



Kevin Mazur/Getty Images for AEG

TAKING A BIG HIT: A federal jury said Wednesday that Ticketmaster owner Live Nation is a monopoly that gouged fans of acts such as Sabrina Carpenter and even leaned on musical artists.

TIX-TSK FOR LIVE NATION

Jury rules to stop monopoly

By THOMAS BARRABI

Ticketmaster owner Live Nation has maintained an illegal monopoly over the live event and ticketing markets, according to a bombshell verdict announced in Manhattan federal court on Wednesday.

The jurors determined that Live Nation, led by CEO Michael Rapino, illegally leveraged its ownership of major concert venues to benefit its own tour-promotion business. Concertgoers paid an extra \$1.72 per ticket as a direct result of Live Nation's anti-competitive practices, the jury found, according to Bloomberg.

US District Judge Arun Subramanian will decide on what penalties Live Nation will need to pay as a result of the verdict as well as appropriate remedies — including a potential breakup of the business.

The ruling appeared to cap years of fan and artist complaints about Live Nation, which controls 42 of the top 50 amphitheater venues in the US, and Ticketmaster, which sells tickets. Artists accused Live Nation of forcing them to work with it if they wanted to play its venues. And fans raged at concert prices they blamed on Ticketmaster's market control.

Feuds with fans & artists

The spats go back decades, with Pearl Jam accusing Ticketmaster of punishing the grunge act for its criticism in 1994.

The jury's decision followed a six-week trial that proceeded to court even after President Trump's Justice Department struck a controversial settlement with the entertainment gi-

StubHub's wrist slap

StubHub will pay a \$10 million settlement to ticket purchasers for violating federal rules about unfair and deceptive fees, the Federal Trade Commission announced.

On April 9, the FTC said StubHub, the nation's largest ticket exchange and resale ticket provider, will settle charges for "deceptively advertising ticket prices on its website without clearly and conspicuously disclosing up-front how much consumers actually would pay, including all mandatory fees."

The settlement involves tickets purchased between May 12 and 14, 2025.

"This settlement covers a limited number of transactions, spanning just three days in May 2025, where some listings on our site may have displayed ticket prices exclusive of fees," said a StubHub statement obtained by USA Today.

StubHub has contacted consumers who purchased tickets on these dates.

Brooke Steinberg

ant. A coalition of 33 states, including New York and California, opted to continue the case.

Lawmakers have sought for years to rein in Live Nation, which presided over the ticketing fiasco for Taylor Swift's Eras Tour.

Ticketmaster sparked a furor in 2022 when it canceled a general public sale of Swift tickets after seeing "historically unprecedented" demand at its presale events, prompting a suit from disappointed fans who alleged Ticketmaster "tacitly encourages" scalpers.

The states are seeking up to \$700 million in damages, as well as penalties for violations of state-level antitrust laws, according to Bloomberg.

"This is a historic and resounding victory for artists, fans and the venues that support them," California Attorney General Rob Bonta said in a statement. Live Nation's stock

slumped 6.3%. Meanwhile, shares of industry rival StubHub jumped 3.5% and Vivid Seats was up 9.3%.

Buyers 'are so stupid'

Live Nation did not immediately return a request for comment and is expected to appeal the ruling.

Court records that surfaced during the trial included Slack messages in which Live Nation employee Ben Baker admitted to turning a blind eye when brokers were buying up big blocks of tickets, saying, "normally I'd look other way."

In other Slack messages from 2021 to 2023 that went viral, Baker and fellow Live Nation executive Jeff Weinhold gloated about charging massive fees on ticket purchases, saying "these people are so stupid" that "I almost feel bad taking advantage of them," according to court papers.

Umpire's close call in Philly

Girlfriend tattoo abuse

A Major League Baseball umpire did not feel any brotherly love while in the city of Philadelphia last week.

Brock Ballou was robbed and assaulted April 9 while in town to work the Phillies series against the Arizona Diamondbacks, according

to CBS News Philadelphia. Ballou was one of two people who were allegedly attacked by the same assailant, who Philadelphia police believe is in his teens.

Ballou was allegedly approached by the suspect — seen in surveillance video wearing a black hat, black

pants and a light blue hoodie — while walking on the 1600 block of Walnut Street in Philly, when the individual stole his phone and took off.

Ballou gave chase and ended up getting into a "physical altercation," Capt. Jason Smith told the outlet,

When Ballou tried to take back his phone, he was punched in the head several times. He eventually got the phone back.

The injuries sustained by Ballou were not serious, and he umpired first base the next night.

Christian Arnold

An evil boyfriend almost completely covered his now-ex-girlfriend with more than 250 tattoos, many of his name or initials, using a cheap machine he bought online.

The Dutch abuser — identified only as "Hans" and who has not been charged with any crime — for years forced her to get

the tats, covering almost 90% of her body and branding her his "property," according to an organization that has raised \$35,000 to get the ink removed.

Many were in "places he thought had been touched by other men," said Andy Han of Dutch organization Spijt van Tatoos, or Tattoo Regret. Patrick Reilly