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Nike Fans Flames of Team Loyalties

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By Kamau High

NEW YORK A Major League Baseball-themed in-store, print and poster push by Nike from Cole & Weber imagines the United States as a country demarcated by rabid fan loyalties.

While the re-imagined U.S. retains familiar state lines, certain liberties are taken. For example, Florida is home to a surplus of Marlins fans, while the Devil Rays—which also play in Florida but are far less popular—occupy a small patch of land.

The agency researched the boundaries of fan loyalty by monitoring chat groups and enthusiast sites.

In addition to a large U.S. map, there are maps for individual teams that not only show how far the fan base extends, but include hometown icons. For example, the New York Mets' edition features a drawing of the subway system with the words "Cultural landmark: Blue-collar commute."

Nike distributed the signage to MLB teams this week. Each team makes its own decision on how to display the work in stadium stores. The maps themselves are not for sale.

"We were interested in tapping into all those things that are unique to baseball—the curses, the myths and the rituals," said Todd Grant, ecd at Cole & Weber. "The stadiums are the hubs of fandom. Each baseball country has its own rules and personality."



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