MERIT REPORT
ON MEDIA VALUE IN PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL

Season 2019/20

MERIT

www.meritsocialvalue.com

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Presentation

The MERIT (Methodology for the Evaluation and Rating of Intangible Talent) approach is part of an academic endeavor that has vast applications in the field of sports business management. This methodology has been proven to help in measuring the economic value of talent in professional sports and other entertainment industries. The estimations and elaboration of rankings is made taking into account two elements: the popularity (degree of interest aroused from the fans and the general public) and the media visibility (level of attention paid by the media). points in time over the season, or accounting for the news articles published in a certain period: weeks, months, years, etc. The homogeneity of the measurements permits comparing the media visibility status of individuals, teams, leagues, institutions, etc.

Our estimations and rankings are based on appraisals of media visibility and popularity

Along with appraisals and rankings, our data sets are useful for analysing a wide variety of economic and managerial problems: estimates of the market value (or "fair value") of players' transfer fees; calculation of the brand value of individuals, teams and leagues; valuation of the economic return from sponsorship alliances; etc. The usefulness of these rankings is clear, given the growing number of companies whose business relies on media exposure and popularity as sources of potential income.

The approach adopted by MERIT allows us to reach where others cannot, since often the crucial issue is not to access to greater information but to be able to rely on the appropriate methodology and capabilities for analysis. More information is found at:

www.meritsocialvalue.com | www.uic.es/merit

Main Results – Season 2019/20

Lionel Messi

1st position in the MERIT ranking of **Players**

FC Barcelona

1st position in the MERIT ranking of **Teams**

Premier League

Football league with the highest media visibility

Kylian Mbappe

Player of Top 25 with the highest media growth

Kylian Mbappe

Player Under-21 with the highest media visibility

"Dream Team"

5 players of Spanish La Liga are in the "Dream Team" of media visibility

1. MERIT Media Visibility Ranking - Football Players

It must be remarked that the results of this report correspond to an atypical season, where the results are distorted by the pandemic Covid-19 event.

The following table shows the results of the MERIT ranking of the media value of the main players in the 2019/20 season. The MERIT index values are expressed with respect to the average of the 2,500 players with the highest media visibility out of a database of more than 5,000 players. The individual index is thus the factor by which the number of news articles of a player multiplies the figure of the normal (average) representative player in our database.

Rank		Player Season 2019/20	Team	Index MERIT
1		Lionel Messi	FC Barcelona	168.65
2		Cristiano Ronaldo	Juventus FC	133.28
3		Mohamed Salah	Liverpool FC	74.42
4		Neymar	Paris Saint-Germain	68.79
5		Luis Suárez	FC Barcelona	58.61
6		Paul Pogba	Manchester United	53.48
7		Kylian Mbappé	Paris Saint-Germain	44.77
8		Sergio Ramos	Real Madrid	38.03
9		Antoine Griezmann	FC Barcelona	33.68
10		Raheem Sterling	Manchester City	33.19

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According to our analysis, Lionel Messi reached in season 2019/20 a visibility in the media almost 170 times higher than that obtained by the average player. The second top star player, Cristiano Ronaldo, multiplied by more than 133 times the exposure of the reference player in our database. Behind them, we find Mohamed Salah, Neymar and Luis Suarez; placed third, fourth and fifth, respectively.

1ra Position
Lionel Messi
168,65
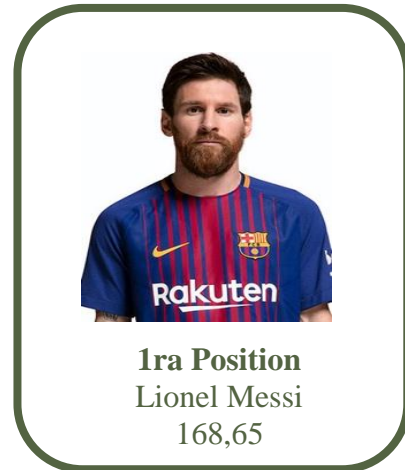
Similarly to the precedent season, La Liga shows an especial prominence in the Top-10 world ranking, as four players out of 10 belong to this league. However, this leading role has decreased as compared to the previous year, due in part to the presence of just one Real Madrid player (Sergio Ramos). The other three players in the Top-10 paly for FC Barcelona: Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez and Antoine Griezmann. A noteworthy fact is that, in the Top-10 ranking of players, 4 out of the 5 main European competitions are represented: domestic leagues of Spain, England, France and Italy. On the other hand, the individual media leaders (within the Top-10) play for 7 different clubs: FC Barcelona, Real Madrid, Manchester United, , PSG, Juventus and Liverpool.

