

BASEBALL TEAM CORPORATE IDENTITY DESIGN: ARTISTIC AND TRADITIONAL CULTURE ASPECTS

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Abstract. The purpose of the article is to analyze the design of baseball team logos and create an original baseball club logo based on the identified trends. The analysis of the logos of baseball teams in the United States, China and Ukraine showed that the logos mainly depict elements related to baseball; elements of national cultural heritage; the name or monogram of the team. At the same time, the logos of baseball teams in the United States and China have pronounced features of shape, icon and color scheme. Baseball team logos in the USA often use a round shape. Blue and red are popular colors. The logos of Chinese baseball clubs mainly have a combined structure of the emblem, which accommodates the mascot of the club (zoomorphic or anthropomorphic), a baseball tool and the name of the club. The logo colors of Chinese baseball teams are black, white and warm colors: red, orange and yellow. Blue is also used. Based on the results of the analysis, elements of the corporate identity of a baseball club were developed: logo, branded colors, branded font. The main components of the corporate identity project are sports equipment, printing and souvenir products.

Keywords: *Corporate identity, logo, cultural heritage, printing and souvenir products, branded colors, branded font.*

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Received: 5 April 2023;

Accepted: 12 October 2023;

Published: 6 April 2024

1. Introduction

In a postmodern society, corporate identity plays an important role in brand communication with consumers.

Corporate identity is a set of color, graphic, verbal, typographic, design, permanent elements (constants) that ensure the visual and semantic unity of goods (services) of all information coming from the company and its internal design.

As the review by Kim & Lim (2019) showed, the subject of scientists' consideration is the design of the brand logo mainly according to its main elements: font, shape, color. The article by Sklyarenko et al. (2022) examined design creativity, in particular in the field of graphic design. The principles of coding visual information in graphic design are presented in the study by Vorobchuk & Skliarenko (2022).

As demonstrated in a study (Liu *et al.*, 2018), cultural heritage is widely used in the design of modern Chinese brand logos. The research by Vinitha et al. (2021), which

How to cite (APA):

Yezhova, O., Pashkevich, K., Tang, C., Meng, K. & Gao, X. (2024). Baseball team corporate identity design: Artistic and traditional culture aspects. *New Design Ideas*, 8(1), 81-96 <https://doi.org/10.62476/ndi.8181>

revealed consumer confidence in brand logos with biomorphic elements, is of practical interest. The study of Luffarelli et al. (2019) investigates the impact of logo design on brand equity, focusing on the role of asymmetry in brand logos.

In sports management, the corporate identity of a sports club is considered by scientists as a means of identifying the team and its fans. As noted by Lu (2021), being an important part of sports intangible assets, the club's corporate identity correlates with the individual image of athletes. In general, it has a symbolic meaning and commercial value, since it does not depend on the individual image of athletes. The positive attitude of fans towards the team's visual identity is important, which stimulates the fans' desire to consume the club's information products. Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou (2018) have justified the importance of designing the corporate identity of a sports team for a favorable attitude of consumers of licensed products. An article by Davies et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of a sports club's brand for effective engagement with fans, particularly through social events and branded merchandise. The problem of the brand in eSports is highlighted in the review (Gawrysiak *et al.*, 2020). The issue of the relationship between fans' attachment to a sports club and its logo has been addressed by studies (Havard *et al.*, 2018; Reid & Mason, 2017). In their article Ko et al. (2022) described an experiment that revealed the attachment of baseball fans to the team's anthropomorphic mascot. Through empirical study, Shi & Liu (2022) analyzed the internal driving relationship of football club corporate identity, it is found fans' cognition of the club corporate identity can produce their emotional attitude reaction and then generate behavioral intention such as loyalty to the club. The article by Ganushchak-Efimenko et al. (2018) highlights the importance of brand recognition for brand equity.

The research of national identity in the design of the logos of the Olympic Games 1964-2020 is of interest (Ceken & Aybay, 2021).

