What the Tisch Family's Giants Ownership Transfer Teaches About Estate Planning

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Most families don't own an NFL team.

But the estate-planning strategy behind the Tisch family's reported transfer of their ownership stake in the New York Giants to trusts for their children offers lessons that apply to many family-owned businesses.

The reported transaction would move roughly 23% of the franchise into family trusts, continuing a multi-year succession strategy.

From an estate-planning perspective, several principles stand out.

1. The Best Succession Plans Happen During Life

Many people assume wealth transfers primarily through a will.
In practice, sophisticated planning often involves lifetime transfers. Moving interests into trusts earlier allows future appreciation to occur outside the senior generation's taxable estate.

For assets likely to grow dramatically in value—such as professional sports franchises—timing can make a substantial difference.

2. Ownership and Control Don't Have to Be the Same

Trust planning allows families to separate economic ownership from operational control.

The next generation may become the beneficial owners while experienced family members remain involved in leadership and governance. For family businesses, this structure can allow a smooth generational transition without disrupting operations.

3. Illiquid Assets Require Careful Planning

Sports franchises may be worth billions, yet they often produce relatively modest cash flow compared with their valuation. Without planning, estate taxes can create liquidity pressures that force heirs to sell part of the asset simply to pay the tax bill. Gradual transfers to trusts can help mitigate that risk.

4. Succession Is a Process, Not a Single Event

The Giants ownership transfers appear to have been structured over several years. That’s typical of effective estate planning. Large family assets are rarely transferred all at once. Instead, the process unfolds gradually through trusts, valuation strategies, and governance planning.

The takeaway:

Most families don’t own NFL teams—but many own valuable businesses, real estate portfolios, or investment partnerships.

The same principle applies — the most successful estate plans transfer wealth gradually while preserving stability and keeping important family assets in the family.