

# WILD TIMES

The Iowa Wild logo is a circular emblem with a green border. Inside, there's a stylized 'W' and 'I' in green and gold, with the words 'IOWA WILD' written around the inner circle.

VOL. 11

WHERE  
ARE THEY  
NOW?

STARTING ON PAGE 5

#20 CHAD RAU

FROM  
GRASSROOTS  
TO GAMEDAY

STARTING ON PAGE 11

2013-14 SEASON

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# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Iowa Wild is now in its seventh season in central Iowa as the Minnesota Wild's American Hockey League franchise. In that time, fans have watched more than 200 players wear the Wild sweater.

Two of Iowa's most popular players in the team's inception were Chad Rau and Marc Hagel. The Wild Times caught up with both players to find out what they've been doing since leaving Des Moines.



**CHAD RAU**

Veteran winger Chad Rau was one of the original members of the Wild who relocated from Houston to Des Moines in 2013. Rau, who also played for Des Moines Buccaneers in the United States Hockey League, played center for the Wild that first season. Since leaving Des Moines, Rau has played for hockey teams based in Finland (SM-Liiga), China (KHL), Russia (KHL), and Slovakia (KHL). Rau's brother, Kyle, has played three seasons with Iowa. The elder Rau now resides in Glasgow, Scotland, playing for the Glasgow Clan of the Elite Ice Hockey League.

**STORY BY: TOM WITOSKY**

**CHAD RAU #20  
2013-2014**



**Q: Why did you decide to play hockey in Glasgow, Scotland?**

**A:** I had always wanted to play in the UK at some point during my career. I had heard good things about the team here and living in Scotland in general. Also, most teams offer a chance to pursue an MBA degree while playing and that was something that always interested me and had an influence on my decision to come here.

**Q: How does it compare to playing in the KHL or other European leagues?**

**A:** The KHL is a very skilled league with some high-end players. The ice sheets are very big and puck possession is a primary focus. The Elite League is a little more of a North American style of play with more physicality and an emphasis on systems.

**Q: When you aren't playing or practicing, how are you spending your time?**

**A:** I am currently in school studying to get my MBA degree. Most of my free time is consumed with schoolwork. We also just had our third child over here in Scotland and that's been keeping us very busy, but I enjoy spending free time with my kids.

**Q: You were one of the players who moved with the team when it relocated from Houston to Des Moines. What was your impression of Des Moines as an AHL city?**

**A:** I played for the Des Moines Buccaneers in 2004-05 and coming back when the team relocated, it was impressive to see the growth of the city. It is a great city for an AHL team, especially for an affiliate of the Minnesota Wild with the location being so close. The facilities and fan support were something that stood out to me in a positive way as well.

**Q: How much longer do you think you will play hockey?**

**A:** I'm unsure of how much longer I will continue to play. My body still feels good, knock on wood. But my children are getting older and we want to establish some roots for them soon. It will be something we talk about after the season as a family and make a decision.



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# FROM GRASSROOTS TO GAMEDAY

STORY BY: TOM WITOSKY

As the Iowa Wild hockey team boarded an airplane destined for a 10-day road trip in January, the Wild's other team gathered for its weekly meeting to go over game plans for the next five home games.

Allie Brown, the Wild's Senior Director of Marketing and Creative Services, and members of the Wild's various business departments spent the next 75 minutes talking about marketing, social media, communications, ticket sales, sponsorship opportunities and concert management in preparation for the hockey team's return to Wells Fargo Arena.

"We've got a lot of work coming up," Brown told the group. "We are in pretty good shape, but there is still a lot to get done."

Todd Frederickson, the Wild's President and chief architect of the franchise's success in central Iowa, sat nearby to help Brown and add his own insights related to how this 31-member squad should approach the heaviest schedule of home games during the 2019-20 season.

"I think we've done a good job of building a successful organization over the last seven years because of the approach we have taken," Frederickson said after the meeting. "We have created a brand that



people are proud of. We've done a great job in the community. We're growing the sport of hockey. Our approach has always been as a team."

