

# SCIE'S COLLECTORS CORNER

SEPTEMBER 2009

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How did you get into the hobby?

Childhood memories



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Favorite Card



# TRISTAR Commemorates the 100th Anniversary of the 1909 Obak Minor League Baseball Cards



Orders Due: 8/7/09  
Release Date: 8/25/09  
Case Item Code: 10020440  
• 6 Cards Per Pack  
• 20 Packs Per Box  
• 24 Boxes Per Master Case  
• 2 12-Box Mini Cases Per Master Case  
• \$4.99 MSR Per Pack  
**All Boxes & Cases Individually Numbered! Only 150 Cases!**

## PREMIERE EDITION 1909 T-212 OBAK DESIGN

TRISTAR Obak™ pays tribute to the one of the largest Minor League card sets of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with cards featuring the top Minor League players of yesterday and today and a look at the exciting, rich history of Minor League Baseball.

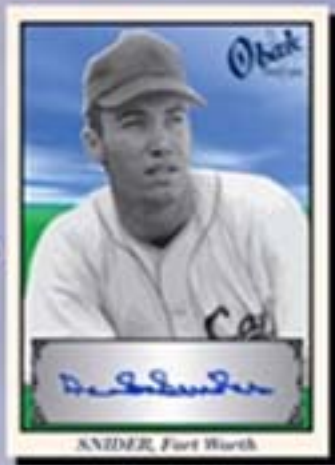
## GUARANTEED PER HOBBY BOX NINE HITS!

- 2 Autograph Cards: 1 Current Player, 1 Retired Player (1 Autograph Card Numbered to 50 or Less)
- 2 Parallel Cards Numbered to 50 or Less
- 1 T-212 Mini Parallel Card Numbered to 50 or Less
- 3 Short Print Cards
- 1 Special 4-Card T-212 Mini Uncut Strip: Numbered to 3,600

6 Officially Licensed Cards Per Pack • 5 Modern Size & 1 T-212 Mini Size  
20 T-212 Mini Cards Per Box

### AUTOGRAPH CARDS

Legends include Duke Snider, Tom Seaver, Brooks Robinson, Dale Murphy, Jim Rice.  
Prospects include Madison Bumgarner, Josh Vitters, Andrew Brackman & More!  
All autograph cards are numbered to 200 or less.



SNIDER, Fort Worth

### PARALLEL CARDS COLOR PARALLELS

TRISTAR Obak™ card fronts & backs will be printed in alternate ink colors!

- PURPLE 1/1      GREEN 1/25
- RED 1/5      BLACK 1/50

### 1910 & 1911 BACK VARIATIONS

Select players will have modern size and/or T-212 mini size parallel cards showcasing variations of the 1910 & 1911 Original Obak card backs.

**LOOK FOR IMAGE VARIATIONS!**

### CUT SIGNATURE CARDS Look for Randomly-Inserted 1 of 1 Autograph Cards



FOLK, Eastern

Plus...Barack Obama, Bing Crosby, Ted Williams, Stan Musial, Sammy Bough & More!

**FEATURED PLAYER CARDS INCLUDE:**  
TED WILLIAMS  
NOLAN RYAN  
STAN MUSIAL  
SATCHEL PAIGE  
& MANY MORE OF HISTORY'S GREATEST!



STANTON, Joe

**FEATURED PLAYER CARDS INCLUDE:**  
MIKE STANTON  
JASON HEYWARD  
JUSTIN SMOAK  
BUSTER POSKEY  
& MANY MORE TOP RISING STARS!



CARD BACKS & PARALLELS



PRO DEBUT



HISTORY IN THE MAKING



U.S. PRESIDENTS



HISTORY'S GREATEST PLAYERS



MINOR LEAGUE BEST



MLB PLAYER OF THE YEAR



GAME CHANGERS



MLB LEAGUES & FRANCHISES



[WWW.TRISTAROBAK.COM](http://WWW.TRISTAROBAK.COM)



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**The Team**

Editor and Publisher:

Karine Hains

Assistant-Editor:

John Jimenez

**Writing Team**

Linda Mankefors

Kevin Lee

Dan Gladstone

Kyle Hymel

**Team Contacts**

Trevor Picone

Scott Kozlowski

Peter Kapuschinsky

Stephen Duell

Jason DiOrazio

Ed Hutchinson

**Graphics and Design**

Houng Ngui

**Picture Editing**

Ally Bradley





### And the Winner is...

By Karine Hains aka Pheeb888



In mid-July SCF teamed-up with Dacardworld.com to launch the second edition of our writing contest. This time around, there was a box of Gridiron Gear Football 2008 to win thanks to Dave and Adam. With such a sweet prize up for grabs, there were numerous entries and it sure kept the writing team busy! By the closing date, we had received 34 entries of good original articles that were a pleasure to both read and edit. For those who haven't had a chance to read the work submitted by the members, this edition of Collector Corner features several of the entries. I invite you to read them all

and feel free to send your comments to the author of the article(s) you enjoyed, it's always a pleasure for a writer to get some feedback.

Unfortunately, there could only be one winner and it was rather difficult for me to come to a decision. After reading and re-reading the front-runners I came to the decision that our winning entry this time was (drum roll...): Stolen Cardboard Memories by Matthew Tomkins aka reoddai. Matthew's article takes you back to the simpler days of collecting, a time we all remember fondly before offering a critical appraisal of the hobby today.

I would also like to point out that two of the submissions have been selected for publication in Tuff Stuff's Sports Collector Monthly which is a great achievement for the two members selected and each has received 2000 card cash as a reward. I am happy to report that the contest allowed us to find some hidden writing talent and I truly hope that members will carry on submitting articles in the article submission forum. Finally, I am also pleased to reveal that we received 33% more entries than during the first edition of the contest. I can only hope that the third edition will be even more successful! If you have ideas as to which topics could be used in the third edition of the contest, please feel free to drop either me or gmoney158 a private message we would love to hear your thoughts!

### New Sponsor














You might have noticed that the usual advertisement on page two of Collector's Corner features TRISTAR's brand new product Obak. We are happy to say that following contacts made at the National Sports Collector Convention, TRISTAR is now officially a SCF sponsor. They offered us two boxes of Obak, one to review and a second that will be the top prize in an upcoming baseball contest. Thank you very much TRISTAR and we are very happy to count you as one of our sponsors. Turn to page 8 for our review of Obak and keep an eye on the baseball contest forum for your chance to win a box!



Every month, we aim to provide you with an accurate list of release dates, however as you will no doubt know, release dates do change. At the time of publishing, all dates were correct.

## September 2009

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7	 -First Edition Baseball Factory Set	 - 1972 The Year in Hockey	 - Chrome Baseball	11
14	 -Goodwin Champions Baseball -SPx Football -Signature Edition Basketball	16	17	 - Finest Football  -Ballpark Collection Baseball
 - Football Factory Set	 - OPC Hockey - UD Basketball	 -Absolute Memorabilia Football  -Sterling Football	24	25
28	 -First Edition Football -First Edition Basketball	30		



## **Stolen Cardboard Memories** **By Matthew Tomkins aka reoddai**

Back when I was a kid my dad took me to the local card shop. When we went the store was something like ten meters long and two and a half meters wide. The entire left wall, top to bottom, was full of open boxes. It was a pack buyer's dream. Absolutely everything from the last few years was available as well as older products.

As a kid I got very little allowance compared to my peers. But every so often I would have enough money to pick one or two packs and buy them. As a child I remember the exhilaration of looking at the boxes. Already I had a passion to collect all the cards in the set and pull my favorite players. At the time, I was beginning to understand the value of money and when I reached into that box of to pull my lucky pack from the bottom left (my dad was left handed and I wanted my pack to be one that no one else had touched), I could feel all the other packs as I pushed past them to get that bottom pack. For every pack I passed I thought that I would just never be able to afford them all. The dream of buying a box was too huge and far away to ever be a reality. I opened my pack and, on those rare occasions, I pulled a hologram and life was wonderful.

Then, the '90s came with overproduction, speculation, etc. With the value of all sports cards on the rise pack searching has become something that not just the extremely greedy did but that many more people learned to do. Pack searching did exist while I was younger of course, but most product was available in hobby shops all you needed was an honest owner who could tell the loser to get out of there.



The result? Today my childhood card shop is like all others. Yes the wall of packs still exists but much of the wall is now behind a counter. The owner, a wonderful man named Dave, now picks your packs for you to ensure that everyone get a fair chance at a hit. His store is much like other honest stores. Some stores do let you pick your own packs but stories fly around about those stores. Some rumors are that they search their own packs before putting them out to the



public or feed hot packs to their richest customers to cater for their business.

I'm a little older and wiser now. I am also somewhat richer now. It's not enough for much but just enough to still enjoy at least one pack of cards. But now, unlike in my childhood memories, I can no longer get the tactile sensation of all the other packs in the box. I can't pick up the box to feel its weight, its embossed texture or enjoy the smell of the wax. I will never see the very bottom of that box of packs as I reach for my bottom left pack. If I go to a place where the owner doesn't care if the box is searched I can get my own packs but by then the box has already been defiled. My hits will never be any more than base or inserts. That means that the \$5 would have been better spent to buy five \$1 grab bags rather than a pack. No one is so rich that they can just waste money on something that can't possibly return what is promised, which would be fair odds for pulling hits if a box isn't searched.

As a result of pack searching I no longer buy loose wax. My \$5 of impulse spending money goes elsewhere and it does not go to cards. If pack searching wasn't so bad, that \$5 would go toward cards. I would be able to enjoy it knowing that I had at least a tiny chance to pull something big. I suffer because I need to find relaxation elsewhere and I would dearly wish that I could do so while shooting the breeze with my friends at the local hobby shop and opening some packs. My local hobby shop suffers because I don't spend as much money with them as I would and in these times you really do need to support your local shop.

The proliferation of pack searching killed my enjoyment of going to the hobby shop and spending a few dollars on wax. Unlike what I had with my dad I will never get to pass on such an experience to my future children, a niece or a nephew. After all they'll never even be allowed near the box. Human beings are sensory in nature. We need to see, touch, smell and hear to relate to our environment. I want to see my wax before I buy it. I want to touch the box to see if it just radiates luck to me and feel the other packs brush against my hand as I go find my bottom left pack and think how one day maybe I could afford them all. I want to hear how the pack is pulled out. I want to smell that new or old wax smell and the next time I smell it I want to remember all the great hits that I pulled even if they aren't great by other people's standards.

With my dad now dead some of my fondest memories of him are card shop memories. I wouldn't trade them for anything in the world and part of me is so hurt that I will never be able to share something like this with a son of mine all because of pack-searching.

In case you were curious the name of the shop, aptly enough, was Cardboard Memories, 230 Sandalwood Parkway East, Brampton, ON.



**2009 TRISTAR Obak Baseball Product Review**  
**By Don White aka Doniceage**

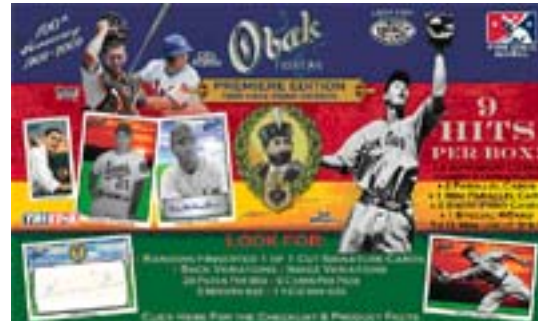
Thanks to the great folks at TRISTAR for providing with this box to break and review.

**Box Details**

20 packs per box  
 6 cards per pack  
 4.99 MSR per pack

**Product Breakdown**

Nine Guaranteed Hits per Hobby Box!!



2 Autographs Cards: one current player, one retired player (with one autograph being numbered to 50 or less).

2 Parallel Cards numbered to 50 or less

1 T-212 Mini Parallel numbered to 50 or less

3 Short Print Cards

1 Special 4-Card T-212 Mini Uncut Strip numbered to 3600

Autograph Card Checklist

T212 Checklist

Base Card checklist (consisting of various subsets)

Parallel Cards are color coded as followed:

- Purple 1/1
- Red 1/5
- Green 1/25
- Black 1/50

1910 & 1911 Black Variations Select players will have modern size and/or T-212 mini size parallel cards showcasing variations of the 1910 & 1911 Original Obak card backs.

Highlights of what we pulled: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBaG5mPwbwE>



Base (94/114) 83%  
Dupes - 6

T-212 Base (19/64) 30 %  
Dupes - 1

**Final Ratings (Out of 5):**

Base - 5  
Fun - 4  
Overall Design - 4  
Value - 3.5  
Rebuy - 3.5

Final Grade - 20/25 (80%)

Upon receiving this box I looked forward to the break as it is a retro product. The sell sheet states there are nine hits per box, which ups the ante on Allen & Ginter in trying to deliver value per box. The one bad thing is TRISTAR like some other companies out there cannot use all the copyrighted logos. Some folks do not fully embrace a product that does not have all the copyright logos.

TRISTAR did emphasize their PRO DEBUT designation. This will allow them to showcase the up and coming players and give their product value. Unlike other companies that are not licensed and whose product do not include any true rookies, which ultimately drives away many collectors.

The cards have a simple design that is aesthetically pleasing without trying to do too much. Some collectors will love the various parallels while others will not so that is a personal preference. The variations are in the image, back (year), or possibly the print run of the card (color). The oddball collectors will like the T-212s as they offer another set to be worked on with some different variations as mentioned above. One thing I would have loved to see would be the T-212s using a different design for the cards or possibly new players to keep them different from the base set therefore attracting more player collectors.

The autograph debate will continue as TRISTAR did use sticker autographs that again will please some while disappointing others. On the retired player autograph we pulled (Vince Coleman) the blue sharpie signature showed up very nicely on the grey sticker. There has to be something said on an autograph you can read even if you do not know whom the player is.

So hats off to TRISTAR for creating a new product even though they are not on an even playing field being without a licence. I look forward to see how this product evolves much like other products in the hobby if they bring it back next year.



## **The Cup 2008-2009 Product Review** **By Karine Hains aka Phebs888**

Once again this year, the release of Upper Deck's (UD) flagship high-end hockey release had to be delayed. Originally slotted for a June release, The Cup was then pushed to an end of July release which would have coincided with the National sports Collectors Convention. Unfortunately, UD wasn't able to make this date either and in the end, the product came out on the 6th August. While there was a fair level of annoyance from the collectors, we were all hoping that at the very least, the product would be worth the wait and I am glad to say that in my view at least, it truly was.

In the hockey world, there is nothing quite like busting a tin of The Cup...Cutting through the outer wrapper, opening the tin, then the inside wrapper on the small box and finally opening the said box to reveal the long awaited cards is quite a thrill! One could even compare it to a ride on Cedar Point's much loved roller coaster: Top Thrill Dragster; it's over just as fast and you have the same adrenaline rush feeling once you're done. If the break was good that is.

### **Box details**

Pack per tin: 1  
Cards per pack: 5 to 6  
Base Set: 60  
Rookies: 90  
Price per Box: 349.99 to 390.99

Checklist to all sets available here: <http://sports.upperdeck.com/collectorszone/cardsethome.aspx?q=6&sid=52489>.

### **The Breaks**

As one could expect there has been a lot of The Cup breaks in the last few weeks, to give you an idea of what you can expect in a tin, here are a few of those breaks. To facilitate trades and sales, I will put the user ID of the member who broke the tin and the link to the break thread.

**Break 1 – Phebs888 - <http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=880649>**

Card one: Nicklas Lidstrom Base  
Card two: Dany Heatley Base Jersey Parallel 12/25  
Card three: Andreas Nodl Rookie Auto Patch 210/249  
Card four: Masterpiece Cyan Printing Plate Dominik Hasek  
Card five: Signature Patches Blake Wheeler 12/75  
Card six: Wayne Gretzky Cup Chirography 7/50





**Break 2 – quiet-things & captngeech**

**<http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=879949>**

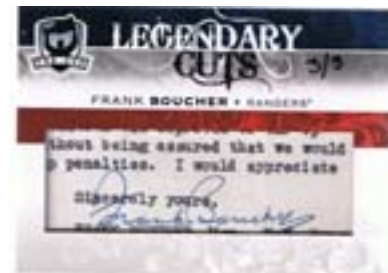
- Card one: Al McInnis Base
- Card two: Jean Beliveau Base
- Card three: Grant Fuhr Base
- Card four: Dan LaCosta Rookie Auto Patch 90/249
- Card five: Brandon Sutter Signature Patches 33/75
- Card six: Sidney Crosby Canada Program of Excellence auto /10



**Break 3 – captngeech**

**<http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=873914&highlight=cup+break&page=2>**

- Card one: Guy Lafleur Base
- Card two: Grant Fuhr Base
- Card three: Dustin Jeffrey Rookie Auto 154/199
- Card four: Brendan Mikkelson 19/249 Rookie Patch Auto
- Card five: Michael Boedker Limited Logo 49/50
- Card six: Frank Boucher Legendary Cuts 3/3



**Break 4 – Scottkoz**

**<http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=880145>**

- Card one: Rick Nash Base
- Card two: Jonathan Ericsson Patch Auto /249
- Card three: Sidney Crosby Cup Foundations Jersey /25
- Card four: John Filewich Rookie Patch Auto /249
- Card five: Mikkel Boedker Rookie Patch Auto /89
- Card six: Luc Robitaille Limited Logos /50





## Comments



Once again this year, The Cup oozes quality. Of course, as with everything there are a few kinks. For instance, even with the delay in releasing the product, there are still some redemptions in there. However, I must admit that it looks like there are less than in the previous years and I prefer seeing the product out now than having to wait another month for the last few cards to be ready. Another thing I've noticed as a Roy collector is that UD has made a conscious effort to picture him in the Habs uniform but it is impossible to find any

Canadiens patches on Roy cards. All of his patches are from the Avalanche's uniform, which give us some mismatch cards. Having spoken to UD at the Nationals, I do understand that they need to use the stock they have but then perhaps it would be better to picture the player in the uniform they have patches or jersey of. My final negative point would have to be the use of bland patches. This is a very high-end release and all white patches have no place in such a product! I have seen a Brodeur Emblem of Endorsement (short printed to 15) where both swatches are completely white. This is a wonderful card, low numbered and one of the two autographs sets in which Brodeur has put an inscription on the cards (552 wins – the other set being Chirography). To ruin it with a weak patch is unforgivable.

