

# Cavaliers fans donating James apparel



Cavaliers fans burn LeBron James jerseys after he left the team.

By Tom Withers  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

CLEVELAND -- They're taking the jerseys off their backs for LeBron James. Then tossing them away — for a good cause.

Stung by the NBA superstar's decision to leave Cleveland and play for Miami, Cavaliers fans have been unloading their unwanted No. 23 jerseys, T-shirts and other clothing items bearing James' name at locations around the city.

Organizers are shipping the discarded James gear to homeless shelters in South Florida.

"It's like any breakup," said

Beau Miller, who began the campaign with three friends. "You want to give all your stuff back."

For the past week, Cleveland fans have been dropping off their LeBron-related items at Yours Truly Restaurants in Northeast Ohio.

Miller said he and his friends wanted to turn a negative situation into a positive and that the response has been "extraordinary."

"We wanted something good to come out of this," he said. "We didn't want another 'I hate LeBron' campaign. There's enough of that going around."

Doug Libelich, manager of the Yours Truly location in Shaker Heights, Ohio, said there has been a steady flow of

fans — mostly young ones — ridding themselves of LeBron-related clothing, including the iconic 23 jerseys.

"It's been picking up in the last few days," he said. "All kinds of stuff."

James' messy separation with Cleveland has caused a negative backlash against the 25-year-old, who announced his decision to leave the Cavs as a free agent during a one-hour TV special on July 8.

While appreciating the pain James caused Cleveland fans, Miller, along with friends Chris Jungjohann, Andrew De Crane and Tim Zeller, saw his departure as an opportunity to help those less fortunate. Proceeds from the \$15 shirts are going to the Cleveland City Mission.

## Kovalchuk deal will be rejected

By Ira Podell  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

NEWARK, N.J. -- A person familiar with the issues raised says the NHL is rejecting Ilya Kovalchuk's 17-year, \$102 million contract with the New Jersey Devils because it circumvents the league's salary cap.

Speaking on condition of anonymity because the NHL has not announced the decision to void the deal, the person tells The Associated Press on Tuesday night that Kovalchuk's contract is illegal because the years of low salary at the end of the contract were added for the sole purpose of lowering the cap hit.

The person added that no side believes Kovalchuk will play the final years of the deal at the low

salary numbers that were agreed to in the deal.

The star forward was slated to earn only \$550,000 in each of the last five seasons of the contract.

Kovalchuk was wooed by the Los Angeles Kings, among others, but decided to stay with New Jersey — the team that pried him from the Atlanta Thrashers in February.

Kovalchuk dismissed money as a main factor in his decision. He instead cited long-term security for him and his family and the opportunity to win the Stanley Cup with an organization that boasts three titles in 15 seasons.

One driving point for Kovalchuk and the Devils in agreeing to such a long commitment was how well each side clicked once Kovalchuk arrived from Atlanta.



Members of Manchester United arrive at the Philadelphia Art Museum. United, one of the most famous and successful soccer teams in the world, will play the Philadelphia Union tonight at 7:30 p.m.



Amare Stoudemire (right) will not join team USA after a contract issue.

## Stoudemire won't play for US

By The Associated Press

LAS VEGAS -- Amare Stoudemire will not play for the United States in next month's world championships because of problems insuring his contract, a damaging blow to the Americans on the day training camp opened.

The New York Knicks new forward was expected to be one of the Americans' top players in Istanbul, Turkey, but the team learned of the change of plans Tuesday.

The Knicks asked Stoudemire to pull out Monday night and he understood, though he was looking forward to rejoining the team after playing for the Americans in the 2007 Olympic qualifying tournament. He could still play in the 2012 Olympics if the insurance issues are worked out.

"We can only address right now,

this year," USA Basketball chairman Jerry Colangelo. "The fact that we were notified by his team that they were pulling him we didn't get specific about next year or anything beyond the immediate information."

ESPN.com first reported that Stoudemire might not be available to play in the championships that begin Aug. 28.

Stoudemire has had microfracture knee surgery among his injuries, a major reason Phoenix wouldn't offer him a maximum length contract.

The Knicks then gave him a five-year deal worth nearly \$100 million, even while saying they weren't sure if the contract could be insured.

According to the Knicks, the insurance policy from Stoudemire's contract with the Suns is still in place, but it excludes his surgically repaired left knee. The Knicks have begun

working to secure insurance on his new deal, but that hasn't been completed.

Without proper insurance, NBA teams can prevent players from taking part in summer events.

"He had to pull out because he couldn't get insurance on his knees. So, he's not able to play," said Knicks coach Mike D'Antoni, who is an assistant with the U.S. team.

