
BEYOND THE BID PRESENTATIONS:

**Broken promises and
contract terminations in
Delaware North's recent history**



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For much of its history, Delaware North has built its brand and reputation on being a high-quality operator focused on providing services at facilities owned by its clients.

But starting around 2014, Delaware North began a “decade-long shift” toward owning its operations directly — away from reliance on providing services as an operator.¹

This review of Delaware North's recent history as an operator reveals the following:



Contract terminations



Broken promises to partners



Costs to taxpayers

We urge potential business partners — including procurement managers and small business partners — to review this information when considering Delaware North.



Contract Terminations

“This obviously stings.” Why is Delaware North Losing Sports Contracts?

Delaware North has won sports events contracts, like the Vegas F1 Grand Prix, but as of August 2025, Delaware North hasn't won a single new sports stadium or arena contract since 2021 in the United States. Its competitor Levy has won at least twelve .²

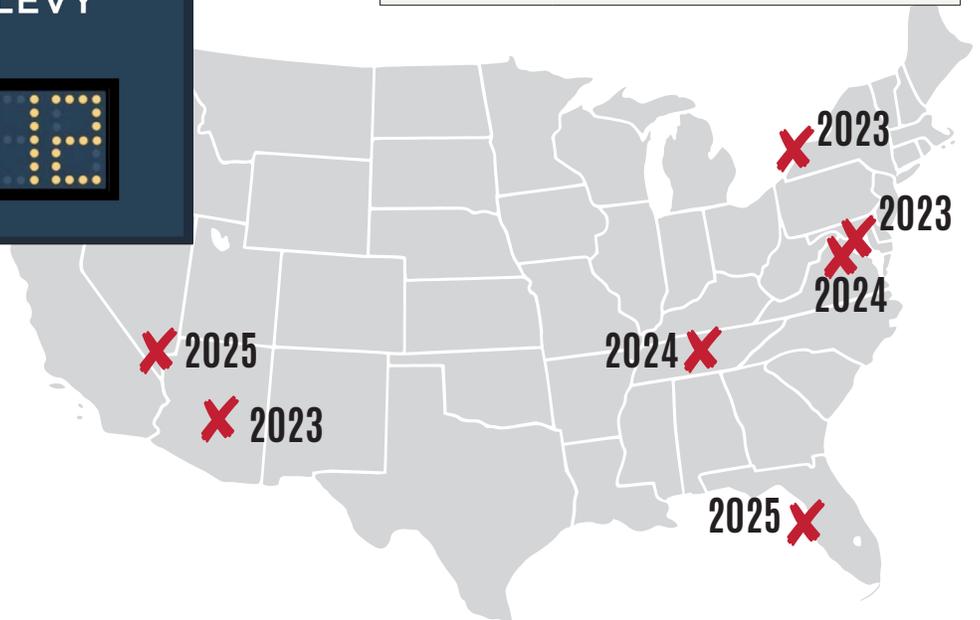
Meanwhile, Delaware North has lost contracts and contracts where Delaware North was the incumbent operator have ended.³

The head of Delaware North's Sportservice admitted “this obviously stings” when the company's hometown team the Buffalo Bills ended its concessions contract after 30 years.⁴

STADIUM DEALS SINCE 2021

DELaware NORTH	LEVY

SPORTS LOSSES FOR DELAWARE NORTH	
2022	Delaware North's sports dry spell begins: no new US venue contracts since 2021
2023	Orioles part from Delaware North after a single contract term.
2023	Buffalo Bills rejects Delaware North contract renewal after 30 years, in the company's hometown.
2023	Delaware North loses a bid at the Phoenix Sun's Footprint Center.
2024	Delaware North loses a bid at the Baltimore Raven's M&T Bank Stadium.
2025	Delaware North loses a bid for the new Tennessee Titans Nissan Stadium.
2025	Tampa Bay Lightning drops DNC after nearly 30 years.
2025	The A's reject Delaware North's bid for new Las Vegas ballpark.



“Premium” Patina Restaurant Group Loses Legacy Contracts after Its Purchase by Delaware North

Delaware North acquired the Michelin-starred Patina Restaurant Group in 2014 and relies on the brand to win contracts in markets that increasingly expect premium offerings.⁵

- Two years after Delaware North purchased Patina Restaurant Group: “LA Weekly critic Bessa Rodell gave Patina [restaurant in Los Angeles] just two stars out of five, writing, ‘People like to say that fine dining is dead, but in the case of restaurants like Patina, it feels less like a death and more like delusion and apathy.’”
—LA Eater article in 2016.⁶



Rockefeller Center in New York City. (Photo: “NYC - Rockefeller Center” by Deepti Hari, CC BY 2.0.)

- In 2019, NYC Rockefeller Center’s landlord announced it wouldn’t renew a lease on three Patina-operated restaurants that had been there since the mid-1980s.⁷
- In July 2020, LA’s Music Center Plaza announced it was not renewing a contract with Patina to operate its food and beverage. This had been Patina’s flagship location, where its namesake restaurant won a Michelin Star in 2007.⁸

“People like to say that fine dining is dead, but in the case of restaurants like Patina, it feels less like a death and more like delusion and apathy.”