A number of publications are devoted to the problem of rebranding a sports club. The article by Walsh et al. (2018) outlines the main reasons and steps for changing the name, logo and club colours. The attitude of high- and low-identified fans to the rebranding of the logo and club colors was revealed in studies (Williams & Son, 2021; Ahn *et al.*, 2013).

One of the current trends in sports club logos is retro-marketing, which aims to connect fans with the past. The main areas of practical use of retro marketing of sports clubs are outlined in the article by Scola & Gordon (2018), namely: imagery, merchandising, venue, gameday promotions and advertising. However, a study by Dwyer et al. (2020) found that in professional sports, the advantages of a retro logo compared to a modern logo have not been proven.

Baseball is one of the most popular sports that actively uses club visual identification, in particular logos. Yoon et al. (2020) examined the attitudes of fans of Major League Baseball clubs, the Red Sox and Yankees, toward their team logos in comparison to attitudes toward the opposing team's logo. As Hersch & Pelkowski (2019) discovered, when replacing the owner of a baseball club, the visual identification of the team, in particular the logo and uniform of the players, usually changes. The logo is applied to the sports uniform both by printing and by embroidery. As the studies by Pashkevich et al. (2022; 2023) showed, embroidery is a popular way of decorating clothes among designers around the world.

However, the analysis of publications showed that the color and compositional features of baseball team logos are insufficiently studied.

The purpose of this article is to analyse the design of baseball team logos and create an original baseball club logo based on the identified trends.

2. Methods

The methodological basis of the research is a systematic approach, methods of visual analysis of the object of research, systematization of types of logos of baseball teams. A comparative analysis of logos was carried out according to such visual features: geometric shape, colour, font style, icons. Logos of leading baseball clubs in the United States of America, China and Ukraine were selected for analysis.

3. Results

3.1. United States of America baseball teams logos

From the point of view of corporate identity design, the logos of leading MLB baseball clubs are of interest.

The Los Angeles Dodgers are one of the most award-winning baseball clubs in the United States. The club was founded in 1883 as the Brooklyn Atlantics and moved to Los Angeles in 1958, changing its name to its current one.

In 1938, the first official symbol of LA Dodgers appeared. This logo featured the word "Dodgers" in a swirling, ornate font with a peculiar underline, beginning with the letter S (Los Angeles Dodgers logo, 2022).

Again, in the 1958 logo, the font is slightly tilted up. The baseball design has been retained here, but enlarged, with red lines drawn underneath to help convey speed and movement. This logo was one of the first examples of the logo that fans of the club are familiar with these days. Currently, the LA Dodgers logo is a sleek version of the previous logo with a slightly thinner font, closer to the original design we saw in 1958. The coloring is bold and powerful, with the speed and passion of the red highlight, while the blue symbolizes reliability and professionalism.

The modified version of the Los Angeles Dodgers logo is not much different from the previous ones (Figure 1a). The word "Dodgers" remained dark blue and some details connecting the letters were modified or completely removed from the logo. The current LA Dodgers logo has a semi-connected handwritten font, in which the letter "D" is separated from the rest of the letters and the letter "O" is devoid of a "tail". The line between "G" and "E" is made a little thinner. This made it easier to visually perceive the name of the team, located on the background of the baseball flying upwards and its trajectory. The trajectory lines and the baseball itself made this clearer (Los Angeles Dodgers logo, 2022).

The alternative logo (Figure 1b) has also not changed; it is the letters "LA" in blue, which is an abbreviation and a typical baseball cap logo for most teams. There is also another alternative logo that looks exactly like the main one, but in a different color palette. The font is made in white on a blue background. There is a ball in flight and red marks indicating speed in the background.

Today's LA Dodgers logo font is an italic font designed specifically for the team. The font design is similar to Ballpark and Philly Sport Script.

The Dodgers logo colors are traditionally blue and red, although the company has experimented with other shades over the years. The official club color of LA Dodgers is blue, which symbolizes loyalty, professionalism and reliability.

The Los Angeles Dodgers baseball club cap logo (Figure 1c) is a classic and enduring design characterized by its interlocking "LA" letters, royal blue and white color scheme, script font, symmetry, minimalism and iconic status. It represents the rich history and tradition of one of the most storied franchises in baseball.