"I don't know if his (future USA Basketball) status has changed or not. I have no idea. I hate it for him, but it's business."

With the players who led the Americans to the 2008 Olympics gold medal taking the summer off, USA Basketball was counting on Stoudemire.

"He's disappointed, we're disappointed, but we have to honor the team's request, decision to pull him. I think it was late notice," Colangelo said.

## Coaches

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However, the fourth year saw an increase in success, as Auburn upset Oklahoma in regionals and qualified for nationals.

The Tigers went on to qualify for regionals the final eight years the Thompsons were at Auburn, and earned No. 2 seeds at regionals two out of the past three seasons. At the same time, the Thompsons improved their attendance to an average of 5,500 in 2010. They said they hope to bring more fans to Rec Hall as well.

The Thompsons are inheriting a

lot of talent from Shephard's regime, including the 2010 Big Ten Freshman of the Year Sharaya Musser. Musser was a four-time All-American last season. The Lions also return junior co-captain Whitney Bencko, who was a two-time All-American her freshman season.

"The goal is always to win," Rachele Thompson said. "We want to win. We want to start off winning, winning in all areas. That's the main goal and just to take Penn State to the next level. It's going to be a couple years building, but were going to do it."

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## Bullpen

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success will help them down the road.

On a night where the Spikes offense struggled to find runs, Gourley said that any game could be turned around with a hit or two and it was huge for the bullpen to keep them in it, even if the effort wasn't materialized.

"They kept us in it, held [the Scrappers] right there," Gourley said. "The bullpen did a good job keeping them where they were. Kept us in position, kept us within four. That was big."

Robinson has been switching pitchers from starting positions to relief spots and he said that with the rotation that they have, it will likely continue, forcing guys to adjust their routines. Ponders said that the pace of coming into relief is much faster but to him, it's all about doing what he can to help the team.

"It's definitely a different men-

"Coming out of the pen is different, but you just have to adjust."

Brooks Ponders  
Spikes Pitcher

tality, getting ready quicker," Ponders said.

"I'm just trying to help the team out as much as I can. Coming out of the pen is different but you just have to adjust."

In the seventh inning, Ponders put himself in a jam, allowing a two-out triple through the gap in second base, but quickly recovered by striking out the Scrappers catcher Diego Seastrunk looking.

"All in all I thought it was a good outing," Ponders said. "A good confidence booster, and hopefully come out next outing and keep the ball down in the zone and make guys swing at the ball early."

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## Spikes

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decent, but they had nothing to show for it.

Shortstop Walker Gourley, who had one of the four hits, agreed.

"We squared a lot of balls up," Gourley said. "Some nights those hard hits are going to turn into bloopers. We're going to catch some breaks. Just keep putting the barrel on the ball and it will find holes."

It didn't take long for the Scrappers to get on the board against State College (16-16) starting pitcher Zack Von Rosenberg. Mahoning Valley (13-19) designated hitter Chase Burnett hit a first inning sacrifice fly, and second baseman Dan DeGeorge ripped a two-run double down the left field line in the second.

Von Rosenberg, one start removed from picking up his first professional win, gave up four

runs on eight hits in his five innings of work. The 19-year-old right-hander struck out two and walked one before giving way to another 19-year-old, Brooks Ponders, in the fifth.

Ponders hurled two shutout innings, allowing just two hits. He struck out three and walked none before Mitch Fienemann entered in the eighth. The Lockleys, Australia native threw an additional two innings of shutout baseball, allowing just one hit and striking out two. The State College bullpen did everything it could to keep its team in the game, but the Spikes couldn't get anything going.

The State College bats have been inconsistent as of late. On its most recent road trip, a three-hit performance and a four-hit performance followed up a 13-hit performance. An 18-hit performance was then succeeded by a seven-hit performance. Finally, Tuesday night's mere four-hit showing followed Monday night's

15-hit performance in the Spikes' 14-5 win at the Auburn Doubledays.

But Gourley doesn't foresee a problem.

"I think we've done a good job at taking the same approach game to game," he said. "I think that the quality of contact we made tonight, 15 hits could have happened. It was just hitting the ball right at people and it made it so the hits seemed to be low, but we got some good solid contact."

The Spikes hope to earn a split with the Scrappers in the finale of their two-game set at 7:05 tonight.

Quinton Miller will make his fourth rehab start with State College and Gourley said as long as State College sticks with its approach, things will work out on the hitting end.

"I think we'll get on a roll here if we keep doing that," Gourley said.

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Walker Gourley (left) slides in a game earlier this season. Gourley had one of the Spikes' four hits Tuesday