

## RANGERS TELEVISION

# Club to pursue own regional network

## Team's contract with Diamond Sports ends after season's last game

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The Texas Rangers are prepared to pursue creating a regional sports network of their own when the season and current contract with the parent company of Bally Sports Southwest end Sunday, a person with knowledge of the club's negotiating position told *The Dallas Morning News*.

It would be the most ambitious of options the Rangers could pursue. The others: allowing Major League Baseball to take over their broadcasting and distribution, or returning to a deal with Diamond Sports, Bally's parent. While no deals are in place, a RSN model could allow the Rangers the best chance at both improving distribution and increasing long-term revenue. The Mavericks and Stars, whose seasons begin within the next month, have both left Bally Sports Southwest to create their own broadcast platforms.

According to a report from *Sports Business Journal* on Thursday, citing unnamed sources, Diamond offered the Rangers a competitive rights fee to remain with Bally Sports Southwest but the team rejected it. Rangers officials did not confirm or deny the report. It is worth noting, however, that the Rangers' current situation essentially makes them a free agent. If a RSN model proves to be too ambitious an undertaking, there is nothing that would prohibit them from returning to the table later in the offseason.

There is still a lot that must come together for the Rangers to put together their own RSN, including distribution deals and advertising sales. But a club-owned RSN could have freedom to maximize its distribution by being on linear cable, offering a streaming app and potentially negotiating some package of over-the-air broadcasts.

“We have a five-state territory, 16.5 million households and only 16% — a little over 2 million people — can watch our games,” Rangers president of business operations and COO Neil Leibman said recently at a symposium organized by *Sports Business Journal*. “We have to fix that.”

While the size of the territory is a long-term advantage, it does create complications in terms of the number of deals that must be completed in order to maximize carriage of games. That means it may take deep into the offseason before the Rangers are finally ready to announce the size and scope of their model.