Judging from the breaks I have seen so far, the collation seems rather good; I have yet to see a truly bad break of The Cup. Of course, as discussed above the use of some bland patches has made some break less satisfying than they could have been. Boring patches can be quickly forgiven when redeemed by a Legendary Cut Auto (see break three above) and three base cards in a tin can also be acceptable if you are getting a Crosby autograph numbered to 10 (break two above).

## Final Ratings

Overall Design: 4.5/5

Value: 4.5/5

Fun: 5/5

Rebuy: 4.5/5

Variety: 5/5

Final Grade: 94%



It's very hard not to be satisfied when faced with such a product, the .5 deduction on the design mark comes from the use of less desirable patches and the value deduction is justified by the high price tag. Some will say that the value mark should be lower, but have a look on the secondary market and see how well the singles are changing hands on eBay. No one can argue that this is not a fun product to break, it's a massive thrill and even though one would wish it lasted longer, that would mean it being more expensive as well. As for the variety, with so many different autographs and memorabilia set, it's hard to criticize. I especially like the addition of the Draft Day Boards autographs, great new set there UD! Now that The Cup is out, it really feels like the 09-10 season can start, bring on Upper Deck Series 1 and Artifacts!



## 2009 Donruss Rookies and Stars Football Product Review

By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

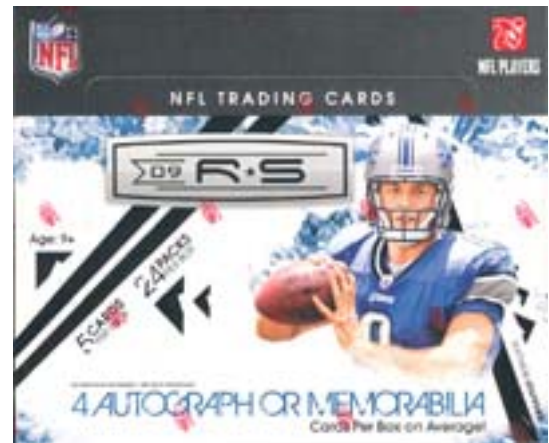
First and foremost, I'd like to thank our sponsors at Panini America for providing us with this box for review.

24 packs per box  
5 cards per pack  
SRP: 73.99-79.99

### Program Highlights

SP rookie signatures featuring signed embroidered NFL patch rookie cards:

Matthew Stafford, Mark Sanchez, Josh Freeman, Pat White, Knowshon Moreno, Chris Wells, LeSean McCoy, Shonn Greene, Donald Brown, Michael Crabtree, Jeremy Maclin, Percy Harvin, Darrius Heyward-Bey, Hakeem Nicks, Kenny Britt, Brian Robiskie.



SP rookie college signature featuring signed embroidered college patches:

Matthew Stafford, Mark Sanchez, Josh Freeman, Pat White, Knowshon Moreno, Chris Wells, LeSean McCoy, Shonn Greene, Donald Brown, Michael Crabtree, Jeremy Maclin, Percy Harvin, Darrius Heyward-Bey, Hakeem Nicks, Kenny Britt, Brian Robiskie

Also look for:

- NFL draft rookie dual signed embroidered nfl patches!
- Team chemistry rookie dual signed embroidered college patches!
- Signature prime materials cards in freshman orientation, prime cuts and statistical standouts!

### What we pulled

Video

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYquKEP\\_0G4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYquKEP_0G4)

Base: 95/100 (95%)

Dupes: 13

Elements (1): Thomas Jones

Rookies /999 (4): David Bruton, Devin Moore, Larry English, Louis Murphy





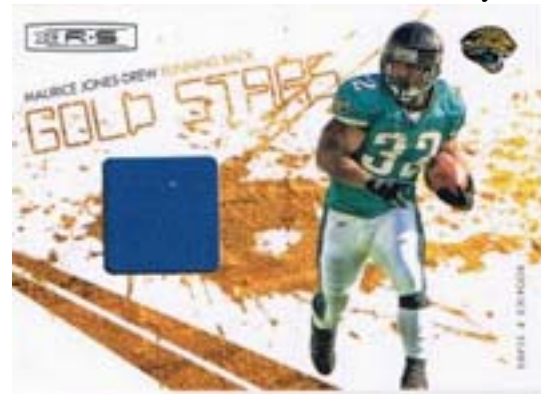
Longevity /249 (1): Joseph Addai  
 Longevity Rookies /249 (1): Aaron Maybin  
 Longevity Rookies Holofoil /99 (1): Michael Mitchell



Cross Training /500 (1): Kenny Britt  
 Studio Rookies /500 (1): Mike Thomas  
 Studio Rookies /100 (1): Javon Ringer



Gold Stars Maurice Jones-Drew Jersey /299



Freshman Orientation LeSean McCoy 3-color Patch /50



Freshman Orientation Stephen McGee Jersey/Auto /100



Frank Gore Autograph /20





**Final Ratings (out of 5):**

Base Set – 4

Fun – 3.5

Overall Design – 3

Value – 5

Rebuy – 4.5

Total – 20/25 (80%)

Well, we all knew it was coming. It was just a matter of when. It appears that moving forward, Panini has dropped the Leaf name from the product line. Not saying it's a bad thing, just takes some getting used to.

The base set has a nice player profile photo of each player. However, not a big fan of the card design. There's too much going on with the card and really, do you need to put "Rookies & Stars on the card when you already have the "09 RS" logo on it? The design makes you feel the cards were designed more for kids than anyone else. Oh and let us not forget the one thing about base sets that peeve me more than anything else...and that's getting almost the entire set in a box while getting more than enough duplicates that would have allowed for a complete set.

Once you get past all that, it's sunshine and roses. This release is a great bang for the buck between the 4 "hits", 4 rookies and 8 inserts/parallels per box. The Elements cards show the player during a game in different weather conditions such as rain and snow. The rookie class is showcased in a wide variety of jerseys, patches and autographs. This is a hard release to pass up buying multiple boxes.

Rookies And Stars delivers exactly what the name of the set implies. With a balance of today's and tomorrow's stars, this set is fantastic for most collectors. The photos are great and the inserts are eye-catching. The "hits" are worthwhile and plentiful. Though, it would be nice to see the base set collation fixed to make things just a bit easier on set collectors.

Once again, thanks to our gracious sponsors at Panini America for giving us the opportunity to open and review this release. For more information on all their products, be sure to check them out at [www.paniniamerica.net](http://www.paniniamerica.net).





## 2009/10 Bowman '48 Basketball Product Review

By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

First and foremost, I'd like to thank our sponsors at Topps for providing us with this box.

### Box Details

24 packs per box

8 cards per pack

Current Retail Price: 74.99 - 84.99

### Product Highlights

- Three Autograph Cards Per Box!
- One Numbered Card Per Pack!
- One Autograph Relic Card #'d To 41 Or Less Per Case!
- Hobby Exclusive!



Autograph & autograph relic cards - total cards - 3 per box!

### What We Pulled

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmeBOtKqlfY>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHrKAws37rY>

Base (100/100) - 100%

Dupes - 63

Rookies /2009 (3) - DeMar DeRozan, Jordan Hill, Tyler Hansbrough

Play Card /1948 (1) - Double Post

Blue Border /1948 (20) - Al Horford, Joe Johnson, Josh Smith, Paul Pierce, Gerald Wallace, Emeka Okafor, Ben Gordon, John Salmons, Mo Williams, Anderson Varejao, Jason Kidd, Rasheed, Wallace, Ron Artest, T.J. Ford, Marcus Camby, Andre Iguodala, Jonny Flynn, Stephen Curry, Tyreke Evans, Single Cut Off Post

Black Border /48 (1) - Blake Griffin





Danny Granger Autograph  
Josh Smith Autograph



Bill Russell Autograph



### **Final Ratings (out of 5):**

Base Set – 5  
 Fun – 2.5  
 Overall Design – 3.5  
 Value – 4.5  
 Rebuy – 3.5

Total – 19/25 (76%)

The base card in Bowman '48 is based on the card design from the original 1948 Bowman cards. Players are pictured with either a blue or red background. On the back of each card is a little tidbit about the player called "Bowman Facts." While the current/retired players are featured in their uniforms, the rookies are showcased in a headshot only. The set is completed by a series of Play Cards, which shows a drawing of a play and the back discusses how it works.

Other than the parallels, there are no inserts. This is probably due to it being a throwback set and the original set didn't have inserts. However, you do get three autographs per box. You will get either an autograph, an autograph/relic or an autograph/patch. The set list is trimmed down, so odds are you will get something nice out of each box.

It is difficult to truly rate a throwback release as it is encapsulating much of the original release. Older sets didn't offer a lot of the glitz and glamour that you see in modern sets. However, I did note a couple of things. One, there is what appears to be an uncorrected error in the set. Card 68, Spencer Hawes, has a picture of Gerald Wallace on the front. I say appears to be an uncorrected error as two were in the box. Secondly, there are way too many duplicate cards. When you can almost complete two base sets, it's too much. Would have been better to release this with 18 packs instead of 24.

Once again, I'd like to thank our wonderful sponsors at Topps for giving us the opportunity to open and review this release. If interested in more information on this release or others, check them out today at [www.topps.com](http://www.topps.com).



## 2009 Topps Chrome Baseball Product Review

By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

First and foremost, I'd like to thank our sponsors at Topps for providing us with this box.

### Box Details

24 packs per box

4 cards per pack

Current Retail Price: 54.99 - 64.99

### Product Highlights

- New! 2009 World Baseball classic stars!
- 2 autographed rookie cards per hobby box!
- Every card is paralleled!

### Product Description

Base cards - 220

Veterans - 170 MLB pros.

Rookies - 50 promising youngsters.

### What We Pulled

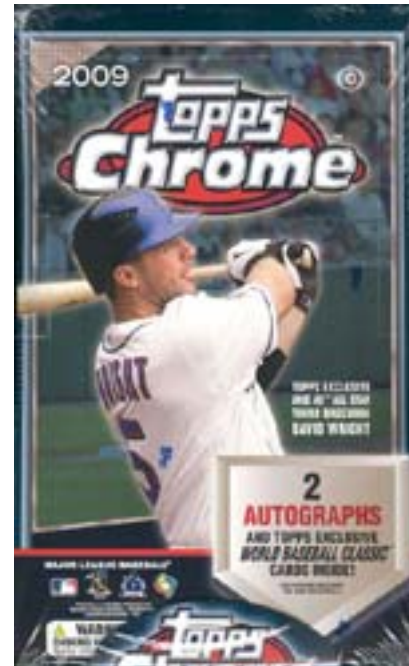
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrXtBe5rDtQ>

Base (76/220) - 34.5%

Dupes - 0

Refractors (8) - Roy Oswalt, Glen Perkins, Yadier Molina, Tim Lincecum, Derek Jeter, Mark Buehrle, Matt Cain, Chris Jakubauskas

Blue Refractors /199 (1) - Ryan Braun





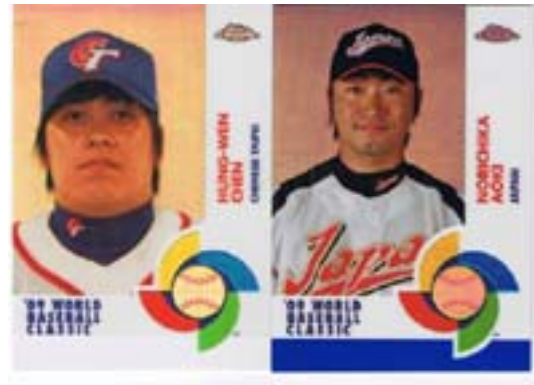
World Baseball Classic (6) - Shunsuke Watanabe, Kosuke Fukudome, Greg Halman, Jingchao Wang, Max Ramirez, Derek Jeter



Trevor Cahill Rookie Autograph  
Brett Anderson Rookie Autograph



World Baseball Classic Refractors /500 (2)  
- Hung-Wen Chen, Masahiro Tanaka  
World Baseball Classic Refractors /199  
(1) - Norichika Aoki



### Final Ratings (out of 5):

- Base Set – 3.5
- Fun – 3.5
- Overall Design – 5
- Value – 4.25
- Rebuy – 4
- Total – 20.25/25 (81%)

Topps Chrome comes through once again as a solid product. The chrome foil shines on all the cards. The rookie crop is trimmed to 50 subjects and getting 20 of the 50 in one box is great for prospectors and set collectors alike. Also, the World Baseball Classic cards return and highlight many of the great players who played for the various countries. In addition, every other pack yields a refractor of some kind.

In previous years, Chrome offered only one autograph per box. This year, consumers will receive two autographs per box. That's great news as though Chrome is a nice product; the appeal has been on the refractor possibilities in years past. Now, there's even more excitement out of the box.

There is a subtle simpleness to Topps Chrome. There are base cards, parallels, one insert set with parallels and an autograph set with parallels. It doesn't get much simpler than that. The pictures on the chrome foil cards are wonderful and highlight this release. Instead of getting a basic, flat picture on a foil background, the picture itself is foil.

Once again, I'd like to thank our wonderful sponsors at Topps for giving us the opportunity to open and review this product. For more information on this release or others, check them out today at [www.topps.com](http://www.topps.com).



## Unexpected Gifts from Unexpected Places

By Duane Williams aka Duane1969



My story starts 16 years ago in Erie, PA. I didn't get into collecting until I had moved to Pennsylvania and was already in my 20's. It was the early 90's and the hobby was taking off again and I, like many others, had gotten caught up in the hobby craze and had quickly accumulated boxes and boxes of cards. I had missed out on card collecting as a child in the 70's so I was making up for lost time by grabbing every box and pack that I could. Along the way I even bought out a few collections and was involved in part-ownership of a card shop.

Jump forward to 2001. My family and I had relocated to New Castle, PA. I was working hard as a manager for a petroleum marketing company putting in over 60 hours per week. Between my work schedule and the disappointment of realizing that 99% of the cards that I had accumulated during the 90's would never be worth more than the paper they were printed on, I decided to pack my collection away and focus on life and responsibilities.

My job as a manager brought me into contact with many people and along the way I became well known as a fanatical Pittsburgh Steelers fan. It was rare that I was ever seen without a Steelers cap or t-shirt on and my customers always made it a point to strike up a conversation about the team or a particular player. Since New Castle is just 50 or so miles from Pittsburgh, Steelers fans were all over the place and team news was a daily thing and so were the discussions about everything Steelers. One of the best things about living so close to Pittsburgh is that I was often able to pick up some neat Steelers memorabilia like beer mugs from the 1970's or an autographed 8x10 of some unheard of player like Kent Nix or Willie Asbury. Occasionally some of my customers would bring me small gifts of Steelers items to add to my collection when they came in to conduct business. Usually it was no more than a refrigerator magnet or a bumper sticker, but the generosity was what counted and I always appreciated it.

Many customers were unique but "Sarge" was a character that stood out from the rest. He was an elderly retired United States Marine Corps Master Sergeant. He was grumpy and difficult to deal with because after nearly three decades of people jumping when he yelled he had gotten used to it. Many of the employees hated to see him coming and tried to avoid being the one to wait on him so I had taken on the role of Sarge's primary contact. Eventually we had gotten used to each other, he knew he could count on my to meet his needs and I had figured out that his grumpiness was easily curtailed by knowing what he wanted and having it ready for him. He came in on the same day, at nearly the same time, and always placed the same order, so I made it a point to have his paperwork already filled out and waiting. He obviously appreciated my efficiency and we developed a working relationship and became friendly to the point that he would hang around for a few minutes and chitchat after his business was finished.



After some time I decided to leave the business. The hours were wearing me down and I needed to find a new career that afforded me more time with my wife and children.



Over the next few weeks I informed my customers that I would be leaving the business. Many of the elderly customers told me that they were sad to see me go and wished me well.

