

# Collector's

## FEATURE

THE NHL MUST BAN ALL  
HEADSHOTS

BY RICHARD MCADAM

"It's the players --- they have  
no respect"

*Dana Cherry*

"headshots have no place  
in hockey"

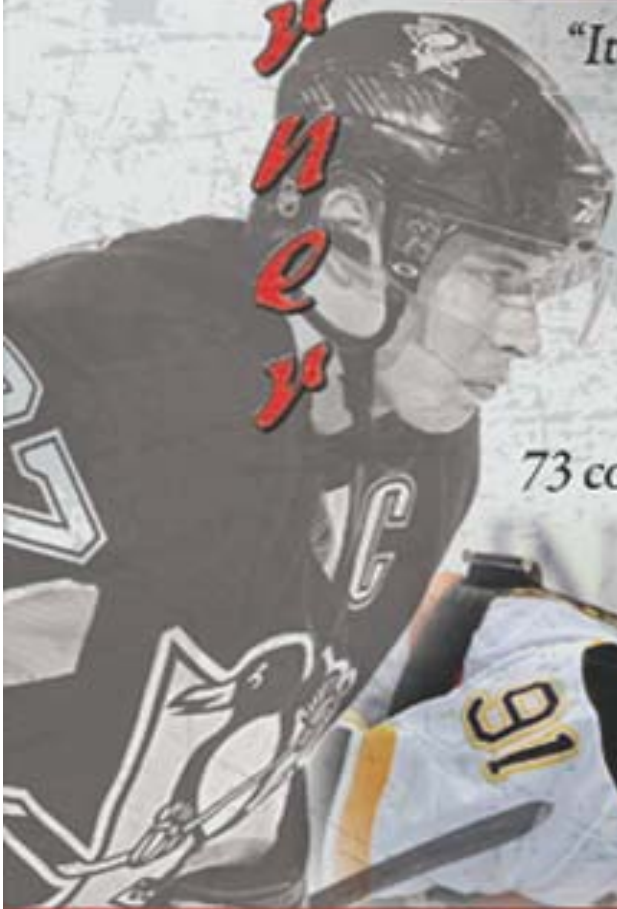
*Ray Shero*

"We've been vigilant on headshots  
the past few years"

*Gary Bettman*

73 concussions in the NHL  
this season

*Montreal Gazette*



o  
n  
e  
y



Reebok

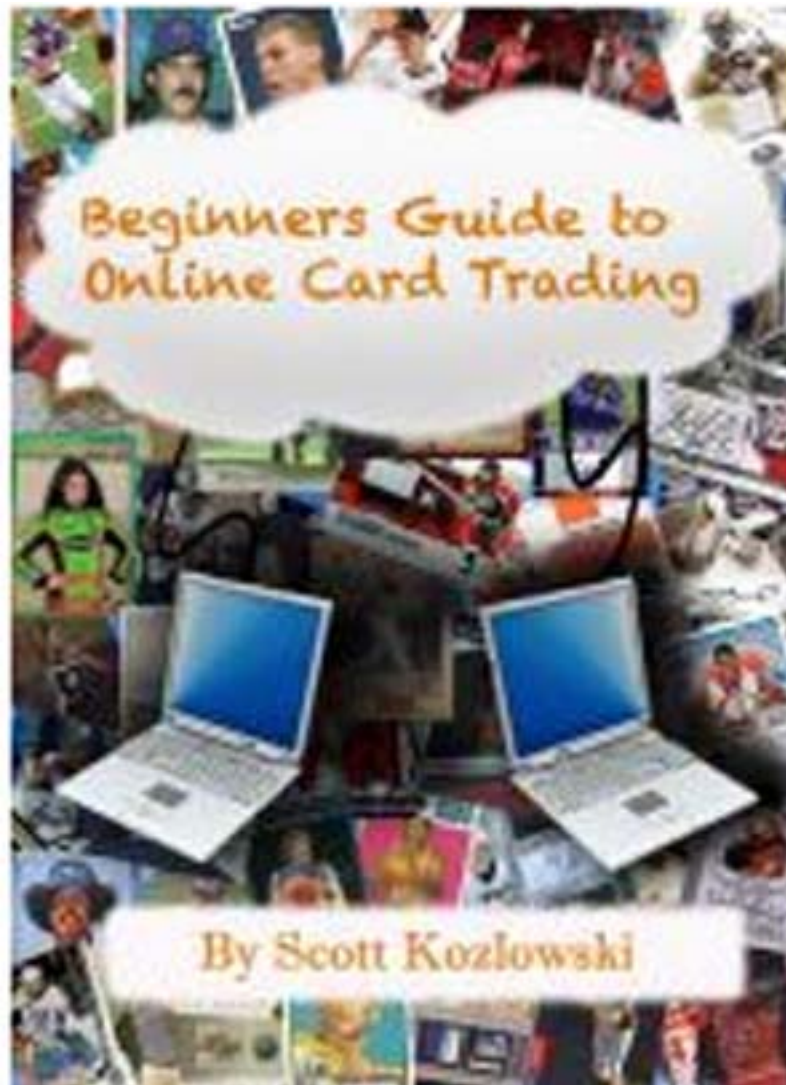


Université  
de Montréal



April 2011

Available at [www.smashwords.com](http://www.smashwords.com), Scott Kozlowski's guide for new online traders!



\$4.95

**Inside**

**Editorial p.4**  
**Card Show Report p.5**  
**The NHL Must Ban All Headshots p.8**  
**Coming up! - Release Calendar p.15**  
**Panini Crow Royale Hockey Product Review p.16**  
**ITG Hits Baseball Product Review p.19**  
**Panini Playoff Contenders Football Product Review p.21**  
**Panini Playoff Patches Basketball Product Review p.24**  
**Book Review p. 26**

**The Core**

**Trader Feedback and Reputation p. 28**  
**Rinkside p.29**  
**Courtside p.31**  
**On the Gridiron p.35**  
**Around the Track p.36**  
**On the Diamond p.40**  
**From the Mailbox p.42**  
**The Heat is On! p.44**  
**The Problem with Today's... p.46**  
**It's About the Memories, not the Money p.48**  
**NHL Relocation to Canada...p.49**  
**Enough is Enough, the NHL Must... p.51**  
**The Naked Pass p.54**  
**An Open Letter to the NHL p.56**  
**Coming Up! p.59**

**The Team**

**Editor and Publisher:**  
**Karine Hains**

**Writing Team**

**Richard McAdam**  
**Scott Kozlowski**  
**Sean McCafferty**

**Team Contact**

**Jay Weger**  
**Richard McAdam**  
**Stephen Taylor**  
**Brad Wingate**  
**Brian Dawson**  
**Kevin O'Connor**

**Graphics and Design**

**Jared Smith**  
**Houng Ngui**



## **Big Month Ahead**

**By Karine Hains aka Pheeb888**

Another month is in the books! The NHL season is nearing its completion and some of the teams are getting ready for the spring dance while others are thinking about their holiday arrangements. We were treated to MLB's opening day just a few days ago and as always, the boys of summer are ready to take us through their marathon of a season while the Sunday heroes are left wondering if they'll be able to ply their trade this autumn...

For me, the last month was special, for the first time since I moved back to Canada, I was able to attend a card show. I had an absolute blast tracking down cards for my PC but also telling everyone who would listen about Sports Card Forum. In fact, I enjoyed that part of it so much that I have made enquiries to SCF's owner to see if we could potentially have an SCF booth at the next Fall Expo in Toronto. Why not the Spring one you say? Well, simply put, if something deserves to be done, it deserves to be done well so we need some time to plan before taking Toronto by storm. So you've heard it here first, SCF will be at the Fall Expo! If you live in the Toronto area and plan to be there, make sure to let us know as part of the fun is not only to tell people about the site but also to meet fellow members and finally put a face on the various user names. We expect to see a lot of you there and would love to make a few in person deals while we're at it, bring those Roy and Brodeur cards to me!

As for the upcoming month, I've got big expectations for it, how could I not? It's time for the playoffs! You know, that time of the year where there is hockey on television each and every single night and each game is played like it is a matter of life and death (that's because it is such a matter). Sure, everyone's aim is to lift the holy grail come June but the fact remain, just getting to the spring dance is an exciting affair. While my team certainly did not win the big prize last year, they definitely took me on a spectacular emotional roller-coaster and I am more than willing to go along for the ride again this year! Couple that with the fact the April should also see a few excellent Hobby released (Between the Pipes and Ultimate Collection to name a few) and all the ingredients are reunited for an excellent month! Well, for us hockey folks that is...the release calendar does seem pretty bare when it comes to the other sports unfortunately but hey, it just means more for them in the later months I guess.

In this issue, you will find a review for 4 different products and also for a book. Yup, I said a book. Rather unusual in these pages but you see, one of SCF's staffers ( scottkoz20) has put pen to paper to come up with a beginner's guide to online trading. I invite you to check out the review and perhaps to buy the book itself to make your own opinion on it. You will also notice that there is a lot of talk about violence in hockey this month but can you blame us with everything that has been happening lately?

Next month, you can expect a review of Between the Pipes Hockey and perhaps if Ultimate Collection if it does come out on time. I will also attempt to find out more from Upper Deck about their new selling practice as it has collectors everywhere outside of the USA somewhat worried...Until then, enjoy this issue!



**Card Show Report: Montreal Pierre Chabonneau Centre March 26th and 27th**  
**By Karine Hains aka Phebs888**



For us card collectors, attending a card show always makes for a fun day but I'll tell you what makes it even more special; attending it to promote Sports Card Forum. Not only do you get to tell plenty of people about an awesome site but chances are you get to meet members in person as well, allowing you to put faces on the numerous user names you see on a daily basis. Last weekend, I was lucky enough to attend a card show in Montreal to spread the word about SCF.

Luc, another moderator on the site, came to me back in December asking if I would be willing to help out at the show in March if he decided to set up. It took me about 3.5 seconds to reply "of course!" and am I glad I did. The show took place at the Pierre Charbonneau Centre in Montreal, this was the spring edition but each year there is also a fall edition. I got to Montreal on Friday afternoon and we went over to the Centre to set up in the evening. We brought two monitors and two laptops to display the demo about SCF to the people at the show, a life size replica of a Habs player, fliers to distribute, printed copy of the SCF magazine and one display case in which we put all of our favorite cards just to show people what you can get by trading/buying on the site. This turned out to be a stroke of genius as our cards sure made people stop by! By 9.00 PM we were all set-up and ready for the two hectic days ahead.

Luc, another moderator on the site, came to me back in December asking

On Saturday, the show started at 10.00 but we headed over at 8.00 to ensure that everything was ready and also to have a look at what the merchants had on display, it's always good to get dibs on some sweet cards! By 9.15, we were completely ready and we had about 45 minutes to do some reckon on the different tables. 10.00 came around soon enough though and the gates were open letting in a steady flow of avid collectors. There were plenty of people around some were all about the cards while others were autograph chasers who had made the trip to get a signature from Johnny Bower, Marianne St-Gelais, Jacques Demers or Marian Stastny.

Our table caught the eye of plenty of curious, we received plenty of offers to buy some of our cards, Luc's prized asset (a Ken Dryden cut auto 1/1) was generating plenty of talk and had he wanted to, he could have made an easy \$4000 there. Personally, I liked the time where this one guy came to the table and asked him how much he wanted for it, as per usual, he said: "It's not for sale", then the guy took a look at the display case and said: "Actually, how much for the whole display case?" He was shocked to



find out that he could not get us to budge and looked at us like we were crazy...guess he has not seen true collectors often...

It was not all about turning down offers though, once people were at our table, we took the time to tell them all about the great features on SCF; the trade manager, the feedback system, the inventory manager, the magazine, the friendly community and anything else we could think of. I'm happy to report that they were very receptive and a lot of them left the table with either of our user name on their flier in case they had questions once on the site. Hopefully, we'll see a nice influx of new members from Québec in the near future! While we (hopefully) recruited new members, we also got to meet existing ones. It's always great to finally meet the people you talk to so much on a daily basis. Although some of them I had already met in the past. Not only did I get to put a face on a few user names but I also manage to make a few in-person deals, you have to love it when cards just come to you and you don't even have to look for them! Bossy'scards, Phill44, c\_bass22, The Messiah, Habsmtl09 and max91ess are just some of the members we had the pleasure to see stop by the booth.

While we did spend a good chunk of the day taking care of business, we just could not resist improving

our PC. We took turns venturing away from the table, each with our sight set on particular targets; while Luc was focused on finding Dryden cards and items, I only had two names in mind; you guessed it Patrick Roy and Martin Brodeur. Being in Habs territory, I was sure I would find plenty of Roy cards, however I had not realized that some would be overpriced...that was a bit of a disappointment but I'm not one to wallow! I bravely took on a Brodeur quest instead and I fared quite well! The first day saw me add 3 new Brodeur autos to my collection and a game-used while I only got a Roy auto from max91ess (that one was not overpriced!). I did toy with the idea of getting a Roy autographed puck but at \$125, it was somewhat expensive...I told the guy I would think about it and later in the day he came by the booth and noticed my collection, he said:



-“A puck would sure look good with all that!”

“It sure would, but it's a little bit out of my price range for now...” I replied

“Well, make me an offer and we'll see” He said

“Alright, I will tomorrow...”



And back to his table he went...I was left pondering what would be a reasonable offer for the rest of the day and much of the night...I can be somewhat obsessive when I truly want something.



Back to the grind I went after that chat, selling the site as well as I could, I swear people's eyes lit up when I showed them some of my cards and said this one is from Sweden (Topps Chrome rookie reprint auto bought from Razzamaztaz) and this one is from Germany (the Cup trio patch of Roy/Brodeur and Price obtained in a trade with Marko), my big selling line was: "SCF opens the world to you, no need to only trade in Montreal anymore". While the morning was just crazy, the traffic slowed down in the afternoon from 2 PM, it kind of was a welcome break as I

thought I was going to lose my voice by that point. It also allowed us to do some more shopping in the afternoon before heading back to Luc's at 6.00. We were both fairly knackered so it really wasn't a late night but that allowed us to be fighting fit for the next day!

On Sunday, there was only one signer but quite a big one; Jean Béliveau who is as popular as ever in Montreal. Before he started to sign though, I had some serious business to tend to and I went straight over to the guy who was selling the Roy puck. I went for quite a low offer and in the end, I got my puck for \$80 which I thought was a great deal (with a certificate of authenticity and hologram of course) that was my big purchase of the day and I only added one Brodeur auto and plenty of inserts from various dealers just dealing game-used cards I had no use for. I also made an in-person deal with Habsmtl09 for a Brodeur/Luongo dual game-used.

