



# SCF'S COLLECTORS CORNER

MAY 2010

INSIDE...



THE  
MARCH  
CSA SHOW

# COLLECTORS CORNER RETURNS!



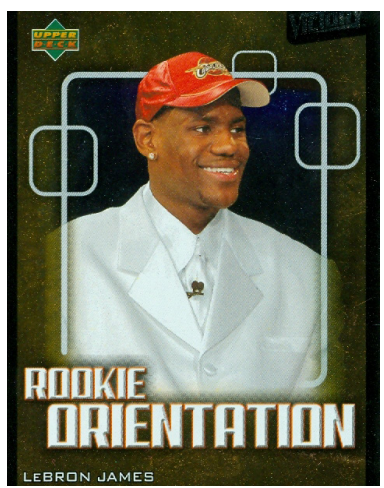
# Welcome Back!

*By Khendra Murdock aka JammingJames23*

After a 4 month hiatus, Sports Card Forum once again has a magazine!

As many of you recall, former editor Karine (Pheeb888) had to step down due to time considerations.

Karine did a great job with the magazine, putting forth immense effort in gathering all of the articles and publishing them in pdf format every issue.



She also wrote many articles herself.

It took her literally dozens of hours each month to put together the magazine as both editor AND publisher, so her contributions should be commended highly.

Stepping in as the new editor, I hope to help bring back the fun of the magazine Karine kept going in times past.

With the help of an experienced real-world publisher (Kerry), an assistant (Matt), a graphic designer (Houng), and many contributing writers whose names you will see throughout this issue (including team contacts Stephen, Evan, John, Richard, Peter, Matthew, and Mike), I think we're definitely back on track!

Welcome back!

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#### The Team

**Editor:** Khendra Murdock  
**Publisher:** Kerry Webster  
**Assistant Editor:** Matt McNabb  
**Graphics Design:** Houng Ngui

#### Team Contacts

Evan Berry  
 John Schinigoj  
 Matthew Cawley  
 Mike Greene  
 Stephen Duell

# Haiti Relief Fundraiser Auctions

*By Khendra Murdock  
aka JammingJames23*

The catastrophic Haiti earthquake, which took the lives of an estimated 230,000 Haitians back in



January, is one of the most tragic natural disasters in recent memory.

Sports Card Forum held auctions and raffles to raise money for the relief efforts in the country. The total amount raised was \$1,087.51.

Our top donor was cp3fan18261 (Jeff), who won our February Member of the Month award for his generosity, donating \$443 for the fundraiser. All money will go to the American Red Cross for Haiti Earthquake Relief.

We received the following donations from sponsors: Upper Deck 2009 USA baseball box set, Upper Deck 2009 SP Threads football retail box, Upper Deck 2009 SP Signature football retail box, three (3) Topps 2009 Bowman Draft baseball boxes, two (2) Topps 2009 Bowman Chrome baseball boxes, and two (2) In the Game 2007-08 Between the Pipes hockey boxes.



## NBA Playoffs are in the air; The BIG question; and lots of contests

*By Evan Berry  
aka ponyboy*

Okay basketball fans, the PLAYOFFS are in the air!! I'm sure everyone's cheering on their favorite team right about now or sulking that their team has been sent home. Well, keep in mind this season that SPORTSMANSHIP is the key. Keep on cheering on the teams that are still in it. You don't want to miss a thing.



The BIG question on everyone's mind this season - WHERE will LeBron hang his sneakers next season?? I guess we'll all have to wait and see.

Now, with the offseason coming up, don't think you can just sit back and slow down. NOW is the BEST time to bulk up your personal collection. Also, don't forget to check out the current and ongoing contests in basketball. Between the 'Guessing the Finals' scores contest, and the ongoing contests like 'Guess the Serial Number' and the ever-popular THEMES WEEKS contests, the offseason is NEVER dull. Some areas of the country are even doing 'SCF get-togethers.'

Check out and see if there's one near you??



# Baseball Product Review: 2010 Topps Opening Day

## BOX INFORMATION

36 packs per box

7 cards per pack

Current Retail Price: \$24.99-\$34.99 (online)

## RATINGS

Base - 4/5

Design - 3/5

Fun - 5/5

Value - 4/5

Rebuy - 4/5

**Total - 20/25 (80%)**



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0NlvEAa6b0> (part one)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=czyYhAar2FA> (part two)

## Price point to added goodies, Opening Day delivers for the youngsters

*By Tony Joyce  
aka Enigma*

Traditionally, Topps releases Opening Day to coincide with the opening of Spring Training and this year is no exception.

The base cards match the design of Series 1 other than the Opening Day Logo on the front of each card. Some of the subjects found in Opening Day are not in Series 1, but will be seen in Series 2. Also, there are 14 rookie subjects in Opening Day and the final card of the base set is a checklist card. Only 1 parallel numbered to 2010 can be found.

Numerous insert sets surface in Opening Day. With a kid-driven tone, there's a 26-card set featuring the various Team Mascots around MLB. Superstar Celebrations show

off some of the most exciting events in baseball in 2009. As a promo for Topps Attax, there are 25 possible playing cards interspersed. To differentiate from the cards from Topps Attax, the Opening Day Logo adorn the cards. ToppsTown cards continue to appear in the low-end releases from Topps with a slight change of having the codes on the front.

Rounding things out is Where'd You Go, Bazooka Joe. This 10-card series is not so much about the players as it is about locating Bazooka Joe on the front (think Where's Waldo). Each card does provide a clue on the back.

Topps Opening Day delivers on its most important quality, being a product for kids. From its price point to the added goodies, kids

will enjoy opening each and every pack.

Even though there are autographs in Opening Day, they are rare enough to make them exciting to chase and will bring excitement when one does pop up in a pack. One negative would be the checklist card in the base set. A checklist should be an optional card, not a necessary card to complete a set. And then the bigger slap in the face is a duplicate of it appearing in a box. At least make the duplicates of a player so that the kids can have more fun opening and trading.

