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Fading Hit: The jersey of Los Angeles Dodgers' Yasiel Puig has been a best-seller.

Merchandise Of Big Hitter Could Whiff

Dodgers fans may turn to other players while Yasiel Puig in minors.

When former fan favorite **Yasiel Puig** was sent down to a minor league affiliate earlier this month, the **Los Angeles Dodgers** were sending away a player who brought big merchandise sales, as well as big base hits, to the team.

Puig, 25, departed for the **Oklahoma City Dodgers** after a falloff in production, months of friction in the clubhouse, and controversy in the media.

The right fielder had been a big sales force when he was more popular. Over a four-day period in June 2013, the team sold more Puig-related merchandise than any other

player, moving about 3,000 items, according to the Los Angeles Times. In the second half of the 2014 season, his No. 66 jersey was among the top 5 best-selling jerseys in the league, according to **Major League Baseball's** website.

Puig's departure will only have a "subtle effect" on merchandise sales for the Dodgers, said **Russell Scibetti**, founding editor of The Business of Sports website. True blue fans will likely just opt for a **Clayton Kershaw** or **Adrian Gonzalez** jersey instead.

"Someone who really wants a Dodgers jersey (or Dodgers merchandise, they're probably still going to buy it," said Scibetti.

In fact, most fans are looking for a "positive association" to make with the team, choosing to buy the jersey of a high-performing player over one who's been demoted

or no longer with the team, said **David M. Carter**, executive director of the Sports Business Institute at USC's Marshall School of Business.

At Dodger Stadium, on-field caps, jerseys, and player T-shirts are top sellers, according to **Allister Annear**, the team's vice president of merchandise. Once a player leaves the team, their personalized products are discontinued, except in the cases of iconic figures such as **Jackie Robinson** and **Sandy Koufax**, whose commercial appeal endures past their tenure. As for Puig, the Dodgers won't say whether or not they'll be restocking his merchandise in the stadium store anytime soon.

"We are hopeful that Yasiel Puig will be back in Los Angeles this season to once again play for the Dodgers," Annear wrote in an email.

— Hayley Fox

Light Maker Takes Note Of Music Stands

LEDtronics, orchestra working in concert to develop bright idea.

Torrance manufacturer **LEDtronics** has found an unusual application for its light-emitting diode bulb technology: music stands.

Musicians with the **Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra** had long been struggling with traditional incandescent music-stand lighting, which can be inconsistent and a challenge for aging or tired eyes. It's a delicate balance: The lights must be bright enough for the musicians to read the music scores, but not so bright as to distract the audience.

"If the musicians can't read the notes, they can't



Standouts: Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra in June using music stands equipped with LEDtronics lights.

perform the concert," said **Ian Harwood**, the orchestra's vice president.

Even worse, the fragile incandescent bulbs would often break during transport and because of the intense heat they emit, they can't be adjusted while on.

Harwood didn't want to replace otherwise good music stands, so he approached **LEDtronics** about replacing the incandescent bulbs with

LEDs. LEDtronics had never designed bulbs specifically for music stands in a concert environment, so it spent several months working with the orchestra to come up with a solution.

"The key was to develop a warmer, softer light that could easily be adjusted for different types of venues," said **Pervaiz Lodhie**, the company's founder.

— Howard Fine

Player Scores Scholarship With E-Sports

UCLA student part of blossoming interest in 'League of Legends.'

As e-sports leagues continue to burst on the professional scene, the hunt for video-game athletes is becoming increasingly competitive.

Just ask **Daphne Jin**, a junior at **UCLA** who last month was awarded a \$2,000 scholarship from Atlanta's **KontrolFreek**, a company that provides performance gaming gear such as high-grade grips and thumb sticks for controllers, for her contributions to the school's "League of Legends" team. The game, in which players

battle virtually in an online arena, is published by West L.A.'s **Riot Games**.

It's all part of a global e-sports market that is expected to hit \$463 million this year and \$1 billion by 2019, according to research firm **Newzoo**.

Millions watch e-sports events on live-streaming services such as **Twitch**, and **ESPN** has started broadcasting some competitions. More companies have begun taking notice of the sponsorship opportunities.

"More money is going to come into the space from endemic and nonendemic brands," said **Ashish Mistry**, chief executive of



Jin

KontrolFreek.

This fiscal infusion also means there are opportunities to support student-e-sport-athletes. And like many student-athletes, **Jin**, a physiological studies major, found it hard to

balance team and school.

"It's a lot different than being a regular collegiate athlete," she said of her experience on the team, which is not officially affiliated with **UCLA**. "Our program was student led, less regulated. It wasn't like we had mandated practice times."

And so despite the acknowledgment from **KontrolFreek**, she's since left the team.

— Carter Stoddard

Making Mark Against Graffiti, Trash

Steve Craig, whose **Craig Realty Group** operates the **Citadel Outlet** mall in **Commerce**, is mostly preoccupied with commercialism.

He has, though, formed a bond with the community around

Citadel and has spent more than five years or so leading an effort to clean up graffiti, haul out debris, and patch up potholes. His beautifying work began after noticing a 1,000-footlong building along the railroad track that was covered in graffiti.

"Why do people just let that go and call it acceptable?" he asked.

Craig got permission to



Cleaning Up: Craig with youth crew.

repaint the vandalized side of the structure, repair holes in the surrounding fence, and plant shrubbery to help beautify the space. From there, he said that he joined community members and local business leaders to haul out hundreds of thousands of pounds of trash from the city and repave almost three miles of street.

"With a little bit of initiative

PAGE 3

JONATHAN DIAMOND

on one person's part, it really caught fire," said Craig, 60.

Now, he leads an annual "Clean Up Commerce" event, where teens, local business owners, and other community members work side by side to improve landscapes, remove graffiti, and pick up trash. For every youth that participates, Craig donates \$100 to local arts and service programs, yielding \$10,000 in donations this year.

Joined by Clubs

Attorneys who practice in the class-action space typically wage war inside the courthouse,

but once a year some of the top litigators from the plaintiffs' and defense bars battle over something other than liability: who's best at golf.

Neal Ross Marder, of downtown's **Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld**, led his defense-side team

to victory in June's sixth edition of what has been dubbed the **KCC Classic**. The **Ryder Cup**-style team tournament has a tendency to end in dramatic finishes and this year was no different.

"We won it with the last group on the last hole," said **Marder**, 56. "It was great."

The weekend golf retreat had its roots in a conversation **Mard-**



Marder

er had six years ago with **Patrick Ivie**, an executive at **El Segundo's Kurtzman Carson Consultants**, which handles class-action settlement administration.

"I told Patrick, 'Wouldn't it be fun to have a mini-Ryder Cup and pit some of the top class-action

defense and plaintiffs' attorneys against each other?'" **Marder** said, noting that **Ivie** deserves the lion's share of credit for growing the event. Typically held at **Pebble Beach**, the competition went further up the coast this year to **Bandon Dunes** in **Oregon**.

The weekend retreat isn't just about competition, however. **Marder** said putting both sides of

the bar together was a chance to forge bonds that can make some of the courtroom skirmishes less kinetic and possibly bring in new cases.

"It's a great opportunity to hang out with some of the top class-action attorneys in the state," **Marder** said. "And any time you're hanging out with lawyers for three days, you're talking about business opportunities."

Asked whether he's been able to win back some of the attorney fee award money paid to plaintiffs' lawyers in cases he's been on, **Marder** laughed. "I'll never tell," he said.

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