

# Football could hurt Dallas wants NBA

United Press International  
DALLAS — Norm Sonju, president of a group hoping to bring a National Basketball Association franchise to Dallas, said Tuesday he is the only concern NBA officials have about the area as its overwhelming loyalty to football.

Sonju will make a presentation to the NBA expansion committee next Tuesday, two days before the annual meetings begin in Florida. He has visited with 20 of the 22 members of the NBA's board of governors, Sonju said. "I think the members believe in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and they can't think of a better thing to say about it."

But Sonju said if there was anything that bothered NBA officials it would be the popularity of collegiate and professional football. "Possibly the fact that football is big here would be of some concern to them," he said. "I saw (Dallas Cowboys quarterback) Roger Staubach play tennis for charity the other night and it was on the front page of the sports section."

"I think that would be their biggest single point of concern. I don't think the lack of success of the Dallas Stars hockey team (the Dallas Chaparrals of the ABA) will be a factor, but there have been a lot of false starts in the NBA."

Dallas businessman Donald Carter, who applied for a franchise earlier this year, hired Sonju to negotiate with the NBA for a new franchise. Sonju served as president of the Buffalo Braves and last summer led to convince the club's owner, Al Brown, to move the team to Dallas.

"It was my firm opinion then to move to Dallas," said Sonju, "because every study I did and every study I saw showed Dallas was the best market available. I plan to continue those studies to the expansion committee."

Earlier this month the Houston Rockets were sold for \$10 million. Sonju feels it will cost more than that to buy a franchise for Dallas.

"This will be the most expensive franchise ever bought in the NBA," said Sonju, who declined to speculate about the final purchase price. "Mr. Carter is a good businessman who has the money to pay whatever the cost might be. But he is also a smart businessman and I don't foresee any smart businessman paying more than what the franchise is worth."

"I know the people in Minnesota (who are bidding for a franchise as well) and they feel the same way. There is not going to be a bidding

war for this thing."

The NBA has announced plans to expand by two teams for the 1980-81 season and Sonju has urged the league to award those franchises at next week's league meetings.

"A decision needs to be made now so we have a year to do things right," said Sonju. "But I don't want anybody to be discouraged if we don't get it next week. It could be in July or it could be in August."

"It's not unusual for the governors to call a special session."

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