

# Spirits

## finally sold

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By LEN HOYES  
Journal sports writer

New owners Saturday officially assumed control of the Flint Spirits of the International Hockey League.

"Everything is signed and sealed," said Bob Perani, spokesman for the group. "The necessary checks are in a trust account and will be delivered on Monday."

Negotiations between Perani's group and President Laraine Lamb of the Spirits had been under way since mid-January. The new owners secured an option to buy on Jan. 31 and have been involved in legal work for the last month.

"It just took time," said Perani, a one-time star goalie for the former Flint Generals. "Most of the problems were the result of the season being in progress. If the work was done in the off season there would have been fewer problems."

The Spirits have 22 games remaining in their first season which ends on April 13.

Perani said he will be president of the new group. Don Chambers is vice president, Lucille Keely secretary and C.J. Shelley treasurer.

Perani is owner of Petland and a sporting goods business which bears his name. Chambers is owner of Chambers Electronics, Keely is a General Motors employee and

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Shelley owns Shand Electronics.

Other owners are: Bob Landaal, an executive of Flint Box-makers; Jerry Myers, owner of Spartan X-Ray, Inc.; Donna and Ron Thompson, owners of Housing Products, Inc.; Mike and Ted Vomvolakis, owners of Raincheck Lounge; and Doris Prichard and Joseph Webber who were described as "just interested fans" by Perani. SUN MAR 2 1986

Perani said the group hopes to add owners before next season.

"We're here not only for the rest of this season but also next season," he said. "In fact, we're in a good position for next year.

"Most of us are business people who don't need the responsibility of running a hockey club but we're interested in keeping hockey in Flint.

"We don't plan to make a lot of money but instead give something back to the community.

"Our first priority is to increase attendance. There will be no drastic changes. Players will be the responsibility of (Coach) Doug McKay.

"Naturally, we hope to have a respectable finish to the season. We'll try to make other teams realize we aren't going to hurt anyone this season, but it's to their advantage to make us a competitive team.

"There are extra players around who could make us respectable."

Final approval of the sale must come from the IHL Board of Governors. Commissioner Bud Poile visited Flint 10 days ago to survey the negotiations and said he anticipated no difficulty in getting the Governors' approval.

Perani said the new owners would assume some liabilities of the previous owners.

"Negotiations went real good except for a lot of little items," he said. "We talked on a friendly and helpful basis with the Lambs. We probably will need their advice on some items until we get established."

Laraine Lamb was listed as the sole owner of the Spirits and her husband, Carl, was vice president.

They secured the franchise from the IHL Board of Governors Aug. 6 after the Generals had departed for Saginaw.

Their operation was hampered by a poor schedule and poor attendance. Crowds averaged in the 1,700-1,800 range most of the season.

A figure of 2,150 was listed as the break-even point.

Perani said, "There's not a big difference between actual attendance and what's needed to break even. We hope some of our old fans will come back to support us for the rest of the season.

"I'm not only optimistic, I'm confident."