Annex 1 provides more information, including the Top-50 media football players.

Top 10

LaLiga	Premier League	LIGUE 1	SERIE A TIM
40%	**30%**	**20%**	**10%**

Top 10

FC Barcelona
3 players
on Top-10
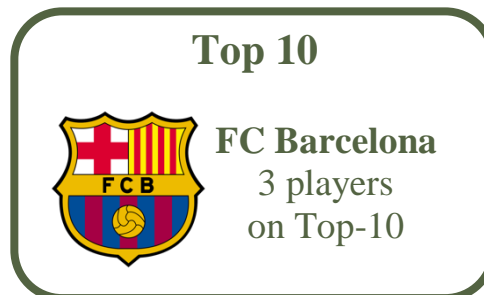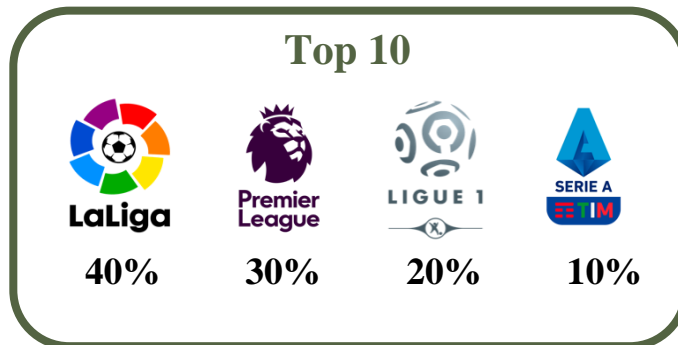
2.   MERIT Media Visibility Ranking – Players under-21

The following table shows the results of applying the same analysis to just players younger than 21 years old.

The calculations follow the same procedures used to derive the regular MERIT media visibility ranking, with the difference that we only report here a selection of young players. The analysis is very informative in order to identify prospective global superstars in professional football. The table identifies the top-10 young football players. Among this group, we should expect to find the main protagonists in the years to come, both in terms of media value and sport performance.

Rank	Player Season 2019/20	Team	MERIT Index
1	Kylian Mbappé	Paris Saint-Germain	44.77
2	Marcus Rashford	Manchester United	24.50
3	Matthijs de Ligt	Juventus FC	12.01
4	Alexander-Arnold	Liverpool FC	8.24
5	Ansu Fati	FC Barcelona	4.42
6	Vinícius Júnior	Real Madrid	3.82
7	Mason Greenwood	Manchester United	2.76
8	Mattéo Guendouzi	Arsenal FC	1.44
9	Daniel James	Manchester United	1.41
10	Rodrygo	Real Madrid	1.19

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The table reports the ten young footballers who, in the coming years, look set to occupy the headlines of sports news and become media stars.

The ranking is once again commanded by PSG striker Kylian Mbappé, whose media visibility is 44.77 times greater than the corresponding figure of the average player. He is followed by Premier League striker Marcus Rashford, whose MERIT index is 24.50 points. Third place goes for the Juventus player Matthijs de Ligt, whose media visibility index amounts to 12.01 points.

1st position
Mbappé 17.8

The results of this analysis reveal the importance of the Premier League in terms of the prospects of young soccer stars in the future. Fifty percent of the top 10 media players under the age of 21 are based in the English league, where teams such as Manchester United, Liverpool and Arsenal stand out. The other league with concentration of promising young stars is the Spanish La Liga.

Top 10

Premier League	LaLiga	LIGUE 1	SERIE A TIM
50%	**30%**	**10%**	**10%**

Top 10

Real Madrid	Manchester United
2 players	3 players

3. MERIT Media Visibility Ranking – Players of the Champions in Main European Football Leagues

This his section displays the MERIT media visibility indexes for players in the roster of the winning team in each of domestic competition.