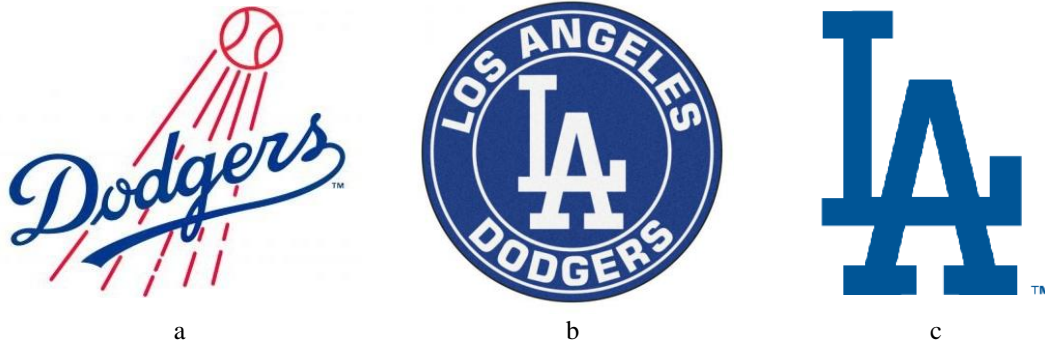


Figure 1. The Los Angeles Dodgers baseball club logos: a – main, b - alternative, c – cap logo (Los Angeles Dodgers logo, 2022)

The logo of the New York Yankees baseball club, which is the most successful franchise in the United States is of interest. The club has won the most trophies in Major League Baseball history and is a well-known baseball club outside the United States. In addition, it is a global brand. The New York Yankees logo is one of the most recognizable logos in sports. The logo is older than the baseball team itself. Currently, two modern team logos are used. One is in the form of an emblem (Figure 2a), the other is in the form of an abbreviation that resembles a sign (Figure 2b). In 1947, American sports artist Henry Alonzo Keller created the top hat concept for the New York Yankees. Since then, the franchise has been using the brand logo. The New York Yankees logo featured a white baseball with red seams and stitches and the inscription “Yankee” in red font. A red baseball bat formed a vertical “K” Line. The logo also featured the top hat of Uncle Sam, the common national personification of the United States (New York Yankees Logo, 2022).

In the current version, the baseball bat has a diagonal direction and extends beyond the emblem. There is a hat with a brim painted in the color of the national flag of the United States above it. The word “Yankee” serves as a background. The letters “Y” and “s” form long lines that create the border of a large baseball. It makes up the main form of the logo. The New York Yankees have three versions of the logo. One variation is used on the batter's helmet, another is on the cap and the third one is on the home jersey. They differ in the shape of the letters. The color palette consists of dark blue, white and red. The font used for the logo is proprietary. However, the round logo has a different font. The closest font to the Yankee font is the Machiarge Regular Font. Fonts are unique, legible and eye-catching. The New York Yankees' target audience is migrants and tourists who are baseball fans who don't yet have a favorite team or club, but want to attend baseball games. The target audience is not from New York, but those who are far away from their family. Therefore, the club is trying to create a family concept. Because of this, they create a family environment that allows them to attract this target audience.

The New York Yankees baseball club cap logo (Figure 2c) is another iconic and instantly recognizable symbol in Major League Baseball (MLB). The centerpiece of the Yankees' cap logo is the interlocking “NY” letters. This iconic design represents the team's affiliation with New York City. The “N” and “Y” are beautifully intertwined,