Frederickson and Brown, along with Vice President of Sales Eric Grundfast, Senior Director of Broadcasting and Team Services Joe O'Donnell and Senior Director of Ticket Operations Lisa Rothlein have spent seven years pouring a solid foundation for a sports franchise in a community that wasn't shy in its skepticism of the Wild's commitment to a long-term stay in central Iowa.

"I think people were hesitant with the organization coming in because they'd seen it before and now they were seeing it again," Grundfast said. "We had to get through the first three years and still be here."

In 2013, Craig Leipold, the owner of the Minnesota Wild, decided to move the

“  
WE HAD TO GET THROUGH  
THE FIRST THREE YEARS  
AND STILL BE HERE.”





organization's AHL franchise from Houston to Iowa. The move was based mostly on getting the Wild's AHL prospects closer to the NHL team's home in St. Paul. The four-hour car ride between the two cities has even spawned an axiom to players: "The road to St. Paul goes through Des Moines." Team officials were also impressed with the quality of Wells Fargo Arena and the fact Des Moines appeared to be a growing mid-sized city in need of more sports entertainment.

To corral Iowa hockey fans and establish the franchise, Leipold hired Frederickson, who had been working at the AHL headquarters as Vice President of Team Services and had spent 10 years in the ticketing department with the Chicago Wolves.

When Frederickson and a small staff from Houston arrived in June 2013, the beginning days of the franchise were hectic, if not outright chaotic. With little office furniture or supplies, the staff went to work to get the franchise up and running by October — not

nearly enough time to do it adequately.

"It was a whirlwind," Grundfast remembered. "If someone had a good idea, they put it down on a scrap of paper and moved it along. We were drawing up ticket packages and our sponsorship programs on scrap paper and then would hand it off to our design team. That's how crazy it was in the first two months."



## TEAM OFFICIALS WERE ALSO IMPRESSED WITH THE QUALITY OF WELLS FARGO ARENA

Brown remembers it just as vividly. "We didn't even have desks at that point," she said. "It was working through Minnesota to get computers for everyone and phones set up. We didn't have the basics to get started, but we had to put something together to make it work in three months."

Frederickson had a plan and it was focused on the long-term growth of a franchise. He also received strong financial support from Minnesota.

"We've received the financial resources from Minnesota to do great promotions, have great entertainment at our games, and to be able to hire staff from around the country and have them all moved here," Frederickson said. "Those are the things that successful organizations have to do and, most times, minor league organizations can't afford to do that."

Plus, the business team had to begin the process of building a foundation at a time when the hockey side of the organization struggled. For three years, the team's operation was less than stellar on the ice — finishing near or at the bottom of the division and Western Conference. Ironically, the team's lack of success may have helped the business side focus its efforts on involving the club in the community and making each game an enjoyable experience for families looking for a fun time on a winter's night.

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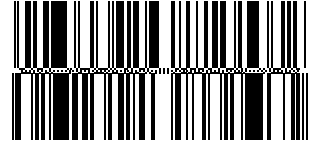
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Some easy ideas for the DSM Local Challenge are ordering takeout or delivery from a local restaurant, purchasing gift cards from local retailers or restaurants online, purchasing season passes to our local attractions and museums, booking future services at salons and spas, taking advantage of professional development trainings virtually — and more! The ways to support local businesses safely from your home are endless.

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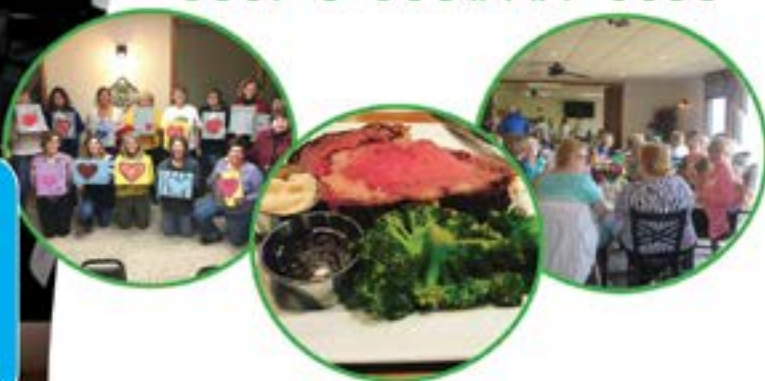


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When Marc Hagel retired from professional hockey following last season, the former Iowa Wild forward moved as he did on the ice — quickly, aggressively and in unexpected directions.

