

The world's largest global newspaper



metro

NEW YORK • WEEKEND, JUNE 20-22, 2008



(Cover)

NHL calls penalty on Dolans' Rangers

In court filing, league threatens to freeze out ownership of Rangers

ANDREW S. GARIB
letters@metro.us



Jim Dolan has been known to enrage Knicks fans, offend women's groups and aggravate Yankees viewers. And the relationship between the chairman of the board of Cablevision and the National Hockey League appears to have grown icy as well.

The NHL threatened to end the Dolan family's ownership of the Rangers, according to court documents filed by the league Wednesday. It is the latest move in an ongoing fight between the league and one of its six original members.

Cablevision, which owns the Rangers, Knicks and Madison Square Garden, broke its "contractual commitments with the League and the other 29 Member Clubs" and deserved in-house discipline, the NHL said in a press release Thursday. League Commissioner Gary Bettman said possible disciplinary actions included the suspension or termination of league membership. But any such punishment would need to be approved by three quarters of team owners under NHL rules.

The league asked a Manhattan judge to allow it to pursue internal disciplinary actions against Cablevision after the company sued the NHL under antitrust laws for control over the Rangers' Web site. But MSG said the brawl

Four reasons to despise James Dolan

1 1999-present: The Knicks. From Allan Houston's contract to Isiah Thomas, the team and its management have been a disaster.

2 Oct. 2, 2007: MSG was ordered to pay a former employee \$11.6 million for sexual harassment from Knicks coach Thomas.

3 1999-2005: Dolan increased his meddling with the Rangers, but the team did not make the playoffs, despite paying big for big names.

4 2002: One hundred and thirty Yankees games are blacked out on Cablevision's MSG Network.

SEAN QUINN/METRO

should be decided by a court, not the league's board of governors.

"Every American citizen or business has a right to go to court and have its dispute heard by an impartial judge," MSG spokesman Barry Watkins said. "We will not be intimidated by the NHL's bullying tactics."

Dolan angered Knicks fans and women for fumbling the team's management and for a sexual harassment case involving ex-coach Isiah Thomas. Cablevision also blocked TV access to Yankees games after the team launched its own cable network, YES, sparking a battle over money.