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



# Basketball Product Review: 2009-10 Panini Classics

## BOX INFORMATION

18 packs per box

5 cards per pack

Current Retail Price: \$79.99-\$89.99 (online)

## RATINGS

Base - 4/5

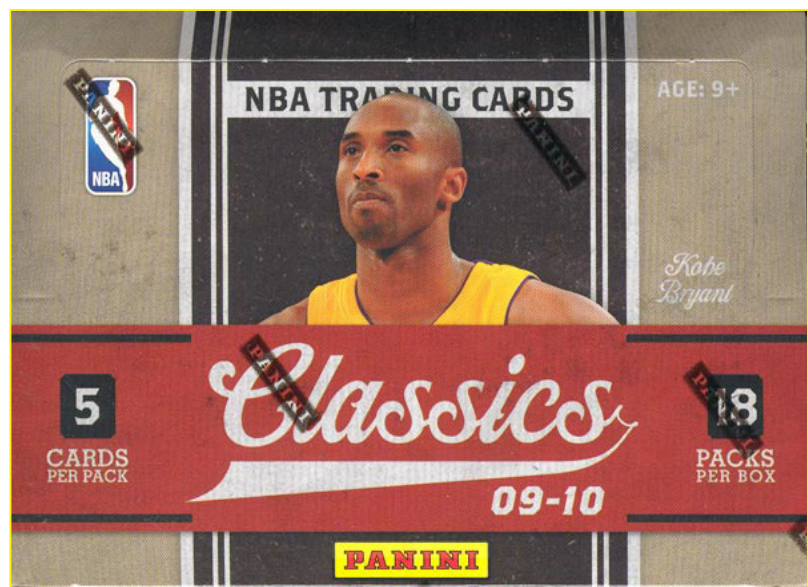
Design - 4/5

Fun - 4/5

Value - 4.5/5

Rebuy - 4.5/5

**Total - 21/25 (84%)**



Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJJuya1QOsw>

## Panini basketball continues to provide 'bang for the buck'

By Tony Joyce  
aka Enigma

Panini in its continuation of bringing recognized products from other sports to the hardcourt collectors has released Classics upon the masses. Classics has a 100-card base set that is accentuated with 60 Legends (/999) and 40 Autographed Rookies. The cards are on a glossy card stock with the players in action photos in the middle. Each card is bordered with 3 stars on the left and right with pertinent information at the bottom. Timeless Tributes is a parallel of the base set that has three levels numbered to 100 or less.

There are 4 insert set found in Classics. Classic Combos features 2 current or former teammates who had major impacts when they suited up together. Classic Confrontations is a double-sided

card with a player on each side who were or have been formidable foes on the court. Classic Greats highlight the superstars of yesteryear. Finally, Dress Code shows off many of the various uniforms around the league.

Classic yields 4 autographs or relics per box. Outside of the aforementioned Autographed Rookies, there are 2 levels of Significant Signatures. The memorabilia cards based of the base set are a part of the Timeless Threads series. There are 2 levels in this series. There are other relic sets, such as the Dress Code series as seen in this break.

Panini continues to provide a lot of bang for the buck with their basketball line. Much like its football counterpart, Classics contains a myriad of rookies, veterans and legends. While not showy in design, the understated back-

grounds help bring out the player photos. Instead of the 3 stars on each side, it would have been nice to see the players rated based on the number of stars on their card, much like high school players are rated as they head to college. Every pack on average seems to contain something from an insert, parallel, relic, or autograph. I do not know if it is the case over the entire production run or not, but it's nice to see both autographs we pulled were on-card. Speaking of autographs, I would much rather see a regular rookie and then an autographed version instead of the rookies being solely autographed. The cards are great for TTM and IP collectors as the autographs show. There's a lot to be found in Classics and it's well worth the money.

Once again, I'd like to thank our  
(Continued on page 12)



# Football Product Review: 2010 Press Pass

## BOX INFORMATION

28 packs per box

4 cards per pack

Current Retail Price: \$89.99-\$99.99 (online)

## RATINGS

Base - 4.75/5

Design - 3.5/5

Fun - 3.5/5

Value - 4/5

Rebuy - 4/5

**Total - 19.75/25 (79%)**



Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PfXBBjsAsUM>

## 'A must have' for college football card collectors

By *Tony Joyce*  
aka *Enigma*

Press Pass is back in 2010 with a 100-card base set. Back are the familiar subsets: Trophy Club, National Leaders, All Conference, and Teammates; and the short print subset which features 5 of the elite players in this year's draft class.

The Reflectors are back as well. There are three levels: Reflectors (to 500), Hobby Proof (to 100), and Solo (to 1). These are parallels of the base cards from 1-100. You can expect a variation of 3 of these per box. Also, there's another parallel set called Black & White. It is simply the base cards done in a black and white color setting.

On average, Press Pass will yield 5 autographs per box. There are 2 autograph series this year. First, there's the regular Press Pass auto-

graph set, which has four levels. The levels are Bronze (unnumbered), Silver (normally numbered to 199), Gold (normally numbered to 99), and Blue (normally numbered to 50). Each of these also has red ink (the autograph is in red instead of blue) and Nickname variations. The other autograph set is the Power Picks series. There are two tiers: Power Picks (to 250) and Power Picks Showbound (to 25). Appearing once in every 3 boxes are the Gridiron Gamers Jersey cards. There are 3 levels: Silver (this is the base jersey to 299), Gold (to 199), and Holo (to 99).