forming an elegant and distinctive monogram. The Yankees' cap logo primarily features a classic color scheme of navy blue and white. The interlocking letters are typically white against a navy blue background when displayed on the cap. The font style used for the “NY” letters is a simple, blocky and bold typeface. The letters are straightforward and easy to read. This no-nonsense font style contributes to the logo's no-frills, classic look. The interlocking “NY” letters create a sense of balance and symmetry within the logo. This symmetry enhances the logo's overall aesthetic appeal and makes it instantly recognizable. The Yankees' cap logo is a prime example of minimalistic design. It avoids intricate graphics, elaborate details and unnecessary embellishments. This minimalism is one of the key reasons for the logo's timelessness. Over the years, the Yankees' cap logo has transcended its role in sports and has become a cultural icon. It is often seen in fashion and pop culture, worn by fans and non-fans alike as a symbol of New York and a timeless sense of style. So, the New York Yankees baseball club cap logo is a classic and enduring design characterized by its interlocking “NY” letters, navy blue and white color scheme, blocky font style, symmetry, minimalism, historical significance, iconic status and consistency. It represents not only a baseball team but also a city and a rich tradition of excellence in the sport.

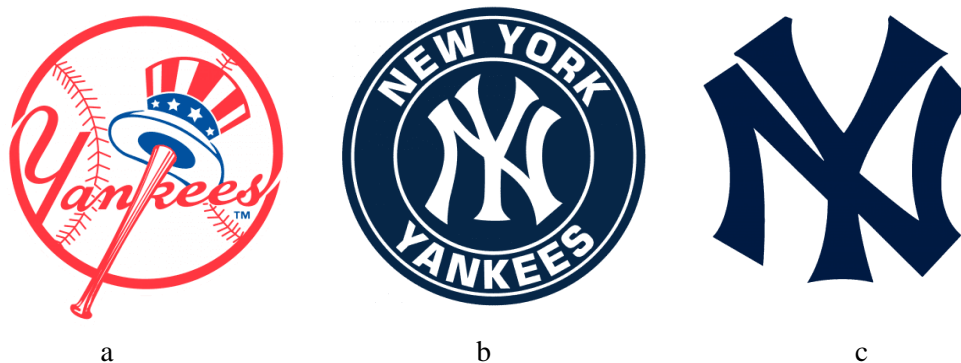


Figure 2. The New York Yankees (2022) baseball club logos: a – main, b - alternative, c – cap logo

Another well-known example is the Boston Red Sox, a baseball club (Boston, Massachusetts). This sports club was founded in 1901. The current logo (Figure 3a) of one of the major American baseball teams was developed in 2008. This is a pair of red socks, white heels and toes on the socks, but with elegant and smoother lines, which makes the whole image look more modern and confident.

As one alternative logo, a version was developed that was used in the 1960s and featured a baseball in blue lines with blue seams and red stitching. Hanging socks were on the front and this created a classic round logo. In the 1970s, it was slightly modified to make the blue lines slightly thicker and the direction of the seams was changed to the opposite. This logo previously featured the word “BOSTON” in blue block letters, outlined in red above and “RED SOX” in the club's classic “Tuscan” typeface in red letters below. But today's variation (Figure 3b) has only red letters outlined in blue (Boston Red Sox Logo, 2023). As an additional logo, the club uses a distinctive ornate red “B” (Figure 3c) that was designed in 1933 and was reproduced in the 1976 version of the logo. The “B” signature is usually circled in white and placed on a dark blue background. It can be a solid circle or a flag with the slogan “Champions” celebrating the club's victories.

The Boston Red Sox logo font is a proprietary Boston Red Sox font. The Boston Red Sox font is used for T-shirt lettering, player names, numbers, team logo, branding and products. A modern font based on the special Red Sox font is the Bosox font created by Lee Gordon.

The logo uses three official colors of the team: red, navy blue and white. However, there are only two of them on the Red Sox team logo: red and white. The navy-blue color can be seen on some secondary logos (for example, the word sign and the “B” logo).

