

# Connecticut Law Tribune

July 9, 2015

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An ALM Publication

## INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY patent & trademark

### Conn. IP Firm Helps ESPN Star Patent A Really Cool Cooler

By MEGAN SPICER

‘As you can imagine, a lot of people have been playing around with cooler concepts,’ said attorney Michael Cantor, whose firm researched previous patents.

If you’ve ever gone tailgating, either at a sports event or an outdoor concert, then you probably have witnessed or experienced what some could call an unintentional workout.

You bring a cooler for your food and drink. You also use the cooler as a place to sit.

Then a friend wants a drink. So you stand up, open the lid, close the lid and sit back down. Repeat roughly every five to 10 minutes until it’s time to pack up the party and get to the main event.

Enter Mike Golic, Connecticut resident, former professional football player and half of ESPN’s “Mike & Mike” radio show, and his son Jake, who have secured a patent for an invention they believe will solve the tailgate workout: The Golic Cooler. The solution was simple: People can use the top of the cooler as a seat; there are even built-in chairs that flip up. In the meantime, others have access to the cooler from side panels.

“It shouldn’t surprise anyone that I’ve spent a good deal of time around a football stadium,” Jake Golic, who played football for the University of Notre Dame, said in a press release. “It occurred to me that coolers have looked the same my whole life. I have a degree in design, so I knew there were better ways of designing a cooler that would provide improved function and deliver the ‘wow’ factor.”

Michael Cantor, co-managing partner of the Hartford intellectual property firm Cantor Colburn, was retained to secure a patent for the Golics’ invention. First, the firm conducted a search to see if anything similar to what the Golics had in mind already existed. “As you can imagine, a lot of people have been playing around with cooler concepts,” Cantor said. But his firm found nothing like what the Golics were proposing.

#### Patent 731,858

If there’s one thing the Golics know best, it’s how to tailgate, said Mike Golic, who often jokes on the radio show about his ample appetite.

“We’ve been tailgating at football games for many years and have always felt that better tailgating products could improve the experience,” said Golic. “When Jake mentioned to me that he thought we could improve coolers by incorporating seats, we put our heads together and started a process that led us to being the owners of a number of really innovative and fun cooler- and tailgating-related products.”

After Cantor told the Golics they had a novel idea and could move forward with securing a patent, he asked if they were truly serious about making their idea reality. They were. So Evo Design, of Watertown, was hired to design their cooler so they could have a manufacturable product.

The initial patent application was filed



Mike Golic

with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office in July 2013. On June 16, 2015, U.S. design patent number 731,858 was approved. Cantor explained it can take years to have an application approved because of the sheer number that are filed each year and the back-and-forth correspondence an applicant must go through with a patent examiner about the application’s specifics. In 2013, there were 464,659 patent applications filed with the PTO, according its website.

Now that the patent has been secured, Evo Design and the newly formed Golic LLC can start manufacturing. It would have been possible to begin production before the patent was issued, but Cantor said that could have put the Golics at greater risk of someone copying aspects of their idea. “In the best of all worlds, it’s best when your product comes out when you have your patent,” Cantor said. “But you can’t always have it that way.”

Cantor said working on securing the cooler patent with the Golic family has been a fun experience. “Our clients are companies like IBM or Samsung or General Motors,” Cantor said. “These are wonderful companies, but having the opportunity to work on a consumer product can be a lot of fun.”