

whoville

144

WRIGLEY

COMISKEY Sorry South Siders... "L.S. Cellular" doesn't exactly say "Mar's best friend"

ERNIE

35

BANKS

7

CUBBY/CUBBIE/CUBY

46

CUBBYBEAR

3

SOX/WHITESOX/SOXX

18

BUEHRLE As in White Sox's 2009 perfect game pitcher Mark

7

MADDUX As in former Cub Greg

9

IVY As in Wrigley Field's outfield

35

JORDAN

31

M.J.

8

PIPPEN

3

BULL/BULLY

6

JOAKIM

1

ROSE

12

JABARI The former Duke star's a Chicago native, after all...

1

SKY

24

KANE/KANER

15

SHAW

2

TASER/TAZER

3

TOEWS/TOEWSER

3

HAWK/BLACKHAWK

2

PAYTON

44

SWEETNESS As in Walter Payton's nickname

5

DITKA

4

BUTKUS

11

DABEAR

1

URLACHER

2

CUTLER Nobody's surprised!

0

SOURCE: CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

50

FANS WITH DA FUR

171

BEAR

BY THE NUMBERS

So, which Chicago team really has the most four-legged friends? RedEye scoured the city clerk's office records of all 43,995 dogs currently licensed in the city to find out. And this doesn't even include all the cats. Or parakeets, for that matter. —G.P.

By Gwendolyn Purdom | REDEYE

Years before Nathan Pajor had a dog, he already had a name picked out. So when the 32-year-old Lincoln Park resident and his wife Holly brought home a puppy last summer, the Vizsla was christened Pippen immediately.

"He's a good No. 2 guy," Pajor, a longtime Bulls fan, said of the now nearly 1-year-old dog named for Scottie Pippen. "It shows loyalty and pride regardless of where we live, we'll always have the Chicago [tie]."

Why not name him for bigger team stars?

"We're saving Jordan Rose for a daughter," Pajor said.

Pajor might be waiting to use His Airness as a namesake but according to the city clerk's office, throughout Chicago many aren't. There are currently 31 registered dogs named Jordan and at least eight M.J.s. One hundred and forty-four are named Wrigley. One hundred and seventy-one are named Bear. In a sports city like ours, it's no wonder fans look to their favorite teams for pet-naming inspiration.

It happens all the time at PAWS Chicago. With new dogs and cats arriving at the Lincoln Park shelter around the clock, adoption center director Diane Wilkerson says the staff often picks sports-related names for the animals. The facility gave its newest arrivals football-themed names in honor of the NFL Draft being in town this weekend, and on Wednesday, PAWS teamed up with Animal Planet and the NFL Players Association for a draft-like adoption event where current and former players including Anthony "Spice" Adams and Alex Brown helped adopters decide between first round picks like husky mix Walter Playton or part-Boxer puppy Lick Butkus.

Rover.com's Brandie Gonzales says these tributes are becoming more common.



Augie (Ojeda)



Buehrle



(Mark) Gracie



Pippen



Wrigley

"We are seeing a trend of people choosing a name that ... represents something they're really passionate about," Gonzalez said. According to surveys conducted by her site, sports-inspired names are the seventh most popular category for dogs in Chicago.

The approach, not surprisingly, seems to spike when a particular team or player is making headlines. Jeter, for example, was one of the most popular sports-related pet names nationwide last year, Gonzalez said, following the New York Yankee's retirement. In recent years here, Wilkerson says Blackhawks and Bulls

names have been especially big.

Oak Lawn resident Mikal Elyse Farrell says her one-year-old cat Kaner, named for her favorite Hawk, Patrick Kane, fits her moniker.

"She's a little bit smaller than most normal cats and Kane's a little smaller than your typical hockey player," said Farrell, 27.

Wilkerson says sharing a name with a beloved athlete can even score an animal a home.

"Adopters come in and they kind of connect with that," she said. "They come in and see Toews there and they go 'That's my favorite player! I want that kitten!'"