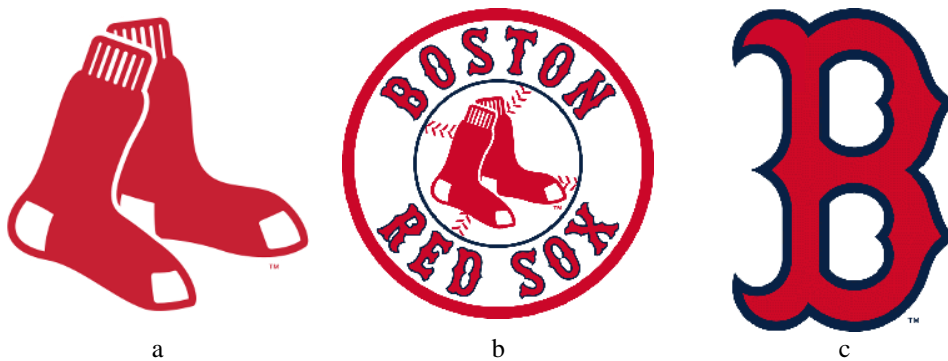


Figure 3. The Boston Red Sox baseball club logos: a – main, b - alternative, c - cap logo (Boston Red Sox Logo, 2023)

In 1962, the Houston Astros Club appeared, which was then called the Houston Colt 46-s. During its existence, the team had seven different logos, where the first 4 included both the name and image. The current Houston Astros Club logo (Figure 4) actually consists of one name and a star on a blue background. Almost the entire history of the Houston Astros logo is a step-by-step transformation of the word “Astros”. This continued until the version with the capital “H” appeared, with which the first part of the club's name begins. The designers proposed it in 2013 (Houston Astros Logos History, 2022). To emphasize its high importance in the world of sports, the Houston Astros chose a logo in the form of a seal. This classic element is a sign of leadership and a symbol of power. In this logo, the seal is shown in the contours of a baseball field. The image of a star located in the center emphasizes the idea of superiority. The star is also a tribute to the astronautic traditions of the region, because it is here that the main objects of the space industry are concentrated. The letter H on the logo represents the name of the club and the city in which it is based. Then there is a wide blue bar with the full name of the team: at the top it says “Houston”, at the bottom — “Astros”. The logo uses the Player Bold serif typeface created by Patrick Griffin and first developed by Canada Type.

The official palette of the team includes three colors, each of which is included in the emblem. The background color is navy blue, the star and dividing lines are orange and the center letter and club name are white. The 2013 Houston Astros logo meets all modern corporate identity design requirements: easy to place on media, well-recognizable and printable.

So, an analysis of the corporate identity of the leading baseball clubs in the United States showed that the teams have a main and several additional logos. The round shape of the logo, which is a sign of leadership, is widely used. Popular is blue, which symbolizes professionalism, as well as red, as a symbol of dynamism and passion. Note that these colors are also present on the US flag, so adherence to their use in the corporate identity can be an emphasis on the team's nationality. Logos show elements that are

related to baseball: a ball, a bat, a baseball field and uniform elements (socks). To emphasize the national identity, along with blue and red colors, the logos use such symbols as Uncle Sam's top hat, a five-pointed star.



Figure 4. The Houston Astros logos: a – main, b – additional (The Houston Astros official website, 2023)

3.2. Ukraine baseball team logo

Baseball is not very popular in Ukraine, so the number of teams is small.

BioTexCom-KNTU is a Ukrainian baseball team based in Kropyvnytskyi. It exists since 1988. This is the most titled team of Ukraine: 24-time champion of Ukraine, 22-time winner of the Ukrainian Cup (Biotexcom_kntu, 2023).

The team's logo appeared in 2018. The logo in the form of an emblem is chosen as the basis. The main element of this logo in the center is a baseball with characteristic red stitches (Figure 5a). Around the ball, in a circle, the text “gorn 1988 KNTU Kropyvnytsky City” is inscribed in the emblem. In the middle, on top of the ball is the name of the Biotexcom team. At the top of the logo are two yellow stars, each star means 10 champion titles. This logo has an alternative option on a white background (Figure 5b). The sans-serif font is placed in a circle. The main text of the logo is shown in block font. The logo's color scheme consists of dark blue, red, white and yellow.



Figure 5. Biotexcom baseball team logos: a – main, b – additional (Biotexcom_kntu, 2023)

As can be seen in Figure 5, the Biotexcom logo contains all the elements inherent in the logos of American clubs: a round shape in the form of a seal, sports equipment (ball), five-beam stars, the presence of blue and red colors.

