

# Group Led by Magic Johnson, Jersey's Kasten Buy Dodgers with Record \$2.15B Offer

by Joel R. Glucksman on March 29, 2012

Ending the soap opera that overshadowed last season for the Los Angeles Dodgers, a group of investors, including basketball hall of famer Magic Johnson, won a bankruptcy action for the Los Angeles Dodgers with a bid of \$2.15 billion.

The deal will be formally presented to judge Kevin Gross for a bankruptcy law review and final approval next month. Last year, owner Frank McCourt filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, throwing the team into turmoil.

While Johnson is expected to serve as an ownership spokesman who will use his special connection to the Los Angeles market, the other partners are also notable. The controlling partner in the bid is Mark Walter, who currently serves as the head of the Guggenheim Partners investment firm, which is based in New York and Chicago. The president of Guggenheim, Todd Boehly, is also involved in the deal.

New Jersey native Stan Kasten also has a major interest in the deal. Kasten has a great deal of experience in sports franchises, having helped run the Atlanta Hawks, Atlanta Braves and Washington Nationals over the past 33 years in various capacities.

Frank McCourt will also have a marginal role moving forward, having retained a 50 percent ownership stake in the land's parking lots, meaning he could still have a role with future real estate law developments regarding the area.

McCourt needs to finalize the deal by April 30, just before he must pay his ex-wife \$131 million in their divorce. He bought the team in a deal worth just \$420 million in 2004.

Economists said the bid was well above earlier estimates of up to \$1.4 billion. The previous record for the cost of any sports franchise was the \$1.47 billion price paid for soccer's Manchester United in 2005.

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