

NBA Pro Antetokounmpo Lays Suit Against Bed-Maker To Rest

By **Elaine Briseño**

Law360 (March 28, 2024, 6:29 PM EDT) -- NBA superstar Giannis Antetokounmpo has dropped his Wisconsin federal court lawsuit against luxury bed-maker Maree Inc., which he had accused of fraudulently scheming to mislead customers into thinking he had endorsed its products when he had not.

Antetokounmpo filed his voluntary dismissal on Wednesday, and U.S. District Judge J.P. Stadtmueller approved it on Thursday. The Milwaukee Bucks forward gave no reason in the court filing for his decision.

Nathaniel Cade, an attorney for Maree and its owner Erica Gleaton, told Law360 on Thursday that the parties had reached "an amicable agreement."

"Our efforts to resolve the underlying issues will materialize in the coming weeks," Cade said. "My colleague and I are proud to have represented Ms. Gleaton and her company, Maree Inc., which is and remains a world-class business that makes luxury bedding for athletes."

Antetokounmpo **filed his complaint** on Oct. 17, 2023, accusing the Utah-based company and its owner Erica Gleaton of posting a photo of him on Instagram taken years earlier in an effort to imply he was endorsing or had an affiliation with their product. The photo depicted the player reclining on a luxury bed and described him as "our client."

He said he did not consent to the posting and had sent the company two letters prohibiting them from doing so. Antetokounmpo says he called Gleaton "at least 20" times to resolve the problem, without her responding, and sent a letter of complaint about the delivery of mattresses in addition to letters accusing her of impermissibly using his image.

While Antetokounmpo did purchase mattresses from the company for delivery to Athens, Greece, in April 2023, the order arrived late and was defective, according to his lawsuit. The company had promised a June delivery, and the mattresses did not come until July.

The alleged problems included missing fittings for the headboard and missing legs and bases for the bed frame, as well as torn fabric and screws that did not fit. Gleaton also gave incorrect shipping information to the shippers, "unilaterally" changed their agreement on who would pay shipping fees and eventually failed to deliver all the items ordered, according to the suit.

The suit accused Maree and Gleaton of violating his privacy as well as deceptive and unfair trade practices, fraudulent inducement, and breach of contract. Antetokounmpo was seeking a full refund of more than \$95,000 for the order and delivery of the mattresses, compensatory and punitive damages, and an injunction against misusing his name, image and likeness. He also asked the court to treble his damages as outlined by federal and state image and likeness laws.

The 6-foot-11 native of Greece is playing his 11th season with Milwaukee and has been selected as the NBA's most valuable player twice. He is one of the league's most marketable players.

His representative did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Antetokounmpo is represented by Eleni Melekou of Pardalis & Nohavicka LLP.

Maree is represented by Nate Cade and Annalisa Pusick of Cade Law Group.

The case is Antetokounmpo v. Maree Inc. et al., case number 2:23-cv-01389, in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin.

--Additional reporting by David Steele. Editing by Philip Shea.