The 31-year-old Hamilton, Ont. native, who became a popular player in his 192 AHL games in Iowa, moved into the financial world as a partner in a day trading firm with former professional hockey player James Sixsmith and then enrolled himself in a chiropractic college in Ontario. His life is a busy one, but as a Princeton University graduate and holder of a masters' degree in political science from Miami University - Ohio, Hagel has always liked an intellectual challenge as much as one on the ice.

**Q: Do you have any spare time these days?**

**A:** Oh man, pro hockey was a dream life. Coffee, rink, practice, Chipotle, then hang with the guys the rest of the day. That was awesome. Now, I basically go to school all day, then study all night and do investment work at night as well. So, a busy day.



## #29 MARC HAGEL 2013-2017

**Q: What prompted you to get into investment work?**

**A:** We always dream about money and how to make money and the two places to make money are in real estate and the markets. When I studied at Princeton, I didn't take any econ classes, I studied politics instead. It always just felt a stone unturned that I wanted to learn about. So when someone close to me and a teammate made an offer to me it made sense to take it. I got to learn the markets and learn day trading in the trading world.

**Q: And becoming a chiropractor?**

**A:** Chiropractic comes back to hockey. When I was with the Wild and all through my college years, I basically lived on the chiropractic table. The team chiropractor for the Wild is the one that got me through the seasons. As a result, I decided that that was something I wanted to do.

**Q: What made you decide to retire?**

**A:** Honestly, I'd been away from home since I left for university and then all the years in pro hockey and then overseas a couple of years. I was just looking to get home for a bit. When I'm done, I'll probably end up taking off again.

**Q: Do you still have time to play hockey?**

**A:** Every Thursday night in a men's league with my friends.

**Q: You were one of the members of the Iowa Wild's first roster. How much did you enjoy your time in Des Moines?**

**A:** My hockey home was definitely in Des Moines. It is one of those undercover cities that has everything you need. It's not too big, but it's big enough to be a real metropolis. It's got great restaurants, great people. I mean, I loved it there.





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TRIVIA ANSWERS

1 - b. Kaapo Kahkonen, 2 - c. CJ Motte, 3 - a. Matt Register, 4 - c. Steve Michalek, 5 - d. 9  
6 - d. 7, 7 - a. True, 8 - d. 13,503, 9 - c.Cody McLeod and Connor Dewar, 10 - b. San Antonio Rampage





**ONLY ABOUT 20 PERCENT OF THEM KNEW THE OUTCOME. BUT THE OTHER 80 PERCENT KNEW THEY HAD A REALLY GOOD TIME. AT THE END OF THE DAY, THAT'S WHAT IT IS ALL ABOUT.**

"It changed our focus," Brown said. "It became about the community and telling their stories and getting our players involved with the community. It was really about focusing on what we could do for the community."

Two of the landmark programs were the establishment of the franchise's Wild About Reading program and the Healthy Living Floor Hockey program introduced to Des Moines area school districts.

Grundfast remembers being told that school district officials might not be approachable to get involved in the programs.

"My first two weeks I spent meeting with every superintendent in the market and we talked about both programs," he said. "The response was absolutely positive once they saw how both programs represented our involvement in the community and how it supported reading and health."

At the same time, the club also began to focus on the kind of entertainment that central Iowans enjoy both at hockey games and generally.

"During those first years, I would imagine if you polled folks coming out of the arena, only about 20 percent of them knew the outcome," Grundfast said. "But the other 80 percent knew they had a really good time. At the end of the day, that's what it is all about."

As a result, the club has worked diligently on its game presentation that features well-made videos, rocking music designed to get people on their feet dancing, and focusing on getting fans to know players, often as part of a sponsorship promotion.



