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Chargers' Move to LA Just the Latest Example of How Greed Wins in the NFL

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AP Photo/Gregory Bull

This is a story of stupidity, plunder and sheer, naked disloyalty. This is the story of the [Chargers'](#) ill-fated move to Los Angeles.

In a text message to Bleacher Report, one owner described how Chargers owner Dean Spanos, as first reported by [ESPN's Adam Schefter](#), told [NFL](#) Commissioner Roger Goodell and other owners about his intention to move.

This owner, like others, told me he was stunned Spanos was making this announcement before apparently telling his team or the city.

"He acted like our league isn't full of gossips or like the internet doesn't exist," said the owner.

The predictable happened. Schefter heard about the news and reported it late Wednesday. I'm told by a Chargers team source that Schefter's report caught many in the organization totally by surprise. The move became official Thursday after [Spanos released a statement](#) on the Chargers website.

Indeed, those in the Chargers' inner circle were so out of the loop as to Spanos' plan, one outright refuted the report to the *San Diego Union-Tribune's* Kevin Acee, who tweeted after ESPN's report:

It wasn't worth much.

Informing other owners and Goodell before telling his own team was a massive PR blunder by Spanos. It's also not unusual for an organization as poorly run as the Chargers.

Spanos fluctuated greatly about his decision these past few weeks, according to the owner with whom B/R spoke. But the truth is, as far as I can tell, there was just one stadium plan put before San Diego voters in 15 years.

If Spanos truly wanted to stay, there would have been more options for the public to consider. There weren't. The Chargers may dispute this, but in offering so few alternatives, the move smacks of disloyalty.

Teams have moved before, and moving is never pretty. The [Colts](#) left [Baltimore](#) in the middle of the night for Indianapolis, and the [Browns'](#) move from Cleveland was perhaps the most contentious in sports history.

But this is a new era, one in which the money is bigger—much bigger—and that weakens the bonds between teams and communities. And as profits become the driving motivation, fans feel a greater squeeze on their wallets while getting less and less return on the field for their fandom.

Cities are held hostage more than ever before with fan loyalty used as proof of life. In essentially one to two years, if the [Raiders](#) move to Vegas as expected, we could have three teams change homes. That

would be unprecedented.



Donald Miralle/Getty Images

Chargers owner Dean Spanos.

So the next time a team or owner questions why fans aren't going to games, give them the side eye. Because with a few exceptions, no team is safe.

The reason why is cash. Owners can make tons of it with a single move and it doesn't matter if a stadium is full or not. It doesn't even matter if the team is any good.

It's about the cash in hand. The [49ers](#) are a good example of this. A new stadium—Levi's Stadium in this case—is built, and fans have to pay between \$2,000 and \$80,000 to secure the rights to get the seat. Not the seat itself. *The rights to the seat.*

It's a variation of the personal seat license. Except it's the personal seat license on HGH. That doesn't even include the paying for the actual seat, or the massive monies paid for parking, hot dogs, candy

and overpriced beer.



AP Photo/Denis Poroy

Plunder, indeed. No matter how bad the team, or how empty the stadium, owners make their money. Do the math for the 49ers and [you're talking about a billion](#) or so earned. And this is a franchise that won all of two games this season.

[This will be the model](#) followed by Spanos, Stan Kroenke of the [Rams](#) and Mark Davis of the Raiders. Mo' money, mo' money, mo' money.

Football and L.A. have often worked better in theory than in practice. Why will this time be any different? Are the teams better? Has the city lost any of its other attractions? Even if attendance dips, and history tells us it will, I just don't think Spanos or Kroenke care because they will make their money.

Yes, this Chargers story is one of stupidity, plunder and sheer, naked disloyalty. This is the story of the Chargers' ill-fated move to Los Angeles.

And it's sad.

Mike Freeman covers the NFL for Bleacher Report. Follow him on Twitter: [@mikefreemanNFL](#).