For college football fans, Press Pass is perennially a must-have product. With its 100-card base set plus 5 short prints, you can expect to get most of the cards, so chasing down the rest is not that hard. The

Reflectors shine as always with the foilboard cards. Plus, you get at least 5 hits per box (in which all autographs are on-card). However, there are some drawbacks. There's only one regular insert set (Banner Season), so there's not much to look for in packs outside the main hits. While you do get most of the base cards, 100 cards seem to be overkill. Press Pass used to be 45 cards and 5 short prints and that seemed to be the right balance. The subset designs take away from the cards instead of enhancing them. And while I am a fan of the variations (red ink and nicknames) of the autographs, it should be announced ahead of time how many of each are out there as it gives collectors a better idea of how much more special the card

*(Continued on page 13)*



# Hockey Product Review: 09-10 ITG Between the Pipes

## BOX INFORMATION

18 packs per box

9 cards per pack

Current Retail Price: \$84.99-\$94.99 (online)

## RATINGS

Base - 4.75/5

Design - 4/5

Fun - 4/5

Value - 4.5/5

Rebuy - 4.5/5

**Total - 21.75/25 (87%)**



Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Is3ou375DMk>

## Between the Pipes comes with a lot of hype and expectations

By *Tony Joyce*  
aka *Enigma*

Coming off the heels of what was considered one of the best products of the 2008-09 season, ITG has released Between the Pipes with a lot of hype and expectation behind it. The base set comprises 150 subjects. They are divided over a series of 4 subsets: Future Stars, Stars of the Game, Greats of the Game and the Rival League. Goalies honing their skills in the AHL and CHL are located in Future Stars. Today's goalies in the NHL can be found in Stars of the Game. Greats of the Game features past goalies who left their mark on the NHL. Finally, the Rival League is devoted to the goalies who were on display in the now-defunct WHA (World Hockey Association).

There are 5 insert sets in Between the Pipes. AHL and CHL Rookies dominate 2 of the sets. Considered

one of the greatest goalies in NHL History, a Tribute set can be found for Martin Brodeur encompassing his career. I love the idea of 2 goalies dropping the gloves and mixing it up; you can find them in Net Brawlers. And then there's the chase set that has been around for years and keeps going strong; Masked Men II. This set features a Silver and Gold version.

On average, you can expect 2 autographs and 2 relics per box. The base autographs are divided up like the base cards into 4 subsets. There are a multitude of game used relics to be found, some of which are the basic Game Used Jersey (or Number) series, International Crease (which features 3 countrymen), and Mega Stars (highlighted by a gigantic swatch). Following last year's success, there are also the Glove Save, Pad Save, and Stick Save series.

ITG had a lot of work to do to attempt to surpass the highly successful release of Between the Pipes last year. The 150 card base set works as each box does not yield a duplicate and collectors are able to complete most of the set. The cards also have a wide variety of subjects, lending itself to a great opportunity for IP of TTM signatures. Year in and year out, the Masked Men series offers a wonderful chase set. The vibrant pictures of the goalie masks create a wonderful display. The autographs (like H&P) have a tendency to stick to the card in front of it in a pack. This is due to the tight seal of the pack as well as the fact they are sticker autos. Bringing collectors closer to the game are enormous swatches as well as relics such as swatches from gloves, pads, and sticks. It will be amazing should

(Continued on page 14)



# Racing Product Review: 2010 Press Pass Eclipse

## BOX INFORMATION

24 packs per box

5 cards per pack

Current Retail Price: \$109.99-\$119.99 (online)

## RATINGS

Base - 5/5

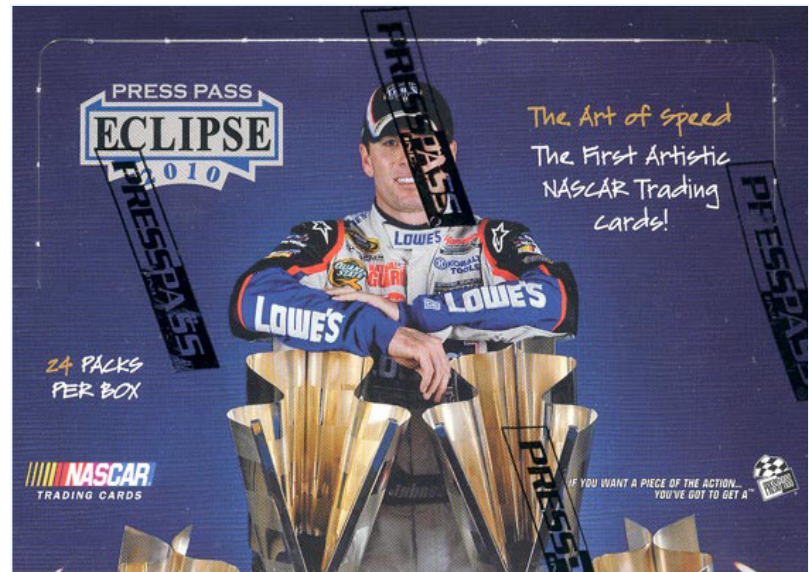
Design - 5/5

Fun - 4/5

Value - 3.5/5

Rebuy - 4/5

**Total - 21.25/25 (86%)**



Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOkb6g6-AVM>

## Artistic painting cards make up base set for revamped Eclipse product

By Tony Joyce  
aka Enigma

Coming off a successful revamp last year, Eclipse is back in 2010. Press Pass has gone in a different direction again with Eclipse, unveiling artistic painting cards for its base set. There are 6 subsets in the base set. There are the normal driver and car sets. After that, a subset called Anthology focuses on the various tracks around NASCAR and includes information on the backs of the most successful drivers there. That is followed by a set devoted to the Awards show in Las Vegas at the end of last season. Rounding it out is a photomosaic subset that takes various miniature pictures to recreate the face of a few of the drivers along with a set devoted to the drivers or teams who have made a change for 2010; it is a 90 card base set with no short prints.

Outside of the continuation of the Hall of Fame series (10 cards per release in 10 products), there are 3 insert sets in Eclipse. The first is called Cars. This 9-card set highlights some of the most popular cars on the track with tidbits of information about the driver and the car on the back. The color theme of the card is one of the primary colors of the car. Next is a series called Decade. This 8-card set aims squarely at showing off some of the elite drivers over the past ten years. Finally, there's Focus. This 6-card set focuses on the stalwarts of NASCAR today.