In the case of the Spanish La Liga, the winner of the domestic title was Real Madrid. Among its top players in terms of media value, we find the defenders Sergio Ramos and Marcelo, as well as the French striker Karim Benzema.

In England, Manchester City won again the Premier League under its coach Pep Guardiola. The players with the highest media exposure of this team are: Kevin De Bruyne, Agüero and David Silva.

In the Bundesliga, Bayern Munich earned its eighth consecutive title in the national championship, with Manuel Neuer, Lewandowski and Thomas Müller standing out as the players with the highest media value.

England
Premier League

1.	K. de Bruyne	17.5
2.	Sergio Aguero	16.6
3.	David Silva	13.6
4.	Gabriel Jesus	5.9
5.	Kyle Walker	3.1
6.	Joao Cancelo	2.6
7.	Bernardo Silva	1.7
8.	Laporte	1.6
9.	Mendy	1.1
10.	Fernandinho	1.0

Spain
La Liga

1.	Sergio Ramos	38.0
2.	Marcelo	28.5
3.	Karim Benzema	28.3
4.	Gareth Bale	27.3
5.	Eden Hazard	27.1
6.	James Rodríguez	17.0
7.	Luka Modric	16.3
8.	Thibaut Courtois	13.5
9.	Isco	10.4
10.	Toni Kroos	8.5

Germany
Bundesliga

1.	Manuel Neuer	16.2
2.	R. Lewandowski	10.1
3.	Thomas Müller	8.3
4.	Thiago	5.5
5.	P. Coutinho	4.6
6.	Gnabry	2.4
7.	Boateng	1.8
8.	David Alaba	1.5
9.	Kimmich	1.0
10.	Kingsley Coman	0.7

Italy
Serie A

1.	Cristiano Ronaldo	133.3
2.	Paulo Dybala	24.5
3.	G. Higuaín	13.8
4.	G. Buffon	13.1
5.	M. De Ligt	12.0
6.	M. Pjanic	10.2
7.	G. Chiellieni	6.3
8.	M. Mandzukic	4.2
9.	B. Matuidi	3.5
10.	Adrien Rabiot	3.4

France
Ligue 1

1.	Neymar	68.8
2.	K. Mbappé	44.8
3.	E. Cavani	24.8
4.	Mauro Icardi	13.2
5.	A. Di María	11.5
6.	Thiago Silva	7.6
7.	T. Meunier	2.8
8.	Marco Verrati	2.7
9.	Marquinhos	1.4
10.	L. Kurzawa	0.8

The predominance of Juventus continues in Italy, as it won the Scudetto once again. The main media stars of the Italian team are the Portuguese Cristiano Ronaldo and the Argentinian players, Paulo Dybala and Gonzalo Higuaín.

Finally, in the French league, the winner was Paris Saint Germain, where the main protagonists are Neymar and Mbappe. Precisely, the main players in terms of media exposure of the Parisian team are the three first-choice attackers: Neymar, Kylian Mbappe, and Edinson Cavani.

4.   MERIT Media Visibility Ranking – Teams

This section shows the results of the media visibility analysis by teams. The MERIT records for the clubs are obtained by aggregation of individual ratings of media visibility of the 15 most popular players in each team roster.

The table displays the hierarchy of top teams according to the MERIT ranking for the season 2019/20. Remember that the 2019/20 season was affected by the shock of the pandemic caused by COVID-19, which certainly distorted the results, as it even caused the interruption (temporary or even definitive) of some domestic leagues and, subsequently, involved the resumption of games without public.

Rank	Team Season 2019/20		League	MERIT Index
1	FC Barcelona		La Liga	356.6
2	Real Madrid		La Liga	242.8
3	Juventus		Serie A	234.9
4	Liverpool		Premier League	213.3
5	Paris Saint Germain		Ligue 1	181.1
6	Manchester United		Premier League	155.6
7	Manchester City		Premier League	117.1
8	Arsenal		Premier League	63.9
9	Bayern Múnich		Bundesliga	53.7
10	Inter Milán		Serie A	34.4

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FC Barcelona led the MERIT ranking for the 2019/20 season, accumulating a media value index of 356.6 points. The second team is the other Spanish giant, Real Madrid, followed by: Juventus, Liverpool and PSG, respectively.

