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## Dodgers Ask About Angels

The survey, done in advance of expected ticket price increase, queries fans about L.A. baseball and their thoughts on McCourts.

By Bill Shaikin

Times Staff Writer

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In the marketing campaign they unveiled last winter, the Dodgers declared, "This is L.A. Baseball." But, based on their current customer survey, the Dodgers now wonder whether their fans believe the Angels are L.A. baseball too.

In advance of this week's announcement of a ticket price increase, the Dodgers have surveyed fans on a variety of topics, including the perception of owners Frank and Jamie McCourt and their commitment to winning and the community.

After the Angels slapped a Los Angeles label on their team in January, Frank McCourt said, "True Angelenos really know who their team is, and they bleed Dodger blue." Ten months later, the Dodgers' survey asks whether ticket buyers consider the Angels an L.A. team.

"We want to know what our fans think about what's going on in the marketplace," Dodger spokeswoman Camille Johnston said.

For the second consecutive season, the Dodgers and Angels combined to sell 7 million tickets, a record for baseball's two-team markets. But, while the Angels won their second consecutive division championship, the Dodgers lost 91 games, a manager and general manager.

They have not won consecutive division championships since 1977-78, and a local sports business expert said the response about the Angels could help the Dodgers assess the risk of erosion in their fan base.

"Do you, Joe Fan, consider the Angels an entertainment alternative and a substitute for Dodger baseball? That's what they're really getting at," said David Carter of the Sports Business Group in Redondo Beach. "To what extent are the Angels beginning to siphon mind share away from the Dodgers?"

The survey includes 60 questions, but each fan is not asked each question, Johnston said. She characterized it as part of ongoing research "to stay connected to and learn from our fans." The topics ranged from ticket prices to stadium music, promotions and renovations. Johnston confirmed several topics but declined to provide a copy of the survey, and it was not disclosed how many fans were being surveyed.

She said fans were asked whether the McCourts should focus the Dodgers' charitable efforts on youth sports, high school sports, reading and literacy programs or cancer and diabetes research.

Johnston said the Dodgers would announce what she called a "nominal" ticket price increase this week. She declined to define "nominal" but said the increase would not apply to every seat.

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