Each box of Eclipse yields one autograph and 3 race-used cards on average. The primary race-used pieces are tires and car covers. Burning Rubber continues to appear as it has in the previous 2 releases, consisting of a piece of tire from the winning car of a par-

ticular race in 2009. Replacing Solar Swatches is Spellbound. Spellbound is a series of cards where the various letters of a driver's name are used to house either a tire or car cover piece. Collectors have the chance to spell out the entire last name of a small assortment of drivers. Autographs from the 2010 year are typically found in a box, but if lucky, you could acquire a Signature Series card that will have a race-used item and an autograph. Replacing the Black Hole prize cards is a set called Press Pass Vault.

The changes last year to Eclipse created quite a buzz and anticipation for this year. Press Pass made some changes this year. Most were good, but not all. The painted base cards are wonderful. The checkerboard background enhances the driver pictures, and I also enjoy the

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# Official report from the Collectors' Showcase of America's March event

By *Ryan Evans*  
*aka Rabs*

I know a few other members here went to the Chantilly show the last weekend in March. I was unable to meet any of them, sadly, and it was my first time at the CSA show (they have 3 a year) and my largest show ever. I wasn't expecting to see so much memorabilia there as I did, including helmets and jerseys, but it was pretty neat. There was also a lot of unique artwork as well, such as 3D athlete portraits. You can see some of the guy's work here: Playaction.

I was there all three days; here are some of the pictures I took of the event:



People were out in droves to see what the show had to offer.



Autographed baseball were a hot item in Chantilly.

The athletes who were signing autographs were impressive. I saw Roger Staubach, Terry Bradshaw, Paul Hornung, Jerome Bettis, Herschel Walker, Mike Ditka, Doug Flutie, and more. The only one I got to meet and sign something for me was Brian Orakpo who I love since my favorite college is team is Texas and my favorite pro team is the Redskins (he played for one and now plays for the other). Here is a picture of me and him. I especially like the it since we did the "hook em horns" sign!



As far as what I picked up at the show, here are the goods:



Overall I was very glad I was able to attend the show. I plan on going back and had a really good time.

I honestly have spent more money on cards at other shows, but the atmosphere was different from a normal card show. There were tables everywhere, and being so close to so many famous athletes was amazing!

I would recommend anyone in the Virginia/Maryland area to try to make it out to the show at some point. It's a good time!



## The Choice is Back on the Ice

*By Karine Hains  
aka Pheeb888*

Unlike baseball and basketball, licensed hockey trading cards has been an exclusive business for the last five years. Yes, back in 2005 the National Hockey League Player Association and the National Hockey League signed an exclusivity deal with Upper Deck to be the sole license producer of NHL trading cards. This was long before the NBA signed such a deal with Panini and Major League Baseball inked a similar deal with Topps.

So after 5 years, has the exclusivity been a positive experience for the NHL? They tell us that it has been; however, today they announced that for the 2010-2011 season, 2 companies will have the right to produce NHL trading cards. Upper Deck retained their license, but is now joined by the newly crowned basketball heavyweight Panini. March's announcement reveals that this will be the situation for the upcoming hobby season, slotted to start in August with yet another Victory release from Upper Deck and a return of the once popular Score brand by Panini.

The news will likely be very well received in hobby circles because, to put it bluntly, Upper Deck has been receiving a fair amount of flak from collectors in the last few years. The general opinion has been that the monopoly allowed Upper Deck to become complacent and lazy when it came to consumer service. Of course, such criticism wasn't really reflect-



ed in the sales numbers as they still carried on bringing in the big bucks. Some will say that if customers were that displeased with Upper Deck they could just have stopped buying. The truth of the matter is however, that if one wanted a licensed product, they had nowhere else to turn to and they just had to buy from Upper Deck. Of course, there was still quality unlicensed product out there, most notably the "In The Game" or ITG brand, but it's just not quite the same thing. In short, the masses appeared to be craving choice on the licensed market.

Faced with this reality, the NHL couldn't really pull the license from Upper Deck. After all, they are selling the product well, but they nonetheless decided to give collectors an option. Panini succeeded in getting a second big North American sport license after bagging basketball last year. This is a huge deal for the Italian-based company and it will come as quite a blow for ITG who were no doubt hoping to regain their license.

Panini's license can sort of be considered as the dawn of a new

era. The announcement raises many questions. One of the major criticisms directed towards Upper Deck in the last year was that it just put out too many different brands; now that there are 2 licensed producers, will they both be overproducing? Will the end of the monopoly mean a greater quality control and a market improvement in customer service in Upper Deck? Having once again been ignored in the race to the license, will ITG carry on producing unlicensed release? I for one really hope so as they do put out fantastic material – and even though the lack of license hurts them, their cards are still highly sought after.

Overall, I see this announcement as great news for the hobby in general. I will welcome the option to choose from more than one manufacturer, and I will admit that I have been impressed by Panini's work since they became the main player in the basketball industry. I look forward to the spin they will put on their hockey line and to the announced new brands Adrenalyn and Certified, and of course the return of previous brands, which were once issued under Donruss, Pinnacle, Score and Pacific licenses. I'm also pleased to see Upper Deck retain their license because – say what you will – when they really want to, they can put mean product out there. Just think of the thrill you get when you open a tin of The Cup. Hopefully this means onwards and upwards for our favorite hobby!

# Change at Upper Deck Should Equal Change in Hobby — but will it?

By *J.R. Lebert*  
aka *jrlebert*

With the news that Upper Deck has lost its football license, the reaction from the hobby has been many, varied, and extremely vocal. This is a decision that doesn't just affect one company or one sport. This decision affects the hobby as a whole. It's my hope that this will be the dawning of a new era in our hobby, and in what we can and should expect from our hobby companies.

First, yes, UD's recent business practices were, in a word, deplorable. The whole Yu-gi-oh! deal really soured many collectors, not that I own (or would ever own) a single card. The fact that it came from the top down, and it was THE top, straight from Richard, made me think twice about ever buying their products again. The whole Ultimate Collection debacle in baseball, and their spat with MLB Properties, made me wonder yet again, and further question the integrity of UD's business practices.

