

The JFTC Issued a Warning to Nippon Professional Baseball

September 19, 2024
Japan Fair Trade Commission

The Japan Fair Trade Commission (hereinafter referred to as the “JFTC”) today issued a warning to Nippon Professional Baseball (Note 1). In this case, Nippon Professional Baseball was likely to be in violation of the provision of Article 8 (falling under item (iv) [unjustly restricting the functions or activities of the constituent enterprise]) of the Antimonopoly Act (hereinafter referred to as the “Act”).

(Note 1) “Nippon Professional Baseball” is a voluntary organization consisting of the Central League, the Pacific League, and the 12 teams that are members of these leagues.

Summary of Warning

(1) The following facts were found regarding Nippon Professional Baseball.

(a) Nippon Professional Baseball required its member teams to follow certain practices concerning player agents in contract negotiations. The organization mandated that player agents must be qualified lawyers under the provisions of the Attorneys Act (Act No. 205 of 1949). Furthermore, it prohibited players from appointing individuals who were already serving as agents for other players.

(b) On September 2, 2024, Nippon Professional Baseball resolved to discontinue the practices mentioned in section (a) (Note 2).

(Note2) The JFTC began its investigation in August of this year, pointed out issues related to the suspected violation of the Act described in (a), and requested Nippon Professional Baseball to consider early withdrawal. This resolution was made accordingly.

(2) The acts of Nippon Professional Baseball mentioned in (1) (a) were likely to fall under Article 8, item (iv) of the Act, and were likely to violate the provisions of the same article. Therefore, the JFTC issued a warning to Nippon Professional Baseball to refrain from engaging in similar acts described in (1) (a) in the future.

* This announcement is a tentative translation.

Please refer to the original text written in Japanese for more details.