

Sarver thinking of selling? Jeff Weltman front-runner for GM gig? Lots to discuss here

Written by

Tuesday, 30 April 2013 08:44 -



Wow. There's a LOT to chew over in this report from Ric Bucher. Not only does Bucher report that [Milwaukee Bucks](#) assistant GM Jeff Weltman is the front-runner for the Phoenix Suns GM job, but he buried the lede on the Robert Sarver front.

Bucher's source also puts the blame for Blanks on Sarver's shoulder (something I'd never heard before and take with a grain of salt) and goes on to suggest that Banker Bob might just be ready to cash out on his investment in the [Phoenix Suns](#) franchise.

Here's the report:

[Ric Bucher's post on San Antonio Spurs | Latest updates on Sulia](#)

Jeff Weltman, as has been reported, is the frontrunner to be the Phoenix Suns' next GM, and one source said he was team president Lon Babby's preference when he first joined the Suns but that owner Robert Sarver was eager to tap the [San Antonio Spurs](#) ' braintrust and therefore preferred the now-deposed Lance Blanks. The bigger question is, how much longer will Sarver be calling the shots? One source says the increased evaluation of franchises inspired by the Seattle-Sacramento fight over the [Kings](#) has Sarver wondering if it's time to cash out.

Wow.

We've heard whispers over the years that Robert wasn't in it for the long haul and would be open to selling but that's still very thin gruel.

So first, let's tackle the Sarver selling thing which I think is the bigger story.

Sarver was the lead guy in a group that purchased the Suns from Jerry Colangelo in 2004 for a

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reported \$400m (give or take a couple of million dollar hamburgers). The Kings valuation in the Maloof sale is at least \$525m and could end up closer to \$550m when the dust settles.

Wow.

That's a pretty hefty increase and something that has to make Sarver take notice. He's on the [NBA's Finance Committee](#) and has seen all the details of the Kings transaction. If the Kings are worth that much, how much would the Suns be worth?

Cha-ching!

It's VERY important to note that this is one rumor from one source. We've heard whispers over the years that Robert wasn't in it for the long haul and would be open to selling but that's still very thin gruel.

I also am of the opinion that Sarver has taken far more grief (mostly from the national media) than deserved.

He's OBVIOUSLY made mistakes when it comes to both business and player decisions but he's no slum lord (I see you Donald Sterling) and it baffles me that super-rich, large market [Bulls](#) owner Jerry Reinsdorf doesn't get raked over the coals for being "cheap" while Sarver (whose team did pay the luxury tax for several years while in contention) does.

So, let me just say this about the potential of Sarver selling --- sometimes the devil you know is better than the devil you don't know. How would you feel about Chris Hansen and his Seattle crew setting their eyes on your Suns should they strike out on moving the Kings to the Emerald City?

Anyway, it's something to file away and chew over for the time being until we get more info one

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way or another. And one would think this report might prompt some kind of response from Bob. Then again, Sarver's words and actions haven't always been in alignment (how's that for tact!).

As for Jeff Weltman, here's what we know about him:

Weltman is the assistant GM in Milwaukee and [has reportedly been given permission](#) to interview with the Suns. He's been with the Bucks for five years (since April 2008) and recently signed an extension in his current job. He has a long NBA resume which you can read [here](#)

But never forget -- Joe Alexander.

Perhaps most intriguing about Weltman is his propensity for analytics which, you will kindly recall, is a focus for Babby during this "Summer of Analytics".

SB Nation's Brew Hoop talked to Weltman during the lockout in August 2011 in an interview that mostly addressed analytics. Here's [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#) of the interview. Weltman certainly talks the talk.

Frank Madden from [Brew Hoop](#) said this about Weltman and the possibility of him coming to Phoenix:

The Bucks' front office has deservedly taken plenty of heat for the Bucks' lack of results over the past five years, but Weltman might be the person they can least afford to lose. In my interactions with him I've found him to be approachable and open-minded, and he's generally considered to be a very analytical guy with a strong knowledge of the CBA.

On the flip side, Weltman has been with the Bucks for five years and that franchise hasn't exactly blown the doors of the NBA. At some point in the future, certainly if Weltman is hired by the Suns, we'll explore his team's draft record in more detail. But never forget -- [Joe Alexander](#)

Are we having fun yet?

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