Honestly, though, I'd like to first pose a question to all of you lashing out at UD: After all the stuff that has gone on, both with UD and with the issue of Topps putting SEAT pieces instead of bat pieces, and all the forgery and aftermarket changing out of jersey and patch pieces on cards, aren't you questioning your entire hobby, not just UD right now? Do we really know that Pujols patch/auto you just pulled was really a game-worn/used Pujols jersey, and not a \$200 Mitchell and Ness? If I were a company in financial ruin, such

as UD, or a company looking to improve my finances like we know Panini and Topps would want to do at every chance, why not cut those corners? Where is the system of checks and balances for us, the consumer? There is, obviously, no evidence to support my feeling, but all of this has me thinking, and I'd be shocked to find out I am the only one. I'd love the remaining companies to institute something that could put the collectors' minds at ease. If I pulled an Adrian Peterson/Barry Sanders dual patch/autograph #/10, I should be able to go to the company's website, look up my card, and watch it being made. Is it a bit more expensive for the company to do this? Sure. But imagine the consumer confidence we would have in such a company.

How many of you out there really use a Beckett to determine prices anymore? And how many of those people, especially for cards under \$50, get anything close to Beckett value, especially when listing on Ebay? Where should the collectors/hobbyists go to determine fair market value for their card, set, or collection? The fact is, our hobby is in shambles right now. All of it. UD is simply the most egregious offender.

Look over your collection from the past 20 years. Look back at the



innovation that UD has brought to the hobby. UD brought thousands of little kids into the basketball collecting world in the early 1990's. With your Happy Meal at McDonald's, you could get a pack of UD cards, and how awesome of a feeling was it to pull your first Michael Jordan card from McDonald's? Remember SPx, when it first came out, in the mid-1990s? How mind-blowing were those die-cut holograms? I spent hours holding those cards up to the light, watching the holograms move back and forth. As lame as it seemed, think about how ahead of its time Powerdeck was. Yes, I know, the concept of cards that were CD's was a flop, but have you popped one of those in your computer in the last 5 years? They actually stand the test of time. SP Authentic has become one of those rare staple brands, a brand that yes, while it may look remarkably similar to the year before it (I'm looking at you, 2004 and 2005 football!), you always knew what you were going to get, a quality product with ON-CARD autographs. UD was an innovator in the high end products. Remember the cherry wood boxes for the Lakers, Dodgers and Yankees Master Collection sets that came out in the early part of this decade? Or the one per pack bat cards? That was simply unheard of. And if you collect hockey, how amazing was that first year of The Cup? I will never forget going to UD's sponsored Heroes of Baseball card shows, or buying 1990 Upper Deck just to try

*(Continued on page 14)*



# My three minutes with the Stanley Cup

By *Matthew Tomkins*  
aka *reoddaï*

Back in February, the Stanley Cup came to town. It was right behind city hall and I was incredibly surprised at the tiny 4-5 person line up. There was a constant stream of people, but they came, saw and then left. I got some really nice photos and the opportunity to touch it.

What I was most excited about was seeing the engraved names of previous Stanley cup winners' names. I knew that they had every player's name on the cup, but I always thought that they would be incredibly tiny. Up close, they're rather large. I decided even before visiting the cup that I wanted some photos of those Stanley Cup players, but that is one shiny cup.

As I was looking for information about the Stanley Cup to write this article, I stumbled across the fact that there is more than one Stanley Cup. It turns out that there are 3 Stanley Cups. The original is in the Hockey Hall of Fame. There is a 'replica' which is a stand in for



the original when the original has to go places. Finally, there is the "Authenticated" or "Presentation" version. This is the one that is presented nowadays to the Stanley Cup champs and is then hoisted over their heads for the traditional skate around the rink. How do you know which one you're looking at? Unless you're in the Hockey Hall

of fame, you aren't looking at the original. The easiest way to tell between the replica and the presentation version is to find Mr. Basil Pocklington in the 1983-84 Edmonton Oilers. If you look at the Edmonton photo I included above, you'll see that Mr. Basil Pocklington's name has been covered with "X"s. That makes this the presentation version that every Stanley Cup champ has hoisted over their head for the past 50+ years. There's only one word for that.

Awesome.

For those die hard hockey collectors, nothing beats an in person meeting with the Stanley Cup. I hope to see the cup again in the future as I could see myself collecting photos of the Stanley Cup winning teams' names engraved on the cup. You can see the burgeoning gallery here.

My next goal will be some of the earlier cup winners and Dryden's rookie year cup. Plus, whatever else I can snap up in my next three minutes with the cup!

## Racing Product Review

*(Continued from page 8)*

photomosaic cards, although the faces don't come out clearly since it is a painted landscape. You do get either a gold parallel, insert, or a "hit" in almost every pack. However, it seems there are packs which are exact copies of a previous pack in the box and that's not exciting. I like seeing the return of the letter cards, but I still don't understand the rationale in making some cards numbered less than others. To heighten the case, perhaps? If so, that's a turn-off to driver collectors. Also, why car covers and tires? Tires should just remain with the Burning Rubber series. Adding more tires will lead to alien-

ating the racing collectors as they appear to be the most plentiful race-used item out there.

Once again, I'd like to thank our wonderful sponsors at Press Pass for giving us the opportunity to open and review this release. For more information on all their products, you can check them out at [www.presspassinc.com](http://www.presspassinc.com).

## Basketball Product Review

*(Continued from page 5)*

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



# Remembering Why We Love the Game

*By Ethan Cahn  
aka hhliving1101*

You know, as a collector, sometimes we forget what these games are about, and why we love them enough to spend our money on our heroes of the field.

Last week, I had the opportunity to take my son to a Minor League baseball game. It was the Savannah Sand Gnats vs. the West VA Power.

It wasn't just any father/son game, it was my son's 9th birthday party, so we had an entourage of about 12 in all.