Eventually my final day came and it just so happened that it was also Sarge's day to come in. He came in and did his business and we had our usual talk afterwards. He then asked me if it was my last day and I responded that it was. He pointed his finger at me and said "Don't you leave this place until I get back this evening!" I jokingly saluted him and said, "Yes sir!!" He grinned and shook his finger at me and headed out

the door.

The day progressed as normal and I sort of forgot about Sarge. Around 6PM I was about to call it a day when Sarge pulled back into the parking lot and I remembered that he had said that he would return. He walked into the store and handed me a small package wrapped in brown paper. He smiled and shook my hand and said, "I am going to miss you son" and then told me not to open the package until I got home because he didn't want the other employees thinking he had "gone soft". I promised to wait, we said our goodbyes and off he went.

Later as I drove home I couldn't help but wonder what was in the package. I pulled into the driveway and parked and pulled the package onto my lap and ripped it open. Inside I was stunned to find a Lucite case with a Steelers mini-helmet in it and on the helmet was autographs of then Steelers players Jerome Bettis and Kordell Stewart. To be honest, I got a little bit emotional.

To this day I still own that mini-helmet and I know that I always will. It holds a special place in my Steelers memorabilia collection and every time I look at it I am reminded that no matter how hard-nosed or gritty and old Marine seems, deep inside, he is just a big softie.



## A Summer that Will Last a Lifetime By Michael Diaz aka Met4life



My love for collecting as well as my passion for baseball started one summer at one of the greatest places a baseball fan can visit, the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown.

As a young boy I was very accident prone, breaking at least one bone a year from the age of 5 to 15. Needless to say my parents never thought twice about putting me into sports because they felt I would just get even more

hurt. Due to this fact I spent most of my youth playing video games and hanging out with friends. I never had any desire to watch sports and I could remember looking at my father watch the Mets on TV as a kid and just wonder why he was getting so worked up. I just couldn't understand it back then. My dad even had season tickets to the Jets and he would take me to every game as a kid. All I could remember wanting to do was make paper airplanes and see how far I could throw them. I just never felt any connection to sports until that one summer weekend in 1998.

In my opinion it was one of the greatest times to be a baseball fan. It was the year of the great race between McGwire and Sosa to 61. Yes, I do know that now there is controversy surrounding that time period because of all the information that came out about Sosa and McGwire but still that really was one amazing time. At first when we arrived to Cooperstown I had no idea what I was in store for. We stayed at this little hotel about five minutes out of town and as far as I could tell we were just visiting this beautiful town just off a lake and nothing else. The next day we made our first trip to Main Street, which to a baseball collector, is the most amazing three blocks you could ever step foot on. You turn left, you turn right and even if you turn around you are surround by baseball memorabilia shops everywhere. The first place we head to was Seventh Inning Stretch, a nice sized looking shop from the outside with a little ice cream shop in front. I will never forget that day because it was my first day ever opening a pack of baseball cards.

Once inside we walked around the store and there were tons of things everywhere to look at from the wall of autographed balls to the cases of incredible looking vintage cards. There was already so much to take in but then we came to the wall of baseball card boxes. There were so many packs and boxes to choose from and I had no idea what any of this stuff was. After a minute or so of my dad explaining what this stuff was he turned to me and told me to pick three packs of what ever I wanted.



I start walking back and forth just in awe of this amazing wall of packs. Having no idea what anything was worth I just went by the packs that looked the nicest to me. I picked a pack of Upper Deck MVP, Victory and one pack of Topps. My dad took my packs to the shop owner and as he was paying the owner told me good luck. At first I had no idea what he meant because I wasn't aware you could get anything special from packs but I was in store for a surprise. I decided to open the packs right there in the shop because my dad and the owner started up a conversation about the Mets. I started with the pack of MVP. As I was opening the pack I noticed that one of the cards stood out because it was very fat, I begin to look through the cards and got to the fat card. It was a Ken Griffey Jr. MVP game used bat card. Back then these were very rare and the shop owner even said that it was the first one he had seen pulled at his shop. He pulled out a Beckett price guide and proceeded to tell me that my card was worth \$300. I just couldn't believe that a card could be worth that much money and I thought it was amazing. I was hooked from that point on. After leaving the shop with the biggest smile on my face, all thanks to the new amazing card I had, we head over to the Baseball Hall of Fame. There was so much history behind this game and so many fans that loved it.

The building was filled with people looking, talking, and laughing over all these images and items, which were all foreign to me at first. I will never forget that amazing weekend in Cooperstown. Ever since then I have forged an undying love for the game of baseball as well as a true passion for collecting, which I know I will carry with me until I am long and gone. My next hope, as I am sure it is the same for most fathers, is that I can pass my love and devotion down to my children so they too can find what it feels like to fall in love with collecting.





## How I Got (Back) Into Collecting By Dwight Erickson aka Dwight



Let's travel back to summer 1989. My two sons, age 12 and 14 at the time who were living with their mother a few hours away, had come to visit for a couple of weeks after school had let out for the year. The oldest had developed a fascination, or should I dub it an "obsession", with finding either a) a Jerry Rice rookie card or b) the obscenity card version of the 1989 Fleer Billy Ripken. He already had the white box and black box versions, but his collection (as it were) would not be complete without the original. As for myself, I had a very minor league collection of a couple hundred baseball cards, including some fairly low-level rookies and stars from the late 70s and early 80s, way in the back of the closet. This collection was nothing to write home about, mind you, just some old cards in a notebook and more in a shoe box that I had virtually forgotten about. I had long since outgrown my childhood passion of buying packs of baseball cards and clothes-pinning them to the spokes of my bicycle wheel. Somehow, this handful of commons had managed to survive the expulsion of just about everything else related to my childhood

days. I had moved on to the more adult, in my mind anyway, and rising sport of auto racing. Undoubtedly some of you will disagree with the "sport" aspect, but that is left for another, more lively discussion.

My oldest son convinced me to take him and his little brother to the local card shop to see if either of his quests could be met behind the counter. If not, he was more than willing to buy a few packs of '89 Fleer or '86 Topps (if they had any and with my money) and roll the dice on pulling his version of the White Whale. I truly had no interest in any sports cards at that time.

Once we arrived at the sports card shop, however, my interests in sports cards and life, as I knew it changed forever. We found an abundance of 1989 Fleer Baseball packs and boxes, as well as a box or two of 1986 Topps Football available for purchase by the pack, lining the shelves. Under the shiny glow of one of the lighted card display cabinets, we saw the top football and baseball cards all encased in hard plastic sleeves that screamed that these are the most sought after and most desirable cards under current release. Sadly, in my son's opinion, they were no Rice rookies or Ripken "dirty word" cards. Suddenly, my eyes came to rest on something I had never imagined possible. 1988 Maxx NASCAR collector cards. Yes, here was a small grouping of relatively new, little known cards by an even lesser known manufacturer, proudly shown in the display case alongside some of the greatest sports heroes of the time! Mark Martin, Dale Jarrett, Cale Yarborough, David Pearson, and my hero, Davey Allison, beside some of the best athletes of the era. The cards were very simple in design with the driver's picture on red, white, and blue cardstock on the front with minimal career information on the card back. I simply had to have a pack or two for myself in addition to the aforementioned Fleer and Topps cards.



After we got home with our booty, my two sons and I plopped down at the kitchen table and began the now familiar task of pack busting. The eldest was heartbroken that his packs produced nothing (read this no Rice and no Ripken) and the youngest couldn't really have cared less. Nonetheless, he still enjoyed the activity. For me, every pack was a new adventure. Every card was a new experience. Every pack was a journey into the unknown. Alas, I was once again hooked on sports cards. Especially sports cards of my favorite sport, auto racing. The best part, however, was spending quality time with my boys. This was a scene that was repeated many times over the next several years.

In the years since that fateful summer day in 1989, much has changed. My sons have grown up, gotten married, and had children of their own. The Rice rookie card and Ripken obscenity card have long since passed as children's fantasy, much as my own original fascination

did with baseball cards when I was young. I have gotten much older myself, changed careers a time or two, and been through more of life's ups and downs. But I still have those 1988 Maxx racing cards. My 1988 Maxx set was completed many years later after I finally discovered trading cards on the Internet and that phenomenon known as eBay. My latest project is to complete a BGS set of 1988 Maxx. I have a long way to go to accomplish that goal.

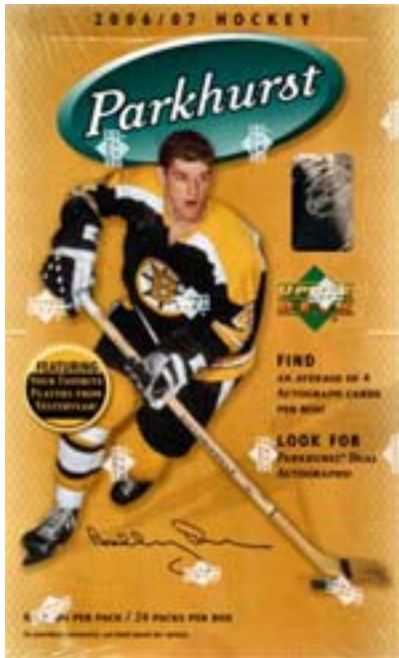
I also have added over 200 more complete sets and literally thousands of cards of my favorite drivers to my collection. Base, parallel, subsets, popular, obscure, race-used, autographs all now grace my collection of well over fifty thousand racing cards. My sons have also added to their collections, although not as fervently as I have due to more pressing family obligations, and are also trying to involve their own sons in the hobby. They are still much too young to fully appreciate sports card collecting and probably will end up being more interested in Playstation and Wii than sports cards. The eldest did finally manage to find the Ripken card of his dreams and still has it. He has not added the Jerry Rice rookie however.

I can only hope that my grandsons will someday find that sports card collecting desire that my own sons managed to light under me so many years ago. For the time being though, I must be happy with my own collection, the good times I shared with my sons collecting, and satisfied in the fact that my sons share the same interest in computer games that my grandsons are beginning to show.

Even if it's not sports card collecting, it can never be a bad thing as long as dads and their sons have some common interests, right?



**All I Wanted to Do Was Avoid a \$2 ATM Fee**  
**By Theron Ross aka TRDouble**



“How did I get into collecting?” And let me add to that question, “-as an adult?” Because I have collected cards since I was a youngster back in the 1970s, mostly football, some hockey, and “Superman: The Movie” too! This was back when collecting cards was simple – for football cards, there were Topps for cards of individual players and Fleer for cards that featured action shots of a full team. Right before every football season, my father would take me to a place that we always referred to as, ‘the warehouse,’ a place that existed before someone started chains, and slapping names on them like, ‘Sam’s Club,’ and, ‘BJ’s Warehouse.’ I would spend my entire saved up allowance to buy my own box of Topps Football cards, so I could delight in my own early ‘box break,’ while my two older sisters delighted in the hard, stale gum in which I had no interest. Ah, the good ‘old days! And then, in 1984, the year I entered high school... I stopped.

Fast forward to 2007. Over the years, I had picked up a pack of cards here and there, just to see, but that was it. On one fateful day in 2007, I ran into a Target to get some money. As I looked at the ATM machine and its’ \$2 ATM fee, I thought to myself, “That is ridiculous. I may as well buy something for \$2 instead and use my debit card to get cash back.” But what to buy for \$2? As I searched around the registers for something I wanted, I walked by the cards area and saw an open box of 2006-07 Parkhurst hockey cards with Bobby Orr on the front - \$2.99 a pack. Close enough to \$2 for me! As I would never spend that much money on a pack of cards, most of that would have just been going to the bank in ATM fees anyway. So, I purchased my pack of cards, got \$20 back in change and happily left the store. When I finally found some extra time, I opened up the pack of cards and to my surprise; all of the cards featured players that I had grown up watching, or remembered well enough just from being a long-time hockey fan! So from then on, whenever I needed money, I found myself at Target, buying at first packs of Parkhurst, and then packs of Upper Deck Series 2. As one that is addicted to collecting things, from comic books and action figures to vinyl records, I could feel a new addiction coming on. But I resisted as best I could; I was only going to buy a pack (or two) of cards when I needed some quick cash. No more!

As I started to study the hobby a bit, I noticed that Target had boxes of cards that were only \$19.99 for 12 packs of cards; that’s a pretty good value! Especially compared to anywhere from \$60 to over \$100 for a so-called ‘hobby’ box with only up to 24 packs of cards per box sometimes less. I could get that many packs in two boxes from Target for less than half the price of a hobby box! But as I continued my research, I came to realize the differences between the retail blaster and the hobby box. And while autographs and jersey pieces sounded cool – and were brand new to someone who had stopped collect



ing cards in 1984 – I was very happy with my ‘base’ cards and maybe even making a complete set of them. Just like the old days. And after all, like they say, you can’t miss what you have never had, right? But, in one single day, that would all change.

On Father’s Day 2007, my wife handed me my last present of the day. Having no idea what it could be, as I had given her no clues as to what to get, ‘the hardest person to buy for,’ I reached into the gift bag, all the way fighting tissue paper that my wife loves to stuff into these gifts bags, and I pull out a hobby box of 2006-07 Parkhurst! Wow! I could not believe that my wife was paying attention to my rambling explanations about the card hobby and the differences between hobby boxes and retail boxes! I could not believe that she had paid attention to the empty Parkhurst wrappers tossed into the garbage (or left on the dining room table)! And I really could not believe that she would spend that much money for a box of hockey cards (to this day, she still has not told me how much she paid for that box of Parkhurst, besides, “a lot!”).

As my oldest daughter and I began to rip open packs of cards – albeit, with great care – I told my daughter to look for autographs right on the cards (“People wrote on the cards? Isn’t that bad?” “Yes, they did, and no, that’s good!”). While we joyously opened up packs of cards – hobby packs of cards – and I pointed out special players that I grew up watching, like Grant Fuhr, Mike Liut and Gilbert Perreault, my daughter opened up a pack, paused, and then reached out to hand me a card. “Here you go, Daddy! Is this a good one?” As I reached out to take the card, a dual Bobby Clarke/Bernie Parent Autographed card graced my outstretched hand. “Yes. Yes, this is a really good one.”

Hook. Line. And Sinker!





## The Pull of a Lifetime

By Mike Cancelliere aka mikecancelliere



In November of 2008, I found out about a website called “Upper Deck Kids.” This website instantly became a favorite of mine because I was able to type in codes on the back of my Upper Deck cards and receive points for each one. When I had about 30,000 points from spending countless hours typing codes off the back of every card I had, I looked at the prizes section to see what I was able to get with all those points. I skimmed the page and saw a raffle for a hobby box of 2008 Heroes Football and it only cost 100 points per raffle ticket. I have had pretty good luck with raffles so I decided to spend all 30,000 of my points on 300 raffle tickets. A few days after purchasing the 300 raffle tickets, I got an email from an Upper Deck representative. The email stated that I had won the raffle. I was so excited and was very anxious to bust open the box once it arrived.

After I got the notification that the box was shipped, I waited by the window everyday for the FedEx truck. When it didn’t come I tracked the shipment online to see where it was. About a week later, which seemed like eternity to me, it was the day the box was estimated to arrive. I waited by the window for two hours only to see the FedEx truck just drive right by. I was in shock and a little bit angry at the same time. I wondered why it didn’t come. I quickly went back online only to see that the package has been lost! I called FedEx immediately and they said that they opened a “missing case” and it could be over a month before I get the box.

Luckily, the next day the package came. I assumed that the “package is lost forever” thing was all a mistake by FedEx. I ripped the packaging open and there it was; the brand new factory-sealed 2008 Heroes Football box. I ripped the box open hoping for a nice rookie autograph and/or a nice patch. What I ended up pulling was better than both of those.

My first hit was a Chad Henne rookie auto. It wasn’t that bad of a pull and I felt good after that one. The next two hits were just jersey cards. The players were DeMarcus Ware of the Cowboys and Devin Hester of the Bears. I was pretty happy about the Hester because I am a huge Bears fan. There were only four packs left and I was expecting one more hit. When I opened the next pack I saw a super thick card. I wondered what it was. I thought it might be a patch or redemption. I didn’t even look at the base, as I was so curious to see what this super thick card was. My jaw dropped after I read the info on the card I was due to receive. It was a Brett Favre patch autograph numbered to just five! It was my first redemption pull and my first superstar auto pull in baseball or football.

After five very long months I finally got an email from Upper Deck saying that the card was shipped. Once again I waited by the window for two hours a day. Finally, the FedEx truck pulled into my driveway and the driver handed me the package. I said thanks really fast, as I had no time to waste because I wanted to see this amazing card. I ripped open the packaging and there was my beautiful Brett Favre Patch Autograph numbered to five!



## How I Got into Collecting By Spencer Davis aka sports collector



I guess the thing that really got me started with collecting cards was following baseball in the first place. I remember watching Mark McGwire with the Cardinals and thinking he was the best thing since sliced bread.

Those thoughts quickly faded as reality set in about steroids. Though he has never failed a test he is guilty in the public eye just by not claiming innocence. I then went on to watching Albert Pujols. After watching him I started picking up packs for \$3 at Quick Trip. I had gotten a lot of cards as I now had two binders full of them. They were organized by team and I thought they were the most valuable things in the world.