The day was fairly busy people wise, but not as busy as Saturday, at the booth anyway. There were plenty of people queuing to get Jean Beliveau's autograph though and I even saw a celebrity! OK, minor celebrity, a player from the Quebec team in the Quebec-Montreal reality hockey show. The dealers seemed pretty pleased with their weekend overall, they were a pretty nice bunch, even though one wore a Charra jersey and another one a Flyers one...but hey no one's perfect. While I was at a table marvelling at some Brodeur autographs a dealer was chatting with a fan:

"Ouch...how about your Canadiens last night?" (They had lost 2-0 to the Caps, losing by shut-out for a third straight time)

"Yeah it was pretty brutal..."

"There's got to be something wrong with the team at this stage..."

"Yeah...probably something going on in the dressing room..."

At that point, I just could not help myself and I had to say: "Yup, it's called Scott Gomez." and that's how I got myself a great price on my last Brodeur autograph for the weekend. Now that everything is said and done, I would say that this was a great success both for me personally and for SCF. What's next for SCF? Well, it's safe to say that some of the American staffers will no doubt set-up at the Nationals in Chicago this summer. I personally won't be able to afford to go but if I have a say in the future projects, I'd love to see SCF at the Toronto Fall Expo...Stay tuned, I'll keep you posted!



**The NHL Must Ban All Headshots**  
**By Richard McAdam aka RGM81**

It was just a little over a year ago that Sidney Crosby scored the goal of a generation, lifting Team Canada to a dramatic victory at the Vancouver Olympics. Today, the NHL's best player and major marketing vehicle is out indefinitely due to the effects of post-concussion syndrome. On January 1st he was hit in the head by the elbow of David Steckel, a blindside hit – no penalty was assessed on the player. On January 5th he was hit from behind by Victor Hedman and his head struck the glass – no penalty was assessed on the player. We do not definitively know whether it was the first hit, the second hit, or both that induced the concussion on Crosby; I am of the belief that he actually suffered two concussions, one from each hit. For there to be absolutely no consequences to the players that have ended Crosby's season (while not officially announced, we need to look at this practically: it is mid-March and he is still not symptom-free) is an absolute travesty and a miscarriage of justice. It should be a clarion call that the National Hockey League must improve upon the headshot rule and move to eliminate all hits to the head.

“It's Part of the Game”



There was a time when hockey fans would somewhat regularly a disturbing image on their television screen and not give much of a second thought beyond, “Keep your head up, kid.” That image would be of a player that had just been on the wrong end of a thunderous bodycheck that targeted their head, flopping and flailing around on the ice like a newborn baby deer. Such hits were celebrated, a trumpeting of how tough a game hockey was and how tough you had to be to play the game. When Scott Stevens obliterated Paul Kariya in the 2003 Stanley Cup Finals with a check in which Kariya's head was targeted, the ESPN commentators noted that Kariya “never saw that coming because Stevens came from his right and

he was looking left.” As much as they lauded Stevens' physical prowess, when Kariya returned later in the game and scored a key goal, he was hailed to an even greater extent.

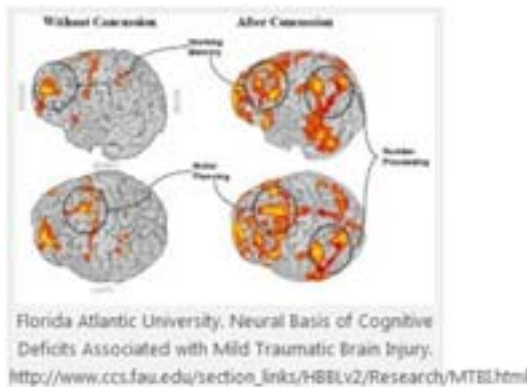
Kariya suffered a concussion on the play, one of several during his career. In today's NHL, he almost surely would not have been allowed back on the ice after the hit. Indeed, Kariya has chosen to sit out the entire 2010-11 season in order to recover from post-concussion syndrome in the hopes of returning to play hockey next season and beyond. For his part, Stevens would almost surely have been ejected from the game and likely received supplementary discipline from the NHL for a blindside hit to the



head. But back in 2003, those hits were simply “part of the game” and were considered acceptable. Injuries sustained to the players were said to be of their own fault, for either not being aware of their surroundings or for having their head down. In the machismo world of the NHL, blaming the victim ignored the problem and shifted the focus away from long-term injuries to a lack of toughness.

Throughout that era, careers were shortened due to concussions. Brett Lindros had to retire at the age of 20, after only 51 NHL games, due to post-concussion syndrome. His older brother, Eric, suffered numerous concussions throughout his career, and missed an entire season to recover from a massive check delivered by, you guessed it, Scott Stevens. While the Lindros brothers are the most famous and well-known players of the era to have careers ended by concussions, they were certainly not the only ones. Among many others, Adam Deadmarsh, Pat LaFontaine, Keith Primeau, Jason Botterill, Petr Svoboda, Brad Werenka, and ultimately Stevens himself all had to retire prematurely due to post-concussion syndrome. Some of these players were injured accidentally, but others were retired by blows to the head that resulted in significant brain trauma. Yet the NHL did nothing to address the problem. It is not entirely their fault, as the science involving brain injuries was not fully developed in that era, but they should have moved quicker to protect the livelihood of their players.

### The Science of Concussions



It is really only in recent years that we have made great scientific advances in studying the human brain and its reaction to trauma. There has been considerable discussion in the scientific community about methods of prevention and what happens to the brain in the aftermath of being concussed. To date, unfortunately, there is no real method of healing, so that leaves us to focus on how to prevent the injuries and how to mitigate the symptoms one endures when going through post-concussion syndrome. An examination of what a concussion is would be appropriate here. Simply, a concussion is a brain injury caused

by a sudden jarring blow that causes the brain to slam against the inside wall of the skull. This can result in a bruise to the brain, along with severing nerve endings that causes the brain to literally misfire, making even simple chores very difficult for a concussed person. Not all blows to the head will result in a concussion, but since the brain floats inside the skull any jarring blow can trigger an injury that may not meet the criteria of a concussion. The image on the left shows the areas of the brain that are operating when a person performs a simple arithmetical calculation, before and after a concussion

This is a very striking image – the brain is literally hyperactive trying to perform what would otherwise be a routine task. Those who have suffered a concussive are often sensitive to light, unable to travel,



and may find themselves repeating themselves asking simple questions. There are many other symptoms involved in a concussion, and they make daily living an almost unbearable labour. Professional wrestler Bret Hart described his early experience with the concussion that ultimately ended his career as follows:

People with concussions are the last ones to figure out how badly hurt they are. I was more responsible than anyone for downplaying my condition to myself and everyone else. Somewhere inside me, a fearful voice cried out that I was seriously hurt, but that same voice warned me to quit listening to my brain because it was my brain itself that was damaged...I drifted through every day in a pale-faced, sweaty, head-pounding stupor, pacified to the point of numbness by the four Advils I took every three hours.

Bret Hart. *Hitman: My Real Life in the Cartoon World of Wrestling*. Toronto: Random House, 2007, p.510.

What is additionally frightening about concussions is that once a person has suffered a first concussion, they are increasingly susceptible to future concussions. It reaches a point where an athlete can be risking their lives every time they step on to the field or the ice because of the injuries they have previously sustained. This was the case with Eric Lindros. After the Stevens hit, many felt that it was inevitable that he would end up injured again. It was only a matter of time. Yet the desire for the athlete to compete, and the absence of an outside force (i.e. a doctor) telling him that he could not safely resume competition, was strong enough that he was willing to go back on to the ice and risk further, possibly even permanent and/or debilitating, injury.

### Enough is Enough

The impetus for change in dealing with headshots did not come until October 2009, when Mike Richards delivered a blindside hit to the head of David Booth. Booth laid motionless on the ice for several minutes and was out of action for some time. He returned in February 2010, only to receive another concussion after a hit by Montreal Canadiens defenceman Jaroslav Spacek that forced him out for the rest of the season. Richards was not penalized on the play, nor did he receive supplementary discipline. However, in the court of public opinion he was vilified, and fans and the media demanded the NHL change its stance on hits to the head. Nothing happened.

It was not until Matt Cooke delivered a similar blindside hit to the head of Boston Bruins forward Marc Savard that the NHL finally took action. Because there was nothing in the rule book at the time of the hit to Savard, Cooke went 100% unpenalized. Even though he is a player with a history of dangerous play causing injury to others, who has since been suspended on two separate occasions for attempts to injure other players, he emerged scot-free from that event. The only solace Bruins fans could take in the incident that ended the season of their best player was the vigilante justice distributed when Thrashers forward Evander Kane one-punch KO'd Cooke later in the season.



The NHL was, and still remains, far behind the curve when it comes to headshots in hockey. In international play, all hits to the head are penalized with a major penalty and a game misconduct, plus a minimum one-game suspension. There is no provision for “north-south” hits or blindside hits – if you hit a player in the head or neck area in international hockey, you’re out of the game and subject to further supplementary discipline. While some view this as excessive in certain circumstances—i.e. Shea Weber was once ejected from a game only a minute into the action for a hit to the head; he would receive a 3-game suspension, which was in effect a 4-game ban due to how early the hit came—it leaves an absolutely strong message that hits to the head are intolerable in the international game.

So when the NHL announced Rule 48, many felt that it was simply a first step that did not go far enough. Here is the text of the rule:

#### Rule 48 – Illegal Check to the Head

48.1 Illegal Check to the Head – A lateral or blind side hit to an opponent where the head is targeted and/or the principal point of contact is not permitted.

48.2 Minor Penalty – There is no provision for a minor penalty for this rule.

48.3 Major Penalty – For a violation of this rule, a major penalty shall be assessed (see 48.4).

48.4 Game Misconduct – An automatic game misconduct penalty shall be assessed whenever a major penalty is assessed under this rule.

48.5 Match Penalty – The Referee, at his discretion, may assess a match penalty if, in his judgment, the player attempted to or deliberately injured his opponent with an illegal check to the head.

48.6 Fines and Suspensions – Any player who incurs a total of two (2) game misconducts under this rule, in either regular League or playoff games, shall be suspended automatically for the next game his team plays. For each subsequent game misconduct penalty the automatic suspension shall be increased by one game.

If deemed appropriate, supplementary discipline can be applied by the Commissioner at his discretion (refer to Rule 28).

National Hockey League. Official Rules – Rule 48: Illegal Check to the Head. <http://www.nhl.com/ice/page.htm?id=64063>

The main weakness of the NHL headshot rule is that there is room for an official’s discretion. I have spoken previously of my lack of confidence in NHL officials, so I am not exactly of the perception that leaving player safety in the hands of a referee’s judgment is best for the players. The official must be of the belief that the head was targeted and that there was intent to injure in order to assess a penalty. The second major weakness is that it still permits “north-south” hits to the head in the game. A Scott Stevens-esque check is acceptable, even if it results in a concussion that ends a player’s season. There are simply not enough teeth in the rule for it to be a true deterrent to players targeting the head of another player. Its weakness is why there was no penalty taken against the players that ended Sidney Crosby’s season.



## After They Hang Up The Skates

Concussions are very perilous. Multiple concussions are even more troubling. Marc Savard returned to the ice this season, only to be put out of commission again when his head was driven into the boards by Matt Hunwick. Going through a second round of post-concussion syndrome, Savard's very career is

now in jeopardy. We have seen what has happened to athletes in other sports that have sustained multiple serious concussions in their careers. Athletes who have suffered concussions are prone to other alarming neurological disorders later in their life, including Parkinson's disease, which affects "The Greatest of All Time," Muhammad Ali. However, these disorders may yet prove to pale in comparison with Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE). The chart below documents a concussed person's potential journey:

Table 1  
Stages of concussive injury

Acute Concussion	Postconcussion Syndrome	Prolonged Postconcussion Syndrome	Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy
Physical symptoms (headache, dizziness, hearing loss, balance difficulty, tinnitus, nausea/vomiting, sensitivity to light or noise, decreased athletic performance) Cognitive deficits (one of short-term memory, difficulty with focus or concentration, decreased attention, decreased work or school performance) Emotional disturbances (irritability, anger, tear, mood swings, decreased libido)	Recurrent concussions Usually lasting 1-6 weeks after RTBI Self-limiting	Symptoms lasting over 6 months Lowered concussion threshold Diminished athletic performance Diminished work or school performance	Latency period (usually 6-18 years) Personality disturbances Emotional lability Marital/parental relationship failures Depression Alcohol/substance abuse Suicide attempt/completion

Sedney, Cara L., et al. "When to Consider Retiring an Athlete After Sports-Related Concussion." *Sports Medicine* 30.1 (2011), 190.  
<http://download.journals.elsevierhealth.com/pdfs/journals/0278-5919/PBS0278591910000578.pdf>

healthy for the rest of his career without any further long-term injuries, will only be a hockey player until he is 35-40 years old. As a Canadian, he has a life expectancy that may exceed 80 years. Players, organizations, fans, and media need to consider that for the balance of their lives, indeed often the majority of their lives, hockey players will not be hockey players, they will just be regular people. Nobody wants to think of the idea of a former player in their 50's or 60's suffering from depression, or committing suicide. The recent announcement that CTE was found in Bob Probert's brain coincides with similar discoveries in professional athletes from other sports: former Pittsburgh Steeler Justin Strzelczyk was killed in 2004 after experiencing hallucinations and driving his vehicle into a tanker truck, and professional wrestler Chris Benoit killed his wife and child before committing suicide in 2007. CTE was a major—though not the only—contributing factor in their personal situations taking turns for the worst in the later years of their lives, as all three struggled with various personal demons including drug use and bouts of rage.

## Getting Tough on Headshots

Stiffening the punishment for blows to the head is the only way that players will be sufficiently deterred from targeting the heads of their opponents. But working hand-in-hand with that must be improved education so that the players understand the consequences of inflicting a concussion on another player. I am not privy to what the Players' Association discusses at its meetings, but they must take a



stand and address the lack of respect demonstrated within their ranks. When a player like Trevor Gillies, who returns from a 9-game suspension for attacking another player and then taunting him to play 1:13 of his first game back before delivering a blow to the head of Cal Clutterbuck, does that sort of thing it absolutely embodies the lack of consideration the players have for one another. While Clutterbuck was uninjured on the play, he very easily could have been. There are other examples on an almost nightly basis, be it a slewfoot, an elbow to the head, a two-handed slash to the leg, or a stick in the skates on an icing play. The NHLPA should hold a very public session with its members to make them fully aware of the consequences of a concussion. They should also work hand-in-hand with the NHL to craft a new policy on headshots.

What, then, should be the penalty for a blow to the head?

First, an automatic game misconduct. If you hit a player in the head with your elbow or shoulder or fist on an unsuspecting player, you should be assessed a five-minute major penalty and a game misconduct. Stick infractions and fighting are covered separately by the NHL Rules, and do not fall under this suggestion.