Before the game, the Sand Gnats gave my son (Harrison) an autographed team ball and brought over one of the players to sign autographs for the kids.



Harrison was given the chance to do a few things during the game. The kid threw out the first pitch. Now I don't know about you, but I've never done that. He realized after he was in front of the stadium how special it was.

A very well-spoken and nice young man (can't believe I just wrote that) named Mark Cohoon (he's a pitcher for them – played Rc ball the end of last year) pitched and won the night before for the team!!

Harrison had the opportunity to throw out the first pitch

Harrison reared back and threw the pitch as

hard as he could – yes, still a little short (he's 9, LOL) – but pretty darn straight, and Wilmer Flores was able to reach it.



Around the 5th inning, the Sand Gnats event staff asked if he wanted to play one of the sideline games for his birthday. Of course he did, and he got to do that, too. Then he was treated to the entire stadium singing "Happy Birthday" to him. He was in awe...

After the 5th, everything was pretty much done. I then got to actually stop and take a look around. I was seeing friends all around, with giant smiles on their faces, and three generations of my family coming together (my parents were there as well). That is what it's all about: no worries, problems, or anything – just us all being together watching a baseball game.

Now, truth be told, we were torn who to root for as the Power's Closer is a Hilton Head Island Native (a Hometown boy), and his entire family was next to us. The Gnats lost, but this day will never be forgotten...

With all the recent changes in our hobby, I thought it would be a good reminder to us all why we started collecting, and why we love the sport. My son is now a baseball fan for life. A collector? Well, we'll work on that...

## Football Product Review

*(Continued from page 6)*

they pulled really is. Once again, I'd like to thank our wonderful sponsors at Press Pass for giving us the opportunity to open and review this release. For more information on their products, be sure to check them out at [www.presspassinc.com](http://www.presspassinc.com).

# Are Customized Cards Legit or Unethical?

*By Drew Hall  
aka Batman72*

As they say, desperate times call for desperate measures. Such is the case some card collectors find themselves in with uncertainty and paranoia invading our thoughts regarding our nation's economic recovery. We have learned through experience how to prioritize our hard-earned dollars and stretch them until they bleed. The sports card industry is raking in just 25% of what it once did at its peak in the early 1990's. That isn't even factoring in inflation. One part of this downfall is the result of the decline in the collectability of base cards. Base cards have become redundant, common, mundane, bland, whatever you want to call it. Unless you are a brand new collector or have a man-crush on a certain player, most consider them nothing but cardboard.

As a result some collectors have taken it upon themselves to spice up their base cards while quite possibly turning a profit in the process. Customized cards are sprinkled in throughout auction sites. Anyone with a sharp exacto knife and some glue most likely can create one. One example of a custom card

## Hockey Product Review

*(Continued from page 7)*

pieces of an actual mask get added someday.

Between the Pipes is obviously devoted to goalies only, but that shouldn't turn anyone away from it. There's a lot for everyone who enjoys hockey. With a base set full of bright colors, a mix of players from today to yesteryear, and the right amount of chase sets, collectors can find a lot of excitement and enjoyment in every box.

Also back is the He Shoots He Scores redemption. Collectors receive a HSHS point card in every pack not containing a relic. Once amassing 200 HSHS point cards, you can send them in to ITG and pick up a specially made relic card. There are typically only 30 cards with a production run of 20.

Once again, I'd like to thank our wonderful sponsors at In The Game for giving us the opportunity to open and review this release. For more information on all their releases, you can check them out at [www.itgtradingcards.com](http://www.itgtradingcards.com).

I have seen recently was Sammy Baugh's 2008 Upper Deck Masterpieces base card. The front of the card was cut so that the maker could fit an NFL Shield patch on the front of the card. The patch is obviously manufactured. The seller does clearly state that the card is custom made. Perhaps Sammy Baugh does not resonate with collectors as he used to, however. The card was priced at \$7.49 but did not sell. The interesting thing is that several other cards this particular seller has made have in fact sold, and sold well at that. A 2008 customized Joe Montana Masterpieces base card using the same format of a manufactured NFL patch attached to the card recently sold for over \$8.00. And it seems many of the buyers of these cards are happy with them.

With card companies using manufactured patches themselves these days, does it really matter if a card you purchase comes from a large card manufacturer or the average Joe collector? I can imagine Upper Deck would take issue with sellers manipulating and customizing their cards to make money. It can probably even be argued that making these custom cards and selling them for profit is illegal. I can definitely see an ethical argument against such a practice. As always though, collectors should make the call. Why not add a new dimension to a faltering hobby? See how creative you can get and share your works with other collectors. The most important thing is to keep the hobby fresh, exciting, and fun.

## Change at Upper Deck

*(Continued from page 11)*

and pull a Reggie Jackson Heroes card.

What the hobby as a whole has done with those innovations has crushed the market, but those were really important and fun innovations at the time. Now, you can't go two packs without falling over a plain white or black jersey card numbered to 99 from a \$50 pack, which is considered your box's big hit, or the one per case auto of three offensive linemen. The hobby has been flooded with jerseys, autos, bats, patches, bases, balls, masks, seats, caps, pants, and helmets attached to every card in every place possible.

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## Case breaks and Gridiron Glory contest noted

By John Schinigo  
aka StainLss

Hey there – thanks for reading the football section of the Sports Card Forum magazine. The NFL season is starting up with a new class of talented players and lots of interesting free agency moves. There are many entertaining topics being discussed in the football forum.



We will also be holding the second year of Gridiron Glory, a Sports Card Forum contest exclusive to the football forums. Here's the Web address for last year's contest: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=884235>

[showthread.php?t=884235](http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=884235)

Congrats to Kyle (footballcardfreak) for being the 2009 Gridiron Glory Winner! He will surely be tough competition for anyone looking to be named the next Gridiron Glory Champion.

The football team will also be running a Guess the Score on a weekly basis and many other contests throughout the year. Check out the football contests forum for more information and game rules.