I then moved away from the hobby for a while and focused strictly on autographs. I loved making the six-hour drive up to St. Louis to games and the shot at Albert Pujols signing just one baseball with mine being the lucky one. I would later compare this to the chance at pulling that great auto from a pack of cards.



A friend introduced me to a site called fanmail.biz. I was skeptical about fan mail at first but after seeing the results he got I had to try it. I sent out about 60 letters to athletes and a few select entertainment stars. After a while fan mail was not satisfying me because very little of it had to do with sports. I lobbied for more sports related forums but it was no use. I forgot who first referred me to Sports Card Forum but after about an hour I was hooked! I then got into collecting cards and I learned many things.

All of these things got me into collecting but what made me stay along for the ride is what truly matters to me. People talk about pulling a “white whale” or getting a cut auto of players like Babe Ruth or Honus Wagner. My expectations are much less. I have never busted a box of anything although I plan on busting a box or two soon. I do regularly bust packs and I’m happy if I get any base cards that someone might need to build sets. If I do bust a box I know that the feeling of anticipation will be better than ever.

It’s that possibility of getting that once-in-a-lifetime-pull that is amazing. Walking up to your mailbox hoping there are goodies inside is probably one of the best feelings I have ever had. Also negotiating a trade that will get you that “must have” card for just a piece of cardboard and searching around on sites like eBay for that card that you need that would bring your personal collection to the next level give the same feeling. All of these things keep me in the hobby. I love these feelings and I can’t get enough of them. I don’t know what could ever beat it. I love the feeling and I don’t anticipate ever completely giving up collecting in the hobby.



**My Day with Baseball Royalty**  
**By Mike Stelzer aka puffster31**

My wife and I vacationed in Las Vegas for my 30th birthday. When researching the hotels, events, casinos, etc., I stumbled across an article about Field of Dreams in Caesar's Palace's Forum Shops. I've been collecting baseball cards for 21 years so when I saw that Pete Rose signs autographs at Field of Dreams I almost jumped in the car and drove to Vegas just to meet the man that day. The wife said no so I waited.

I've lived in Ohio all my life and started watching baseball around the time Pete became the all-time hit king. I remember watching the hit, seeing the crowd erupt and then watched in awe as the celebration ensued for Mr. Rose. I was already a Reds fan and now I was hooked. Pete Rose had become my main target, granted I was 10 at the time so obviously cash was at a premium. I do remember buying packs for \$0.35 and getting 17 cards and a stale piece of bubble gum, searching for elusive Rose cards. When I pulled my first Rose card, I was on cloud nine! A 1986 Topps card that, to this day, I still have it. Well, needless to say the card mentioned above was in pretty bad shape and I wanted a good card for Pete to autograph. I went to a local card shop, Dave's Dugout in Celina, Ohio, and told Dave that I was going to meet Pete Rose and I wanted a good card for him to autograph. I searched through his stack of cards until I found the perfect card, a black and white photo of Pete with an individual with Down syndrome, handed out by the K of C. There was no date on the back of this card but I'm guessing it was produced during the early '80s. This was the one, unique and sentimental, a perfect card for an autograph. Dave gave me the card and said that he wanted to see the autograph after I had it signed.

Day three of our vacation was the day! Pete was to begin signing at 10:00 and I was kind of miffed at my wife because we got there 15 minutes late. My heart was racing, my eyes bugged out of my head, and if the security guard was not there, I would have run into the man before paying for the autograph. I paid the fee and then waited in line for my turn. I remember thinking this is Pete Rose! Pete Rose! All-time hit king Pete Rose! The shop helpers took my camera and started taking pictures. I don't think I said a word; I was just in awe until Pete saw the card.

He put on his glasses and asked me where I found this card. I somehow managed to say that a local card shop gave me this card. He then asked me how old the kid in the picture was. I didn't have an answer for





him, so he looked at the card again and commented that the kid is probably in his 40s by now. Again, there were no words on my end. He took the card and provided a perfect autograph.

Here are the pictures from that fateful day:



I remember after the card was autographed I was afraid to touch it, thinking that Pete Rose just signed a baseball card for me. I think I might have shuffled through a thank you and then I left the shop. This became my prized possession. I met Pete two more times within the next few years and he signed another card and a baseball for me, but nothing could ever compare to the first meeting and my first autograph from him.



This card is very special for me because for six years, I was a SSA (Service and Support Administrator) for the Mercer County Board of MRDD. This was basically a glorified way of saying 'Case Manager'. I had an adult caseload of 47 individuals, whom I began working with when they turned 16 years of age. It wasn't long before I started to volunteer for Special Olympics, first helping out during sectional bowling, then basketball, the first and second Polar Bear Plunge at Grand Lake St. Mary's and then for the past two years my wife and I volunteered for Special Olympics Summer Games in Colum-

bus, Ohio. In fact, this past year I took over as head coach for the Mercer County Bobcats.

Although I left this position a year ago, I see many of the individuals I worked with on a regular basis. Mercer County is very small, and if you shop at Wal-Mart you meet the world! Working with these people and helping them achieve their dreams was very rewarding. These are remarkable individuals whom I had the utmost respect for. As you can tell, this card is very sentimental to me and is my prized possession.

Oh, and Dave was pretty impressed as well. He asked me for the card back and joked that I never paid



## A Collector's Resurrection By Steven Wiblemo aka swib25

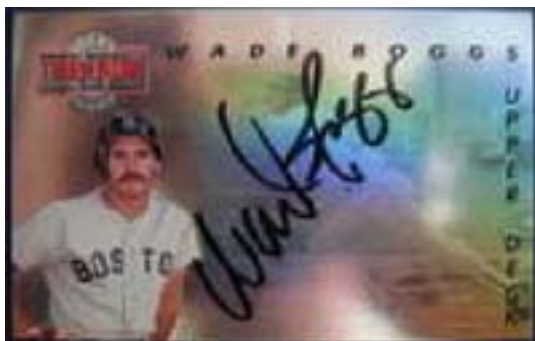
My story starts in 1997 when I was 13 years old in my hometown of Marshall, MN. I was hanging out with some friends tearing wax at our usual haunt, a small shop called ABC Cards and Comics. We knew it simply as Brad's for the first name of the fellow who owned the shop. To this day I still don't know his last name.

We were opening packs of our favorite product at the time, Fleer Ultra. Ultra was cheap enough for a kid like me to afford, but it also offered plenty of inserts. As I tore through the shiny silver packaging I came upon a shimmering relic that excited me at first, but it then faded to disappointment. It was a platinum medallion parallel card. It was very rare but it was of some no-name Twins rookie I had never heard of.

Even though I lived in Minnesota I wasn't the biggest fan of the Twins. My favorite player of that time was Greg Maddux. I too was a geeky looking pitcher with thick double bridge glasses. Maddux gave a nerdy kid like me hope that I too could be a baseball star despite my poor vision and choice of eyewear. I didn't pull any big names that day, only the no-name rookie. Why couldn't this rare parallel have been of some player who was worth something? I set my grief aside and decided it was still worth hanging on to. After all, it was a rare insert. I placed it in a top loader and promptly deposited it into the cliché shoebox of treasures I kept under my bed where it wouldn't see the light of day for over a decade.

Years passed, and as I grew older, I drifted away from the hobby. I was an adolescent and the things that occupied my thoughts were girls and playing baseball. I traded in my glasses and got a pair of contact lenses that helped me become the starting ace of my high school baseball team. Maddux would have been proud. I eventually graduated from high school and went on to college. I attended the local university and continued to be a baseball fan. I even came to love my home team, the Twins, as they suddenly started winning division titles.

I was now 22 in the July of 2006 and my small town in the southwest corner of Minnesota was buzzing

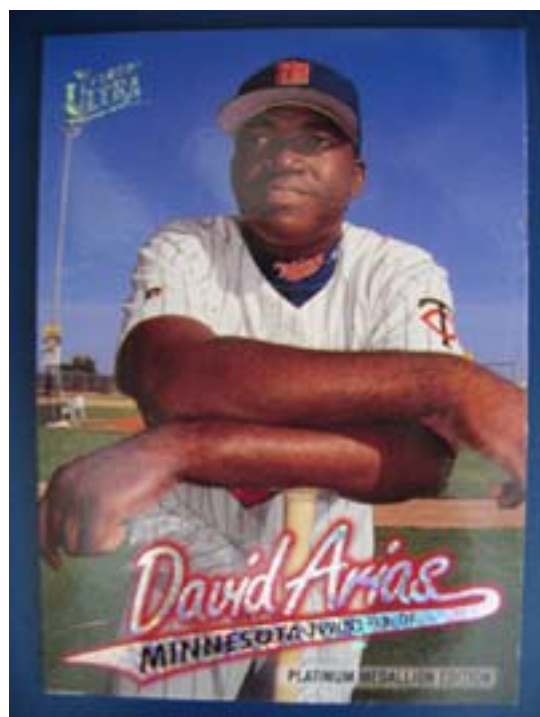


about a celebrity visit that was about to grace our community. During this particular July, Schwan's Home Food Company, based in my hometown of Marshall, was holding a ceremony for one of its long time associates, a man who was the air boss for the Red Baron Squadron. His name was Wayne Boggs. Yes, the brother of Wade Boggs who had recently been inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Wade was in Marshall that day and, as an added treat, he held a private signing for the families of Schwan's employees. Even though I wasn't collecting, I couldn't pass up the chance to get some autographs from a



Hall of Famer. I searched through my old collection and uncovered some gems for him to sign. One of them was a particularly beautiful upper deck hologram insert. He signed it perfectly with his signature reflecting majestically off the holographic image of the Boston skyline.



Even though I wasn't a Boggs fan, or even a Boston fan, I loved looking at this card. As I stared at it a flame was rekindled in my soul and I suddenly had the urge to go back and unearth the boxes of cards under my bed. As I sat on the floor of my old bedroom I felt 13 all over again. I could practically feel the weight of my old glasses sitting on the bridge of my nose. I looked through sheets of my hallowed Maddux collection, all of which were still in pristine condition. Then I began looking through the box of cards I had put into top loaders, which is when I came across the 1997 platinum medallion Twins rookie. I still didn't recognize the name on the card, but when I looked closer at the face of the player on it I soon realized who it was. The name on the card was David Arias. No wonder I didn't recognize the name. I only knew him as David Ortiz, or Big Papi.

When I realized who it was that old feeling I hadn't felt in a long time, the feeling of opening a pack and pulling out a fantastic card, swept over me. I immediately took the card and revisited Brad's to look it up. The card booked at \$150. My jaw hit the floor. But, this was the summer of 2006, when Ortiz hit his career high 54 home runs in one season. I tracked the card all summer long as it climbed to \$200, then \$250, then \$300, and finally \$350. As soon as it hit that last figure, I made the decision to put it up on eBay. It took one day before I received an offer of \$280 for the card. I would have taken that, but now I had the collecting bug once again. Since I had become a Twins fan I negotiated a deal where I received \$250 and a 2006 Topps Finest Francisco Liriano autograph.

From this one transaction, two life-altering experiences sprung. First I used the cash to open a savings account. One year later I emptied that account and used the money as a down payment on an engagement ring. To this day, whenever my wife complains about my baseball cards, I remind her that they helped pay for the stone on her finger. The other experience was the Liriano that gave my obsession a new direction. It was the start of my new Twins collection that, in three years, has grown to over 100 autographs and game used cards.



## A Card With Memories By Robert Shirley aka Champ1985

We consider ourselves lucky in life when someone profoundly touches our lives. This is exactly what happened to me when I met a young fellow online and became fast friends with him. It was a love of baseball and collecting that drew us together and life that made it all come crashing down. My friend lives 838 miles away and although we have never met, and probably never will, I'll never forget him and the hours spent chatting and trading our baseball cards. It was this friendship that produced my favorite card. It is not an earth shattering, once in a lifetime, impossible to find card but it is by far my favorite. It's a 2004 Sweet spot classic Ted Radcliffe autograph.



My friend and I spent hours online chatting and helping each other find those elusive cards that each of us needed for our collections. This is how eventually he came across this Sweet Spot and gave it to me for no special occasion. It was only because I wanted one. Ted "Double Duty" Radcliffe was a special player. He pitched and played catcher for more than 30 teams. He won over 500 games and had 4,000 strike outs added to his 4,000 plus hits and 400 homeruns. He became a manager and later in life became an ambassador for the game. At 103 years old he was thought to be the oldest living Negro league player. He passed to the field of dreams on August 11, 2005. I just had to own a piece of that history. My buddy called me

one day and told me he was sending something to me and the Radcliffe arrived a few days later. I was thrilled beyond belief.

Personally, my collection boasts over 100 priceless cards, many more valued much higher, but no card can replace the feelings that this one brings. It is displayed prominently on the front page of my Photobucket so I can show it off to everyone that happens by and for my own personal healing. Every time I open my bucket I remember a friend that is no longer in my life, the fond memories of countless hours spent together online and on the phone and, most importantly, a friendship that is sorely missed. Life dealt my buddy a bad hand and has since put his collection on hold but after a few years of searching another friend was able to track him down and I have contacted him. It is funny how life can change so quickly.

I love collecting even more I love trading, (you know how it is finding just the right deal that adds that illusive card to your collection) but I believe without doubt that I have a card that is absolutely un-touchable. It is one that I wouldn't trade for all the tea in China. Furthermore I have a card that I truly believe has as much, if not more, meaning than anyone else on earth. I can't imagine a baseball card worth more to someone than a piece of wonderful memory. Not just a moment in time, but an era that can't be recaptured.



## I Remember

By Carrie Freeman aka Miss Inertia



I can vividly remember sitting in my father's lap watching Super Bowl XX. I had just turned six years old. I remember yelling every time the Bears would score. What little girl doesn't like bears? I remember the sights and sounds of the halftime show and the celebration afterwards when the Bears were crowned World Champions. I remember my father explaining plays and positions in great detail even though I was at a loss for what most of it meant. I enjoyed hearing him talk football.

I remember being in church the following Sunday and everyone laughing at me when they raised their arms to praise God. I threw my arms up too but shouted "TOUCHDOWN!"

Three months later, I lost my mother and father in a car crash. My brother and I were adopted by close family friends. My adoptive dad, whom I refer to as dad, opened a hobby shop shortly after we were adopted. I spent hours and hours inside that shop learning the game of football. While all of my friends were playing with Barbie dolls and Strawberry Shortcake I was learning stats and studying plays and formations. A few years later I was entrusted with set building. After school I would be at a table with every base card from a case Dad had just busted, putting them in order and making sure to read every card as I did so. The cards I liked Dad would set aside and put in a 3 ring binder for me.

Years went by and now my friends had left the Barbies for boys. I, however, remained at the shop collating cards and building my collection. There weren't many days that you could have come into the shop and not seen me behind a large stack of cards. I was a stat machine for anyone who came in to buy, sell or trade. After high school I went away to college, returning to the shop every weekend without fail to help and to build my own collection. That collection now sits in a storage unit and is nearing two million dollars in value.

I continue to build and expand my collection as the years go by. I still help out at the shop when I can afford the time to. My Dad still emails and calls me daily with football questions that he has received from customers. Indeed, still, on any given Sunday you can find me at the shop behind a stack of cards with a game on the television and a smile on my face. I love the game of football.

Being a girl in this hobby has never been a downfall or nuisance for me. Every now and again someone will try to take advantage of me but I believe that happens to everyone. If you're knowledgeable of the sport and of the hobby you'll be okay. The rules of football have changed over the years, as has the hobby. The one constant that has remained is that football is the greatest game played on this planet and as long as that stands, there will be collectors of great players.



## **An Everlasting Bond the Reason Behind my Collecting** **By Darcy Ryan Brooke-Bisschop aka bb\_bros**

For the longest time very few people seemed to understand my obsession with the hobby of collecting sports cards. My wife-to-be thought it was just another of my many quirks, and friends and colleagues generally seemed bewildered by it.

Comments along the lines of ‘Why do you spend so much time and money on that stuff?’ or ‘I just don’t get how you can find little pieces of cardboard so interesting’ have not been uncommon throughout most of my life.

When faced with these comments and pressed to explain my fixation, I often struggled to identify exactly what makes collecting such a passion for me. For me, an explanation as simple as ‘it’s fun’ or ‘I just enjoy it’ never seemed to properly classify what made collecting so special to me.

Sure collecting is fun, and sure I enjoy doing it, but I never felt that those reasons could fully express why I collect. It always seemed as though they were only pieces of a larger answer, but I could not figure out precisely what that larger answer was.

Only a relatively short time ago did I truly come to realize what that ‘something’ was. It was while opening a box of packs during a stopover on a road trip I was on with my brother and dad that it hit me. The reason I enjoy collecting, and the reason it is fun for me, is because it has given me a lifelong connection with one of the most important people in my life: my father.

My parents separated when my brother and I were 2 and 3 years old respectively. For the remainder of our childhood, and the duration of our teenage years, we spent Monday to Friday with our mom, living over an hour away from our dad who we’d visit each weekend. Though this kind of situation can be very traumatic on kids, my brother and I were so young when it began that - to us - it just seemed normal. Thankfully, each of my parents strived to maintain this sense of normality by playing very active roles in our lives, and they did a great job of that if I may say so.