Second, an in-person hearing with the NHL's disciplinary committee. Hearings conducted over the phone are generally seen as a way to quickly dispense with a minor suspension or a fine; if the League intends to demonstrate that it is serious about headshots, it must hold its disciplinary hearings in a serious manner. At that time the player can make his case that the hit to the head was not deliberate and that the suspension ought to be commuted. There are mitigating factors in the course of a game and these deserve to be taken into consideration when evaluating the length of a suspension.

Third, there must be a suspension of no less than five games. It can be higher if the disciplinary committee feels that there was a deliberate attempt to injure, but five must be the baseline. There must be a demonstration that hits to the head are considered to be worthy of greater penalties than for making lewd comments in the media or knee-on-knee hits. Even in instances where there was no deliberate attempt to injure, the NHL must take a hard line to protect its players' heads. Five games off for a player making a million dollars equals forfeiture of \$61,000, no small amount. If a person is a multiple repeat offender, the suspension can be no less than double the previous suspension. If a player has demonstrated that he has not learned to be more aware of his presence, he deserves to be out of the game for an extended period and forfeit his salary. It is fitting that the money deducted from a player's salary for suspensions goes to the NHLPA Pension Fund, as it benefits the players after their careers have ended.

While the details are simply suggestions, there must be a firmly established sliding scale for punishment for blows to the head. Remove all grey area and do not allow this ridiculous kaleidoscope of disciplinary action to continue. Ben Eager got suspended four games for punching an unsuspecting Colby Armstrong in the head; Milan Lucic punched Freddy Meyer in the head when Meyer's arms were restrained by the officials and received a \$3,500 fine. Joe Thornton was suspended for two games under Rule 48 for his check to the head of David Perron; Daniel Paille was suspended for four games for his headshot against Raymond Sawada. In order for a rule to have teeth, it must be enforced consis-



tently and firmly. We should not hear about a particular player “getting off lightly” in the TSN Quiz panel when it comes to suspensions and/or fines for headshots.

The more we learn about concussions and their long-term effects on an individual, the more it becomes plainly obvious that we must demand action to prevent them. A blow to the head is not the only way in which an NHL player can be concussed. However, it is the most prominent and severe manner that a player can suffer a traumatic brain injury. There will be those accidental moments when two players not fully paying attention collide, or a clean check results in a player’s head bouncing off the boards or ice. But on the occasions when a player targets another’s head and goes for the kill-shot, the NHL has a responsibility and an obligation to take firm action against the perpetrator. It is well past time to implement serious rules with serious punishment. Sidney Crosby’s injury should have been the impetus to revisit Rule 48. The NHL missed that opportunity. How many more of its players will have to be concussed due to blows to the head before it wakes up and realizes that it needs to take the next step, and implement a full ban on all headshots?

### Conclusion

Hockey is a tough, physical sport played at a high speed by elite athletes. There is always going to be some measure of tolerable violence in the game. A solid check that is intended to separate a player from the puck has been and always will be part of the game. Fighting, for all of the problems and outcries it generates, has been and always will be part of the game unless there is a major event which significantly alters the mentality surrounding the level of acceptability we find in fighting in hockey. The cries from the likes of Mike Milbury and Don Cherry that “leftist pinkos” are trying to take contact out of the game have it wrong; well-reasoned and well-intentioned people are trying to ensure that there is still a quality of life for players long after they have stopped playing hockey.

Even with stiffer deterrence, headshots causing injury will still occur. There is no panacea that will remove that element from the game. While stiffening penalties, raising awareness, and promoting






sions will help inspire to think twice (in some cases, once) ings can still happen in an instant that will have a profound und even years to come. There is a growing outcry among the t for those who transgress the rules of the game and injure e player who injures another player should be suspended for game, this is not a reasonable scenario and certainly some- he competition committee would never approve. But there used to deter players and mollify fans who are sick and tired chers. The growing tidal wave of concern about concussions until the NHL firmly lays down a policy designed to protect the League to do is institute a plan to ban all headshots in an inate, the number of concussions sustained by its players. It star is shelved indefinitely, and there will be more unless the



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.

**April 2011**

4	5	6	7	8
11	 -UD Football Series 1	 -Panini Pinnacle Hockey - Panini Classics Basketball	 -Between the Pipes Hockey	15
18	 -SP Authentic Hockey -Ultimate Collection Hockey	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	 -Enshrined Hockey



## 2010/11 Panini Crown Royale Product Review

By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

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

### Key Information

4 packs per box

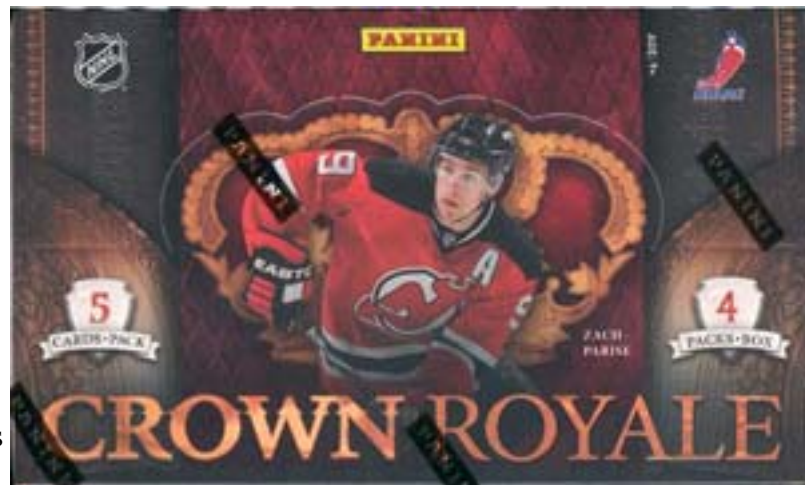
5 cards per pack

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

### Product Description

Every Case contains at least:

- 8 Rookie Royalty Signatures #d to 499
- 1 Rinkside Signatures #d to 50
- 1 Voices of the Game Signatures #d to 100 or less
- 7 Heirs to the Throne Materials #d to 250 or less
- 1 Heirs to the Throne Signature Materials #d to 50 or less
- 3 Premiere Date Signatures #d to 100 or less



### What We Pulled

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4AR78zn24Y>

Base: 12/100 (12%)

Premiere Date /100 (1): Jay Bouwmeester





Calder Collection /99 (1): P.K. Subban  
 Lancers /250 (1): Eric Staal  
 Legends (1): Patrick Roy

Heirs To The Throne Taylor Hall Jersey /250



Rookie Royalty Eric Tangradi Auto /499

Royal Lineage Taylor Hall/John Tavares /Steven Stamkos Triple Jersey /25





## Scratching The Surface Shea Weber Auto Redemption

### **Final Ratings**

Base - 3.5/5

Design - 5/5

Fun - 4/5

Value - 4.5/5

Rebuy - 5/5

Total - 22/25 (88%)

Crown Royale is a blast from the past for older collectors and a sight for sore eyes for newer collectors. The die-cut design draws you in with the help of vibrant colors. Though set collectors will have a rough go of it to complete the base set. Outside of the 100 veterans, there are 15 regents (retired players), 14 silhouette rookie jersey autos and 46 rookie autos that comprise the full base set. While the regents and the rookie autos are numbered the 499, the silhouette rookies are numbered to 25 so hats off to whomever completes this set.

The simplified packaging is a huge plus. The use of a small box with a pretense of special packing materials is eco and collector friendly. While the break itself is quick, there's much to enjoy within each pack. Knowing you will get a "hit" and an insert in each pack creates a sense of excitement. Considering other releases that yield about the same return, it is well priced and worth the investment.

Once again, I'd like to thank our wonderful sponsors at Panini for giving us the opportunity to break and review this release. For more information on all their products, visit them at [www.paniniamerica.net](http://www.paniniamerica.net).





## 2011 ITG Baseball "Hits" Series One Product Review

By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

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

### Key Information

1 pack per box

5 cards per pack

Current Retail Price (online): 79.99 - 99.99

### Product Description

This is a very unique baseball product in that there are no base cards, only "Hits". That means that each box will only contain autograph and/or game-used memorabilia cards! The checklists have a great mix of heroes and prospects with a lot of 1/1's mixed in (on average a 1/1 in each 12 box case\*).



### What We Pulled

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=98THGP3bo5c>

Heroes Memorabilia Silver Steve Carlton Jersey

Bobby Borchering Auto





Matt Moore Auto



Steven Ames Auto



Lumbergraphs Brandon Belt Auto



**Final Ratings**

- Base - N/A
- Design - 3.5/5
- Fun- 5/5
- Value - 3/5
- Rebuy - 3/5
- Total - 14.5/20 (72.5%)

In The Game moves out of the world of hockey and into baseball. While ITG and its subsidiaries have had baseball figures appear in products before, this one is baseball only. Known for magnificent designs and player photos, they may breathe life into a one major entity market. The premise of Baseball "Hits" is simply no base cards. Every card is either a memorabilia or autograph, with a heavy focus on autographs. Each card comes already sleeved and encased in a top loader.

While there are some well-known prospect names that signed for the product such as Kyle Drabek, Yonder Alonso and Tim Beckham, there is a large pool of autographs that will not be to the liking of many. A dogma in a hit only product is that the product has to be a bang for the buck product or it fails. You've got to keep the masses coming back for more and I just don't see it with this release. Maybe some tweaks such as the Lumbergraphs have an actual signed bat barrel instead of it pictured on the card. It's really hard for collectors to shell out the money for only five cards without the intrigue and anticipation to go along with it.#

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 products, visit them at [www.itgtradingcards.com](http://www.itgtradingcards.com).



**2010 Panini Playoff Contenders Product Review**  
**By Tony Joyce aka Enigma**

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

**Key Information**

24 packs per box  
 5 cards per pack  
 Current Retail Price (online): 139.99 - 164.99

**Product Description**

Playoff Contenders has long been the gold standard for NFL Rookie Cards! In 2010, that phrase takes on a most literal meaning with the pioneering introduction of The Golden Ticket, the industry's first 14-karat solid-gold trading card.



**Box Break**

- 4 Autographs (at least one on-card)
- 1 Parallel
- 2 ROY Contenders
- 2 Draft Class
- 2 Rookie Roll Call
- 2 Legendary Contenders
- 6 Super Bowl Tickets
- 2 Other Insert/Parallels

**Case Break**

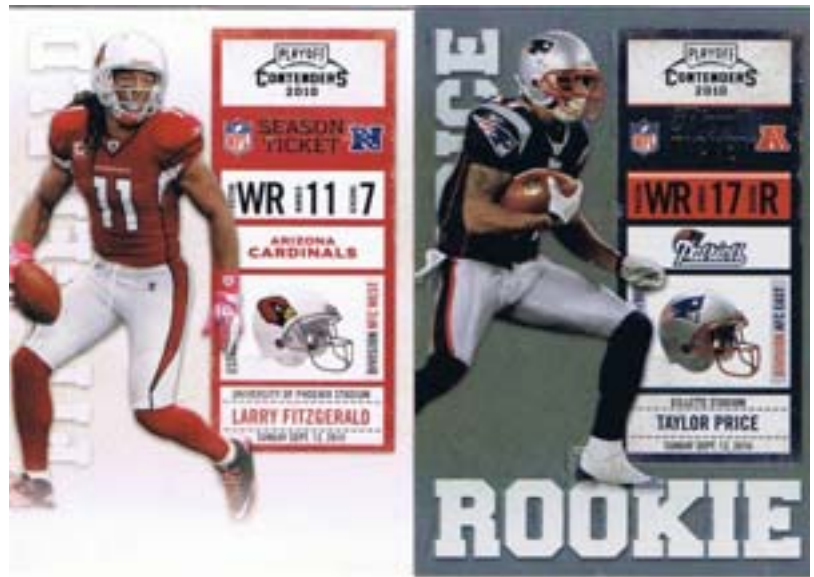
Six off the following on-card autographs: Sam Bradford, Tim Tebow, Ryan Mathews, Jahvid Best, Dez Bryant, C.J. Spiller, Dexter McCluster, Demaryius Thomas, Mike Williams, Ndamukong Suh, Golden Tate, Jimmy Clausen or Colt McCoy

**What We Pulled**

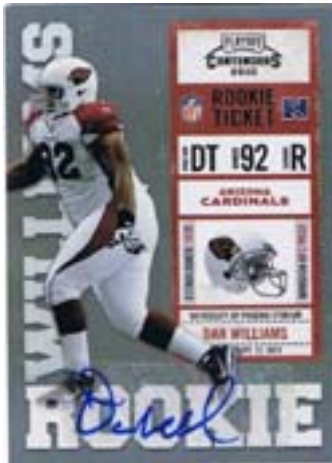
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NcCVyWSnhiY>



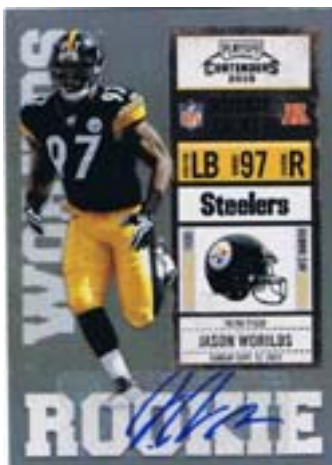
- Playoff Ticket /99 (1): Taylor Price
- Draft Class (3)
- Draft Class Gold /100 (1): Jimmy Clausen/  
Golden Tate
- Legendary Contenders (2)
- Rookie Roll Call (3)
- Rookie Of The Year Contenders (3)
- Super Bowl Tickets (6)



Dan Williams RC/Auto



Jason Worlds RC/Auto





Marc Mariani RC/Auto



Dez Bryant RC/Auto (on card)



Mike Kafka RC/Auto (on card)



**Final Ratings**

Base - 4.5/5

Design - 4.5/5

Fun - 4/5

Value - 4/5

Rebuy - 3/5 (Due to price hike)

Total - 20/25 (80%)

Contenders is perennially a product that collectors buy in mass quantities early. It's released after the season is over, so there's no need to worry about who will emerge as the top rookies and that's what Contenders is all about. The base set contains 100 veterans and then 135 rookie autographs, some of which are on card. The "ticket" on the cards are a great resource for tidbit information, such as the number of years a player has been in the league.

As mentioned though, the reason most go for Contenders is the rookie autos. On average, each box will yield 4 autographs. Nothing like a bonus autograph though to keep you on your toes when opening a box. The blue ink shows up well against the foil background. Too bad all the autos are not on card.

On a side note, the big addition to this year's Contenders are the Golden Ticket cards. There are 52 of these cards (1 per player) and they appear as a redemption in a pack. When redeemed, the owner receives an encased 1/1 gold card of the player. Reportedly, the amount of gold in the card is 11 grams. This cards have gone for insane amount on the secondary market and sadly for the general collector have in turn driven the price of boxes upward. At times, Contenders was seen in the upper 90 dollar range and now have risen to 50-75% since its release. It's made it very hard for many collectors to afford the product.

Once again, I'd like to thank our wonderful sponsors at Panini for giving us the opportunity to open and review this release. For more information on all their products, visit them at [www.paniniamerica.net](http://www.paniniamerica.net).