While there was a strong presence of Spanish players in the individual media value ranking, in the team ranking the Premier League is the one that shows a clear dominance, as we find four teams in the Top-10: Manchester United, Liverpool, Manchester City and Arsenal FC.

40% of teams in the Top-10 MERIT Media Value Top-10 belong to the Premier League

Concerning the Italian Serie A, we see how it gains prominence in the 2019/20 season. Actually, the Juventus reaches the third highest post, a feature explained mainly by the presence of Cristiano Ronaldo. Moreover, after a great season at local and international level, Inter Milan sneaks into the last position of the Top-10.

Media Ranking - "Big-5" Domestic Leagues

1. Liverpool
2. Man. United
3. Man. City
4. Arsenal
5. Tottenham

1. Bayer Múnich
2. B. Dortmund

1. Juventus
2. Inter Milán
3. SSC Napoli
4. SS Lazio
5. AS Roma

1. FC Barcelona
2. Real Madrid
3. Atl. Madrid
4. Sevilla FC
5. R. Sociedad

1. PSG
2. AS Monaco
3. Olympique Lyon
4. O. Marseille
5. AS Saint-Étienne

5.   Media "Dream Team" (2019/20)

This section presents the media "Dream Team", in which Barcelona, Real Madrid and Liverpool shine, monopolizing most of the positions on the field, highlighting their current global hegemony.

Below is the layout of what would be the "gala" 11 of the team formed by the most media players in each position: GOALKEEPER; DEFENSE; MIDFIELD; and ATTACK.

The media "Dream Team" of the season comprises the following players:

Goalkeeper:	David de Gea
Defense:	Marcelo – Sergio Ramos – Gerard Pique – Virgil van Dijk
Midfield:	James Rodríguez – Paul Pogba – Kevin De Bruyne
Attack:	Cristiano Ronaldo – Lionel Messi – Mohammed Salah

Among the most media-worthy players, Spanish goalkeeper David de Gea stands out in goal. In defense, Real Madrid center-back Sergio Ramos reach an index of 38.03 points, followed by Marcelo, Van Dijk and Pique, respectively.

In the midfield, the French Paul Pogba maintains his dominance, with a MERIT index of 53.48 points, ahead of James Rodriguez and Kevin De Bruyne.

In attack, the figure of Lionel Messi emerges once again as the greatest of players, thanks to his extraordinary season. The MERIT index achieved by the Argentinian surpasses that of his historic rival: Cristiano Ronaldo. A significant factor is perhaps the absence of players from the French Ligue 1 in the "Dream Team" of the greatest media value leaders.

5 players in the media "Dream Team" come from teams in the Spanish league

2 players	**3 players**	**1 players**	**2 players**	**1 player**	**2 players**

6.   Media Value Ranking of the "Big- 5" domestic leagues

In this section, we apply the MERIT approach to compute the hierarchy of domestic leagues, by aggregating the individual MERIT indexes of the 400 most popular players (those with the greatest visibility figures). Similar results would have been obtained if the calculations for each league had been performed on groups of 300 or 500 players.