In an effort to ensure that he missed as little of our youth as possible, and despite the distance separating him from us, our dad stayed very closely involved with my brother and I wherever possible. He would coach our minor hockey teams every season, attend all of our school plays and track meets, and shuttle us back and forth between our mom’s house and his own every single weekend for nearly fifteen years. Shortly after his separation from our mother, he also introduced us to collecting sports cards; a hobby we’ve all enjoyed together well into our adult life.

Having grown up a fan of all of the major professional sports, as well being an inherent pack rat, my dad has always had a connection to collecting. It’s scary to think that my grandmother burned hundreds of cards that he had collected as a kid in the ‘50s because she thought that he may as well have just burned his money rather than ‘waste it’ on cards.



My dad introduced us to collecting just as the trading card boom was heading toward its peak. In general I have a poor memory, but I can clearly recollect sitting at our dad's kitchen table and tearing into our first ever box of packs: the now much maligned 90-91 Pro Set Hockey. That was nearly twenty years ago now, but the memory is as clear as if it had just happened yesterday.

Since that day I've been hooked. For years the three of us would spend hours every weekend working on our collection. We'd go to card shows and stores together, searching for bargains as we tried to find cards we needed. We'd buy boxes and split the packs into three piles so we could each open them and compare the treasures found inside. We'd sit at the computer, pile of cards in hand, creating detailed lists of the cards we needed, and organizing those that we had recently picked up.

I'm now in my mid-twenties with a career in full swing, a wedding on the horizon, and a seemingly endless list of get-togethers with friends all taking up a significant amount of my limited free time. Unfortunately, I don't get to see my dad as often as I did when my brother and I were kids. My passion for collecting is as powerful as ever though, and so too is my connection with my dad.

Almost every card show I go to, I still go with my dad. Anytime I pick up a new card for our collection, I immediately call or e-mail him to make sure our lists are up to date. Anytime I see a card store, or even just a pack of cards for sale in a convenience store, I think of him and all the time we've spent together compiling our collection card by card.

Although it took a long time to realize the exact root of my passion for the hobby, it has been a very enlightening revelation, and not only for me. Now, whenever someone asks me why I collect, I have a way to truly express my passion for the hobby. Each and every person now seems to understand and appreciate it.

They see that it is about much more than collecting cards. It is about a bond between a father and his sons, and having a unique way to help maintain that bond as our lives inevitably pull us in different directions.

My single best experience in the hobby has been my entire experience in the hobby. Every show I attend, every pack I open, every big pull I have; all of it has been shared with my dad. That is why I collect. That is what makes every moment of collecting incredibly special to me.



## Montana, Me and Pops By Brian LaFave aka lafabj23

My father was old school, one of those grumpy, workaholic sons of the '60s. As a youngster he spent his time working on old junk cars and milking cows on the family farm. All he did was work, work and more work. He never had time to watch sports, let alone time for a hobby like collecting sports cards. Three children later I was the awkward middle child of a man who worked two backbreaking jobs. While he was off working I spent my youth sitting in my bedroom with packs of football and baseball cards, pouring over the stats of each player and looking forward to the Saturday baseball game of the week or Sunday afternoon Packer games on the fuzzy TV in my room that picked up three channels, if there were no clouds.

As I got older and started cutting grass around the neighborhood for money, I started to pick up my father's work ethic. However I "wasted" my money on sports cards, as he liked to say. "Save your money for a car," he'd preach, "cause I sure the heck can't afford to buy you one." It would have been good advice except I was only 12. A car was as far away as college was. I continued to cut grass and use the money on sports cards which worked out great because there was a little store up the road that sold Tootsie Rolls for a penny, Sunkist in a bottle for 75 cents and packs of baseball or football cards for only 50 cents. Oh the good old '80s!

In 1990 I spent most of the summer trying to complete the entire Pro Set Football set. With such a big checklist it took many 50-cent packs to get even close to collecting the entire set. Even though I pulled some neat cards, like one with Santa and another with SuperPro, the Pro Set super hero, I wasn't satisfied. The card I wanted the most was the Joe Montana card they pictured on the front of the boxes of cards. It had Montana in an action pose.

I remember one day I was particularly agitated to get that dang Montana card. I was so eager that I begged my mom for two quarters. "Please," I begged. "I think this is going to be the day I get that card. I just have that feeling." I managed to negotiate a dollar from my mom in exchange for me washing the station wagon. I spent the next hour washing and scrubbing the car, meticulously pouring over every detail, even using my little brother's toothbrush to scrub the spokes on the rims. When I finished I raced to the store and purchased two packs of cards, ripping them open before I even got out of the store. To my displeasure the Montana card never surfaced.

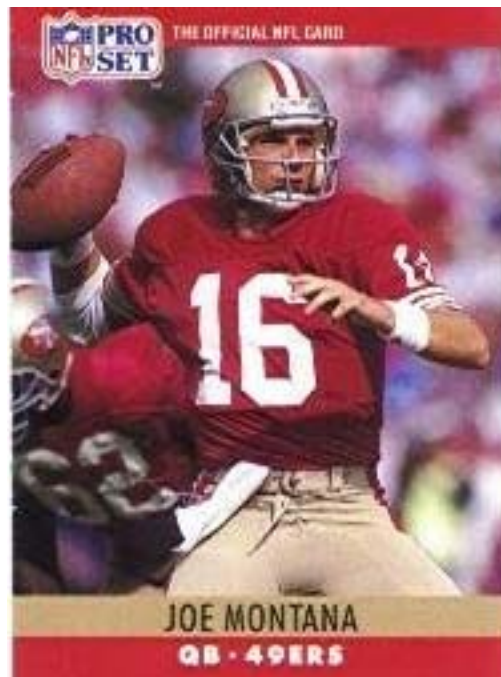
When I got home, mom asked if I got the card I wanted. "No," I said. "I have the worst luck in the world." But I didn't just say that and rather gave her an unedited version of what I felt. My mom's heart just about fell out of her body and the look she gave me was punishment enough. She put soap in my mouth and told me to go play outside until dad got home. Oh no, dad. His punishment was going to be 100 times worst. Sad and frustrated, I pouted in my tree house for the rest of the afternoon. When 4 PM came around and I heard my father's truck pull into the driveway, I knew I'd have to change my attitude. The old man didn't put up with pouting or cussing. Before I had a chance to get down I heard my father yelling for me. I cringed as his voice crackled through the yard. The hair on my arms stood up as I slowly made my way towards the house.



He was waiting for me on the porch.

“Sit down,” he said in a deep, dark voice. I sat. What he didn’t do was yell at me neither for cussing nor for doing it in front of my mother. He also didn’t spank me, which was his go-to parenting manoeuvre. Instead he told me how life really is and how in life you sometimes get the Spencer Lewis card instead of the Joe Montana. Then he did something I’d never seen him do before. He took me to the store and bought me a pack of football cards with his hard earned money since I did such a good job on washing the car. And, no kidding, I pulled that dang Joe Montana card.

I have autographed cards of Joe Montana, Joe DiMaggio and Phil Rizzuto, yet my favorite card of all time, hands down, is that Joe Montana card. It’s worth less than the cardboard it’s printed on, yet that card symbolizes how much a son is like his father, even if on the surface they have nothing in common. The card sits in a plastic screw down in a padded wooden box I crafted in wood shop specifically for that card. Someday, when I have a son, I will pass that card down to him. It’ll still be worth nothing but it comes with a story and a lesson.





## My Collecting Adventure By Nathan Loewy aka Garnett\_21

Collecting cards has been a way of life for me since I became a teenager. While most teens prefer to play video games instead of looking at cardboard, I found that I was quite unusual. I thought nothing was better than opening a fresh pack of wax! None of my personal friends have ever collected cards, at least to the extent that I do, and most would rather sit for hours in front of a television playing video games as opposed to sitting for hours in front of boxes/binders of cards. If you couldn't already tell, I am the latter.

Before I really was interested in collecting my mom would buy "baggies" of cards from a local Salvation Army-type store. That is where the majority of my collection came from until I turned 13. She figured that even if I didn't get into the hobby I would at least have some sort of investment. Unfortunately, most of the cards were late '80s and early '90s base so there is very little investment potential with them. But that didn't matter to me back then and it still doesn't.

When I turned 13 we had recently moved to a new city and located about a mile away was a newly opened card shop. The owner was very nice and he had great deals. There were boxes upon boxes of late '80s and early '90s baseball and football cards for \$.50 per pack. I was in heaven! Being able to get 12-16 cards for \$.50 was a 13-year-old card collector's dream! Unfortunately, as we age, we realize how something that seemed so great back then wasn't really all that great. But I don't regret it at all as I highly doubt that I would be as active in the hobby today if it wasn't for that card shop and the cheap prices. Even though most of the cards I pulled were cheap base, I did get a few nice early '90s serial numbered cards. While being number out of ten thousand is absurd today it wasn't back then.

As the years progressed the card shop ended up closing, which was quite saddening to me. That meant no more \$.50 packs, no more looking at all the singles that looked so cool and no more talking with the owner about cards. Nothing. But that didn't stop me from collecting! I started purchasing cards from local retail stores and made an occasional purchase from eBay. I continued this trend for many years, buying a lot of variety boxes and loose packs, all the time not getting many "hits." I found some of the bubble packs that guaranteed two game used cards for \$10 and that was how I acquired my first jersey card. I still own one of them to this day, and the player has become a side PC player.

Fast forward through a few more years of buying all retail and I stumbled across a 2001 Sage Hit basketball hobby box at a retail store. I had seen it for quite awhile at this store and I was able to save up enough money over a few weeks to buy it. I was really excited to be able to purchase it as the odds on the box said six autographs per box. It was too bad I didn't read that you couldn't pull a Jordan, Garnett, Kobe or LeBron auto! \$40 and 24 packs later I had pulled my six autographs with the best one being Kwame Brown. I was fairly disappointed, but also happy at the same time, as that Brown autograph was one of my most valuable cards. I was curious about how good a pull it was and just anything in general about the box. A few weeks before, I had found a site online called Sports Card Forum so I



decided to join and ask my questions. I was greeted and had my questions answered quite quickly and, right off the bat, I knew I had found something good! I didn't end up making my first trade for over two months, and didn't trade for my first Kevin Garnett card for nearly 3 months, but they were well worth the wait!

Over almost the last two years as a member of SCF I have learned so much more about the hobby than I ever thought possible. I have also met many people that have the same interests as me and have made plenty of friends. I honestly had no idea that there were so many people out there that collected cards but I am sure glad that I have found out otherwise! In that time period I had decided that I needed a player that I would collect. I decided upon a former local hero, Kevin Garnett, as he was the one player that I watched and really liked during my teen years - a true class act.

When I first decided to start collecting him I had a meagre collection of only 15 cards, none of which were jersey cards. As of today I have over 700 different Garnett cards, including 72 jersey cards, most of which have come from trades on SCF. I feel very fortunate to have come across so many collectors that have been willing to help me in my quest to become the biggest Garnett collector in existence! I know I have a long way to go but I am very grateful for all the help thus far.

That's basically how I went from being a pre-teen who wasn't interested in cards to a young adult who could not imagine living without collecting cards!





## **Back in the Day**

**By TJ Hill aka Napuke46**

It's late in the winter 1988. I am eight years old and I come into the living room and Dad is watching a bunch of guys on ice skates swat around at a little black thing. "Whatcha watchin'?" was all I could think to say. He replies, "It's something called ice hockey." with this tone in his voice of, "Who knows but it's something to watch." That winter evening way back then was the start of something that has lasted over 20 years. It was that night of hockey that got the entire family started into the sport. Season tickets two years later would lead free packs of 1990-1991 Pro Set hockey cards given away at the no-longer-there Capitals Center in Largo, Maryland. Of course being the little guy who liked hockey I got everyone's free packs and that started it all. Since those free packs I have spent thousands of dollars in purchasing cards over the past 20 years. It stayed low end as a kid with packs of those early 1990s Pro Set.

I can remember when the Series 2 Peter Bondra rookie card was all I could hope to pull, when the Wayne Gretzky all-star card was like pulling his rookie card and all of that from one sports card store in Birmingham, Alabama where a kid my age could get a pack of cards for 50 cents. Of course, after a while, the hobby died down because getting the same cards over and over again became boring and Mom and Dad wouldn't spend the \$2 a pack on Upper Deck for the really cool cards. That meant my collection consisted of hundreds of Pro Set cards until I came back to Maryland in 1994.

It was the fall of 1994 on a trip to the local K-Mart that I jumped back in full force. There were boxes upon boxes for sale and all less than \$29.99 each. It was those boxes that would jump start an interest in this hobby that would rise and wane over the next 15 years but those boxes still were the most fun to crack open. It was from those boxes I would pull a 1995-1996 Upper Deck Freeze Frame Wayne Gretzky from what would become known in the hobby as a "hot box". I fought like tooth and nail to find the Felix Potvin /Patrick Roy Next in Line from 1993-1994 Upper Deck. It was Christmas mornings like 1996 when Mom and Dad spent the \$110 for a box of Select Certified from the local store from which I pulled the Select Certified Gold Team of none other than Wayne Gretzky. For a 16-year-old kid who bought boxes from K-Mart to pull a card valued at over \$100 was a Christmas made for stories like these. It could only be topped by the three packs of 1994-1995 Stadium Club for one dollar each at that same local card store that produced my Wayne Gretzky First Day Issue card.

It was not long after those great pulls that I found other things to do in high school and cards just fell to the wayside. A few years later I tried again and had some decent pulls out of the 2001-2002 Topps Retail packs and got a great kick out of the quad jersey in every blaster box of 2001-2002 Pacific Heads Up. But it fell to the way side again to be brought back like everyone else in 2005 when Sid the Kid and the Great Eight hit the scene. And I, like many others, pulled a Sidney Crosby Young Gun from my very first Upper Deck box. But even that pull, as big as any pull a guy could ask for, does not come close to that 1990-1991 Pro Set Peter Bondra Rookie or that Wayne Gretzky card with that tiny piece of foil that says First Day Issue. I still have those cards and it's those pulls that made you bigger than life and feel like you were on top of the world, not wondering what you could trade it for or how much it would sell for on eBay. If we could all only go back to those days, the days of being a kid and not loving the cards for what we can get for them but for who was on them.



## My Life in a Card

By Jordan Freemyer aka free7694

There is a card I have that sums up nearly a decade, or half, of my life. To the average collector it's really nothing special, but to me it is precious. It is a Vincent Jackson rookie game used card from 2005.

I am currently a student at the University of Northern Colorado, the same school Jackson attended. Additionally, both of my parents went to UNC and my great-grandfather taught there. Needless to say, being a UNC Bear is in my blood. As a school that was, until very recently, Division II we don't get many athletes in the pros and even less appear on their own cards. That's part of why I collect Vincent Jackson as he's the only player from my school that I can find cards of fairly easily.

My dad and I had season tickets to UNC football for Vincent's entire career there. We went to every game, which was a special bond for us; neither of us has missed a UNC game since the early 1990s. While Jackson was at UNC we sat on about the 40-yard line in row F, coincidentally the same letter the jersey on the card is cut into. When he scored his first career touchdown at UNC as a freshman on a punt return the couple right in front of us went absolutely nuts. It turned out we were sitting right behind Vincent's parents.

Over the years, as Vincent re-wrote the UNC record book, we got to know the Jackson family and even met Vincent a few times. On his senior day my dad, brother, the Jackson family and I were a handful of the few hundred people to show up in a driving snowstorm to see the Bears finish out a 2-9 season. Even though it was freezing cold Vincent was happy to stay on the field and get a picture with us before he headed off to the NFL. We've stayed in touch with the Jackson family and have seen them a time or two a year when they come up for games.

I got into the hobby about a year and a half after that, and deciding to collect Vincent's cards was a no-



brainer for me. This card was the first one of his I bought. I paid three or four dollars for it but once it got here and I saw it, I would've paid a hundred. Seeing someone I had met and talked to several times on a football card was one of the coolest feelings ever. The fact that it was a rookie and the jersey was cut into the letter of the row we sat in brought back a ton of great memories and school pride for me.

I look at the card quite often, and it never ceases to bring back great memories of both high school and college for me. The card also recalls the great times I got to spend with my dad at football games together. It is what most people would consider pretty low end but I couldn't think of any other card I'd rather have.