## 2010/11 Panini Playoff Contenders Patches

By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

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

### Key Information

20 packs per box

5 cards per pack

Current Retail Price (online): 94.99 - 109.99

### Product Description

### Box Break

4 Autographs, Including 3 Rookie Patch Autographs - One of which will be a draft lottery pick!



### Case Break

Find one or more of the following Autographs: Kobe Bryant, Shaquille O'Neal and Panini Exclusive John Wall, Dual-Signed Building Blocks Black Autographs #d to 10 or less and Place in History Black Autographs #d to 10 or less

### What We Pulled

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMXEheDHIB0>

Base: 84/100 (84%)

Dupes: 0

Season Ticket /299 (2): Blake Griffin, Rajon

Rondo (Base: Kobe Bryant)

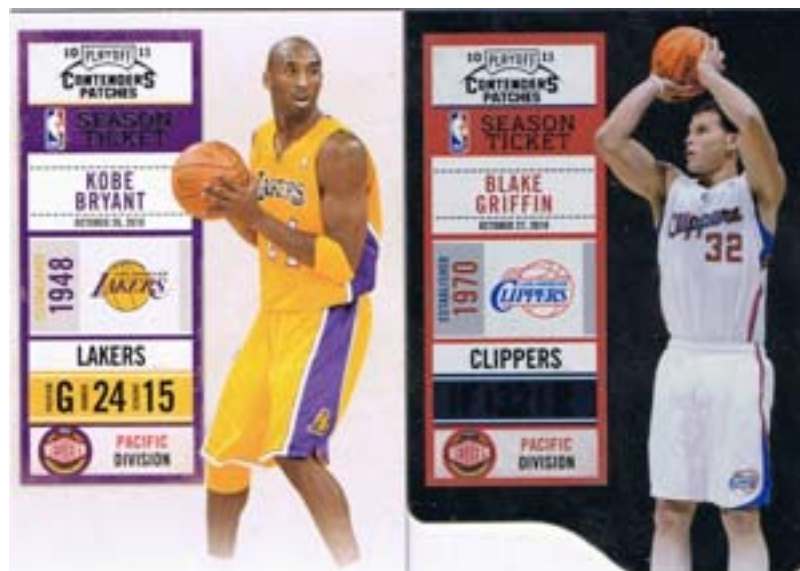
One Two Punch (3)

One Two Punch Die Cut Gold /99 (1): Derrick Rose/Joakim Noah

Place In History (3)

Rookie Of The Year Contenders (2)

Rookie Of The Year Contenders Die Cut Silver / 299 (1): Ekpe Udoh Starting Blocks (4)





Gordon Hayward RC/Auto



Elliot Williams RC/Auto



Trevor Booker RC/Auto



**Final Ratings**

- Base - 4/5
- Design - 4.5/5
- Fun - 4/5
- Value - 3/5
- Rebuy - 2/5
  
- Total - 17.5/25 (70%)

Lance Stephenson RC/Auto



Contenders is back for another year from our friends at Panini. Four less packs than we are used to though, so getting a little less for your money. However, almost every pack yields a bonus card. The base cards have a nicely done design. The player and the "ticket" share the card equally and the "ticket" border matches the team's color so it plays well off the player's uniform.

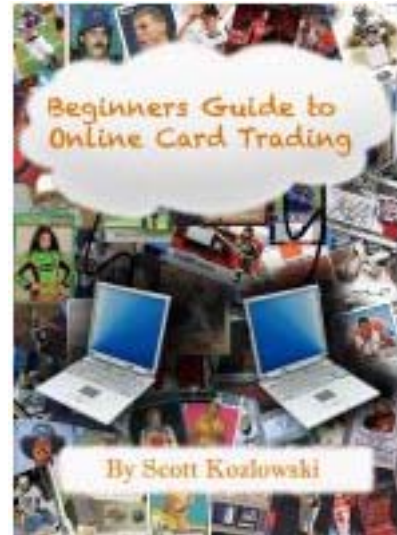
Panini decided to shake things up a little and change what many regard as a great product. Out the door went the shiny foil rookie autographs. In walks in manufactured patches and autographs on a white background. I am perplexed on why they would do this. Why fix something if it isn't broken? I guess the idea was to do something different to attract more consumers, but this is an absolute turn-off. Keep the gimmicky stuff to other products. Don't mess with the staple brands. When the main draw to a product gets a complete unnecessary overhaul, it just leaves you scratching your head.

Once again, I'd like to thank our wonderful sponsors at Panini for giving us the opportunity to open and review this release. For more information on all their products, visit them at [www.paniniamerica.net](http://www.paniniamerica.net).



**Book Review: Beginners Guide to Online Card Trading**  
**By Karine Hains aka Pheeb888**

The world wide web is a big big playing field; for us collectors it is an invaluable tool at our disposal to further our collections. However, it's not always easy to fin your way around the Net and know what to do and when to do it when it comes to online trading. We've all been there, we were all beginners once with about a million questions to ask and for those of us who did not know anyone else who collected online, it might not always have been a smooth ride. Like it or not, it's always handy to have someone explain the ropes to you in whichever endeavour you undertake. When I first got online to trade cards, I was somewhat anxious about how it all worked and I wished I had a friend I could get some guidance from.



Those days are now over as one of our very own Writing Team members, Scott Kozlowski, saw a gap in the book market and decided to write a little something for all the trading beginners out there.

The book contains a variety of information which will be handy to any new trader out there, starting with a rather useful section titled “Common Terms and Acronyms”, for most of you, plenty of those terms have long been mastered but take yourself back in time to when you were a rookie on your favorite trading site and you will no doubt realize that such as section is almost invaluable. The chapters are well thought out and placed in a logical order.

Every new collector must start by identifying their needs before they start collecting and trading online and Mr. Kozlowski's book highlights this quite nicely. Failure to do this will result in an abundance of trades which will be useless in the long run as the new trader will end up with cards he does not have a real need or desire for and the worst thing is, they will end up having spent good money to acquire those cards. A planned venture into online trading will help making the most of their investment and ensure that the fun lasts longer.

No matter how much you plan though, there are some things you cannot know about unless you are made aware of them. Some of those things are mentioned in the “Issues and Pitfalls” chapter of this book. The emphasis is firmly placed on online trading and it might have been a good idea to spend some time discussing some aspects of online collecting/buying when it comes to collectible. A word of warning about the bane that are fake patches and autographs could have been indicated and perhaps a quick run-down of what is good and what is not in a card (multi-colored jersey pieces, hard signed auto over stickers etc...) However, with such a wide topic, it is rather hard to think about every single piece of advice which a new online trader might need.

I am quite fond of the section describing the “Inviters” and the “Annoyers” as online trading really is about finding a way to deal with all kind of people and most of us have met people who have literally



drove us up the wall. Let's just say that it wouldn't have gone amiss to know about these types prior to being confronted to them.

In the age of text messaging and fast communication, the writer also takes the time to provide new traders with valuable advice on the way to communicate. Getting your message across is the basis of successful trading online and there is no escaping the need to have good communication skills if you want to have a good time trading online.

The book also contains advice for the actual trading and shipping part of the transaction, while it is important to have the right tools to reach an agreement and find trades, it is equally important to complete them in a satisfying manner and therefore manage to build a solid online reputation. While the book is aimed at new traders, it is likely that any trader can take away some useful information from reading it.

If you would like to purchase Mr. Kozlowski's book, it is available to download at [www.smashwords.com](http://www.smashwords.com) for \$4.95 a rather reasonable price considering how useful it can be for new traders.

**Final ratings:**

Content: 4.5/5

Artwork and pictures: 3/5

Clarity: 5/5

Value for money: 5/5

Overall: 87.5%





## **Trader Feedback and Reputation** **By Kevin O'Connor aka rainman67ko**

My name is Kevin and I am an advisor or moderator on the SCF Disputes Team. I will be writing articles related to the Disputes process, best trading practices, and online trading execution which is the follow through after the trade is confirmed and completed.

This month I am going to address the topic of trader feedback. In an online trading community such as ours we communicate by text and build our reputation. While our postings contribute to how we are perceived, it is our trader feedback that will ultimately define us.

Most traders want to give and receive positive feedback. We want to build trading relationships and instill confidence on our trading partners by enhancing our reputation. Following best trading practices, including good communication, proper packaging, and prompt shipping, generally leads to positive feedback.

Honest feedback is important. How else do we protect our online trading community? It is common to leave a Positive grade with a comment like "Easy to trade with" or "Great job, Thanks". It is also OK to be more specific and still leave a positive such as "Slow shipping but it got here" if the situation dictates. Neutral feedback is sometimes left where the other trader had issues following through but a negative is not warranted. A Negative feedback should be reserved only for the most egregious issues such as never sending the trade or other such errors. When in doubt contact a member of the Disputes Staff or other moderator for guidance. In most instances this negative feedback can be avoided.

SCF cannot make another trader leave feedback. Sometimes a trader does everything right and does not receive feedback. Occasionally this happens. I have experienced it. Check the box and move on.

I recently saw a dispute where the parties could not come to a complete resolution. One trader, Trader B, was found to be at fault and received the appropriate action administered by SCF Staff. The other trader, Trader A, was permitted to leave feedback since he had followed through with the terms and conditions of the trade. Upon leaving feedback Trader A had put the issue behind him. Later it was discovered that Trader B had left negative feedback. The feedback was deemed retaliatory and removed by SCF Staff. Penalties for retaliatory feedback range from a warning to permanent point violations depending on the incident.

In summary, if we value our standing in the community, and want to enhance our card collecting experience, we should strive to follow best trading practices. The rest will fall into place.

Please contact me at SCF with any questions regarding the SCF Disputes process or trading execution and I will try to answer immediately. I may also incorporate ideas into future articles published here in the Sports Card Forum magazine.



## It's Heating Up!

By Richard McAdam aka RGM81

Throughout the month hockey collectors have been enthusiastically following the playoffs races, breaking boxes, and participating in the latest contests. As is always the case at this time of year, people are having a lot of fun on the boards and getting involved in some very serious discussions about the action both on and off the ice.



Concussions have continued to be a major focus of the sport in recent weeks. With Sidney Crosby still indefinitely sidelined and only cleared to resume non-contact skating drills, the biggest star in the game remains off the ice. While the Crosby situation remains a focal point for everybody, there was a major incident that took place on March 8th involving Zdeno Chara of the Boston Bruins and Max Pacioretty of the Montreal Canadiens. The outcome of the play resulted in Pacioretty suffering a fractured vertebra in his neck and a severe concussion. Passions were running very high

as a consequence of the play, and boiled over when it was announced that Chara would not receive any supplementary discipline for his role in the play. It is commendable that the members of the SCF community were able to discuss and debate the play with civility and with respect for differing opinions, of which there were many. Less than two weeks later, there was a nearly-unanimous sentiment that Matt Cooke got what he deserved when the League suspended him for the balance of the regular season plus the first round of the playoffs for a headshot delivered to New York Rangers blueliner Ryan McDonagh. Clearly the issue of concussions, headshots, and violence in the sport is going to be at the forefront for some time.

In the backdrop to all of the discussion about headshots, there has been a tremendously exciting playoffs race. For much of March, nearly every team in the Western Conference and the great majority of teams in the Eastern Conference were still very much in contention to play in the post-season. The miracle run of the New Jersey Devils, who were looked at as being a lottery team during Christmas, gave the team real hope before a mid-March slump greatly reduced their chances. Of equal note has been the strong performance of the Toronto Maple Leafs. The Leafs have not made the playoffs since 2004, but as of this writing are still clawing and scratching their way towards the eighth seed. While they may not have enough games remaining, the play of young James Reimer has given the Leafs hope for the first time in many years. Back in the West, Calgary surged after Christmas and erased much of the doom & gloom talk from earlier in the year, and remain within breathing distance of a playoff spot. The room for fluctuation in the West is incredible: a team presently in 6th can vault up to 4th with a win, while a loss can see a team plummet down the rankings. The races in both conferences will go right up to the final weekend of the NHL regular season, setting the stage for some high drama for fans across Canada and the United States.



Have you been participating in SCF's contests? There have been some amazing contests throughout the 2010-11 season that are now approaching the finish line. The Race For The Trio, in which the prize is a The Cup Triple Enshrinements featuring Bobby Orr, Phil Esposito, and Johnny Bucyk, has been a scintillating year-long contest. Panini has sponsored The March to the Playoffs, featuring monthly prizes of Panini product and a grand prize of a Taylor Hall autographed puck. These contests have been tremendous benefits to SCF and rewarding its valued members, and we are already looking forward to another spectacular season-long contest for 2011-12! Any hints? Sure – if you're a goalie fan, you will definitely want to be keeping your eyes peeled for what SCF has to bring you very, very soon!

In addition to these great contests, SCF has introduced a new monthly contest known simply as "Busted!" Members who share their breaks in the Box/Pack Breaks Forum are eligible to receive a monthly card cash prize for having the best "hit" from their product breaks. Be sure to check it out, as card cash rewards help members unlock

many great additional features to being an SCF member!

Do you have a question for Panini? If so, be sure to drop by the Panini Feedback/Discussion Forum! This area is regularly checked up on by Al Muir, who is the head of the hockey department for Panini – he will answer your question! In addition to participation from Al, the sub-forum also hosts the latest news from Panini, including product reviews, announcements, and all things related to the company. It is a very valuable resource and we encourage member participation in this forum, as well as the Hockey Card Talk Forum for all of your questions, comments, feedback, and insights into the hobby today!

That pretty much wraps it up for now. As always, the Hockey Team is happy to answer all of your questions and give you assistance with matters relating to SCF. They're always available to reach via PM and steer you in the right direction.

Until next month, keep your sticks on the ice and enjoy the games!



## On the Ball

By Jay Weger aka Jay520

### **Basketball Hobby News**

In hobby news, this month Derrick Rose cards seem to be shooting up due to his great play and MVP push from NBA analysts. His RC cards are climbing every month as well as his autos. Blake Griffin cards have stayed hot since his dunk contest win over the all-star break. 10-11 Absolute Memorabilia hit the shelves this month with a good reaction from collectors. Also the 2011 UNC set came out after a few month's delay from Upper Deck. And finally members on the site have had a problem with their redemptions being delayed by Panini. Earlier this month they moved from Arlington to Irving and have yet to answer calls about redemptions. Many members are starting to wonder if they will ever get the redemptions.

### **Contests and Winners**

In March there were 2 new contests announced from the basketball staff. 2011 SCF "March Madness" Bracket Challenge and 2011 VIP SCF "March Madness" Bracket Challenge for VIP members. After joining the SCF group members just needed to fill out their NCAA Tournament brackets on ESPN.com and Yahoo.com (VIP). For the regular member ESPN contest CC will be given out. For the VIP contest the top 3 winners will choose a card from the team prize vault. With the NCAA Tournament down to the Final 4 SingleDaddyof2 is in first place with 780 points, Bouncer in second place with 760 points and jdlee123 is in third place with 650 points for the ESPN contest. JordanFanatic is in first place with 73 points, stang66dad is in second with 66 points and in third place are jprrt80 and SingleDaddyOf2's picks tied with 60 points for the Yahoo(VIP) contest.

