended The Co-operative Group against three claims for race discrimination, victimisation, and disability discrimination. The respondent was successful and awarded almost £20,000 in costs.

Chambers UK 2019/Employment/Western Bar

Strengths: "He thinks strategically about his cases and can absorb large amounts of information."

Chambers UK 2018/Employment/Western Bar

Strengths: "As well as being technically competent on legal issues, he is also able to demonstrate a good understanding of a client's business and its commercial drivers."

Chambers UK 2017/Employment/Western Bar

'Has represented high-profile employers and employees in Tribunal cases nationwide, and also acted for students in university disciplinary hearings and employees in professional internal disciplinary issues.

Strengths: "He's well regarded, thorough and client-friendly." "He gets the points across quickly and he's good at cross-examination."

Chambers UK 2016/Employment/Western Bar

'Experienced in a range of employment cases on behalf of clients from a variety of sectors, including recent success with governmental, engineering and automotive clients. Alongside his traditional employment practice, he regularly acts on internal professional disciplinary matters for clients such as rugby clubs and universities.

Expertise: "He is a reliable barrister who is willing to get stuck in."

Chambers UK 2015/Employment/Western Bar

Gareth Graham recently acted for IBM (United Kingdom) Ltd in an unfair dismissal claim by a part-time employee and is well regarded for his 'exceptional courtroom command'.

'Gareth is a fierce cross-examiner. He approaches advocacy with skill and determination to succeed. He is excellent with clients and witnesses, providing much-needed support and reassurance when explaining complex legal issues.'

Legal 500 2025/Employment/Leading Juniors/Western Circuit - Tier 1

'Gareth is very good at giving advice in a clear and logical way. The manner in which he advises clients gives them confidence in his ability to obtain the best outcome. He is also commercially aware.'

Legal 500 2024/Employment/Leading Juniors/Western Circuit - Tier 1

'Gareth quickly grasps the issues in hand, and is extremely approachable. His straight-talking and pragmatic approach is of real benefit.'

Legal 500 2023/Employment/Leading Juniors/Western Circuit - Tier 1

'Very bright, quick-thinking and pragmatic. He quickly builds rapport with witnesses.'

Legal 500 2022/Employment/Leading Juniors/Western Circuit

'Very strong in cross-examination with an ability to think quickly and hone on on the weaknesses of an opponent's witness.'

Legal 500 2021/Employment/Leading juniors

'Is a highly skilled advocate who cross-examines with precision and without bluster.'

Legal 500 2020/Employment/Leading juniors

'An excellent cross-examiner with a brilliant bedside manner with clients and witnesses."

Legal 500 2018/19/Employment/Leading juniors

'He is very good at seeing the bigger picture in a case.'

Legal 500 2017/Employment/Leading juniors

'He has a great cross-examination style and is very effective.'

Legal 500 2016/Employment/Leading juniors

'He has an incisive and forensic approach to legal arguments, and is an excellent advocate'

Legal 500 2015/Employment/Leading juniors

Academic qualifications

- University of Bristol – LLB (Hons)
- University of the West of England – BVC

Professional qualifications & appointments

- Sport Resolutions Panel of Arbitrators and Mediators

Professional bodies

- Employment Law Association (ELA)
- Employment Law Bar Association (ELBA)