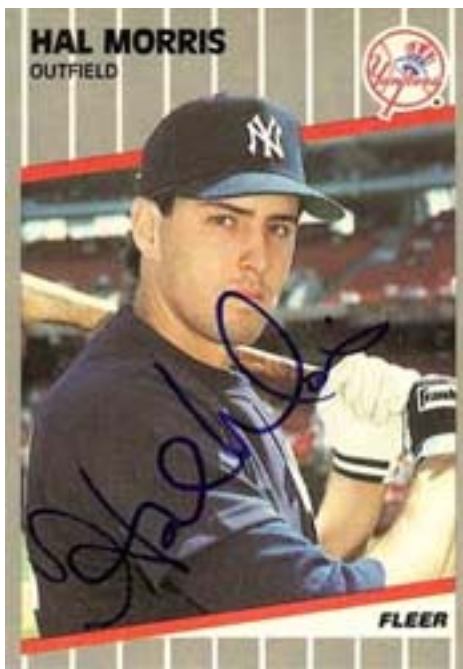
## Remembering Jim

**By Brett Fields aka brettyboy**

On a chilly Christmas Eve in the mid '90s I was nestled in front of the Christmas tree with my family. One person in the family is always chosen to wear the Santa hat and pass out the gifts to everyone else. That year my brother was Santa. He was a small seven year old compared to others his age and the Santa hat drooped over his eyes. He had to push it up every few presents so that he could see. After what seemed like forever he grabbed a package with my name on it. "Brett!" he said as he handed the gift to me. I stood up and grabbed the gift from him hurrying back to my spot and sitting Indian style on the carpet methodically opening the wrapping paper so it would take less time. I was a very fidgety boy at age ten and I knew this was probably going to be cards because I loved collecting and my family knew me very well! It was a gift from my Aunt Vick and my Uncle Jim. I ripped that wrapping paper apart like it was a piñata full of candy. There was not one specific sport in this box. There was basketball, baseball, football, hockey, etc. I tore into the packs of cards getting super excited and yelling out names of players I collected. I then came across a card that is still in my possession today and will be with me until the day I pass on. It was an old Fleer card signed by Reds first baseman Hal Morris.

My eyes got wide and my face lit up just like any child would when receiving a card signed by a professional athlete. This was the very first autographed card I ever received. I was so excited and my Aunt and Uncle revelled in light of the enjoyment it was bringing me.

Not too many months after they had given me this card, which was from my Uncle's personal collection, he contracted cancer and began to get very ill. He started going through chemotherapy and surgeries, which led to the amputation of his arm. We thought everything was better and he was healthy for a while but the cancer came back and had spread through his lungs and up into his brain. At that point the doctors said there was nothing more they could do for him. Very shortly after my uncle sadly passed away.



At one point during my collecting years I lost interest in the hobby. I took my entire collection, which consisted of several big name athlete autos, game used, numbered and base cards and traded them away for a guitar and amplifier. This Hal Morris card was in my box full of cards I was going to trade but upon looking and seeing that card in there I promptly removed it as I vowed it would never be traded or sold. This card was the lone card in my collection until about a year ago when I decided to build my collection back up. I now have big name athletes autos, game used, numbered, rookies, and base cards but the Hal Morris autographed card is still the centerpiece of my collection. Every time I look at this card I don't see the Hal Morris I think of the memories I have of a great man in my Uncle Jim.

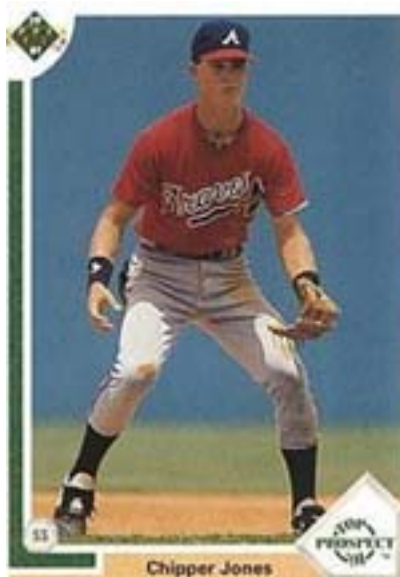


## My Treasure By Colton Hicks aka braves#10

Upper Deck's 1991 baseball set isn't exactly a set full of gems but one of the cards from that set is not only the highlight of my collection but one of the highlights of my life.

I started collecting baseball cards when I was about six years old. As I look back I have no idea what got me to start collecting them as no one in my family collects. In fact they think it's a waste of my time and money. All I remember is that when I used to go stay with my grandmother in Bossier City, LA I always went with her to K-Mart and got a big pack of assorted baseball cards. The packs were full of cheap base cards but to a little 6 year-old like me they were like gold. I would flip through them and every time I saw a premier player I would think that I had won the lottery (but little did I know that they were worth as much as the cardboard they were printed on). As soon as I would get home I would organize them into my card booklet and admire my collection.

I also used to love to go spend the weekend with my aunt, uncle and cousin. Every time I went over to their house they would all sit down at night to watch the Braves. Gradually over time I began to love the Braves, with Chipper Jones being my favorite player. When I would watch the games, every time Chipper came up to bat my world would stop and I would tell everyone around me to be quiet because I never wanted to miss a pitch. He was my idol and I couldn't have been a happier kid.



My cousin was not a collector but she was walking in the mall one day and saw a baseball card stand set up and decided to check it out. While searching through the probably overpriced cards she came across a 1991 Upper Deck Chipper Jones rookie that was a PSA 9.

She, knowing that Chipper was my hero, bought the card and gave it to me. I loved it more than anything I possessed. I guarded that card with my life. Anytime one of my friends came over I had to show them that card. They weren't really impressed but I didn't care. I had the card and they didn't and that's all I cared about. It wasn't until years later that I learned that the value of the card was only \$6 but that didn't matter to me either. I'm never planning on selling that card and I think I would cry if I ever had to give it up.

In December of last year while driving home, my cousin swerved to avoid an oncoming vehicle and hit a tree. She passed away while on the way to the hospital. When I got that call I just broke down. I couldn't believe it. I still have trouble believing that she is actually gone because she was the person that I most looked up to in my family. Now every time I see the card that she got me I can't help but tear up a little bit. That card is so much more to me than just a piece of cardboard. It's more to me than just my favorite card. It's my favorite memory of my cousin.



## Just Glovely

By Kyle Medeiros aka LBJ23213

There is no greater feeling than coming home after a long day and finding an unexpected package waiting for you. This happened to me one day earlier this summer. Usually I am aware of what to expect in the mail whether it is an eBay purchase or trade made with a board member. But on this day I was in for a major surprise.

On this particular day a friend of mine picked me up in his beat-up truck and told me he had to go inquire about a job before we could make our way to the beach, about a half an hour away from where we lived. As we made our way off of the highway down the exit ramp, we heard a loud, unsettling noise coming from underneath us. Seconds later, the truck shut off as we were turned onto a busy road. A spring had broken off and cut the fuel line completely in half, causing a half tank of gasoline to pour out all over the road. The truck had to be towed and we had to wait for someone to come down and pick us up. What started out as a normal day quickly turned sour as it took almost four hours before we made it back home.

Once home I collected the mail and was ready to relax after going through such a lengthy ordeal but noticed a rather large box sitting on the counter behind where the mail was previously placed. Upon inspection I saw that the box was addressed to me! I immediately began to think about what should have been in transit to me. I knew it was not a trade made on SportsCardForum.com as I had not made one on there for weeks. I picked up the box and carried it into my room still pondering my recent eBay purchases. The only ones I could think of were two single baseball cards that would not have warranted such a large box.



I got to my room and placed the box down, noticing the label from it. The box was from a company I never heard of from somewhere in Massachusetts. The situation kept getting stranger and stranger. I reached into my desk and grabbed a small knife that I used to open mail and started to cut into the tape with the precision of a surgeon. Once the tape was removed I folded away the flaps and saw a baseball glove staring straight at me. My first thought was, "huh?" I already have a glove and wasn't even in the market for one. I figured it was a mistake but I was wrong. I picked up the glove and noticed a few streaks of black sharpie on the thumb along with the words, "DUSTIN PEDROIA 2008 A.L. MVP."

No way! How? Sweet! So many emotions were flying through my head. Then it all clicked after I looked under the Easton Professional Infielders glove. There at the bottom of the box was a certificate



of authenticity from Sullivan Tires stating that the glove was personally signed by Dustin Pedroia. Underneath the certificate was a letter congratulating me on winning the glove in their “Be the MVP” promotion. I completely forgot that I had registered to win one of the gloves at the end of Spring Training! I hopped online to check the winner page and sure enough I was the first one to win the glove!

As a diehard Red Sox fan words could not express my elation. Dustin Pedroia is my favorite Red Sox player. He is the definition of a baseball warrior, overcoming a position change from shortstop to second base, a long swing and small body frame to become one of the best all-around players in Major League Baseball. This makes it very hard to collect anything of Mr. Pedroia because Red Sox fans are so passionate that they will spend whatever they can to collect this budding star. I am going into my junior year of college and do not currently have the money to spend on any type of Dustin Pedroia autographs. Living in the heart of Red Sox country means overpriced cards and memorabilia, especially those of the reigning MVP. His cards on eBay have also taken on a meteoric rise over the last few years. I missed the boat big time in collecting my favorite player.

The glove sits comfortably in my display case overlooking my room. I pass by it every day on my way out. It is pretty amazing to think that after the way that day early on in the summer started that it would have ended in such a positive way. Nothing beats an unexpected package, especially one of this magnitude for a Red Sox fan of my calibre.





## The Card

By David Kim aka underdawg

What are the cards that are most coveted? A Michael Jordan Fleer Rookie (especially if it is graded 10 by Beckett)? A triple logoman of Magic Johnson, Michael Jordan and Larry Bird? You see these cards and are left awestruck. But why? Is it because you collect them or is it because that it is just highly coveted? Personally I have no intentions to get a LeBron, Kobe, Magic, Larry Bird or even a Michael Jordan auto. My favorite card isn't even an autographed card. It's my favorite because of the way I got it, the simple yet beautiful design and the low print run.

It was the first day of summer of the year 2008. School just finished and I was just overwhelmed that it was summer. I was going to go to Honduras for a mission trip that my church was doing the next day. That meant I had to spend the first day of summer packing up. Of course being a hobby addict I checked eBay for personal collection cards that were ending while I was gone. Then I saw it. I thought this card would go way over my price range so I didn't even bid on it.

The mission trip was fantastic. We were going to different cities and we arrived at a hotel that had Wi-Fi. Of course, with the card in my mind, I checked eBay for that one card to see how much it was ending for. (Note that I did not have a laptop but an iPod Touch that has WiFi capabilities) To my surprise it was ending in less than half an hour!



Usually I just wait and then snipe. I hate when people do it to me but I understand because I do the same. But that day was just different. The Wi-Fi disconnected every three minutes so I placed my bid with six minutes left. As I waited, I kept refreshing the page over and over. I looked at the shiny cursive one of one on the card every time. Five minutes left. I thought of why I collected Antawn Jamison while I was still refreshing the page. Three minutes left. I thought of how sick one of the patches was while still refreshing the page. One minute left and I thought of how amazing the design of UD Premier was while still refreshing the page. As soon as 15 seconds were left I counted down in my head. One last refresh and bam! I won.

This card's design is so simple yet so beautiful. This card's serial numbering of one of one is different than most one of ones. It actually has, "1 of 1" (in italics) instead of "1/1." The middle patch is the sickest patch that includes 4 colors. This card is my favorite card, hands down. Who knew that I would have purchased my favorite card in Honduras of all places? A small country in Central America where I saw with my own eyes how poverty troubles most of the people there. Just thinking about it makes me feel lucky. Then I thought about how was I fortunate enough to go to the only hotel that had Wi-Fi during my trip when the card was ending. Who would have ever thought?



## Forever Seventeen

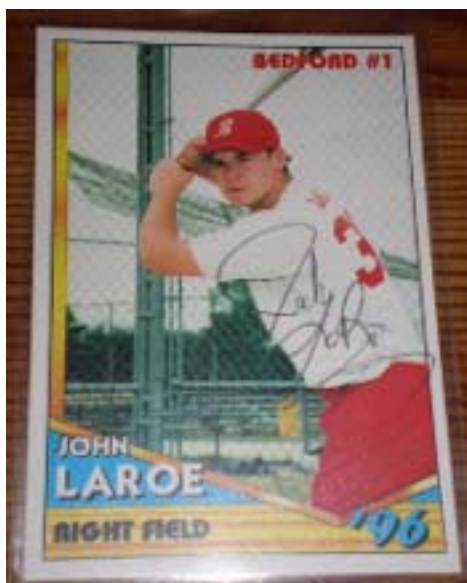
By Brad Wingate aka BBonds25

Working part time as a 17 year old, approximately 5% of my pay check was spent on gas, and the other 95% was spent on sports cards. I had some great times, and some amazing pack pulls that year: a \$350 Michael Jordan, a \$250 Eddie George a \$1500 Emmitt Smith, and even more beyond those. Needless to say, it was a great collecting year for me. But the best card I got that year was not found in any pack, or in any local card shop. In fact, it didn't even cost me any of my hard earned money. It's the one card in my personal collection that I will never sell or trade away, and it was only in the past few years that I realized the true value of this card.

Along with the aforementioned work and card collecting, I also played baseball every summer. My friends and I all played together on the Bedford #1 team, which was coached by my friend Nick's step-dad Denny. We were all a bunch of fun-loving goof balls, but when it came to baseball, we were a great team. Most of us stayed together on the diamond for 4 years, and we loved every minute of it. From winning under the lights, to losing in the playoffs, to playing games in our sleeveless vest style jerseys (it was intimidating), the summer of '96 was one of the best. As I write this, I can still picture some of the games we played that season.

Now let me get back to the best card of that year. Like I said, it was not bought or pack pulled. John Laroe, our baseball team's right fielder, gave it to me. John and I have been friends since second grade, and I was the one who talked him into playing baseball with us that summer. As a fan of Jose Canseco, John naturally wore #33, and batted right behind me in the line-up. We were best friends at the time, and playing next to him in the outfield was special to me. Along with being a friend and teammate, John was also my card-collecting partner. He was there to witness each of the previously mentioned pulls, and I was there to witness his pulls. During our team photo day, as a joke, John was the only one

to order his own baseball card. Once he got the card from the printer, he pulled one out of the envelope, signed it, and gave it to me. It's a knock-off of the 1994 Topps base set design, and offers a great shot of John's "Chico Hairy" game face (Chico Hairy was John's nickname). I remember him telling me to keep it until he became famous, then if I wanted I could sell it for millions. To this day, I still have it in my collection (not due to his lack of fame).



This card is what helps me to remember those great times we had on and off the diamond that year. It takes me back to when I was 17, a time before college, careers, and adult responsibility. A time when all we had to do was have fun and play ball. Unfortunately, that time has long passed us by. I am now 30, and don't get to see John much anymore, but having this card will always take me back to that summer, and back to my friend. Monetarily, it's not worth the card stock it's printed on, but to me, it's priceless.



## Always a Place

By Kyle Hymel aka FootballCardFreak

It was a warm August day; a day that I will never forget. I slowly opened the door, unsure of what to expect. All I knew was that I had 20 dollars and thousands of sports cards to choose from. "Hello," said Mr. James, the storeowner. "Hi," I hesitantly replied. "Let me know if you need anything bud," Mr James cheerfully responded. I looked at all those cards for what seemed like hours, basking in their beauty. As a 10 year-old, I had never been so close to my favorite players; some of who were my childhood heroes. Finally, I found the card I wanted: Peyton Manning/Edgerrin James Donruss Playoff Team Tandems Dual GU 007/150. I looked at the price on the front of the card, and my heart sank. The card cost \$25.00. I stood there pensively looking at the card. Mr. James noticed me. "Hey, bud, find anything you want?" "Yeah, I like that card, but I only have 20 dollars," I gloomily responded. "I can tell you really like that card, so I'll let you have it for 20 bucks," Mr. James pleasantly replied. I walked out of the store that day with a piece of my childhood hero: Peyton Manning; and a gracious, thankful heart for Mr. James. Here is the card that started it all:



To this day, those are the two main things that keep me interested in collecting: the love for the game and the awesome people I encounter as I expand my collection. Sports card collecting isn't just a hobby for me; it's a passion. I am passionate about collecting not because I am always looking to show off my collection, but because of people like Mr. James: people who go out of their way in order to make collecting more fun and enjoyable for everyone. I notice that there seems to be a lot of these types of people who collect cards, especially on sports card forum.

Everyday while surfing the sports card forums on the web I see something that gives me that indescribable feeling inside. Whether it be as big as a little kid going out of his way to mail a fellow collector whom he has never met a few cards to help his collection and even drawing a picture for him, or as small as a veteran sports card collector giving a newbie some collecting advice; these amazing people are everywhere in the hobby.

There are many other reasons why I collect sports cards and because I love to collect so much, I will share these reasons with you as well. Collecting sports cards increases my interest in sports in general



making me an even bigger fan than I already was which I thought was impossible. I keep track of all the different stars, rookies and transactions in order to predict who will finally live up to the hype, who will bust, and who will be the next big star. Sports card collecting has made me the ultimate fan and has helped me line my trophy case with many fantasy sports trophies.

I also love the feeling of opening up a box, completely unaware of what I am about to pull. Every time I buy a box I feel like a little kid on Christmas day who has no care in the world and is so excited to see what is on the other side of the wrapping paper.

I also like to collect sports cards as a challenge to myself. I like the rush I get from collecting rare items or collecting a little known player before he becomes a big star. The challenge and sense of accomplishment when I finally get the last card to a set is exhilarating.