In the process, the club has grown its attendance in five of its last six seasons, increased the number of sponsorships purchased by central Iowa businesses large and small, and, like the coaching staff on the hockey side of the building, the team has developed a training program good enough to give around 20 former employees their shot to work in the majors in sales, communications and management.

"We've had the success of training a number of people who have gone to the majors in social media, ticket operations, and management in Major League Baseball, the NFL, as well as the NHL," Frederickson said, adding a recent opening for a new social media coordinator immediately drew 150 applications.

Grundfast also points out that the staff doesn't hear the question they heard so much in the early days. Those ended, he said, when Minnesota announced not only that the NHL Wild would play a preseason game in Des Moines but also announced a five-year extension of the team's lease with Wells Fargo Arena.

"That night was a huge one and made us all feel we had made a big jump," he said. "I haven't been asked about the team's future here since."

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# HOCKEY IN THE COMMUNITY

During the first half of the regular season, Iowa Wild players and team mascot, Crash, have made **more than 40 appearances** in support of local organizations and causes.

The team's annual Celebrity Server event at 801 Chophouse (Jan. 16) saw a record amount of more than **\$10,000 raised** for The Outreach Program. Along with proceeds from the annual Wild on the Green Golf Outing (Sept. 30), the team will contribute funding for **50,000 meals** to be packaged at the upcoming Tame the Hunger event.

The team, in conjunction with Wells Fargo, the City of Johnston and the City of Urbandale, built two new community ice rinks in the respective cities, for public use open in winter 2019. These two new rinks increased the team's community **rink total to seven locations** throughout the central Iowa region. Players and team mascot, Crash, celebrated these community rinks with a 'Community Rink Takeover' on Feb. 1, joining the public for open skate sessions.

**More than 22,000 students** are participating in the team's Wild About Reading and Healthy Living Floor Hockey programs during the 2019-2020 school year. Each program provides materials to the schools free-of-cost to encourage fun, active learning and to promote the game of hockey throughout central Iowa.





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# HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE WILD PLAYERS?

## ANSWERS ON PAGE 23

**1. Gerry Mayhew won the Wild's second monthly AHL award in January. Who earned the first?**

- a. Jason Zucker
- b. Kaapo Kahkonen
- c. Cal O'Reilly
- d. Tyler Graovac

**2. Which former Iowa Wild player is currently NOT playing in the KHL?**

- a. Zack Mitchell
- b. Ryan Murphy
- c. CJ Motte
- d. Steve Michalek

**3. Which player, who this season signed a contract with Iowa, is the only player in ECHL history to be named playoff MVP?**

- a. Matt Register
- b. Josh Atkinson
- c. Turner Ottenbreit
- d. Patrick McGrath

**4. Goaltender Kaapo Kahkonen this season passed which goaltender for most wins in team history?**

- a. Andrew Hammond
- b. Alex Stalock
- c. Steve Michalek
- d. Niklas Svedberg

**5. The Wild set a record in January for most wins in a single month with how many victories?**

- a. 6
- b. 7
- c. 8
- d. 9

**6. How many community rinks does the Wild and Wells Fargo have in Central Iowa?**

- a. 4
- b. 5
- c. 6
- d. 7

**7. True or False: The Wild have set a new record for goals in a single season each of the last three years?**

- a. True
- b. False

**8. When the Wild broke the organization's attendance record, how many were in the crowd?**

- a. 12,272
- b. 12,799
- c. 13,213
- d. 13,503

**9. Which two players share a birthday exactly 15 years apart?**

- a. Matt Bartkowski and Brandon Duhaime
- b. Mike Liambas and Mason Shaw
- c. Cody McLeod and Connor Dewar
- d. Gabriel Dumont and Will Bitten

**10. Which AHL organization announced next season it will be relocating to Henderson, NV?**

- a. Stockton Heat
- b. San Antonio Rampage
- c. Chicago Wolves
- d. Charlotte Checkers