3.3. Chinese baseball teams logos

Chinese traditional culture has a long history. Since ancient times, there has been totem worship of auspicious beasts. At the same time, the corporate culture of sports clubs can be well coordinated with the spirituality and vitality of animals, conveying unattainable power, speed and vigor through visual symbols. Therefore, it is a more common and vivid design way to show the idea of the club through the biological characteristics of various animals.

Taking as an example the Garuda Baseball Club (Figure 6), adhering to the team culture of “gift, justice, health, wisdom and fortitude”, its logo is composed of symbols representing baseball itself and eagle. The eagle in Chinese culture symbolizes extraordinary determination and a fearless spirit. The corporate identity uses the eagle to represent the wisdom and fortitude that the club values. The combination of black and yellow colors is calm and eye-catching, containing a sense of power. The Garuda font enhances the sense of movement and speed.

Winner Nine Player Baseball Team also uses the eagle as the main element to symbolize the players’ flexible and agile catching ability. The composition of the logo (Figure 7) is an eagle holding a baseball. The text is in the front of the graphic. In addition, the color of the logo is mainly black, white and red, with a yellow eagle beak as an ornament.

Beijing Tigers Baseball Team use “tiger” as team name, taking tiger as the symbol of the bravery in baseball competitions. In the logo (Figure 8), graphic elements of the fierce tiger head, the word “tiger” and shield can be seen. The logo is a symmetrical shape, the above design shows the momentum of the king. In terms of color, black, white and orange are used and black is the main color. The logo is strongly contrasted and eye-catching.

Jiangsu Huge Horse Baseball Team takes the horse as a symbol of flexibility and speed. The logo (Figure 9) uses the horse in profile as the main body with smooth and elegant lines, resembling the wind. The handwritten word “huge horse” designed in front of the horse, which matched the style of the horse properly. There is a baseball underneath the logo to indicate it is a baseball team. Moreover, orange and blue are main color.



Figure 6. Garuda Baseball Club logo (Zhengzhou Garuda Baseball Club, 2023)



Figure 7. Winner Nine Player Baseball Team Logo (Beijing Winner Nine Baseball and Softball Club, 2023)



Figure 8. Beijing Tigers Baseball Team Logo (Tianjin Lions VS Beijing Tigers in the opening match, 2019)



Figure 9. Jiangsu Huge Horse Baseball Team Logo (Jiangsu Huge Horse Baseball Team, 2023)



Figure 10. Sichuan Dragons Baseball Team Logo (Sichuan Dragons Team Introduction, 2015)



Figure 11. Rally Baseball Club logo (Chengdu Rally Baseball Club, 2014)

Sichuan Dragons Baseball Team is symbolized by the Chinese Dragon, a beast in ancient myth, which can make clouds and rain and rule all things with great power. The text is integrated into the dragon's body and becomes a whole with smooth and powerful lines. In terms of color, the logo is easily identifiable with orange and black (Figure 10).

Rally Baseball Club of Chengdu (Figure 11), is a baseball club located in Chengdu, China. This team is focusing on providing scientific and systematic baseball training for youth and baseball fans, developing sports potential and promoting baseball culture. The red block marked with the name of the club divides the logo into two parts. The upper part is the image of an athlete swinging a bat and the blue and white colors express the calm elegance of a gentleman. The lower half has a baseball and the upper and lower parts show a stable corresponding relationship through the contrast of the virtual and natural colors. The red and blue colors are a nod to the United Kingdom, where baseball originated.






In general, the analysis of logos of Chinese Baseball clubs showed that in shape they have mainly a combined logo structure, on which the club's mascot (zoomorphic or anthropomorphic), baseball tools (ball and bat) and the name of the club are located. The logo colors of Chinese baseball teams are black, white and warm colors: red, orange and yellow. Blue is also used.