I love the fact that sports card collecting has no restrictions and allows me to communicate with all types of people. I have witnessed that sports cards can bring anyone together. I love to go to the local card shop and talk to all of the buyers. I remember at one point two young kids, a college kid, a woman, an old man, and I were all in the shop talking about sports cards and enjoying each other's company when I thought about this: how many other instances have I witnessed a group of complete strangers at completely different ages come together to enjoy each other's company in the way that we were?

Maybe I have just been lucky to meet such great people while trying to reach my sports card endeavors, but I don't think this is a coincidence. The great people whom I have encountered while collecting sports cards will always be remembered by me. Their graciousness, generosity, and selflessness will always have a place in my heart. Even if I don't collect sports cards for the rest of my life, the morals and values that have been instilled in me while collecting will forever be a part of my life.





## Collecting Al Bundy

By Ian Banks aka gretzky collector



My Al Bundy Photobucket: [http://photobucket.com/A\\_B](http://photobucket.com/A_B)

I remember my aunt Diane and her husband coming over one night back in 1987. At the time I was only 10 years old so the adults talked about their jobs and such over a few drinks while I played with my toys. Later that evening we were all watching TV. That's when my aunt said that a new show was starting that night. My dad flipped the channel over and that's when I watched "Married...with Children" for the very first time. I have been hooked ever since and it's been 22 years! I taped every episode and that is all I ever watched. Over and over. I now have Season's 1-10 on DVD, just waiting for the last season, season 11. It comes out in October.

I like to think I know everything about Married with Children.

Al Bundy, so funny...the greatest dad in TV history. He was by far my favorite character on the show. He made me laugh the most because he was always up to something. Avoiding the wife, starting riots at the Jiggly Room, reliving his glory days of High School football...he was the best. (I wish a company would make a card of him in his Polk High uniform)

What I admired about him the most is that he never gave up. Let's face it; his life was horrible. A lazy wife, two rotten kids and worst of all he sold ladies shoes. Nothing ever went right for him no matter how hard he tried. He'd get knocked down but always got back up for more! He was a great guy...I really miss him.

I have collected hockey cards forever and hopefully always will. I love collecting my little "pieces of cardboard". Well, anyway, I was searching Jordan Staal cards on eBay one day and decided to do a search on Al Bundy to see what came up. Mostly Polk High shirts, comic books and DVDs appeared. Then I noticed a card! Could it be? It was a 2007 Donruss Americana Silver Proof Ed O'Neill /250



. Without thinking I hit the "buy it now". That's how it all began. I bought every card I could of his and I still do. I was so happy to see that my TV hero had cards. I think it is safe to say I have the largest Ed O'Neill/Al Bundy collection on the planet. (Quite possibly the only Al Bundy collection on the planet if I may add)



I have the complete set of 2008 NFL Icons Autographed "POLK HIGH" Lettermen set with each card numbered out of /12. When those autographed letters hit eBay, I made sure my bids were high enough to win. I had to make the set! I remember when the last letter arrived at my house, I actually cried tears of joy...seriously. It is the biggest accomplishment I have ever made in all my years of collecting cards. It is probably the only complete set out there as you NEVER see autographed letters on eBay anymore. I will be buried with this set! I also have the non

autographed "O'NEILL" Lettermen set with each card numbered to /63 and the complete non autographed "POLK HIGH" Lettermen set with each card numbered to /30.



Yet again, doing one of my many daily eBay searches, I noticed an Ed O'Neill 2008 Celebrity Cuts Platinum 1/1. You're kidding? Al Bundy has a 1/1? I had to have it at all costs! The night it ended, I sat and watched as the time ticked down. At the last second I put a HUGE bid on it. I ended up getting it for almost nothing. Well, at least a lot less than I was willing to pay. I couldn't believe it! Since then I managed to acquire three Ed O'Neill 1/1's. He only has eight so I am almost halfway there.

I have managed to pick up another 6 autographs of him too. The only thing with his autographed cards is that they are all "band aid" autos. I have never seen his auto "hard signed"

Here are the autos I have in hand:

(the 2009 Spectrum of Stars Die Cut /50 is incoming with the 1/1 printing plate)





Do you remember the movie "Blue Chips" with Shaq and Nick Nolte? Apparently Ed O'Neill was in that movie. (I am not a basketball fan so I've never seen it and never knew he was in it). I found out recently that there was a set of cards made for the movie. Ed O'Neill has 4 cards in the set where he is pictured. I picked the set up on eBay for a whopping \$0.99 and took the 4 cards out for my collection.

These are the cards with him pictured:



I currently have 60 different cards and another two incoming. I know of 104 different cards but 17 will probably never be made. He has two autographed Lettermen set redemptions from 2008 NFL Icons. One set was to spell out "LITTLE GIANTS" and the other was to spell out "OSHEA". I redeemed two of them when the first came out but after waiting 6 months I asked Upper Deck for replacements. So, the way I figure it I have 62/87 cards including 1/1s. I am 25 away from owning the complete Al Bundy "master set". The only problem is all the ones I need now are autographs and extremely low print run.

I love collecting hockey cards, I really do, but honestly...I think I love my Al Bundy collection the most. Yes, even more than my Jordan Staal's. I think it has almost made me famous. Everyone knows my sig. I have had so many compliments on it and even an offers to buy it. It has been a challenge to get these many different cards and a whole lot of patience, but it was worth every minute.

Thank you for reading how I got started on collecting Al Bundy and letting me tell my story. Oh...one more thing. When I can manage to afford it, I will be getting my Al Bundy tattoo. You will know when I get it because it will be my new avatar.

"I haven't asked for much and God knows I've gotten it!"  
-Al Bundy





## My Pride and Joy

By Arturo Cepero aka Autocentral

One day, I remember watching the television with my father and seeing Michael Jordan play for the first time. I remember asking him “Who is that you are watching?” he said to me “Only the greatest player in basketball history”. I was only five years old at the time but I remember the moment vividly. Since that moment with my dad Michael Jordan has been my favorite player and would watch him every time they put a game on TV.



On my seventh birthday, my father gave me five cards of Michael Jordan with a jersey of him. It was to me one of the best birthdays ever, because it opened me to the hobby of collecting cards. Since that day I have been collecting cards and more importantly Michael Jordan cards. By age ten I had over 120 Jordan cards, but not his Fleer 1986-1987 Rookie Card. The next year I went to a card show in Tampa with my brother and saw a vendor selling a Michael Jordan rookie card, I asked the vendor how much he was selling the card for and he told me “200 dollars”. I was only a kid, I didn’t have that kind of money, but that day I vowed that in the future I would own that card.

Since that day at the card show I saved every penny I got for the Jordan Rookie. I did everything I could; wash cars, do dishes and wash clothes to earn my weekly five dollars from my parents. By the time I had enough money to buy the card, it had jumped in value and was selling at 350 dollars. So I continued doing the same thing to earn the extra money. Finally by age 13 I had enough money and more to buy the card. It took two years of saving but finally I had enough money to buy the card.

Three days after I found out I had enough money, I went to my local card shop. The card shop owner was one of my dad’s closest friends and had one of the best vintage collections of football and basketball I have seen ever. He had around five Fleer 1986-1987 Jordan Rookie for sale. I bought my Jordan Rookie from him for 335 dollars, and in my opinion, it was the best purchase I ever made. Everyday I would kiss my card in the morning and at night before bed. I would carry the card everywhere with me. It would never leave my sight, no matter where I went.

When I turned 15, having had the card for over two years, I learned that you could grade cards. I sent my card to be graded and it received a PSA 9, which I was very happy with, but I thought I had a perfect gem at the time. By age 16 the card had doubled in value, a PSA 9 was very hard to come across at the time. I’m currently 19 years of age and I got the best news of my life a couple of months ago. I sent my card to be regarded by PSA and it received a PSA 10. It is and has always been my favorite card. I believe this card will never leave my possession, even if I’m in debt. I think that is what collecting is all about being able to get the card you want no matter how good or bad it is. If you put your mind to anything you can achieve it. That is why I love this hobby and this is my story of my favorite card, the Michael Jordan Fleer 1986-1987 Card #57 Rookie, which is my pride and joy and has been for over six years.



## The Day Tony Parker Got Me Michael Jordan

By Joe Marfil aka kardkid74



Well, for starters, I am an avid San Antonio Spurs collector and big on Tim Duncan. I do however collect other Spurs players such as Tony Parker, Manu Ginobili and David Robinson of whom I pick up a few cards here and there. My main focus though is on Tim Duncan one of my favorite players since I watched him play at Wake Forest.

Before Tim Duncan was in the league, like many other kids, Michael Jordan was my favorite player. I started collecting cards because my brother-in-law got me into it. I would tag along to all the card shows, the card shops and everywhere cards were. I tried to get all I could of Michael Jordan. I purchased as many boxes and packs as my cash flow would allow, which wasn't much. And I always tried to get that one item that many MJ fans dreamed of- a Michael Jordan autograph card.

Up until recently I just stopped "trying" too hard to get a MJ auto. With my focus on my Tim Duncan collection, and knowing what buying a MJ auto would cost, I just figured I would never get one. I still busted boxes and packs but never did pull something that good. One day while searching eBay I bid on a Tony Parker buyback auto card. It was very nice but, for some reason, once it was in hand I didn't like it that much.

Fast-forward to a card show that happens about four or five times a year. I took my Tony Parker buyback auto card with me in hopes of selling/trading it for something else. After being at the show for a good while it was time to leave but I still had the Parker auto with me. The only interest I got from it was from my local hobby shop owner. I was desperate to leave without the Parker auto and I ended up trading the card that was hand numbered to just 21 copies for two packs of 07-08 UD SPX basketball.

I was not sure what I had just done but it was already over. I picked my packs out of the box that I believe was from his shop and headed over to a table where my brother-in-law and my cousin were busting a box already. I opened pack number one and my hit was a Spencer Hawes auto. This was turning out to be a bad deal and I would have to live with giving up a pretty nice Tony Parker buyback auto card. I sulked for about a minute, watched the box break happening at the table and opened the second pack.

The next thing I saw after shuffling through the base cards was a redemption card. As I turned the redemption card right side up to read it I thought to myself that this might hopefully be a Michael Jordan auto? But I thought that of course there was no chance until I saw this:

I had done it! A childhood dream had come true. I wanted to jump, scream and yell but I just had this smile on my face that probably lasted all week. It was not just a Michael Jordan autograph but it was also a dual auto with Julius Erving. It couldn't have gotten better than that. I redeemed the cards as soon as I got home. Less than two weeks later my dream showed up in a brown envelope. I will never forget the day that Tony Parker got me a Michael Jordan autograph card.



## Collecting Turbulence By John Schinigoï aka StainLss

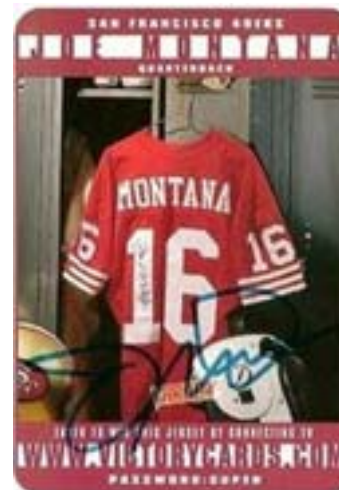
Since I was about three years old (1991) I have always liked collecting cards. I remember my father going to the convenience store and coming home with a few packs of baseball cards for me to open. I used to keep them in an old cookie tin. I didn't know anything about the actual players on the cards or even who they were but something was always there to draw me in. Maybe it was the colors, smell or maybe just the pictures. But that mysterious attraction always kept me wanting more of them.

Looking back I can pinpoint the time in my life when I became a collector. Does anyone remember the book order fliers in school? I do. Each month they would hand out a little catalogue that you could order books and other odds and ends from. You would give your teacher a check and the list of books you would like, they would send it out and in a few weeks you got your books. Well one month in fourth grade I noticed there was a blaster box of baseball cards you could get. It was probably a cheap 9-10 pack blaster. Obviously I had to have it and luckily my parents bought it for me. I remember ripping into that the minute I got it into my hot little hands in Mrs. White's fourth grade class. I know that's when I became hooked on the wax.



My favorite memory of all time was pulling a 1990 Fleer Mark McGwire base card. It was just such a slick looking card. It was around 1997 or maybe a year after so I was eight or nine at the time. Mark McGwire had just hit major league-leading home run number 58. He was the hot player at that time. My brother and I traded that card back and forth as currency for years. It got bent, creased and eventually somehow grew a mustache. That original card is long gone so I had to buy a new one off eBay a while back. The second card is still in my personal collection today. It's probably my least expensive card but it has the most meaning. It was the first card I have a vivid memory of pulling.

The Mark McGwire was the coolest so I have to follow that up with my most embarrassing story. I think it was around 2002 during the year I became corrupted. I heard my shop owner mention something about how a company named Donruss had something called a jersey card. I had no idea what they actually were but I thought I had one. After my mom and I got home I raced to my bin of cards and dug through it. I ended up finding a Joe Montana jersey card! I watched that card like my life depended on it to make sure nothing would happen to it. That next weekend I visited the card shop with my prized card in my collection looking to sell it and make a fortune. I showed it to the card store owner Kenny, who informed me it was not a jersey card but a regular 1990 Victory card that pictured Joe Montana's jersey hanging on a locker. I walked about very disappointed but now knew something about jersey cards, "I had to have one!"





## **Underdogs to Wonderdogs**

**By Anthony Ledesma**

Where were you when College Baseball's greatest Cinderella story captured the sports worlds' heart?

Okay, maybe not all of the sports world's heart, but definitely all 600,000 of Fresno, CA. In a year when they started 8-12, lost their ace of the staff for the season, and a starting infielder quit the team in the middle of a game, the Fresno State Bulldogs were crowned 2008 College World Series Champions. At that moment I became a baseball collector.

Two days after staving off elimination twice and defeating Gordon Beckham's Georgia Bulldogs, our Bulldogs were in for a surprise of their lives! An 8000 strong crowd descended on Beiden Field that only had room for 5000. I arrived at the gates six hours before the gates would open to be sure there wouldn't be any doubt as I was first in line. My father-in-law brought back an official College World Series Bulldogs jersey as a souvenir of his trip to Omaha and I was determined to be one of the lucky few to get it autographed during the 30-minute autograph session.

With local TV cameras and reporters in my face asking me how long I had waited and how excited was I to see the Bulldogs, I shot right by, wife in tow, to what I thought would be the start of the autograph line. Entrenched in my "I'm the start of the line" stance, people flocked to take their place in line behind me. My wife, being the smartest of us two, suggested that we should also start a line on the opposite end of the tables that were set up for autographs. I didn't think it was necessary. After all, I was first at the gates and now first in the autograph line. People would respect that, right? Not at all!

Shortly after my wife snaked her way to the other side, the masses followed her lead. Thirty minutes into the split after countless people had switched their line preference, the congratulations ceremony for the Bulldogs began. Unfortunately all who were in line were unable to view the field where all the action was taking place. However, little did the thousands in the stands know that there was plenty of drama just outside their view.

The next hour would pit line 1 against line 1A. Each side had his representative who would get an update from a nearby staff member every five minutes as to which line was "the" line. Trouble is, each line representative was getting the same news that his or her line was "the" line. This made for a false sense of security for both parties. Each line seemed pretty content with the news until one guy came out and announced that his line would go first. Pandemonium broke. Security officers and staff members alike made it a point to avoid the situation until one of them would have to lay down the law later that night. At one point, the mayor of Fresno was passing by and everyone was lobbying for him to make the executive decision, but to no avail. For once the people joined forces and collectively booed Mayor Autry for not having the guts to put the madness to an end.

By now, you might have guessed that nothing would be solved and it would just have to be a free for all



when the players sat down at the autograph tables. I would not fault you for believing this, but fifteen minutes prior to the session, both lines came up with a solution. Each line would send 10 people at a time through the autograph session and first dibs would be determined by a single coin flip. This eased the tensions a bit until the staff manager came by to play God and make his fateful announcement: there would only be one line and if you were not in that line then you were just plain out of luck.

Have you ever heard the old adage that you can wish something true? Boy did I wish. I wished on all that was good and perfect in the world that he would select our line to be “the one”. I even made some hollow promises to boot. I promised that I would never again bust packs past my budget if I hadn’t received the box hit I was hoping for. I promised that I would put my obsession for Derek Fisher Super Collector status on hold for a while. I guess none of that mattered because the man in charge picked the other line. Ouch! I felt like I let my line down. The language from

everyone behind me would have made even a sailor blush.

Downtrodden heart in place, I sulked my way away from the autograph session, envious of those in “the line”. As I made my departure I looked down at my vibrating phone and received one of the best text messages of my life. My wife was still in line! I thought she would have been long gone by then. Little did I remember that she was in line with me for 6 hours before we were even let into the stadium. She was not about to let me go home empty handed. Like a quarterback sneaks his way through the trenches to gain a first down, I too fought and clawed my way over to the chosen ones in Line 1A. My wife was third in line. The players had made themselves comfortable in their seats at the tables. Five at a time we were let through. I was a part of the first wave, which by the way helped with the autograph clarity, and shook hands and took pictures of each player who signed my jersey. Fifteen minutes later I was at the end of the line with the most precious sports item of my collection in hand. I see it every day I enter my “mancave” to reorganize my card collection. I also deal with the pressure of a local sports bar owner who frequents the restaurant I work in to try to convince me to sell him my collector’s item. I know it would look mighty fancy in a sports bar, but I digress. I could never let those memories go.