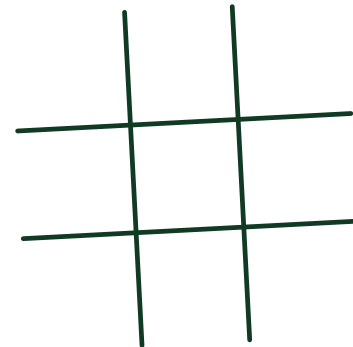
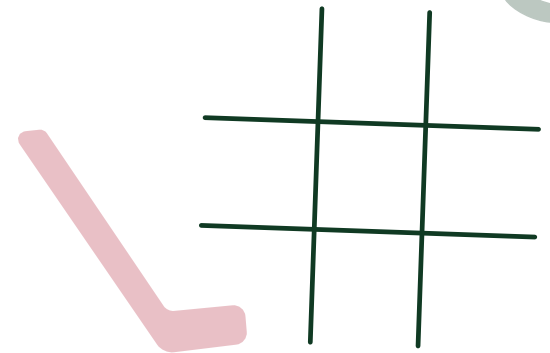


# Kids Corner

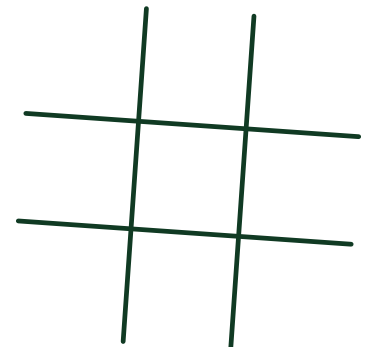


Can you find all the words below?

J Z D P R F I H H R G U K V J  
 L N F J P U E O N Q I O Y S O  
 L P F K U O V R W K J N K T O  
 U L C O C U V M S A J U K I H  
 N V S V K H F H T K W Z V C A  
 W H E E O L G M O E A I V K T  
 I N N R C Z P Q R N A T L B T  
 N V U T J A L Z O N E M E D R  
 C D H I I M A F H E T Q T S I  
 C W S M B B Y J M K Q R A X C  
 A K O E S O E F K Z J C R X K  
 J S E F M N R C K N A K L Z V  
 V M Q R L I S H O C K E Y K S  
 I C I N G P T Q T C E L L Y R  
 U R E I E D M Z U T S M P Q L



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Icing

Overtime

Iowa Wild

Hockey

Players

Stick

Zamboni

Skates

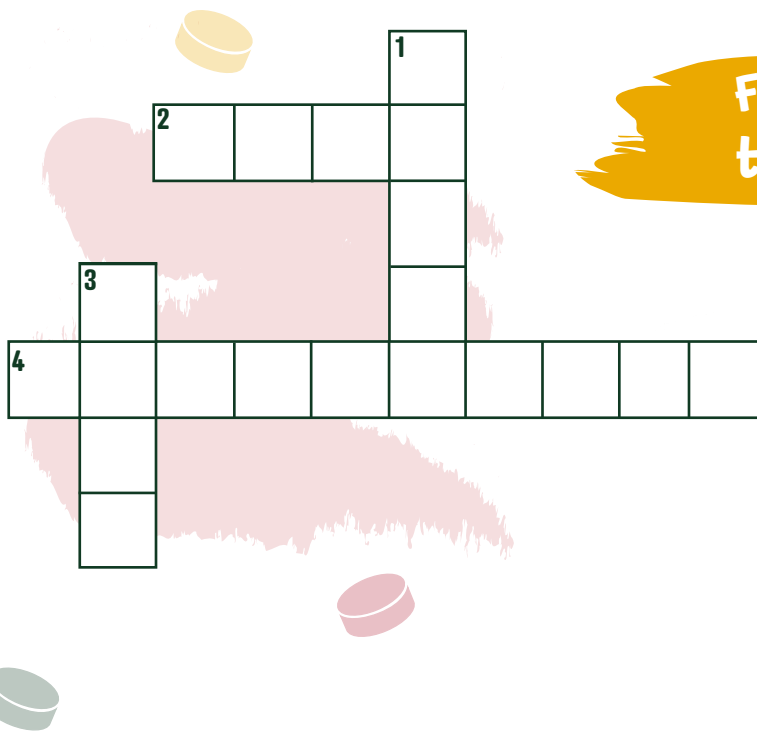
Rink

Celly

Team

Hat Trick

Zone



Fill in the crossword using the picture clues!