Don't forget the football team is also putting on group case breaks. This is run by football team assistant manager rchurchward (Ryan). If you are interested in participating in a group break, and have an idea of a product you would like Ryan to open, feel free to send a PM to Ryan or any of the managers/assistant managers on the football team!

### Change at Upper Deck

*(Continued from page 14)*

It's an odd feeling as UD leaves the football market, and perhaps the hobby. Yes, we all hate sticker autographs, but EVERYONE is doing it, not just UD. Topps Platinum football may be my favorite football product this year, but on those patch/autos? Stickers. Innovation from Panini? Not yet. And I'm not sure I blame them. They are building a foundation in the market. I'm sure there were thousands of you, in unison, when you found out Panini was entering into the market, who said the exact same thing I did: "The sticker company?" But because they have relied on popular brands from the

past, Contenders, National/ Timeless Treasures, Elite, soon to be Crown Royale, and those really neat 1989 Score themed rookies, they are slowly gaining our trust and confidence as a manufacturer.

I hope the loss of UD doesn't just mean one less company in the hobby. I hope it means we begin to expect and RECEIVE more from our companies still left in the hobby.

Let's have a few more low end products to get kids back in the hobby, and let's not just call them Topps or UD base brand. Let's put time and effort into low end stuff again. Let's call on these companies for open access and more

accountability to the consumer. Let's call for an end to exclusive autograph contracts, and far fewer sticker autographs. Let's put more into the design of the card, how many jerseys, autographs, patches, etc. we will have in our sets, and who we can pull. No offense to all the offensive lineman, relief pitchers, backup defenseman, and wash-out lottery picks, but let's make the tough pulls big hits of big players. Let's try and bring set builders back in the mix again. Let's make parts of our hobby more affordable to everyone, because right now, everyone is struggling.

Let's have a hobby again, rather than what we have now: a mess.



# My 2010 Spring Training TTM Success Team

By *Mike Greene*  
aka *indyreds*

Every baseball spring training, I am thrilled to see baseball return, and so I send a large number of autograph requests to Florida and Arizona. It results in a nice steady flow of successes coming in my mailbox and I am always amazed at some of the great returns. This season was no different as my mailbox had produced some wonderful additions to my collection. I had collected them all into one place this spring and not filed them away into holders and boxes yet. When I did finally get to organizing them I realized that I could have a pretty nice baseball team from the players who signed for me this year.

I'm going to start my baseball spring autograph success team with the infielders. My first baseman and a true slugger is Adrian Gonzalez. He has increased his homerun totals every year he has been in the bigs and pounded 40 baseballs over the outfield fence in 2009.

The second baseman for my team is not a bad player either: Brandon Phillips joined the 30/30 club with 30 homeruns and 30 stolen bases in the 2007 season. He has had at least 20 homeruns and stolen bases each of the last 2 seasons. Last season he hit a career high 98 RBI for the Reds and might be the most recognizable player on their roster.

Shortstop might be a weakness on my team, but I still found a solid young player in stack of successes

## 2010 Spring TTM team

**Catcher:** Buster Posey

**Firstbase:** Adrian Gonzalez

**Secondbase:** Brandon Phillips

**Short stop:** Alexei Ramirez

**Thirdbase:** Mat Gamel

**Outfield:** Grady Sizemore, Curtis Granderson, Chris Coghlan

**Starting pitchers:** Mark Buehrle, Edwin Jackson, Jeff Francis, David Price, Brian Matusz

**Relief pitchers:** John Maine, Johnny Cueto, Pat Neshek

**Closers:** Andrew Bailey, Bobby Jenks

**Coaches:** Tony La Russa, Sparky Anderson

to drop in this position: Alexei Ramirez will bring some speed and a nice glove to my roster as he takes the other middle infield position.

The next selection is the first in my lineup based on what a prospect might do and not what a player has already done. Mat Gamel would be my selection to play the hot corner. Topps selected him as their 2008 Minor League player of the year. He started to show what he could do for the Brewers last season and should become a fixture at 3rd for the Brewers for years to come.

Following along the lines of needing some good young talent on a team, my catcher started the season in AAA, but I am sure he will be playing for the Giants before the year is over. Buster Posey has way too much talent, and unlike the Giants, I would plug him into my everyday lineup right

now!

The outfield will be a real strength with my next player in it. This player had a poor injury plagued season last year, but in 2008 he won a Silver Slugger award, his 2nd Gold Glove award, and he played in his 3rd All-Star game. This Indians star is also the 2nd 30/30 guy on my team. Grady Sizemore was a shocking autograph success for me this spring and possibly the best all around player on the spring success team.

Grady will force my next outfielder to switch to a corner outfield position: Curtis Granderson made his 1st All-Star team in 2009. He also has joined the Evil Empire and now is wearing the pinstripes of the Yankees. There were a number of doubts about this young star remaining a possible success with the change to that huge market, but he came through. Hopefully being in that lineup will help propel him to make many more All-Star teams.

It is tough to select my last outfield position, but I am going with a player that very few collectors had even heard of when the 2009 season started. Chris Coghlan came out of nowhere for the Marlins and finished sixth in the NL batting race. He did collect the NL Rookie of the Year Award in 2009, and should the Marlins challenge the Phillies in 2010, this player will help lead them.

It took me a long time to warm to the whole idea of needing a DH on a team. I have grown older and

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## My 2019 Spring Training TTM Success Team

*(Continued from page 16)*

wiser over the years and now realize it allows us fans to enjoy some of our stars long after they have lost the ability to stay in the lineup and play the field every day. This next guy has never gotten enough credit for how great he has been. He currently is sitting at 566 homeruns and 1570 runs batted in during his lifetime. Somehow he has only been on 5 All-Star teams? This is one of the true sluggers of our generation and one who has never had the steroid accusations floating around him. Jim Thome might be in the Hall of Fame someday and definitely is on my roster. It is unreal that someone who has hit that many homeruns still takes time to answer his fan mail! It just goes to show a little about how he feels about the game and the fans!