—LA Eater article in 2016



Walt Disney Concert Hall at the LA Music Center. (Photo: “Walt Disney Concert Hall” by Prayitno, CC BY 2.0.)



Broken Promises to Partners

24 Years of Unfulfilled Charity Commitments

Delaware North owns TD Garden in Boston, the home arena for the NHL Boston Bruins, who are also owned by Delaware North chairman, Jeremy Jacobs.

In 1993, a Massachusetts use agreement mandated that the operators of the new arena must host three charitable events each year as a condition for state approval of \$160 million to construct a new Boston Garden (now TD Garden).⁹

Despite this legal requirement, TD Garden failed to host a single required charity event for 24 years, violating the agreement a total of 72 times. During this entire period, TD Garden was continuously operated by Delaware North and its companies. The New Boston Garden Corporation (now the Delaware North Companies, Inc.—Boston) was the owner of TD Garden when the act was signed.¹⁰

In 2017, TD Garden agreed to a \$1.65 million settlement—a sum criticized by the Boston Globe Editorial Board as “fall[ing] far short of what should be reasonably expected.”

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Bailed Out of Government Contract Early

In 2016, Delaware North contracted with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to operate the historic Honey Creek Resort for 15 years and pay the state a portion of its profits.¹² Delaware North left the contract in 2023, eight years early.¹³

In 2022, according to local news outlet KCCI Des Moines, “the [Department announced that] Delaware North no longer wanted control over Honey Creek. That created uncertainty for more than a year, until March of 2023.” In March 2023, the Department announced the new operator that would take over operations of Honey Creek.¹⁴



(Photo: Benoît Prieur CC 1.0)

TD Garden failed to host a single required charity event for 24 years, violating the agreement a total of 72 times.



Costs to Taxpayers

Yosemite National Park: The Legal dispute that Cost Taxpayers \$3.84 Million¹⁵

While it held the concessions contract at Yosemite National Park, Delaware North registered trademarks that included historic site names, the Half Dome park logo — and even certain uses of the name “Yosemite National Park” itself.¹⁶

After losing a bid to renew the contract in 2015, Delaware North dragged its former client and the new concessions operator into a four-year-long¹⁷ legal battle, claiming that the National Park Service should require the new operator to compensate it for “all property used or held for use in Yosemite” including intellectual property.

Delaware North valued its intellectual property, including the trademarks, at \$44 million. The Park Service alleged that an independent appraiser valued the intellectual property and other intangibles at only \$3.5 million.¹⁸

“We feel very strongly that these historic names are associated with the buildings and belong to the American people.”

—Scott Gediman,
spokesperson for Yosemite

In its lawsuit, Delaware North claimed that the contract did not require the company to notify the National Park Service or seek approval to register trademarks. The National Park Service denied this claim. A spokesperson for Yosemite, Scott Gediman said. “We feel very strongly that these historic names are associated with the buildings and belong to the American people.”¹⁹

The Department of the Interior **renamed major landmarks** in 2016 due to the legal dispute.²⁰

In 2019, the **Federal Government paid \$3.84 million** — and the new concessions operator, Aramark, paid \$8.16 million — to Delaware North to settle the dispute.²¹ The National Park Service also had to pay its own attorney fees and costs.²²



Delaware North Still Holds Trademarks at Federally-Owned Facilities

Delaware North **applied for a trademark in 2013 for the words “Space Shuttle Atlantis”** — the taxpayer-funded centerpiece of the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Center, where Delaware North operates guest services on behalf of NASA.²³

- Delaware North still owns the trademark, and its Space Center contract expires in 2028.²⁴
- **Delaware North also still holds a trademark for the words “Wuksachi Lodge,”** which is the name of the National Park Service-owned Wuksachi Lodge at Sequoia National Park.²⁵



Space Shuttle Atlantis (Photo: NASA/Bill Ingalls)



Wuksachi Lodge Resort (Photo: Davide D'Amico, CC BY SA 2.0)

Other Issues

OSHA Reported \$19,000 Fines for Crushing Hazard Exposure

During an inspection at TD Garden in April 2020, OSHA issued two citations when “workers were exposed to crushing hazards while working...” and “A worker was injured when the section tipped over and struck them.”²⁶

Sexual Harassment Allegations at a Delaware North Restaurant

In March 2025, anti-sexual harassment organization UltraViolet launched an online petition targeting Delaware North for firing a worker at Disney Springs who had reported sexual harassment at work, calling on the company to reinstate the worker and allow a fair process to organize a union. In response to the same incident, women’s advocacy groups led an organizational sign-on statement calling on Delaware North to respond to sexual harassment allegations at a Delaware North-run restaurant at Disney Springs in Florida. After two young women reported sexual harassment by their supervisor at that restaurant, Delaware North allowed him to continue working as their supervisor.²⁷



Conclusion

When seeking a concessions partner, most companies place a premium on hiring operators who are reliable, diligent, and high-quality. The more information you have available to you, the better your ability to evaluate every operator.

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