DOWN

ACROSS

1.



2.



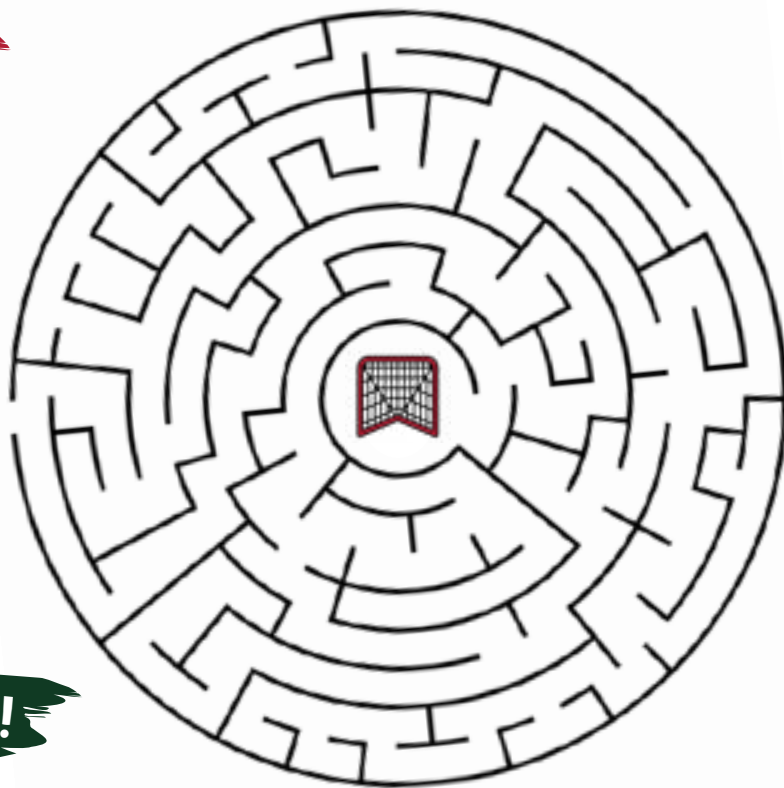
3.



4.



Help Crash find his way to the goal!



Unscramble the words below!

ckits

\_\_\_\_\_

okcyeh

\_\_\_\_\_

rcahs

\_\_\_\_\_

eic

\_\_\_\_\_

oiaw ldiw

\_\_\_\_\_

lhtmee

\_\_\_\_\_

eb lu neil

\_\_\_\_\_

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Frederickson said the effort, which also has included big events such as that Minnesota-St. Louis NHL preseason game in 2018, the Iowa Hockey Days outdoor 3-on-3 tournament in 2017, and various post-game concerts, have focused on a major characteristic of central Iowans. "They love big events," Frederickson said. "And that's what we want to provide as much as we can."

High on the list is the possibility of an outdoor hockey game in Des Moines, possibly at Drake Stadium. In addition, other ideas are bounced off staffers almost daily.

"We are a minor league team, but there's no reason why we need to treat our fans like they're minor league fans," Frederickson said. "So we are creating a brand where they can be proud of it. They can be supportive of it, but everything we do has to look professional. We've made good progress, but there is still more work to do."



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# IOWA WILD RINK TAKEOVER

Since the organization arrived in Des Moines, Iowa Wild made a committed effort to grow the sport of hockey through grassroots initiatives. A hallmark of that mentality is the organization's community rink initiative.

Iowa Wild and Wells Fargo announced the first community rink in December of 2016, which was located in West Des Moines at Raccoon River Park. The following year, the two organizations announced rinks located in Ankeny and Waukee. Last season, Ames and Indianola received community rinks, pushing the number of facilities in the area to five. With the addition of Johnston and Urbandale this season, the Wild and Wells Fargo now bring that number to seven community rinks for the region.

This past winter, Wild players and Crash descended onto five of those community rinks to skate with fans, continuing the partnership between the team and its fans. These are just some of the photos from the event, which could become another staple community initiative for the organization.



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