The figures summarize the results, revealing the MERIT aggregate indexes along with the relative share (in %) with respect to the total accumulated by the "Big-5" European leagues.
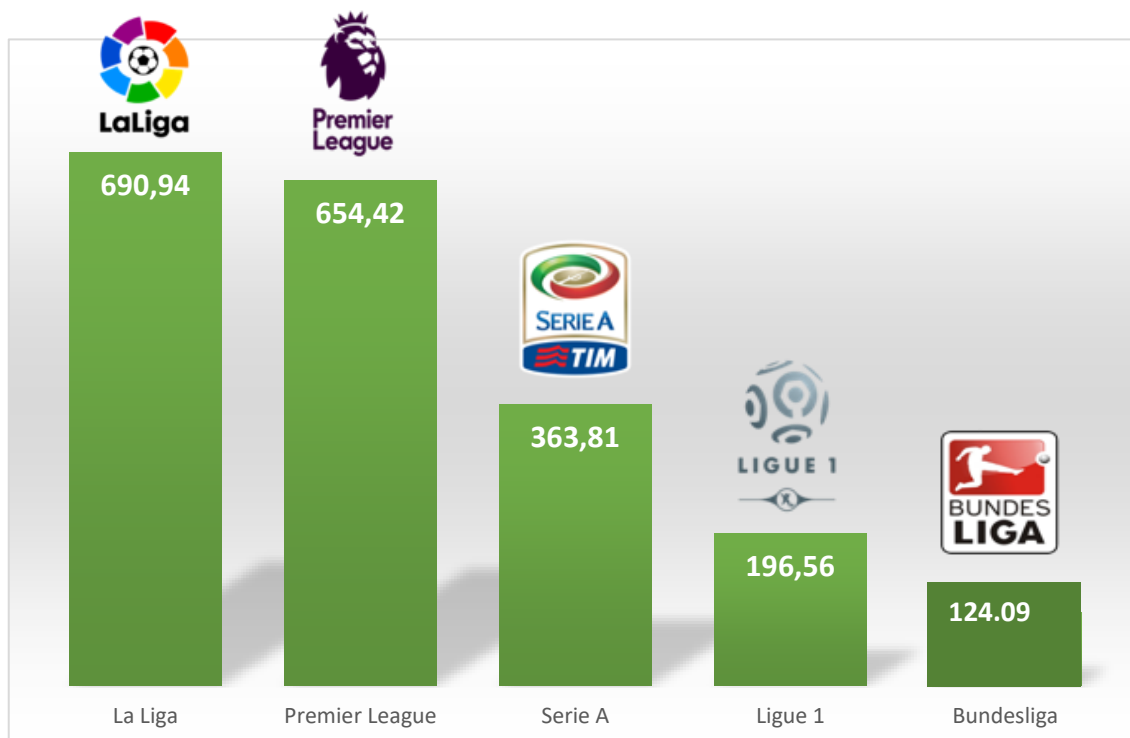
In the 2019/20 season, Spain's La Liga reached the first position in the ranking of European leagues, accumulating a MERIT index of 690.94 points. This means that the Spanish championship obtained the highest level of media attraction, above its neighbors. Second place, with very similar levels of worldwide attention, goes to the Premier League, which - presumably thanks to its high competitiveness - also achieves a spectacular level of attraction.

The European leaders are followed by Serie A, Ligue 1 and the Bundesliga, respectively.

This season, the Spanish league climbed one position in the league rankings, surpassing the Premier League.

24%

51%

64%

92%

69%
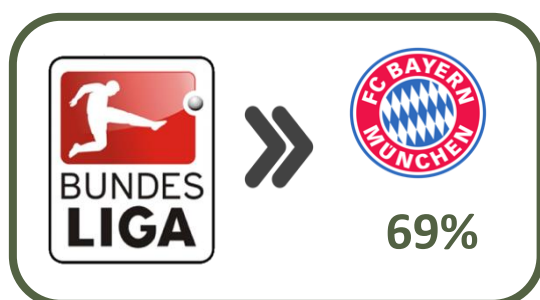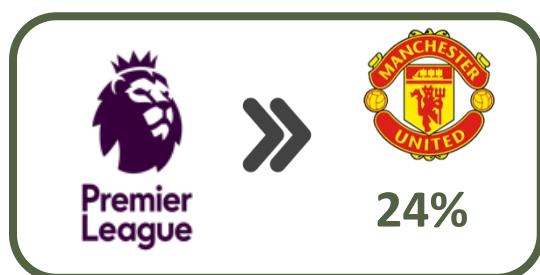
The following graphs show the weight of the top team, in terms of media value, with respect to the total media value of its league. It should be noted that the English Premier League offers a more balanced distribution than the other European leagues. Manchester United attracts most of the Premier League's media attention, although it only accounts for 24%.

In the case of the Spanish league, Real Madrid is the star of La Liga. The club, along with arch-rivals Barcelona FC, account for more than 80% of the league's total. There is a great dependence of the Spanish league on these two clubs.

The Italian and German leagues present a similar situation. In both cases, the main team has a high weight in the league total; although the rest of the teams do not lag too far behind this percentage, indicating that there is a slightly more balanced distribution.

Finally, the case of Ligue 1 seems to represent an example of the "winner-take-all" effect, where one top team gets the largest share of media attention, compared to the other competitors. PSG attracts a large share of the total for the French league, a percentage well above the rest of the top teams in the other major domestic competitions.