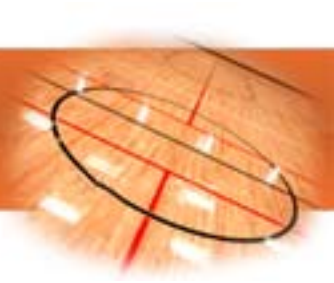
Theme Weeks have returned this month with realreodeal being voted the first winner with a sick Derrick Rose RC patch. Next are the 2010-11 NBA Top Performers winners for February. jdlee123 was 1st earning 100 cc and Thrillseeker in 2nd getting 50cc. As of 3/26/11 tjvisco leads with 24 points and Thrillseeker in second with 21 points. The NBA GTS standings look like this through 3/26 with JesRey with 16 wins, dwighthoward and 2FarGone tied with 11 and abah58 with 8. On the VIP NBA GTS side JesRey leads with 17, andrewhoya 16 and lil5up3rman with 14. Onto the NCAA GTS leaders that shows garnett\_21 with 6 wins, andrewhoya and pwaldo 5 wins and dallascisco and JesRey with 4 wins. garnett\_21 and harrid4 lead the VIP's with 9 wins, bouncer with 7 and TheHeel with 6 wins. The winner of the Ultimate All-Star Weekend contest was taekwandodo taking the box of 2010 Ultimate. 2nd place went to Kobe24Bryant getting a 09-10 Absolute Jrue Holiday rpm auto/499 and in 3rd place ws jdlee123 winning a 09-10 Court Kings Pau Gasol dual GU/149. The team will be trying out a guess the card contest and bringing back the guess the serial # contest in April. Traders you might want to check out the card draft announced this month as well to try to pick up some new cards. You can find it by going to this link: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=1354733>



This month there were some nice breaks and lucky pack pulls. 10-11 Donruss was popular again with Kadamscards pulling a Andrew Bogut patch /5 out of only 4 packs. reds1869 hit a Kevin Durant GU/399 out of 2 rack-packs. Agent7o2 pulled a Dwight Howard GU/399 from a blaster along with other nice cards. kark23 did well and pulled a Lamar Odom GU/399, LeBron James GU/399 and a Evan Turner RC auto/199. FlyersFan got a box and pulled a Andrew Bogut GU/399, Chris Paul GU/399 and a John Wall RC auto/299. WolverineFan hit a Kobe Bryant GU/299 and a Andrew Bogut patch auto/49. McPUG pulled a DeMarcus Cousins RC auto/299 from a blaster. vinny407 had 2 nice Kobe pulls from a blaster a die-cut parallel /49 and a GU/299. And lastly from Donruss daners7576 bought only a few packs and got a Chris Bosh GU/399 and a real nice J.J. Redick patch auto/25.

The new product this month was 10-11 Absolute Memorabilia that made for pretty good breaks. Tylerg30 pulled a Dallas Butler/Kidd/Marion/Terry quad GU/100, Tony Parker jumbo GU/25 and a David Robinson dual GU/5 redemption. jprrt80 also got a box and hit a LeBron James GU/25 and Avery Bradley RC rpm auto /25. keuka34 got a San Antonio Jefferson/Parker/Duncan/Ginobili quad GU/100, Hakeem Olajuwon triple patch /5, Dan Majerle dual patch/50, Ekpe Udoh RC rpm auto//499 and a Al-farooq Aminu RC rpm auto/499 from 2 boxes. SpursGirl85 did well as she pulled an Amare GU/399, Stephen Curry/Ekpe udoh dual GU/100 and a nice Al-farooq Aminu ball/patch/5. lakers10 hit a nice Dallas Dirk/Kidd/Terry triple patch/10 from 1 pack. dauber01 busted 3 boxes and pulled a bunch of nice cards like Amare GU/49, Garnett patch/10, Russell Westbrook GU/25, David Robinson patch/10, Tyler Hansbrough auto/99, and a Sam perkins auto/25. Merl also bought 3 boxes and pulled a DeJuan Blair auto/25, John Wall RC rpm auto redemption, Gary Payton patch/5, Alonzo Mourning jumbo GU/25, Tyreke Evans GU/49, Steve Nash jumbogu/99, Chris Paul GU/25 and a Dallas Dirk/Kidd/Terry triple GU/100. The best pull goes to snackeyp who pulled an unbelievable Kobe Bryant triple ptch auto 4/5!

In other Panini products BizzyDesigner pulled a Toni Kukoc auto/50 from 10-11 Threads. Coltsd21 pulled a Dwight Howard patch/10 from Threads. RedSox006 got a Derrick Favors RC GU/399, Brandon Jennings GU/399 and a John Wall RC auto/399. jprrt80 pulled a Stephen Curry/Ekpe Udoh dual auto/49 from Playoff Contenders. keuka34 pulled a Olajuwon/Pippen dual GU and a John Wall RC auto redemption from 10-11 Timeless Treasures. Peyton18Manning pulled a Evan Turner RC patch auto/25 from 4 packs of 10-11 R&S. CardCollector808 hit a sick Pau Gasol dual patch auto/5 from Timeless Treasures. dauber01 did well and got 2 nice hits from 10-11 Limited in a Greg Monroe RC patch/25 and a Evan Turner patch auto/10.



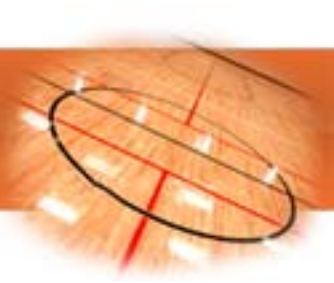
In the search for Derrick Rose RCs there were a lot of 08-09 stuff opened. Dogma opened 2 boxes of 08-09 Topps and hit a Rajon Rondo 58-59 variation auto, George Gervin GU and a nice Russell Westbrook Rookie Photo Shoot red ink auto. grod2875 tried a box of 08 Press Pass Legends hit a Derrick Rose base RC, GU and auto/165. markinca also tried a box of Press Pass and got a David Robinson auto/30 and a Derrick Rose auto. Blake23Griffin pulled a Derrick Rose RC auto/50 from 08-09 Topps Co-Signers. And lastly ShtHairMcGee pulled a Derrick Rose Black Border RC/51.

There were 2 case breaks also this month. kobe1101j opened 16 boxes of 07-08 Hot Prospects and pulled some awesome hits. He got 2 Joakim Noah RC patch autos/399, Rodney Stuckey RC patch auto/399, Jared Dudley RC patch auto/25, Marco Belinelli RC patch auto/25, Bogut patch/10, Magic Johnson dual GU/50, Rajon Rondo/Ben Gordon dual auto/25, Kevin Durant letterman R auto, and a sick MJ/LeBron dual auto /23!! The other case break came from theguru who broke 14 boxes of 08-09 Pres Pass getting 4 Kevin Love autos, 4 O.J. Mayo autos, 4 auto and 3 GU of Russell Westbrook, 2 Beasley auto redemptions, 1 Eric Gordon auto, 1 Candace Parker auto, and 2 GU and 1 auto of Derrick Rose.

### **NBA News**

In NBA news this month some streaks started and ended. First was Kevin Love's double-double streak ending at 56 games. The streak is the most tallied by a NBA player in one season since the ABA-NBA merger in the 70s. Next is the NBA standings for the East which just got interesting in the last 2 weeks. The Chicago Bulls grabbed the top spot by coming out of the all-star break with a 14-3 record and 2 games better than Boston. Bulls are 53-19, 2nd Boston Celtics 51-21, 3rd Miami Heat 51-22, 4th Orlando Magic 47-26, 5th Atlanta Hawks 42-32. San Antonio continues to lead the league and the West with the best record. Although with Tim Duncan getting injured the Spurs are 57-16. 2nd L. A. Lakers 53-20(14-1 since all-star game), 3rd Dallas Mavericks 52-21, 4th OKC Thunder 48-24, 5th Denver Nuggets 44-29.

Derrick Rose has been making a strong case for NBA MVP over the month putting up big numbers turning the Bulls into a title contender. Right behind him is Dwight Howard for Orlando



who had a string of 20+ point and 10+ rebound games. LeBron James, Kobe Bryant and Dirk Nowitzki are not far behind in the race though. Blake Griffin coming off the dunk contest win is still the favorite for the ROY. So far through 3/26 Durant is leading the league in scoring at 27.8, LeBron with 26.4 and Amare at 25.8. Kevin Love is tops in rebounding with 15.4, Dwight Howard 14.2 and Zach Randolph with 12.4. In assists Steve Nash has overtaken Rajon Rondo with 11.4. 2nd is Rondo with 11.3 and 3rd is Deron Williams at 10.1 who now plays with the Nets.

Since the huge trade the Knicks made to get Carmelo Anthony they started playing better. They were 4-2 through 6 games but have fallen on hard times since. Now the Knicks are 3 games under .500 in the East and are 6-13 since the trade. Denver Nuggets have fared much better finding the right chemistry going 11-4 since the trade. Danilo Gallinari and Wilson Chandler have done well in George Karl's system. Also in post trade news the Boston Celtics have sputtered lately going 8-6 since. They have lost games to the 76ers, Nets, Rockets, Grizzlies and Bobcats to name a few.

### **NCAA Tournament**

This year's NCAA Tournament has been strange. Pittsburgh, Duke, Kansas and Ohio St. were named no. 1 seeds in each of the regions. The first round started with 4 play-in games this year with the expansion to 68 teams. (16) UTSA and (16) UNC-Ashville won to get in to the 64. VCU earned an 11 seed for their play-in game and Clemson earned a 12 seed in their play-in game. With the teams set the second round got underway. There were 5 upsets that saw a 10th seed or higher moving on with (12) Richmond beating (8) Vanderbilt, (13) Morehead St. beating (4) Louisville, (11) VCU beating (6) Georgetown, (11) Gonzaga beating (6) St. Johns and (11) Marquette beating (6) Xavier. The upsets continued into the 3rd round seeing (11) Marquette win over (3) Syracuse, (11) VCU over (3) Purdue, (10) FSU over (2) Notre Dame and the biggest shock of the round (8) Butler over (1) Pittsburgh!

So after the first 3 rounds the Sweet 16 got started. (11) VCU continued to stay alive by beating (10) FSU and (8) Butler upsetting (4) Wisconsin. This round saw 2 no. 1 seeds fall. First was (1) Duke losing to (5) Arizona who played a brilliant second half winning 93-77 and (1) Ohio St. losing to (4) Kentucky. Kansas is the only no. 1 seed moving onto the Elite 8. (8) Butler who made it to the title game last year made it to the Final 4 by beating (2) Florida. Next (3) UConn beat (5) Arizona to earn a spot in the Final 4. (4) Kentucky held off (2) North Carolina to claim a spot. Then in what is probably one of the biggest upsets in the last 10 years the Rams of VCU defeated (1) Kansas Jayhawks by 10 points. Many sports analysts around the country though VCU were not good enough to make the tournament but their play has proved them wrong. So the Final 4 match-ups look like this (3) UConn vs (4) Kentucky and (8) Butler vs (11) VCU on 4/2. The 2 teams that make it from those 4 will play for the 2011 NCAA National Championship on April 4th 2011.



## To Play or not to Play...That Is the Question

By Karine Hains aka Pheeb888



When NFL commissioner met the fans in London at the end of last October he was confident that there would be a season of football in 2011-2012. Fastforward to March 2012 however and nothing seems less sure...Indeed, the NFL is currently paralyzed by a lock-out and the fans are anxious to see if the owners and the players will manage to work out a deal. The words: "Will they? Won't they?" are being uttered way too often and right now, things are looking rather bleak in Roger Goodell land...

You know things are not right when the players chose to renounce the NFLPA's status as their collective bargaining representative. This has been a long time in the making since as far back as 2009 there started to be talk about a new bargaining agreement. Of course, none of us can know what really went on during the negotiations but the fact remains, right now, both parties are in a dead end and unless something major happens, we are within our right to wonder if the Packers will have a chance to defend their title this year...

April 6th is the next date which football fans should circle on their calendar as a court in the district of St. Paul's Minnesota will hear the injunction put forward by Tom Brady, Drew Brees, Peyton Manning and co. What will the ruling be? Your guess is as good as mine but let's just say that our Sundays just won't be the same come autumn if there is still a lock on the NFL's gate.

In the meantime though, we invite all NFL fans out there to cheer themselves up by paying us a visit on SCF. You can talk about the current events and the progress of the negotiations or just avoid the discussion threads and lose yourself in plenty of trades, breaks or show and tell, the choice is yours!

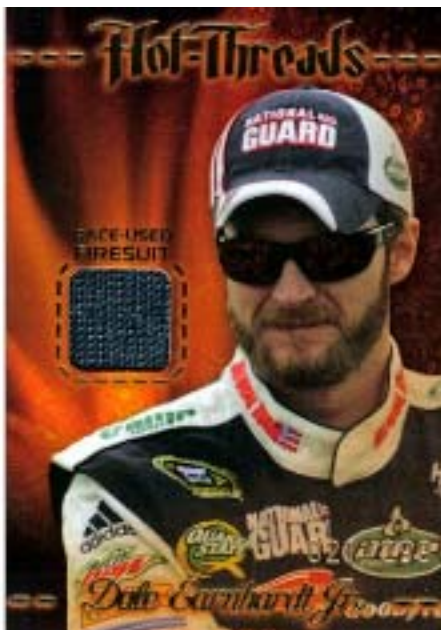




## **Popularity vs. Success: The Nascar Hobby's Unique Collecting Aspect**

**By Stephen Taylor aka race crazy**

When one is to look at the most collected individuals of a sport they usually find success-either in the player or in the team. The most collected player of all-time in basketball circles, Michael Jordan, is also arguably the best to ever play the game. In baseball the Yankees are the most collected team, and also historically the most successful. Countless examples exist and it is a known fact that the more successful the athlete is the more interest arises from collectors. In the Nascar world this pattern fit through its early collecting infancy in the early 1990s. Dale Earnhardt was far and away the most collected driver and also the sport's most successful. He would eventually be followed in terms of collectability by a young rookie named Jeff Gordon who was touted as the next big thing and would eventually prove to be.



