

Baseball in Va? Great Falls fan makes pitch

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If Bart Fisher of Great Falls had his way, Virginia would have baseball, not football. Specifically, Virginia would have the Giants move from San Francisco.

"It would be logical to have pro basketball in Maryland, pro football in D.C., and pro baseball in Virginia. Baseball belongs in Virginia," said Fisher.

Fisher is an international trade attorney and an owner of the Carolina League's Prince William Cannons. He is currently vying with Sacramento, Phoenix, Buffalo and Charlottesville for the Giants, who are looking to move next April. The next 45 days will tell, he said.

No "billionaire bully" like Jack Kent Cooke -- Fisher is just a real fan of the game of baseball.

"It teaches you a lot of lessons about life," he said. "The best hitters have a .300 average, which means that seven out of ten times they don't get a hit. The game is prefaced on failure -- with such rare successes, they just go out there and keep owinging."

It is a lesson he has taken to heart.

Two years ago, he formed Capital Baseball, Inc. with Bill Bryant of McLean to try and bid for an expansion franchise. Together they raised a bid of more than \$95 million, but didn't get the franchise.

Now in the big leagues, Fisher is playing a negotiation game with the Giants and the D.C. Armory that is a lot like the game of baseball itself.

Fisher may be able to please everybody, if he plays it right. With the Redskins practically packed up to move to Alexandria, the District faces the prospect of a suddenly empty RFK stadium.

The Giants want a stadium -- the team intends to leave its home town because San Francisco



Donna Firnhaber/THE CONNECTION

Baseball fan Bart Fisher

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hasn't delivered on its promises to build one.

Whether the team would be called the Virginia Giants or the Washington Giants is still up in the air, Fisher said. "We have to get the team first."

Whichever name or location might eventually win out, Fisher is convinced of the need for a major league baseball team.

"Northern Virginia especially needs it, because it has no real community identity," Fisher said. "[The

residents] all come from somewhere else, and they're looking for a community."

Fisher said he's looking to get a short term (about three years) lease for RFK stadium.

At the end of the lease, he'd like to either make the stadium the Giants' home, or see if Virginia will build a stadium of its own.

"I would rather the money for the Redskins go to a baseball stadium," Fisher said. "I see [the City of] Alexandria's point -- what do they get out of it? The season tickets are in people's wills -- it's a closed market."

"There's no question it would be

successful," he said of the franchise. After all, people like him will even drive all the way to Baltimore's Camden Yards stadium to catch a game.

"The demand for baseball is nearly insatiable."

While he'd rather not say how the negotiations are going with the Giants or the D.C. Armory, he does say, "I'm very reluctant to get people's hopes up," he said.

Fisher does know that the audience is there. "I've gotten a lot of calls. There's a lot of interest, a lot of excitement, a lot of enthusiasm. They want baseball."