In total, many of the Chinese baseball team logos above use animal images and even names. The only reason is that there are similarities between the selected animal's characteristics and the team's competitive concept. Another reason could be the animal is related to the geography of the team. Apart from animals, the baseball element directly reflects the attributes of the sport as well. All logos try to create strong contrasts that are memorable with meaningful elements, shapes and colors.

The results of the analysis of the design of baseball clubs' logos are systematized in a matrix (Table 1).

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of Baseball Team Logo Design Elements (Authors, 2023)

Baseball team	Logo	Logo elements			
		Name font	Color	Geometric form	Icon
Los Angeles Dodgers		Italic	Blue, red, white	Circle, diagonal	Baseball, the trajectory lines
New York Yankees		Italic	Blue, red, white	Circle, diagonal	Baseball, baseball bat, a hat of Uncle Sam
Boston Red Sox		-	Red, white	Combined shape	Sox
Houston Astros		Geometric serif,	Blue, orange, white	Circle	Star
Biotexcom		Geometric serif, sans-serif	Blue, red, white, yellow	Circle	Baseball, star
Garuda		Serif	Black, white, yellow	Circle, diagonal	Baseball, baseball bat, eagle

Winner Nine Player		Serif	Black, white, red, yellow	Combined shape	Baseball, eagle
Beijing Tigers		Serif	Black, orange, white	Diamond	Tiger
Jiangsu Huge Horse		Hand-written	Orange, blue	Combined shape	Baseball bat, horse
Sichuan Dragons		Italic	Black, orange	Combined shape	Dragon
Rally Baseball Club		Sans-serif	Blue, red, white	Shield	Baseball, baseball bat, star, athlete

4. Discussion

Based on the results of the analysis of the corporate identity of baseball clubs, an author's project of the corporate identity of the Fireball baseball club was developed by Anna Parasich under the scientific supervision of Professor Yezhova.

When creating the logo project, the author's concept was to create a corporate identity of a sports club that is characteristic of the field of sports, meets modern trends and is competitive in the eyes of consumers. The logo of a sports team should demonstrate the strength, spirit, confidence and perseverance of the club.

The variant generation process was based on the name of the sports baseball club "Fireball", so it was important to convey the connection with baseball in the creation of the logo. Therefore, the logo uses visualization for better affinity with this sport. Also, the idea is to demonstrate the team's strength through fireprint power and speed.

The next stage in creating a compositional solution was the definition of corporate colors. The choice was made on the contrast of blue and orange colors, so that the logo showed the club's drive.

The designed logo belongs to a combined type that uses a monogram, text and symbolic element. Visual elements include branded letters and the symbolic element of a burning ball, which is an illustrative part of the design.

5. Conclusions

The analysis of the logos of baseball teams in the United States, China and Ukraine showed that the logos mainly depict elements related to baseball; elements of national cultural heritage; the name or monogram of the team. Baseball team logos reflect the team's strength and perseverance, focus on winning and national identity. At the same time, the logos of baseball teams in the United States and China have pronounced features of shape, content and color scheme.

Baseball team logos in the USA often use a round shape, which is a sign of leadership. Popular is blue, which symbolizes professionalism, as well as red, as a symbol of dynamism and passion. To emphasize the national identity, along with blue and red colors, the logos use such symbols as Uncle Sam's top hat, a five-pointed star.

Analysis of the logos of Chinese baseball clubs showed that in shape they have mainly a combined logo structure, on which the club's mascot (zoomorphic or anthropomorphic), baseball tools and club name are located. The logo colors of Chinese baseball teams are black, white and warm colors: red, orange and yellow. Blue is also used.

It was found out that most of the corporate fonts of clubs and teams are unique and therefore attract attention.

Based on the results of the analysis, the elements of the corporate style of the baseball club were developed. The designed logo belongs to a combined type that uses a monogram, text and symbolic element. Visual elements include branded letters and the symbolic element of a flaming baseball. The main components of the corporate identity project are sports equipment, printing and souvenir products.

The results of the study will be useful for designers when developing the corporate identity of a sports club.

Acknowledgments

The authors thank Anna Parasich for the development of the diploma design project of the corporate identity of the baseball team.

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