This pattern would hold station, even after Earnhardt Sr's unfortunate and untimely passing in Daytona. Dale Earnhardt Jr's collecting strength was also at an all-time high and he was successful through the early 2000s despite not winning a championship. However as years have gone by Earnhardt Jr's stats have deteriorated. He will never match the success of his father nor should he be expected to, but for a driver who only has 18 career wins in Nascar's top division and one who has ran poorly for the last few years with what many consider the best team in the sport, Jr's collectability remains strong. Although prices have dropped from the once astronomical levels they were at, it is somewhat of an oddity that Dale Jr's cards more often than not still fetch more than 5-time consecutive champion Jimmie Johnson's or the extremely talented and controversial Kyle Busch. Sure the last name has a lot to do with it-probably most of it in fact, but there is another reason this phenomenon happens in the racing world.

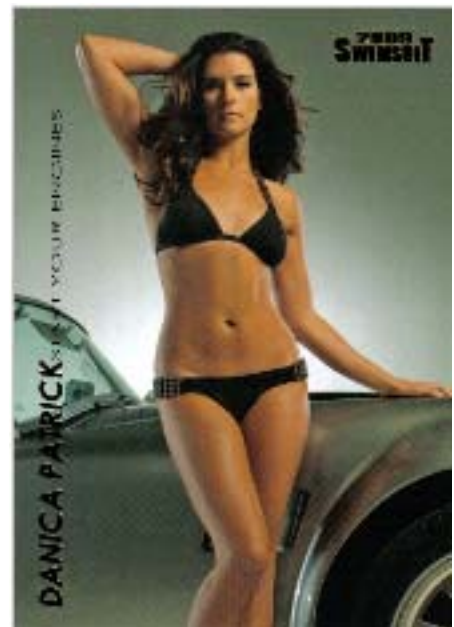
When one is picking a driver to cheer for most fans will tell you that they want a good driver, but the driver's personality is more important. Nascar as a sport allows us the fan more access to the driver than any other sport. We know the driver's family, what they do in the off-weekend, and basically their whole livelihood and racing history are told to us as if we were indeed a relative. It brings the collector closer to his or her hero. Dale Earnhardt Sr. did not have as many fans as he had because he was a great driver, it was because of his personality-the simple Southern working man which so many Nascar fans see in themselves. Dale Earnhardt Jr. is the closest thing Nascar has left to this. In the past at least half of the drivers were from Nascar's home base state of North Carolina.



These days we have more drivers in the field from California and Missouri than we do from North and South Carolina combined. The personality aspect and how fans pick their driver is one of the many things which separate us from other sports.

There is one other driver that enters into this popularity vs. success debate very well. She (yes she) has won a grand total of one race in her upper level motorsports career, an Indycar race in

Japan...and it was on gas mileage. Of course I am talking about Danica Patrick-the only woman ever to win an Indycar race and as of this print the highest finishing female in history in any of Nascar's top 3 divisions (she finished 4th at Las Vegas this March). Her cards go for more on eBay than even Earnhardt Jr's. The why should again be obvious-she is the most successful female in racing history to this point (arguably) and she also markets herself as a sex object with sex appeal. This appeals to many a collector-females like her because she is representing them well in a male dominated sport and guys like her because she is an attractive female that drives race cars! These are obvious reasons as to why-but it still seems weird to me. Maybe because of my collecting background (besides always being a racing collector I collected basketball for many years) it just does not seem right that a driver with a grand total of 0 Sprint Cup Series starts has more market value than a 5-time defending champion. Of course maybe I just spent the page rambling about nothing and maybe it does make sense to all of you as to why-but it still seems weird to me-and always will.



One Month Into the Season-What Have We Learned-Some Bullet Points and Thoughts to Consider After the First Three Races...

### **Nascar is on an upswing again**

3 different and exciting winners and 3 solid races have people interested in Nascar again-TV ratings have risen by quite a bit for the first 3 events of the season, and with an NFL lockout looming Nascar is in a prime position to continue this upswing."



### **The aggressiveness is at an all-time high**

The Daytona 500 saw the most yellows in its history; Phoenix had a 15 car pile-up 60 laps into a 312 lap race. Drivers are not giving each other any room and with the difficulty of passing the double file restarts are proving both treacherous and extremely exciting. Non-fans who like carnage might want to tune into Nascar this year-if the first 3 races were any indication-it looks like there's going to be lots of mayhem-even more than usual.

### **Dale Earnhardt Jr is Solid**

...So far-it is early but Jr. Nation has reason to have some optimism. If not for a late Daytona wreck Jr. would be in the top 5 in the points standings with 3 solid finishes. The crew chief swap that took place in the off-season for ¾ of the Hendrick Motorsports Team appears to be working.

### **Jeff Gordon is back**

After ending a career long losing streak at Phoenix by essentially knocking Kyle Busch out of the way-Jeff Gordon showed the fans that he still has it. With new crew chief Alan Gustafson on the box look for the #24 to be a threat again.

### **Jimmie Johnson-slow start or experimenting?**

The 5-time consecutive and defending champ had his normal Daytona 500-crashing out (for whatever reason besides a 2006 victory JJ cannot finish in the top 30 in the sport's biggest race for the life of him). After struggling at Phoenix for most of the weekend he came back to finish a solid 3rd, but at Vegas the team never got it right, and he finished in a forgettable 16th place. So what gives? More than likely-it isn't anything to be concerned about-Jimmie's crew chief and evil mastermind to many Chad Knaus is known for experimenting early in the season-fine tuning new setups that will be in place come Chase time when the money is on the line-so for casual fans who watched the first 3 events and think this guy isn't that great-trust me-he WILL be there when it counts.

### **Tony Stewart Is Going to Be a Factor**

After a ho-hum last year the man they call Smoke is back to play-Stewart has had a great chance to win all three events this year and has started uncharacteristically fast-leading the points standings. Once we hit the summer stretch is when Stewart really gets going-it bodes well for the team and for his fans that he is running well this early.

### **Kyle Busch Maturing?**

...Maybe-The young Busch brother-extremely talented and often extremely volatile, has so far this year been a different Kyle Busch-after ramming into Carl Edwards at Phoenix on accident instead of not caring Busch apologized and showed remorse for his wreck less actions. After getting bumped out of the race lead at Phoenix by eventual winner Jeff Gordon Busch did not throw his usual tantrum after the race-instead giving a decent interview and not getting mad at Gordon for his somewhat dirty tactics. At Las Vegas after having a great race car Kyle's engine let go-but instead of stomping off or



yelling profanities over the radio he calmly gave an interview to the media. We are only 3 races in-maybe it is not built up enough yet for him to explode as normal-but perhaps the newlywed has calmed a bit-if he is going to win a championship (which with his talent and equipment he is capable of) he must maintain this-it remains to be seen.

### **Carl Edwards is the man to beat at this point in the season**

The 99 car won the last 2 races of the 2010 season then finished 2nd in the 2011 Daytona 500. At Phoenix he sat on the pole with a dominant race car and was more than likely on his way to a race win had Kyle Busch not wrecked him early in the event. At Las Vegas he ran up front all day and took advantage of a late race mistake by Tony Stewart and went on to score the victory. Theoretically the 99 car could have won the last 5 Cup Series points races run-all on vastly different tracks. It bodes well for the rest of the season and the 48 team has already pointed to them as their biggest competition come Chase time-of course it remains to be seen how the Chase will unfold-If one is to remember in 2008 the 99 had arguably the best race cars out there (he won 9 races that year) but two crucial mistakes-one by the driver at Talladega and one by the team at Charlotte lost them the title.





## Play Ball! By Brad Wingate

So with the start of the 2011 MLB season, it's time for me to lay down some not so bold predictions. I am by no means a professional, so please do not place any bets on these predictions.

**AL MVP – Miguel Cabrera, 1B, Detroit Tigers**

Despite his very public spring training arrest and subsequent rehab for alcohol abuse, Cabrera should still be everyone's favorite as Most Valuable Player. The guy can just plain mash, and is always near the top of the league leader board in homeruns, RBI, batting average, and OBPS. Had Detroit made the postseason in 2010, Cabrera may have edged out Josh Hamilton for last years award. I think this is the year he gets his hardware.



**NL MVP – Ryan Braun, OF, Milwaukee Brewers**

Over the past 3 seasons, no outfielder has more homeruns, RBI or runs than Braun, and he ranks in the top 6 in batting average, and slugging percentage over that same span. The Brew Crew are the trendy pick to win the NL Central this year, and even though Prince Fielder is in a contract year, I think this is the season that Braun takes over. Besides his offensive prowess, he can also steal a base, and can play a respectable outfield. He also boasts perhaps my favorite nickname, the "Hebrew Hammer". I think it is safe to say that I have a small man-crush on Ryan Braun.

**AL Cy Young – Jon Lester, LHP, Boston Red Sox**

2010 could've been Lester's breakout season, but his 2008 and 2009 seasons were pretty impressive as well, especially for a cancer survivor. Felix Hernandez took home last year's award, but unless he can get some run support, or can add 6-8 more wins to last years 13, I don't see him winning it again in 2011. Enter Lester. Over the past 4 seasons, he has been the unheralded stud of the Sox staff. Josh Beckett and Daisuke Matsuzaka were given a lot of the spotlight in Boston, but Lester was the one who put up the numbers. There should be no shortage of offense for the Sox this year, and Lester may be the one who benefits the most.

**NL Cy Young – Roy Halladay, RHP, Philadelphia Phillies**

Since the award cannot be given to an entire pitching staff, I will defer to Doc Halladay. We all know the guy can pitch, as evidenced by his 2 no-hitters in 2010. The biggest challenge for Halladay may be holding off #2 starter; Cliff Lee. As good as Lee is, I think Doc edges him out for his 3rd Cy Young Award as he and the rest of the Phantastic Four try to bring a World Series title back to Philly.



**AL ROY** – Mike Moustakas, 3B, Kansas City Royals  
 Question: What is the only team in MLB history to not have a 40 homerun hitter? Answers: The Royals. The team record is 36, hit by Steve Balboni in 1985, which is the same number of homers hit by Moustakas in the minor leagues last season, in 116 fewer at bats. The future is looking bright for KC, and Moose is probably the brightest of all the future Royals stars. He will make everyone forget that Alex Gordon was once a top rated third base prospect. Moustakas will hopefully invoked memories of former Royals 3B George Brett for years to come. Plus, isn't it time for something good to happen to the Royals?

**NL ROY** – Brandon Belt, 1B, San Francisco Giants  
 Is it possible for a team to have 2 straight ROY winners? Just ask the Dodgers, who had 4 straight from 1992-1995 (Karros, Piazza, Mondesi, Nomo). Belt is the type of athlete who can keep the ROY Award by the Bay. He was an unheralded first baseman from the University of Texas when he was drafted by the Giants in 2009. But, after a retooling of his swing, Belt finds himself as the starting first baseman for the defending World Champions. He

has more athleticism than most first baseman, as evidenced by his 22 steals across 3 minor league stops in 2010.

So that's it, those are my award winner predictions for 2011. Like I said, I would not recommend you take these to Vegas, but you can use them to start some baseball conversations at home or work.





**Real Signature or Not?**  
**Brian Dawson AKA Rockiesfan33**

Identifying an auto-penned signature is not difficult at all. I've included examples of the McGwires posted here on SCF for this guide.

Telltale signs of an auto-penned signature include:

1. Uniform thickness to the signature from start to finish. An auto-pen machine writes straight down with uniform pressure throughout the signature, so there are no variances of pressure. The McGwire returns do not display this trend.



2. When the machine begins to "sign", it does so by starting with a straight downward press onto the page and then the signature flows from there. That is most often indicated by a blot of ink at the beginning of the signature. A hand-signed signature will display a "running start" from where the signer's hand starts moving forward right before the pen hits the paper.





3. The machine ends the signature in the same fashion. The pen stroke just stops and is then lifted straight up off of the page. This action creates another blot of ink at the very end of the signature. With a hand-signed item, the signature will trail off as the pen leaves the paper.



4. When compared to other "signed" items, there will be no difference in the signature. Some signers may use different machines for their signatures, but every signature produced from that machine will be uniform. The McGwires show variances in pen thickness throughout the signatures.



5. AP machines can sign on flat or flattened surfaces, like cars, photos, or jerseys. Not on an uneven or non-flat surface like a ball.

So, what does this all mean? The McGwires that are coming back are clearly signed by hand, not by machine. All of the scans posted show variances in stroke width and pressure. All of the signatures show variances in the size of the letters and the spaces in between letters. While this doesn't mean that they are authentic, it does indicate that they are hand signed.



## **The Heat is On!**

**By Khendra Murdock aka DunkinDurant35**

After a first half of the season that didn't quite live up to many people's expectations, yet was still better than most other teams, the Miami Heat have experienced a huge slide lately. This is a really terrible time for them to be having such a slump because competitiveness is rising as the playoffs near, and the players and coach Erik Spoelstra really should be on the same page by this point. They've had more than enough time to gel as a unit, but they're falling apart instead of coming together when it really matters. After all, when a team's coach says guys are literally crying in the locker room after a game, something is obviously wrong.

In examining their problems, there are some stats that are easy to point to and are quite revealing. One is their pathetic record against the other top five teams in the league this season: 1-9. This stat takes into account the whole season, too, not just the more recent woes, so even when the team was winning more games, they still weren't putting together their best efforts against the top clubs. Another interesting stat is their record against any team with a .500 or better record: 15-19. Miami, then, not only has troubles against the most elite teams, but against any team that is currently winning more games than they are losing! Such stats should worry Heat fans, because it's a rare case when a team makes the playoffs with a record below .500. How will this team win a playoff series when they can't even win most of their games against teams with records better than .500?

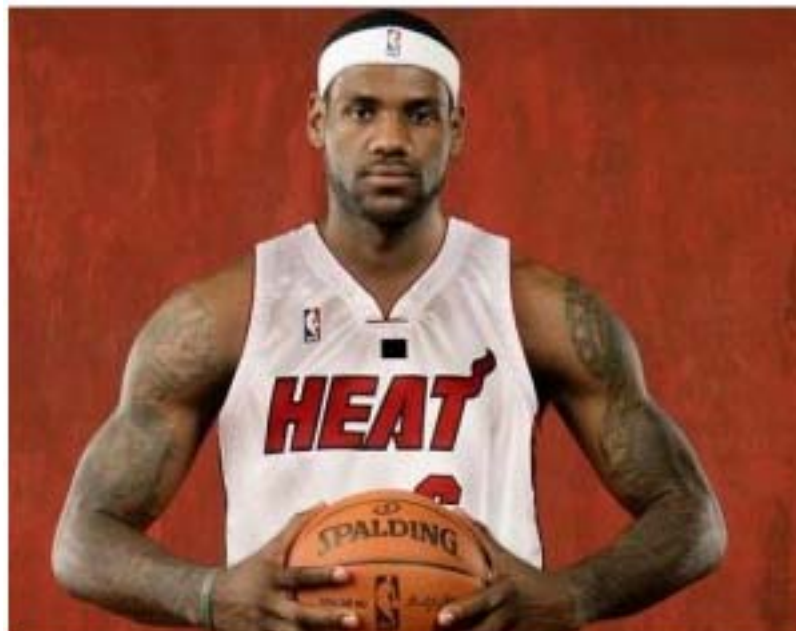
One reason good teams are beating up so much on the Heat is because their supporting cast is being heavily exploited. Many critics suggested this would be a problem for them when The Big Three were hyped up in the pre-season, and these critics' concerns turned out to be legitimate. Outside of LeBron James, Dwyane Wade, and Chris Bosh, no Heat player is averaging double figures in points per game. In fact, if you don't count Udonis Haslem's 8.0 points per game (he's been out most of the season), the fourth best scorer on the team after The Big Three is Mario Chalmers, who is scoring a mere 6.8 points per game on 41.3% shooting. Nothing personal against Chalmers, but I don't think he strikes much fear into the heart of opponents. The recent addition of Mike Bibby hasn't been of much help so far, either; Bibby looks lost and has very little time to get used to Miami's way of doing things. Furthermore, Mike Miller has been slow to get into a groove since coming back from his injury, looking nothing like the smooth shooter and ball-handler who had some good seasons with the Magic, Grizzlies, Wizards, and Timberwolves; his shooting percentage is at an all-time low.