My starting pitcher rotation lacks a true ace, but has a solid group of arms. Mark Buehrle and his 4 All-Star games would be my number one starter. He is in his 10th season with the White Sox and has been able to post a winning record in every season outside of 2006 when he was one game under .500. He has posted a 3.80 era over those seasons and has started at least 30 games every season since joining their rotation in 2001.

Edwin Jackson would be the 2nd starter. He was 13-9 for that poor Tigers team in 2009 with a 3.62 era. I hope that the return to the NL with Diamondbacks will allow him to better the 161 strikeouts he registered in 2009.

Jeff Francis would be a real nice number 3 starter and I believe he

will win the comeback player of the year award in 2010.

David Price has one of the best young arms in baseball and had a solid season last year. He would have to win the Cy Young to equal all the hype he had gotten after his performance in the World Series a few years back, but he will fit nicely as my number 4 starter.

The final starter in my rotation is not a reach. This is a player that I have as the possible 2010 AL Rookie of the Year. Brian Matusz now has wins in 7 of his first 9 decisions with the Orioles. He already looks like a veteran out there on the mound and might be the best pitcher they have had since Jim Palmer hung up the cleats. I am happy with the overall depth of the starting rotation.

The bullpen is very important for any team. Here are a couple of arms to use as middle and long relievers. John Maine and Johnny Cueto just missed my rotation and would end up in my bullpen. They both deserve a spot somewhere on the team.

I could not make this team and not find a way to add this next player to it: Pat Neshek has been wonderful to autograph hounds of all types. He also deserves a spot here with his on the mound performance. He has over a strikeout per inning pitched in his career, an 11-5 record and a 2.82 era. Definitely one of the best short relievers in baseball.

Closers are the heart and souls of any bullpen and I could not make my selection here. I have a bullpen by comity. Last year a reliever was

able to win the AL Rookie of the Year award! Andrew Bailey went 6-3 with a 1.84 era and saved 26 games in 2009. I was shocked that he was still signing autograph request sent to him in the spring of 2010!

Bobby Jenks is my other closer. He has saved over 40 games twice for the White Sox and is off to another great start this season. He is a 2-time All-Star, and like many relievers, Bobby Jenks has gotten no hobby respect.

Every team needs a manager and I will select one of the best ever both for autograph collectors and baseball historians. Tony La Russa has always been great to his fans. He should have a great number of fans as he is one of 2 managers to win a World Series for teams in different leagues. Sparky Anderson is the other. He is 3rd on the all time managerial win list in baseball history. He was the manager of the Oakland A's team that won the earthquake World Series. I could only imagine the stories he could tell with all the years he has spent in the sport.

Well, there is my 2010 spring training success team. I still have a large number of requests out and hope to upgrade a few positions with more returns coming in. It might not be able to win the AL East, but it could put up a run in the NL Central. I hope that you had a good number of requests as well and invite you to post your spring training success team at sportscardforum.com in the autograph central section. I would love to see how yours compares to mine.



# Comfort cards - we all have them

*By Stephen Duell  
aka spuds1961*

I know a lot of us started collecting before all the bells and whistles were ever put into packs.

It got me to thinking what cards that really have no value are very valuable to the person who has them.

My mother, like most others, is responsible for cards of the late 1960's early 1970's having value as they sit rotting somewhere in the Staten Island dump.

I also remember one day she bought me a complete set of Topps 1986 to try and make up for it.

Nice try, mom, but not even close.

This is where my comfort card theory comes in: it is not that big

pull that I'm talking about, although we all love the thrill of that.

I'm talking about that card that can be found in any shop's bargain bin, but means the world to you.

I collect the Yankees in baseball so anything I pull of them is considered a comfort card. Some of my favorite cards are your guys who didn't see the field that much but still found their way into a baseball card set.

A lot of these cards can bring back great memories for me and other collectors.

I just found a couple of Brian Doyle cards and it made me smile, as here was a utility infielder who didn't amount to much, but he did have one great playoff run as a fill-in for an injured Willie Randolph

- and yes, he has a world series ring.

I would love to see what other collectors consider their comfort cards and how they acquired them. Collecting is one of my little guilty pleasures that has no boundaries.

It can hold that superstar autographed game used patch or it can hold that bench guy just pining for a couple of at-bats - but guess what?

In this crazy collectors world, sometimes the bench guy's card is more coveted than the superstar's game used autograph.

Here's hoping to a great restart to the magazine, and I hope some of you found this an enjoyable read.

Happy collecting, and take care.



## Rookie Debut

*By Matthew Cawley  
aka HerdsMan87*

Have you won a new member contest in the year 2010? Do you think your fun is over? NOT SO FAST! The new member team is proud to introduce a year long contest for any member that won a new member contest in 2010!

Basically, this is a chance to pin winners against winners to see who comes out the top new member trader of 2010! Trades with ANY kind of sports related items will count for your total! To gain points in this contest, you will have to trade with as many members as possible. You will earn 1 point for trading with different members (2 trades with the same person=1 point). If you are the winner, you will have a pick of some awesome cards: from NFL logo shields and triple autos to a triple threads jersey/autos of a former ROY/MVP!

And basketball fans, look out for a new contest coming in May!



## A Word From the Editor

*By Khendra Murdock  
aka JammingJames23*

I hope you liked the contents of this special "come-back" issue. The heart of the magazine always included Tony's box break reviews and various articles from our members, so I made sure to keep those elements intact.

Let me know via Private Messaging on the forums or through e-mail (Khendradm@aol.com) if there are other features you'd like to see incorporated into future issues, or if you would like to see any changes to current material. Some questions you may want to consider: How often do you want to see the magazine - is a monthly issue the best way to go? How long do you prefer the magazine to be? What layout style do you prefer to see?

Also, if you want to write an article, feel free to do so! Members whose articles appear in the magazine get CC (Card Cash) rewards. Post your rough drafts of any articles here: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/forumdisplay.php?f=446>

Happy collecting!