

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
MISSOURI, SOUTHERN DIVISION

Jeanne L. Welch-Kurdle and Aaron Kurdle v. Doxa LLC, et al.

Welch-Kurdle · No. 6:25-cv-03108-MDH · Decided May 27, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri ruled on Plaintiffs’ motion to strike or make more definite J.B. Hunt Transportation Inc.’s affirmative defenses. The court upheld nine defenses under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8, required J.B. Hunt to provide a more definite statement for one defense under Rule 12(e), and struck fifteen defenses under Rule 12(f).

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri, Southern Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Douglas Harpool
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri
DECIDED	May 27, 2026
DOCKET	6:25-cv-03108-MDH
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiffs moved under Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 12(e) and 12(f) to strike or require a more definite statement of J.B. Hunt's affirmative defenses to the amended complaint.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Under Rule 12(e), a more definite statement is appropriate when a pleading is so vague or ambiguous that the opposing party cannot reasonably be required to frame a responsive pleading. Under Rule 12(f), the court may strike an insufficient defense or redundant, immaterial, impertinent, or scandalous matter.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; federal district court order
PARTIES	Jeanne L. Welch-Kurdle, Aaron Kurdle v. Doxa LLC, J.B. Hunt Transportation Inc., Cody Rodgers, Other defendants

TOPICS

affirmative defenses

motion for a more definite statement

civil procedure

statute of limitations

comparative fault

PRACTICE AREAS

Civil procedure

Torts

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether J.B. Hunt's affirmative defenses satisfied the short-and-plain pleading standard of Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8.
2. Whether affirmative defense number 7 was so vague or ambiguous that plaintiffs were entitled to a more definite statement under Rule 12(e).
3. Whether the remaining challenged defenses were insufficient under Rule 12(f) because they merely denied elements of plaintiffs' claims or failed to plead affirmative matter.

HOLDINGS

1. Affirmative defenses 2, 8, 9, 11, 18, 19, 20, 22, and 24 were sufficiently pleaded because they stated intelligible legal theories in short and plain terms and provided fair notice.
2. Affirmative defense number 7, asserting waiver, laches, estoppel, and unclean hands, was so vague and unintelligible that plaintiffs could not reasonably prepare a response; J.B. Hunt was ordered to file a more definite statement within 14 days.
3. Affirmative defenses 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 23, and 25 were stricken as insufficient because they merely denied elements of plaintiffs' claims or otherwise failed to plead facts supporting an avoidance or affirmative matter.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiffs brought claims arising from an alleged incident involving Doxa, LLC and later amended their complaint to add J.B. Hunt as a defendant. J.B. Hunt answered, denied responsibility, asserted a crossclaim against Doxa for indemnity and contribution, and pleaded 25 affirmative defenses. At the time of the motion, J.B. Hunt had not yet benefited from fact discovery.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiffs filed the action in Missouri state court, and Doxa removed it to the Western District of Missouri based on diversity jurisdiction. Plaintiffs later amended the complaint to add J.B. Hunt, which was served and answered with 25 affirmative defenses and a crossclaim for indemnity and contribution. Plaintiffs moved to strike or clarify those defenses before J.B. Hunt had received the benefit of fact discovery. The court granted the motion in part and denied it in part.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Knapp v. FAG Bearings, LLC, 2021 WL 3771793, at *2 (W.D. Mo. Aug. 24, 2021)
- Zotos v. Lindbergh Sch. Dist., 121 F.3d 356, 361 (8th Cir. 1997)
- Crutcher v. MultiPlan, Inc., 22 F.4th 756, 765-66 (8th Cir. 2022)
- First Union Nat'l Bank v. Pictet Overseas Tr. Corp., 477 F.3d 616, 622 (8th Cir. 2007)

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