Whether it’s the first card from the first pack you opened, a legit Jordan RC, or like me, a team signed jersey, we all have fond memories of this wonderful hobby. I can only hope that everyone will experience what I did with my autographed jersey saga or will be a part of a community when a local team wins a national championship. Good luck to everyone on their pursuit of the white whale in our hobby known simply as “satisfaction”.



## TTM Olympic Edition

By Ed Hutchinson aka Palantri

In the winter of 1988, I first saw an Olympic games. The games were held in Calgary, and I, as an 8 year old, was absolutely fascinated as a whole new world of sports opened up to me. While I have always professed to be a football fan first and foremost, the Olympics, even now, 21 years later, capture my attention in a way no other sport does. Even with scandals of doping, cheating, and the occasional lapses in sportsmanship that occur, the Olympics, for me, are the purest form of sport.



I started through the mail (TTM) autograph collecting about four years ago. At first, I wrote to whoever I had cards and addresses for, whatever the sport. That got expensive pretty quickly though, at almost a buck per person, so I decided that I would begin to specialize. But what would I focus my attention on? I really didn't know- until 2006, when I was again drawn into the world of the Olympics- this time; the games were in Torino, Italy. And then I knew. My collection, at least, the bulk of it, would focus on these remarkable, under-appreciated athletes. And so, I started writing, putting stamps on envelopes, and waiting.

The successes started coming in. Some were athletes I had heard of, some were athletes I had watched, but all were Olympians- more specifically, American Olympians, since they were the athletes I had always rooted for. My early successes were all on trading cards, but as the collection grew, the desire to expand it grew as well. I started sending 8x10s, custom cards, and other items to get signed. I also began purchasing items that I either couldn't send through the mail, or from athletes who did not sign through the mail. I started picking up certified autographs from the major sports companies, as they began to release autographs of some of these athletes in their products.



My collection currently consists of approximately 40 trading cards, 30 custom index cards, about 15 8x10s, and a few other memorabilia pieces, such as my Cammie Granato signed USA puck, and my Jennie Finch signed softball, which I consider the nicest memorabilia piece I own. My photos include such well-known athletes as Derrick Parra, Kristi Yamaguchi, Dan O'Brien, Mike Eruzione, and many more. I am always looking to build on my collection. My next goal is to get more of the Dream Team players- I already have a few, such as Lenny Wilkens and Karl Malone, but putting together an autograph set of the 1992 USA Men basketball team is my current #

1 priority. Of course, with such names as Jordan, Bird, Ewing, and Johnson on the team, it promises to be a challenging task to complete!



**Racing Happenings**  
 By Peter Kapuschinsky aka doG\_sl\_kcivraH

**CARD OF THE MONTH WINNERS FOR JULY-  
 AUGUST**

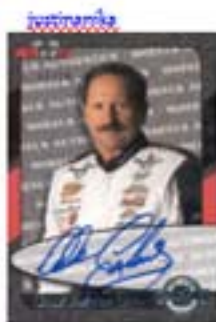
WINNER

SHELBYSALEEN

2008 SP Legendary Cuts Mystery Cuts Signatures Neil Bonnett 1/1 (17  
 Votes)



T-2<sup>nd</sup> PLACE (7 votes)



ericmccoy75



T-4<sup>th</sup> PLACE (3 votes)  
 pa43fan



angryeagle07





## End of Off-Season

**By Trevor Picone aka Trevorp121**

With the majority of the NBA's free agent signings happening in the month of July, there weren't too many signings since the last magazine was produced. Highlighting the signings was Lamar Odom resigning with the NBA champion Los Angeles Lakers, for 4 years. There have also been numerous trades made, but none have been blockbuster deals. The biggest trade, in my opinion, would be between the New Orleans Hornets and the Charlotte Bobcats. The Hornets sent center Tyson Chandler to the Bobcats in exchange for center/power forward Emeka Okafor. There was also one unique trade this off-season - actually, it's been four trades - guard Quentin Richardson has been traded four times since draft day. He was initially a member of the New York Knicks when he was traded to the Memphis Grizzlies for Darko Milicic. Then, he was traded to the Los Angeles Clippers for Zach Randolph. Next, he was traded to the Minnesota Timberwolves for Sebastian Telfair, Craig Smith and Mark Madsen. Finally, he was traded to the Miami Heat for Mark Blount. I do not know if it is a record for most times traded in an off-season, but I would imagine it has to be.

Some of the other deals to be done include Ben Wallace returning to the Detroit Pistons, Glen Davis resigning with the Boston Celtics, and Brandon Roy signing a maximum contract extension with the Portland Trail Blazers.

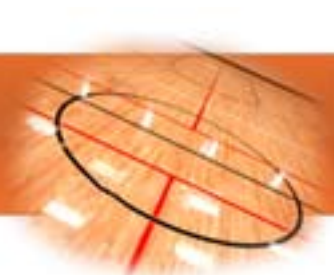
There are very few big names that are still free agents. Allen Iverson as to be at the top of the list, the



fifth ranked player in points per game average over an entire career. While he could be a great addition to any team in the league, his resistance to coming off the bench has hurt him. He wants to still be the star of any team he's on, and with almost every team having a clear-cut star, that does not look possible. Therefore, there have been rumors that he may end up playing in Europe. At this point, those are just rumors, but it is definitely something that I am sure he has strongly considered.

Also, the Minnesota Timberwolves hired a new head coach - former Los Angeles Lakers assistant coach Kurt Rambis. Mr. Rambis was expected to be next in line to take over for current Lakers head coach Phil Jackson, but he decided that he wanted to coach the Timberwolves instead. Mr. Rambis brings championship experience to Minnesota, having won a ring with the Lakers this past season. He has the tough task of turning a struggling franchise

into a contender, but with the multiple young stars on the Timberwolves, it may not be as tough as it seems.



Lastly, Orlando Magic forward Rashard Lewis was suspended for the first ten games of the upcoming NBA season for violating the NBA drug policy. He claims that he took an over-the-counter supplement that raised his testosterone levels. Whether this is true or not is unknown, but this may prove costly to the Magic, as this could affect whether they have home court advantage against teams like the Cleveland Cavaliers and the Boston Celtics.

Upper Deck and Topps licenses for producing basketball cards are nearing expiration, but not without some fireworks. Upper Deck has recently announced that they will release their popular line of Exquisite for the 2009-10 season. According to their website, Upper Deck will release Exquisite on September 23, one week prior to the license switch to Panini. This is big news for collectors who want one last chance at Upper Deck-produced logomen and tagmen to name a couple.

The basketball forum has seen some moderator changes! We would like to welcome our new moderator, #15Vince Carter (Rory)! He joined us as an MIT in early July, and was promoted to an advisor in early August. In addition to Rory's promotion, ponyboy (Evan) was recently promoted to assistant manager! So, please give a warm welcome to Rory and congratulations to Evan!

We have made a change to our weekly Basketball Chat Nights - the baseball team was kind enough to switch days with us, so we will now be hosting our weekly chat nights each Wednesday. So, be sure to stop by Live Chat each Wednesday night between 8 PM and 10 PM EDT, and talk about recent NBA news, participate in some live trading, and even participate in contests for CC, and possibly cards!

Basketball Theme Weeks are still going strong! We have had 25 full weeks of entries thus far, and every week has been fun with a lot of entries. We hope you join in on the fun, either by entering a card you own, or just by simply voting for the best card for that theme each week!

Winners for the year, as of 8/30, are:

- |                             |                                |                         |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| week 1: lc_chatser, bob9826 | week 7: nbacardDOTnet          | week 13: sl7in          |
| week 2: BRoy#7              | week 8: BRoy#7                 | week 14: crizrn         |
| week 3: TeamADG             | week 9: Verse1                 | week 15: OJMayo32       |
| week 4: jeebus86            | week 10: VintageHeros          | week 16: VintageHeros   |
| week 5: XxViSiOnxX          | week 11: drtom2005, MatthewLee | kardkid74               |
| week 6: whalechaser         | week 12: jeebus86              | week 17: xdrew          |
|                             |                                | week 18: crizrn         |
|                             |                                | week 19: Seahawkz37     |
|                             |                                | week 20: XxViSiOnxX     |
|                             |                                | week 21: andreamjohnson |
|                             |                                | week 22: eddiejr        |
|                             |                                | week 23: ponyboy        |
|                             |                                | week 24: nissandriver77 |





## Featured Collection By Rory Quirk aka #15VinceCarter

Everyone knows I collect UNC alumni, but this past month has been excellent for my Marvin Williams PC. I picked up some of the sick-est Marvin Williams' autos for my collection of him. Here are scans of the autos I have received.



This one was from a from last month but I thought I'd show it off  
And to start out for this month



My second Exquisite of Marvin Williams  
05/06 Exquisite Enshrinements Auto #7/25

#1/25



05/06 Ultimate Rookie Auto #3/5

And this one I just received. Big shot out to Trevor (trevorp121) for this one  
05/06 SPX Rookie Auto Jersey Spectrum Throwback  
Marvin Williams #22/25



My Marvin Williams PC is growing very fast and I am always looking for more. I now have 33 autographs of Marvin Williams. Thanks for the read! If you have any Marvin Williams that I may need, send me a PM!



For the Basketball Showcase section, we have some pretty nice cards to show, with the recent release of Exquisite. If you would like to show off your card, and possibly be featured in this magazine, stop by the Basketball Show and Tell forum and look for the "Basketball Showcase" thread!

You can make a reservation to redeem your card by visiting our website at "www.upperdeck.com" and following the easy step-by-step instructions, or call 1-800-873-7332 for information on how to redeem your card. Please note the following specific information for this card:

Product Name : 2008-09 NBA EXQUISITE EXQUISITE TRIPLE AUTO/ JERSEY#ED TO 3 CD# ET - JDB  
 Player Name : KEVIN DURANT/ LEBRON JAMES/ MICHAEL BEASLEY

Expiration Date: 7/31/2011

Card: 2008-09 Upper Deck Exquisite LeBron James/Kevin Durant/Michael Beasley Triple Auto/Jersey #/3  
 Member: dauber01  
 Pulled from: Case of 2008-09 Exquisite

Card: 2008 Press Pass autos - Derrick Rose /250; Candace Parker /199; Russell Westbrook /75 - 2008 Press Pass Game Day Gear Derrick Rose /400  
 Member: usctr0jans  
 Pulled from: 1 box of 2008 Press Pass





**An Then There Was Topps**  
**By Stephen Duell aka Spuds1961**

Hello fellow collectors and card gurus, I find it rather interesting that we as collectors are going to be down to one choice for players in their major league uniforms. I as a collector am on the fence with this announcement as I am the type of collector that likes choices. I do like Topps products but as far as innovation I think other brands have done a much better job. Topps does have its staple brands of Allen and Ginter and Topps Triple Threads but I want more!

Yes everyone would love to own a Topps Mantle rookie card, but remember the rush of enthusiasm when UD came out in 1989 with the Griffey JR rookie card. I also think Upper Deck was the first company after Press Pass racing to include game-used and autographs in their products. Pacific had some of the wildest inserts with the Cramer's Choice, Gold Crown die cuts, and In The Cage.

Now the ball is in Topps' hands to take us as collectors to that next level of collecting Zen. Without competition they can pretty much put out anything they want, here is my challenge to Topps: you have the chance to bring the hobby back to its heyday don't drop the ball!



With that being said I would like to see some innovation out of Topps, something new for us collectors to go nuts over. I would like to see some redemptions that are worthy of waiting for, don't give us an autographed card with a jersey swatch, give us an autographed full jersey with a card depicting what game it was from. Give us an autographed baseball from a playoff game, give us a full bat with an autograph whether it is cracked or not. What I am asking is not a difficult task, heck you buy full jerseys to cut them into 10,000 pieces just keep one intact with an auto and make that the tough pull.

OK I've said my piece on this topic remember fellow collectors if you want to see some new things from Topps now is the best time to ask, as they are the only game in town. Have a great collecting day and take care!



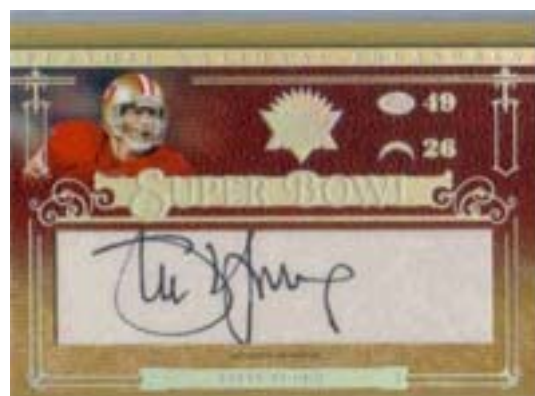


## Kickoff!

By Jason DiOrazio aka jdio13

Football season is officially underway!!! And with that, comes many new and interesting things going on in the Football Section of Sports Card Forum. In this Article, we will highlight the winner of the eBay Steal of the Month Contest for July, and bring you up to speed on all of the new and exciting contests we will have running throughout the college and NFL football seasons.

First, let's start with us highlighting the winner of the eBay Steal of the Month Contest for July of 09. The winner this month was member hazeofgreen. The card he won is pictured on the right.



Now, onto a couple contests we will have running. As we have stated in previous articles, for College Football, we will only have 1 contest running, which is the Guess The Score contest. For the NFL, we will have a wide variety of contests such as Pick 'Em, Guess The Score and many others. But, we have added one major contest called the "Gridiron Glory Contest." It is 11, that's right 11 mini season long contests rolled onto one large contest. Now you say, there must be a great prize for winning that one, and you are correct. The winner of this one big contest will receive...a certified signed full size football of Hall of Famers Barry Sanders and Joe Montana. That's right, Barry Sanders and Joe

Montana. This is the biggest prize ever given away on the Football boards, so come on in and join the fun, and who knows, maybe you will be the lucky winner of a Barry Sanders and Joe Montana signed football. The details can be seen here:

<http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=884235>

From all the Staff members on the Football Team, we would like to thank you for taking time to read this article. We hope to see many of you joining in on the contests and getting involved on the Football Boards very soon. Thanks again!!!



## SCF On Ice

By Scott Kozlowski aka scottkoz20

### Race for the Quad Update

The race for the Quad is well under way, but there is still plenty of time for you to get involved. Upcoming contests will be the Regular Season hockey pool and the preseason game of the night contest which will surely change the top of the leader board.

Currently as of August 26th, gardzy99 is in the lead for the Quad with waf and TannieS closely behind.

### TOP 5 as of 8/26

Username Points

1. gardzy99 9
2. waf 8
3. TannieS 6
4. Oilfan10 4
4. Robot Rabbit 4



### 2009-2010 Regular Season Pool

With the start of the NHL season about a month away, the start of the SCF Regular season pool is getting close. For those that were involved last season, it was a fantastic contest and this year will be even better. Oh, did I mention that this is another contest in which you can earn "Race for the Quad" points?

There will be some slight changes for this seasons contest, as we will be using a new version of Officepools to run it. Expect to have to pick more players this year, which should add a layer of difficulty, as you'll have to think past Crosby, Malkin and Ovechkin!

Keep an eye out for the Contest thread and other contests at <http://www.sportscardforum.com/forumdisplay.php?f=356>

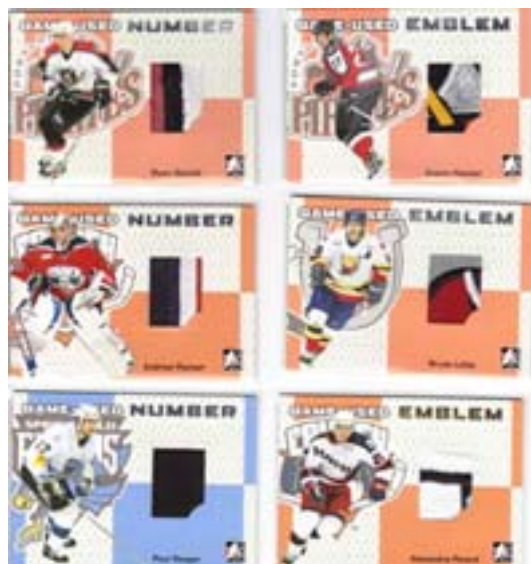




**Case Break Report**

On August 7, 2009, the SCF Hockey Staff busted a 24-box case of 2006-07 ITG Heroes and Prospects. 13 members chose to participate in this break covering 16 slots. Additionally, a box of 2007-08 MVP Hockey was included with the case purchase from Dave and Adams Card World.

Some of the better hits included a Sidney Crosby Glove #/80, a Jiri Tlustý Complete Jersey #/10 and some very nice looking patches. Here are some more of the highlights from this break.



With September arriving, the 2009-10 products will start to be released. Please keep an eye out for Hockey case breaks.