When I watch the Heat, I see a team that plays a lot of one-on-one basketball. The spacing on offense is terrible. James and Wade may be getting assists, but the flow of the offense is hardly impressive. Even Bosh is now complaining about not getting enough shots, but when he came to a team with two of the highest volume scorers in the league, he really shouldn't have been expecting to get as many touches.



For the Heat to get out of their slump, I believe James and Wade need to decide between themselves who wants to become more of a distributor and who wants to be more of the go-to guy. Considering their careers, I definitely think it would be best if James took on more of a point guard role and let Wade be more of the main scoring option. With that said, Wade shouldn't try to force the issue all the time, even as the go-to guy, because teams never succeed when everyone stands around and watches a superstar chuck it up most of the night. Both stars have to get their teammates more involved so that the opposition has reason to go away from double teams and cover other open guys. Every great team that ever won a championship had a strong supporting cast that could come through when the stars were doubled or otherwise had off nights. Even teams that also had great superstars, like the Bulls with Jordan and Pippen and the Lakers with Shaq and Kobe, had guys like Horace Grant, Dennis Rodman, B.J. Armstrong, Robert Horry, and Derek Fisher to help take the load off the big stars.

Only if the Heat reconsider the roles of the superstars and get the other guys more involved in the game will they make much noise in the playoffs. If they continue the way things are going now, however, fans shouldn't be surprised if they get bounced in the first round.





## **The Problem with Today's Card Collecting Is...**

**By Guy Mitchell aka sweetg1**

Let me start by saying what I like about the hobby of card collecting. I like that I can collect (and research) things that interest me. For me in this hobby, it's mostly about collecting Negro League memorabilia and cards. Obviously, not everyone is interested in my type of collection and that is okay. My interest in such a collection began when I learned that my great-uncle played in the Negro Leagues, so I began researching the Negro Leagues and began wanting to know more about them. I then started focusing a collection towards the players that played during this era. Perhaps your own collecting uniqueness lies in collecting significant to you and that's what makes the hobby fun.

While the uniqueness of everyone's collection makes the hobby fun, it can also be a cause of frustration on different levels.

Everyone has the right to collect whomever they want. I get that. However, it sometimes appears that there isn't any loyalty towards a player or a team. Recently, I was trying to trade a particular card of value. I searched on SCF for individuals who collected that individual. Since that player wasn't a particularly highly sought after player, there weren't many collectors. In fact, the previous post of someone looking for that player was about 9 months ago. When I contacted the collector to see if they were interested in trading for my card, they told me that they didn't collect that player any more. They were now collecting who was "hot". They weren't rude about my inquiry, but I could tell by his response that he was wondering why I was contacting him from a 9 month old request. My thought was, I've been collecting the same thing for the last 20 years, so any WTTF (Want To Trade For) request from me would be valid from the day that I first posted it. "Where's the loyalty?", I wondered aloud. But to each his own way, I concluded.

While I'm not knocking that type of collection, it does seem to create a few other problems. Everyone chases who is "hot". That's not only a problem in hobby, but it seems to be a problem in life. We all want the latest model cell phone, whether it's actually better or not. My silver 2 slot toaster from 1975 beats the new Cuisnart 4 slot toaster/bagel warmer every single time (so much so that I'm thinking about going to an antique store to find that old toaster, but that's another story) and I'll apologize for all the high school boys who dump their girlfriends for the new hot girl. But who or what is "hot" does not imply that it's better. Where is the loyalty, I ask?

What's equally wrong about this, in my opinion, is that the card companies understand this about the collectors. They know that, no matter what, today's collectors will be chasers. We chase what's new, no matter the cost. I find it extremely odd that a card like 2000 Topps Chrome Allegiance Refractor Tony Gwynn books for about \$80. There were only 100 of these made! It's fallen off the collector's radar because the card is 10 years old. However, every kid in America is trying to chase the latest Steven Strasburg card and the value of these Strasburg cards is over \$100. It just doesn't seem right to me. If Strasburg were to suffer the fate of 1980 ROY Joe Charboneau (c'mon kids, look him up), then his \$100 cards will fall to \$1.00 and all of his fans will "drop it like it's hot". This is the sort of



thing that turns some collectors away from the hobby. If they spent more time chasing people for the right reason (not because he's the latest phenomenon, but perhaps someone from your home town), then they wouldn't be turned off from the hobby. How many chasers of Barry Bonds were disappointed after the steroids scandal? And what happened to the value of his cards? It was one of the things that turned collectors away from the hobby, as well as turning them away from baseball.

Because collectors today chase the current cards, most tend to stay away from the older cards. It used to be that when the cards were old, then they were worth something. It was the low number of Honus Wagner's T206 cards that helped increase the value of it (or at least, one of the reasons). To think that there are only 50-70 more of the aforementioned Gwynn cards around is amazing to me, and both are Hall of Famers. The very mention of 100 Gwynn cards should make it triple digits. What has Strasburg done thus far to warrant triple digits at such a young age, especially when there are 10 times as many cards? That's not to pick on Strasburg, as he's a wonderful talent. However, the card companies understand this and they exploit it, perpetuating the problem.

I think it would be great if the companies sparked interest in older sets or older players. We do see some of the older players (Turn Back The Clock, Cards Your Mom Threw Out, What Could Have Been type set, etc), and those sets are pretty cool. But people don't always seem to understand the history of the game. To wit, I remembered telling a fellow baseball collector about collecting Negro League cards. They had never heard of the Negro Leagues and they weren't familiar with whom might have played during that time. I was 10-20 years older than this collector (I'm 44). I don't mind educating people about that era, but...REALLY? I can understand if folks never heard of Harry "Suitcase" Simpson or James "Cool Papa" Bell (that's who I would have super-collected in the day), but shouldn't we, as baseball fans, have heard of Jackie Robinson? I'm claiming that part of the problem is that nobody is encouraged to look up the history. They are not encouraged to stay loyal to a player or team (even my nephew stated that his new 2nd favorite team is the Heat after LeBron left – Oh brother!), and they're off chasing today's hottest stars. This is what free agency and the Me-Generation of players has brought us and to be honest, I think it stinks. Am I the only one who thinks this way? However, collectors should be encouraged to look up the historical players. Then they might understand something about the game and something about the older cards. I love the fact that collectors can get old cards through the give-away program. I just hope that it encourages them to look up that player and understand their contributions to the game. I often think the players in the game should research the history of the game.

That's just my two cents. Thanks for letting me get that off my chest! Now who wants my huge Joe Charboneau lot? I'll get back to you right after I go pick up my vintage toaster.

Happy trading everyone!



## **It's About the Memories, Not the Money...**

**By Richard Mock aka Paintball**

I have noticed over the past 10 years or so that all card collectors talk about are the “great pulls” and how much money they got for such and such card. Card collecting has always been a form of gambling, but I’m afraid the young adults with children are missing the most important aspect of collecting, the memories. I am 63 years old and raised three sons. Every time I look through our collection I have a memory. Every time I look at my old cards from when I was a kid I return to my childhood in my bedroom and the hours I spent looking through those cards. I could never sell or trade these cards. They are my childhood. Every time I look at my scuffed up Willie Mays card I remember exactly when my dad picked the card up in a parking lot after a kid had thrown it on the ground saying “D.... N....” I remember my dad putting the card in my back pocket saying: “Save that card boy. He might be the best player to ever play the game.” I remember the weekend we were visiting my parents’ home where I grew up and I took the shoe box down from the top of my old closet and gave the box to my son and told him that I had some cards to add to the collection. He spent the entire weekend looking up the cards in his Beckett and telling me how much each card was worth. All the cards were in terrible condition from being handled so much and I kept telling him they weren’t worth that much, but until he got older he didn’t believe me. “It doesn’t matter” I told all my kids, “It’s about the memories, not the money.” Every time I look at the 1989 Upper Deck Ken Griffey, Jr. Rookie card I see my 12 year old son sitting in the front seat of my car holding up the card with a great big grin on his face yelling “I got it. I got it.” I don’t care if the price of that card reached \$1,000 I would never sell it. There are hundreds of memories stored away in my cabinet of baseball and football rookie cards. Each time I look at these cards another memory pops into my mind. My wife doesn’t understand why I can spend hours looking at these cards...

The memories don’t just end with great pulls. Ever since I was a kid the first thing I would do and still do during baseball season every morning is grab the sports section of the newspaper and turn to the box scores. My sons have picked up this routine and do the same thing. It is not unusual for me to get a call at 6:00-6:30AM from one of my sons asking if I had been following a certain ball player and did we have his rookie card. I will go check and tell him which cards we have or that we don’t have his card. Usually they talk me into getting on eBay and buying some of his rookie cards or sometimes they will buy the cards and bring them the next time they come and add them to the collection. When I look at these cards, I still remember that telephone call and our discussion. Sometimes they have been right and the kid continues his performance. Sometimes they are wrong and a great career falls flat. Sometimes the cards have gone way up in value. Sometimes they become worthless, but like I tell my sons: ” It doesn’t matter. It’s not about the money, it’s about the memories.”

My sons have all grown up, moved away, married and now have children of their own. They all give me hobby boxes of baseball and football cards for my Christmas presents. Every Christmas I sit in my recliner and watch my three grown sons sitting on the floor opening packs of cards like they were kids again. When one of them has a great rookie card pull we all get excited and talk for hours about that player. I hope when I’m dead and gone and my boys are looking at one of these cards that it brings back the memory of their old man sitting in the recliner smiling down on them. I hope they remember that it’s not about the money. It’s about the memories.



## **NHL Relocation back to Canada? Do the Numbers Support the Possibility?**

**By Scott Kozlowski aka Scottkoz20**

With the current news out of Phoenix about the legal issues that surround the survival of the Coyotes, there have been rumblings about Winnipeg getting their franchise back. Phoenix is not the only franchise in despair. The ownership situation in Atlanta is causing people to think that the Thrashers could move to Quebec City.

Winnipeg and Quebec City share the bond of losing an NHL franchise in the mid-1990s after years of losing money and viability to survive in Canada. Fast forward 15 years and both cities have either built (MTS Centre in Winnipeg) or are planning (Videotron Amphitheatre in Quebec) to build an arena and are looking for a primary tenant.

Some people think that it didn't work before, how can it work now?

The single biggest factor is the Canadian Dollar is about 30% stronger today that it was 15 years ago against the US Dollar. In June of 1995, when the Nordiques moved to Denver, \$100/CAD was worth only \$72.60/USD. During that season, the Nordiques payroll was \$8.9 Million/USD (12.257 Million/CAD). The average ticket price was \$31.71/USD during that season. However, all of the ticket revenue was taken in Canadian Dollars for an adjusted average of \$43.66/CAD. There were 24 home games for the Nordiques during that season with a capacity of 15,176 at Le Colisée. Meaning the maximum revenue they could bring in from their home dates was \$15.903 Million/CAD (this is assuming every game was a sell-out)

After paying the players, this left only 3.65 Million/USD to pay for operating expenses, non-player salaries, etc.

In Winnipeg, it was worse. When the Jets left Manitoba in 1996, the value of the Canadian Dollar was higher, but not significantly as \$100/CAD was worth only \$73.30/USD (or .60 per \$1.00/USD). The average ticket price during the 1995-96 season was \$23.82/USD (\$32.50/CAD) giving a maximum ticket revenue for the Jets of around \$20 Million/CAD for the 40 home dates. The average attendance was less than 12,000 during the 1995-96 season in Winnipeg, making ticket revenue closer to \$15 Million/CAD. The payroll for the 1995-96 Jets was \$28.1 Million/USD (or \$38.384 Million/CAD)!!!!!!!

Do you need me to show you that the Jets were operating in the red?

So, let's fast forward to today. The current value of the US Dollar against the Canadian Dollar is \$100/US to \$102.11/CAD. Meaning the value of the Canadian Dollar has increased nearly \$30 per \$100 since the Nordiques and Jets moved from Canada.

Let's look at if a team were to move into Winnipeg's 15,015 seat MTS Centre. The average ticket price during the 2009-10 season was \$51.41/USD (\$50.35/CAD). So if a team were to move into



Winnipeg and charge that amount for tickets, they would make 31.648 Million/USD from ticket sales. The Salary Cap floor is \$44 Million/USD, leaving a \$12.5 Million/USD gap. In order for a team to break even, they would need to charge an average of \$71.43/USD (\$70/CAD) per ticket at the 15,015 seat MTS Centre, which is a possibility.

On the flip side, the planned arena in Quebec is slated to handle 18,000+ for hockey. Using the same average ticket numbers, this would be about \$38 Million/USD from ticket sales, leaving about \$6 Million Dollar gap.

Obviously, ticket sales are not the only source of revenue for an NHL team but it is by far the biggest source. The NHL does not have a lucrative TV deal like the NFL and NBA has and the teams need to rely on the fans to stay afloat. Additionally, what happens when the Canadian Dollar declines against the US Dollar? It was only 2 years ago that the Canadian Dollar was worth less than 80 cents for a short time, and over the past 20 years, it's typical that the Canadian Dollar is worth 80 cents or less.

Is it possible for Canada to support a 7th or 8th team? I believe so, as long as the Canadian Dollar can stay strong. If you were to press me to make a choice between Winnipeg and Quebec City, I'd believe Quebec City would have a better chance of survival, based on the numbers.





## **Enough is Enough. The NHL Needs to Clean Itself Up**

**By Sean McCafferty aka 30ranfordfan**

March 10, 2011. I'm going to mark this date on my calendar, as the one where I've now joined the chorus of fans wanting the NHL to rid itself of fighting. Still in a shocked state of mind over Zdeno



Chara getting no suspension for breaking Max Pacioretty's neck two nights earlier, my brain must have been working overtime to connect the dots. As much as I enjoy watching a good hockey fight, the NHL needs to eliminate them.