Annex 1

Rank 2019/20	Players	Team	MERIT Media Value Index
1	Lionel Messi	FC Barcelona	168.65
2	Cristiano Ronaldo	Juventus FC	133.28
3	Mohamed Salah	Liverpool FC	74.42
4	Neymar	Paris Saint-Germain	68.79
5	Luis Suárez	FC Barcelona	58.61
6	Paul Pogba	Manchester United	53.48
7	Kylian Mbappé	Paris Saint-Germain	44.77
8	Sergio Ramos	Real Madrid	38.03
9	Antoine Griezmann	FC Barcelona	33.68
10	Raheem Sterling	Manchester City	33.19
11	Sadio Mané	Liverpool FC	29.57
12	Marcelo	Real Madrid	28.48
13	Karim Benzema	Real Madrid	28.29
14	Gareth Bale	Real Madrid	27.27
15	Virgil van Dijk	Liverpool FC	27.09
16	Eden Hazard	Real Madrid	27.08
17	Edinson Cavani	Paris Saint-Germain	24.76
18	Marcus Rashford	Manchester United	24.50
19	Paulo Dybala	Juventus FC	24.50
20	Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang	Arsenal FC	23.64
21	Gerard Piqué	FC Barcelona	20.05
22	Roberto Firmino	Liverpool FC	18.73
23	David de Gea	Manchester United	18.03
24	Kevin De Bruyne	Manchester City	17.52
25	James Rodríguez	Real Madrid	16.95
26	Romelu Lukaku	Inter Milan	16.59
27	Sergio Agüero	Manchester City	16.58
28	Luka Modric	Real Madrid	16.32
29	Manuel Neuer	Bayern Munich	16.15
30	Leroy Sané	Manchester City	15.64
31	Ousmane Dembélé	FC Barcelona	15.61
32	Alisson	Liverpool FC	14.90
33	Mesut Özil	Arsenal FC	14.13
34	Ciro Immobile	SS Lazio	13.91
35	Gonzalo Higuaín	Juventus FC	13.78
36	Harry Kane	Tottenham Hotspur	13.71
37	David Silva	Manchester City	13.57
38	Thibaut Courtois	Real Madrid	13.51
39	Mauro Icardi	Paris Saint-Germain	13.16
40	Gianluigi Buffon	Juventus FC	13.14
41	Anthony Martial	Manchester United	13.10
42	Jordan Henderson	Liverpool FC	12.74
43	Matthijs de Ligt	Juventus FC	12.01
44	Harry Maguire	Manchester United	11.97
45	Ángel Di María	Paris Saint-Germain	11.49
46	Dries Mertens	SSC Napoli	10.97
47	Isco	Real Madrid	10.43
48	Miralem Pjanic	Juventus FC	10.19
49	Robert Lewandowski	Bayern Munich	10.08
50	Jadon Sancho	Borussia Dortmund	9.96

Annex 2

Rank 2019/20	Team	League	MERIT Media Value Index
1	FC Barcelona	LaLiga	356.6
2	Real Madrid	LaLiga	242.8
3	Juventus FC	Serie A	234.9
4	Liverpool FC	Premier League	213.3
5	Paris Saint-Germain	Ligue 1	181.1
6	Manchester United	Premier League	155.6
7	Manchester City	Premier League	117.1
8	Arsenal FC	Premier League	63.9
9	Bayern Munich	Bundesliga	53.7
10	Inter Milan	Serie A	34.4
11	SSC Napoli	Serie A	32.6
12	Tottenham Hotspur	Premier League	23.8
13	SS Lazio	Serie A	17.5
14	Borussia Dortmund	Bundesliga	17.5
15	Chelsea FC	Premier League	16.0
16	Atlético Madrid	LaLiga	15.9
17	AS Roma	Serie A	13.2
18	Leicester City	Premier League	11.2
19	Sevilla FC	LaLiga	10.5
20	Ajax Amsterdam	Eredivisie	5.9
21	AC Milan	Serie A	5.9
22	Everton FC	Premier League	5.3
23	Valencia CF	LaLiga	4.8
24	West Ham United	Premier League	4.6

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