

# Bryce Harper gear won't be wasted

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March 4, 2019

How excited are Phillies fans that Bryce Harper signed Thursday to play the next 13 years of his career in Philadelphia?

The team owner, John Middleton, said 180,000 tickets were sold by the end of Friday, and Fanatics, a leading online retailer of officially licensed sports merchandise, reported Harper's No. 3 Phillies jersey is the top-selling jersey for any player, in any sport, in the first 24 hours after launch in the company's history.

Harper, whose \$330 million deal with the Phillies surpassed Giancarlo Stanton's \$325 extension with the Marlins after the 2014 season, broke Stanton's 24-hour jersey sale record among baseball players, which was set when Stanton was traded to the Yankees 2017.



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Harper's first-day e-commerce jersey sales also eclipsed those of LeBron James when he signed with the Lakers last summer.

While a few spurned Nationals fans who helped make Harper's No. 34 among baseball's most popular jerseys during his seven years in D.C. have burned or trashed their Harper gear since he signed with an NL East rival, one Washington bar is encouraging others to donate their unwanted Harper apparel to a good cause.

"Take those Bryce Harper clothing items and bring them to us," The Big Stick, just down Half Street from the center-field gate at Nationals Park, tweeted Sunday. "We will be donating all items brought to the bar to Bread for the City."

Bread for the City is a nonprofit that provides food, clothing, medical care and social services to D.C. families in need.

"It definitely hurt that Bryce went somewhere within the division," said Laura Licata, the social media coordinator for The Big Stick. "We wanted to have a way for fans to let go and say goodbye, but also not be a classless fan base and just set fire to perfectly good clothing

that other folks might need.”

In case patrons needed further incentive not to burn their slightly worn No. 34 T-shirts, The Big Stick is offering a shot of Old Overholt whiskey to anyone over 21 who makes a donation.

The donation drive is expected to run at least until Opening Day on March 28.

“The whole goal is to kind of close the Bryce chapter,” Licata said. “I was reading reports that the guys down at spring training say the locker-room energy is super positive, so we want to make sure that we go through the mourning process and be ready for the season this year. ... When we won the Cup, we didn’t burn down the whole city. I’d hope that we can continue that and not burn jerseys, because there are people who are on the streets who would really love extra clothing.”

The Big Stick also will host an event benefiting Bread for the City on March 27, with food and drink specials and a raffle.

There’s a similar Harper clothing drive going on at Hurley’s Tavern in Richmond, Virginia, where anyone who drops off Harper gear through March 9 will receive a complimentary appetizer. All clothing collected will be donated to Goodwill.

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