Don't get me wrong. I typically attend 10-15 OHL games a year, and the site of two 17 year olds beating each other senseless usually gets me cheering harder than the goals do. I normally watch between 40 and 50 NHL games on TV a year, and have seen anywhere from 1 to 10 games live each year over the last decade. During that time I can

think of just as many fights that really stick out in my mind, as I can goals, saves, or other great plays. I'll label myself as a hypocrite right now – because I know until fights become a thing of the past, my behaviour probably won't change.

Why? Because it's impossible for the NHL to eliminate the rest of the nonsense until they do.

I know the arguments for the status quo. It's a fast game, and accidents happen. You can't expect players to react when they have only a matter of a few seconds (at most) to make a decision. There wasn't any intent. It's a tough game, and you need to man up. He should have done a better job protecting himself.

What a bunch of malarkey. A quick glance at TSN.CA's list of current NHL injuries shows 17 players out with concussion, and two more out with "concussion like symptoms". Without making too many assumptions, I suspect the 6 others out with 'head' injuries are also concussed, vertigo is likely concussion related, Daymond Langkow's broken vertebrae / neck also likely came along with some concussion like symptoms. That's just the current injuries, no mention of how many concussions players have recovered from this year. That doesn't include the contractless Paul Karyia, who can't play this year due to a concussion.

How can any sane person look at this, and insist nothing is wrong? Head injuries have reached epidemic proportions and the NHL needs to do something about it.

As I've seen more of drama around the Max Pacioretty incident unfold, I've actually become convinced that the NHL did get the call right. Based on the rule book's criteria for levying a suspension,



doesn't happen again. It means the rules need to change, so a hit like that results in an automatic suspension.

Like after the blind side hit that Matt Cooke laid on Marc Savard last year, the NHL has the power to act if it wants to. The first order of business needs to be to correct this travesty. Make sure players know that if they run another player into a turnbuckle they'll get an unpaid vacation. A long one. One that eats up 10 to 20 percent of their season, and doesn't distinguish the difference between regular season and playoff games.



Does anyone honestly believe this 'hard hockey play' would have happened if NHLers knew a 15 game ban was waiting for them, even if the player doesn't miss a shift? If after a 15 game suspension that player knew the next time it would be 30, how likely do you think he'd be to reoffend?



But don't stop there. While Pacioretty's near death experience may be the most recent violent act the NHL did nothing about, it's not even the most high profile one of the season. That honour would go to David Steckel, and the elbow that knocked the league's best player for 27 games and counting.

Sidney Crosby was having one of the best seasons we've seen in decades, until a cheap shot put him on the shelf.

Use the word accident all you want. Maybe Steckel really had no idea he was about to make contact with Crosby's head. Fact is, the "I didn't mean to do it" excuse means that Steckel was careless. He wasn't in control of his body, and his reckless actions resulted in an injury. The rule book should hold him accountable for that.

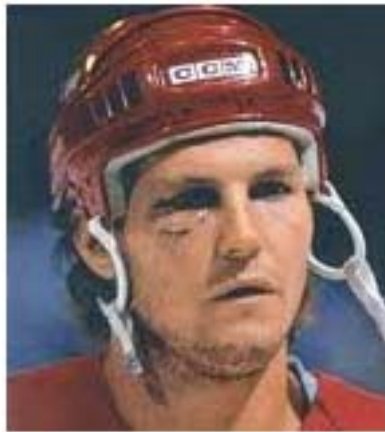
The NHL needs to go after head shots, and they need to be met with suspensions. Maybe a small one of 2 or 3 games to start, but the length would have to escalate with every following infraction. Every single time. Made contact with the other player's head? That will be 5, the game, and a suspension. You're a Super Star? Don't care. It's the playoffs? Still don't care. The other guy didn't miss a shift? That will still be 5, the game, and a suspension. If the punishment isn't automatic, the current "it will never happen to me" mentality will remain. If the punishment isn't written down, and made automatic, Colin Campbell (or whoever replaces him) will screw it up. Don't let them.



There is no reason why this can't be done. Telling players they can't hit their opponents in the head does nothing to take away from their ability to hit them in the shoulder, the chest, or the hip. It doesn't prevent them from separating another player from the puck. It doesn't remove their ability to intimidate with punishing checks. It only removes the unnecessarily viscous hits, protecting players from themselves.

In the NHL's circle of violence, this brings us right back to fighting.

There is no way anyone should be able to keep a straight face, while arguing for a ban on shoulder to head contact, yet support the notion that fists should be allowed fly. You can't ban head shots, without getting rid of the fights. How could the NHL law makers tell players that a 5 minute major is appropriate for a punch, but a suspension is needed for a shoulder? They can't, and they shouldn't try. Remove them both.



If Sidney Crosby's absence doesn't tell us that concussions are a problem, 46 year old Bob Probert's death should. Maybe the NHL need its own version of the Whitby Dunlops' late defenceman Don Sanderson? Is an on-ice death what it will take to get the league's attention? I hope it never comes to that, but I fear if the league continues down its current patch of ignorance, it's inevitable.

I know the changes I'm asking for are drastic. I know this will force many player to change how they play. It will end the careers of many, because the elimination of fights would render players like George Parros, Derek Boogaard, and Colton Orr useless.

Today's players are bigger, faster, and stronger. Modern equipment is capable of inflicting as much damage as it prevents . Hockey has evolved, and the rules need to catch up. I just hope we don't lose too many more players before it finally happens.



## The Naked Pass

By Geraint Chen aka RiceBondsMntna2Rice

“ill pass” These might be the most dreaded string of words to grace our hobby. With nary a key stroke wasted on punctuation or majuscule, this familiar refrain has kept countless sports cards enthusiasts up at night. If you’ve traded cards online long enough, you’ve become only too familiar with this frightfully flippant phrase. Benjamin Franklin once observed; “In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.” Evidently, Mr. Franklin never traded cardboard on the internet.

Sure, the variations on this expression that populate your inbox and trade threads can include commas, apostrophes, or periods where appropriate. But when left standing alone, even in its fullest form, “Thanks, but I’ll pass” is as lacking a way to turn down trade proposals as it is pervasive. The Naked Pass (that is, telling someone “ill pass” without any explanation) isn’t worthy of the good people who use it, so in order to plot its long overdue demise, we need to explore the reasons why the cranky construction is so popular in the first place.

How exactly did The Naked Pass become such a common practice when successful online trading depends so heavily on the ability to communicate and play well with others? The ascent of new media like Facebook and Twitter has certainly lent a hand. These innovations are fast eroding the art of sending a short personal note, fleshed out in the kinds of sentences we in grade school were taught existed in the English language. While at this pace “ill pass” might soon seem downright wordy, its overuse actually belies a more fundamental trend in our hobby.

A growing proportion of those of us who enjoy staring at photos of sports idols on 2½” x 3½” pieces of cardboard appear increasingly prone to flip cards for a quick profit. While the exercise of bartering naturally invites a healthy measure of aggressive deal-finding, the current state of the sports card industry has exacerbated and perhaps even originated a cut-throat attitude that’s touched every rung of the hobby. The pursuit of instant gratification is a far cry from why most of us first fell in love with collecting, but it’s now a running theme from the card company cartels to the struggling local card shops, and from the sophisticated moneyed collector all the way on down to those who can only afford a few loose packs a year (after performing the requisite series of bending and shaking rituals at the local Zellers or Target, of course).

The attitude is exemplified by the rushed manner in which hobbyists turn down overtures to swap cards on card swapping message boards. Granted, there are only so many ways to say “no thank you” without having to write a novel every time. And sure, a short request like “CMB,” which is formally an acronym but has at times morphed into trading parlance for “I wanna trade,” occasionally calls for an equally short denial. Yet no one would likely dispute that given unlimited time, sending a personalized note is always preferable to “ill pass,” primarily because we aim to treat others as they want to be treated, but also because there’s an obvious cost invoking The Naked Pass.



The problem is that connoisseurs of this verbal short cut have calculated that the time and effort required by a thoughtful message isn't worth the benefit. In the short term, they might be right; but in the long run, they can't be.

Dismissing offhand an earnest offer to trade has the potential to extinguish not only the prospects of trading with an individual this particular time, but for all time. The Naked Pass shuts down dialogue by leaving no room for negotiation, and the snarky tone doesn't help much either. Since burning bridges with a prospective trading partner is almost never the goal, there's little to be gained from using online jargon that has every chance of doing just that. First impressions are formed and cemented quickly and in a cross-section of the hobby that's built entirely on the reputation of people who'll likely never meet, there's no more important element in trading successfully on the computer than the opening remarks one person makes to another.

Of course, all of the above assumes that "no" was the intended signal to begin with. Maybe worse than being clumsy, The Naked Pass isn't even misused correctly half the time. Instead, it can seem like the default option any time the answer isn't, "Yes, YES, a thousand times yes!" This scant reply doesn't do what it's supposed to do, and on the rare occasions when it does, it does so poorly.

So how exactly can anyone be expected to confront this virtual malady? The cure is almost too simple: just add "because" to the end of whatever you write. Should your fingers be genetically predisposed to tap out that inadequate phrase, or if years of muscle memory prevent you from hazarding a more creative response, adding "because" will transform even The Naked Pass into a fully clothed comment, because it'll prompt you, however briefly, to elaborate on why you came to your decision. That way even if your answer is, "When hell freezes over," your counterpart will see "When hell freezes over because..." and that subtle invitation to continue talking may mean the difference between gaining a friend on the one hand or becoming yet another forgettable handle on the other.

Think of it, the next private message you send will be the latest opportunity afforded to anyone on Earth to set the kind of example worthy of our fine pastime. So when in the future you find yourself agonizing over whether to go with The Naked Pass? The answer's easy: thanks, but you'll pass.



**An Open Letter to the NHL**  
**By Richard McAdam aka RGM81**

The following text is a copy of the letter I sent to the NHL Head Office in New York yesterday regarding the illegal and devastating hit by Zdeno Chara on Max Pacioretty, and the subsequent lack of supplementary disciplinary action by the NHL against Chara for the hit.

The NHL Response to the Chara/Pacioretty Incident

Richard McAdam

National Hockey League  
1251 Ave Of The Americas # 47  
New York, NY 10020  
USA  
(212) 789-2000

March 10, 2011

To Whom It May Concern,

I am outraged at the decision of the NHL's disciplinary committee regarding the incident involving Zdeno Chara of the Boston Bruins and Max Pacioretty of the Montreal Canadiens. How Mr. Murphy could be so callous as to describe Chara's actions as being a "hockey play" absolutely defies all common sense. It was an illegal action, as deemed by the on-ice official who called a five-minute major penalty and assessed a game misconduct to Chara. There are many precedents set by your disciplinary committee that intent, which was clearly the prevailing factor in decision in this case, is secondary to the outcome of the play. The best example of this took place when Alexander Ovechkin was suspended in March 2010, Mr. Campbell stated that the play which injured Brian Campbell was "reckless" and that even though there was no intent to injure, players must be held responsible for their actions when those actions result in another player being injured. How is it that this standard does not apply in this situation?

The replays indicate that Chara was fully aware of where he was on the ice, and that his hand/elbow guided Pacioretty's head so that it had nowhere to go but "the turnbuckle" seemingly suggests that there was some intent on the play. I am certain beyond a reasonable doubt that Chara did not intend to break Pacioretty's neck and severely concuss him. But I am shocked and appalled that Mr. Murphy concluded that he could find no evidence "that Chara targeted the head of his opponent, left his feet or delivered the check in any other manner that could be deemed to be dangerous." Chara is 6'9" – he



doesn't have to leave his feet to hit anybody in the NHL. Pacioretty himself stated—after the suspension was handed down, from his hospital bed—that he felt that his head was targeted and that Chara “was trying to guide my head into the turnbuckle.”

In your rush to sweep this incident under the carpet and trumpet the machismo of the game by stating that illegal (as deemed by the on-ice official) plays which can result in catastrophic injury are “hockey play[s]” and thus just part of the game, you have failed miserably to demonstrate that the NHL is concerned with protecting its players. A promising career of a 22-year old man now hangs in the balance because he has a fractured vertebrae and a severe concussion. You have chosen not to hold the player responsible for the condition of Max Pacioretty accountable for his thoroughly reckless, dangerous, and unnecessary play. In the warped mentality of the NHL, sitting out the third period of a game in which the Bruins were trailing 4-0 is sufficient punishment for potentially ruining a man's career and indeed his very quality of life. I find this absolutely reprehensible and disgusting.

I have been a hockey fan for my entire life. I have attended games, I have acquired a large amount of memorabilia of my favourite teams and players, and I have always supported the game. What the NHL has done in turning a blind eye to incidents such as this makes it incredibly difficult for me to continue supporting the NHL. Tonight, March 10th, features a game that I have been anticipating for many months, as the Montreal Canadiens take on the St. Louis Blues. And yet, I find that my level of interest in the outcome of this game is severely diminished because my thoughts are first and foremost focused on the well-being of Max Pacioretty, and the utter failure of your League and its disciplinary committee to hold Zdeno Chara accountable for his actions. Most damning to the credibility of the League's disciplinary committee is the statement that “Chara has not been involved in a supplemental discipline incident during his 13-year NHL career.” If this transpires again a week from now and another player is injured by Chara, because of your inaction here, Chara will still not have been involved in a supplemental discipline incident during his 13-year NHL career. Mr. Murphy could not even see fit to hand out a token and pithy 1-game suspension or issue a fine to establish that Chara would have a supplementary discipline history on his record. That is an egregious level of negligence, and a slap in the face to Max Pacioretty.

The NHL has a serious credibility problem on its hands when it comes to policing its players. It has allowed the best player in the world, Sidney Crosby, to be injured. The League even had a second chance after the David Steckel blindside hit to the head, when Victor Hedman slammed Crosby's head into the glass on a hit from behind. It failed on both occasions. The best player in the world has not played a game since January and continues to endure the symptoms of post-concussion syndrome brought on by hits to the head. I suppose that I should not have been surprised to learn that Chara would not be suspended for breaking the neck of Max Pacioretty. After all, the NHL did nothing to protect its



best player or take action against those who injured him. Since there's no such thing as special treatment for superstars in the NHL, and all players are equal, if you don't protect Crosby why would you protect Pacioretty. That is the issue the NHL faces based on the precedents it has set. It is shameful, and I hope that the people responsible feel the full wrath of the players, the fans, and the media for the abject negligence to step up and say that enough is enough and start doing something to restore justice in the NHL.

Sincerely,

Richard McAdam





What are the good folks of SCF going to do with this autographed Carey Price jersey from Starside Signatures? Stay tuned to the hockey forums to find out...



# NEXT ISSUE:

## Between the Pipes Product Review



-The word on UD's new selling plan  
-Many more reviews and interesting articles!

Submit your article today!

[http://www.sportscardforum.com/  
forumdisplay.php?f=446](http://www.sportscardforum.com/forumdisplay.php?f=446)