

# Fisher Explores Oakland A's

By Mark Maske  
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Washington attorney Bart Fisher, who's trying to acquire a major league baseball team for the District or Northern Virginia, said yesterday he has been given permission to look at the financial records of the Oakland Athletics, who are for sale.

Fisher said he's been told by bank officials that the records are in the process of being delivered to him. But this is the second time he's received such assurances, he said, and the records weren't delivered the first time. A's owner Walter A. Haas Jr. has set the sale price at \$85 million for any buyers who would keep the club in Oakland. Oakland Coliseum officials have been given until December to locate a local purchaser, after which out-of-town investors may be considered.

Fisher and his partners have expressed interest in several teams, and last year offered \$150 million for the San Diego Padres. That offer was rejected. Fisher's group also has applied for an expansion franchise, but baseball's expansion process seemingly has been put on hold because of the bitter labor dispute.

Baseball had been planning to add two more teams by 1997, but acting commissioner Bud Selig said: "We'll have to review" the expansion process. Phoenix and Tampa-St. Petersburg are the clear expansion favorites.

It's unlikely that the owners would permit another American League team, such as the A's, to move so close to the Baltimore Orioles. But other franchises likely would become available to be purchased and moved if the players' strike spills over into next season.

Fisher said yesterday that he's had no conversations with anyone interested in starting a new league with major league players whose contracts have expired. That's one of the options players and union officials have discussed pursuing if the owners declare a legal impasse in negotiations and attempt to unilaterally impose a salary cap.