Manchester United considering IPO in US

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Manchester United Ltd., the record 19-time English football champion, is exploring moving its initial public offering to the U.S. from Asia as it seeks to secure the best valuation, said people with knowledge of the plans.

United, which previously planned to raise about $1 billion in Singapore, hasn't made a final decision, said the people, who declined to be identified because the deliberations are private. Banks pitched the idea of a U.S. listing to the Glazer family, the club's U.S. owners, one of the people said.

"This could have negative implications for Singapore's aim to build a cluster of international sports names listed here," said Ng Soo Nam, Singapore-based chief investment officer at Nikko Asset Management Asia Ltd., which oversees about $165 billion. "Such listings would have helped broaden the breadth of the Singapore market."

Credit Suisse Group AG and JPMorgan Chase & Co. will remain lead managers for the IPO, while Morgan Stanley, hired for the share sale in Singapore, would no longer advise if United opts for the U.S., said the people. While a U.S. listing would give United access to investors worldwide, the club could fetch a higher valuation by choosing an exchange closer to its fan base, said Matt McCormick of Bahl & Gaynor Inc.

"Even though Manchester United is a global brand, of all the marketplaces, the U.S. is probably the one where it's the least well-known," said McCormick, who helps oversee $6.2 billion at the firm in Cincinnati. "If they're hot in Europe or in Asia, then it would give me pause that they aren't going to their strengths."