

Late Bid to Move Scouts Finds Novorr Off Guard

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Expecting oblivion, the Kansas City Scouts got Denver instead as the National Hockey League Board of Governors met yesterday in Chicago.

With the governors gathered to discuss, among other matters, the termination of the Scouts franchise, a Denver group represented by Bud Palmer, television sports commentator, came forth with a firm proposal for purchase of the club.

The N.H.L.'s finance committee heard Palmer's proposal and established a special committee to examine it, thereby providing the Scouts franchise another reprieve in its attempt to avoid bankruptcy and dissolution.

Representing the Scouts in Chicago were Ed Thompson, club president, and Vic Swyden, city councilman. Gene Novorr, local clothier who is attempting to organize a Kansas City group to finance the franchise, did not attend the meeting. He expressed surprise at the Denver bid.

"It's a shock to me," said Novorr. "I never even heard of them being interested, just the New Orleans group. If it was discussed with anyone in Kansas City, I was not told about it."

Palmer, 54, heads a group that al-

most bought the California Golden Seals franchise a month ago from Mel Swig, the Seals' owner. The financially troubled Seals are about to be shifted to Cleveland. The board of governors yesterday authorized Swig to proceed with the transfer of the club.

Speaking by telephone yesterday from his home in Vail, Colo., Palmer said his group's proposal amounted to "\$5 million-plus" and that the N.H.L.'s finance committee, chaired by William Wirtz, president of the Chicago Black Hawks, hoped to reach a decision by tomorrow or Saturday.

"We have a pretty strong group of investors who are interested," said Palmer. "We want to get this resolved by the end of next week at the latest."

Palmer said his group's decision to pursue the Scouts franchise was made on the spur of the moment and that little advance preparation had been made. Kevin Conwick, Denver attorney representing the Palmer group, had contacted Thompson before the Chicago meeting to indicate interest.

Another Denver group, headed by Carl Scheer, Jr., president of the Denver Nuggets basketball team, reportedly was interested in the Scouts franchise in March. Palmer would not indicate whether Scheer was an investor in his group.

Palmer said discussions with the finance committee centered on the Scouts liability for debts incurred while operating in Kansas City. But he said that no mention was made of the possibility that new ownership in a different city might be liable for the Scouts' obligations on their Kemper Arena lease. The finance committee was more interested in Palmer's proposed arrangement with the city of Denver and McNichols Arena.

Meanwhile, Novorr vowed to continue his search for a general partner to lead his group and save the Scouts for Kansas City.

"It takes a 51 per cent vote of the (current) partners to approve any sale," said Novorr. "I can't see legally how they (the N.H.L.) can transfer without the Scouts selling or going bankrupt."

"We're so close to keeping it here it's pitiful. We've done six months' work in three weeks. Even if the Denver group does do something we're not going to stop."

Novorr said he expected the league to begin the dissolution process yesterday, giving him about a week to complete his financial package.

"I thought the league would start some kind of procedure for foreclosure," said Novorr. "I never expected this."