

Collector's

August
2011

Owner

METALLICA

What is your summer hobby

Contest Entries

Product Reviews

Summer Hobbies



BULK GRADING ANYONE?



WANT TO GET CARDS GRADED TOO? SEE HOW ON PAGES 28-29 AND 30 WITH SCF'S BULK GRADING SUBMISSION

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Broad Horizons
By Karine Hains aka Pheeb888

Oh, you want to know what Metallica is doing on your hobby magazine? Well, hobby is a term that can be used rather widely and while most of the time we use it to refer to our main addiction of card collecting, there are plenty more hobbies around. Following that logic, when Richard came to me with his Metallica special edition magazine idea I felt we just had to do it. After all, it is the summer and can you honestly say that you spend as much time online or in hobby shops during the warmer months? My hockey card collection is without a doubt my favorite hobby but it is by no means my only one. I'm certain that many of us enjoy a healthy amount of outdoor gigs. Furthermore, Metallica coming to Canada was a rather big deal so we felt we had to highlight it.

As we turn the corner from July into August, time is fast running out on the summer and we should all take the time to enjoy what's left of it. I'm sure that wherever you live, there are some activities that you can only do in the summer. For me, the Quebec Summer Festival is one, the Festivent (basically a festival focused on hot air balloons but also featuring plenty of gigs) and Les Grands Feux Loto-Quebec are just a few of the things I can get up to during the beautiful season. The Festival has come and gone, Festivent kicks in this week and we still have a month of fireworks displays left and boy do I intend to make the most of it.

Last night, I was on the St. Lawrence River for a 6 hours cruise and dinner wrapped up with a huge fireworks display. While I thoroughly enjoy collecting and building my collection, I think it's rather important to find the right balance and to dose our hobbies properly. I can tell from the activity on the boards that many of you feel exactly the same way. What are you doing instead of browsing online? Are you rocking to Metallica or some other band? Are you enjoying the summer weather? Or are you perhaps taking a sports related road trip like Sean (see page 57)? Whatever you are doing, I hope you are having a blast and that you are gearing up to another exciting hobby/sports year. The new season of the NHL is fast approaching and with the new CBA signed, our Sundays will once again this year be filled with entertaining football match-ups.

I hope you enjoy this issue and if you have any questions/comments please do feel free to PM them to me. Until next month, enjoy this issue!





Concert Review - Metallica - Halifax - July 14, 2011
By Richard McAdam aka Outlawtorn81 aka RGM81

You may notice an extra aka in the header there – before I got back into the hobby, I was very heavily involved in the Metallica fan community. The Outlaw Torn is my favourite Metallica song, and so that was my chosen nickname across a number of message boards, including the official fan club boards and a handful of live recording trading communities. Before Carey Price and Josh Gorges, there were Metallica concerts to collect. All in all, I have about 250 or so shows in my collection, which spans the beginning of their career up to the end of the 2006 tour when I largely stopped collecting.



The biographical note is important because it gives you an idea of just how big a Metallica fan I am. They have been a part of my life since I was 16 years old, at times a very big part of my life. In 2004, I saw them live four times in three different provinces; the picture to the left is me at the show in Toronto and is on the official Metallica website. I got together with a bunch of fellow fan club members and organized Nothing Else in B.C. Matters, the official local chapter of the MetClub. I still keep in touch with a good number of those friends despite being on the other side of the country. It was also the move to Halifax that meant I haven't had the chance to see my favourite band perform live since then, a long seven-year itch that needed to be scratched.

That is, of course, until July 14, 2011. After an incredulous 18-year lapse between shows, Metallica returned to Halifax. It was one of only two shows in Canada for 2011, and given this city's reputation it was all the more amazing that they chose this as one of their venues to play a show. Of course I got tickets as soon as possible, and the mere fact that they were coming here lit a spark within me and re-ignited my deep passion for this band and its music. It is something that never truly left, but other priorities—my wife, our cats, hockey cards, etc.—somewhat relegated the music to the backburner.

Along with the excitement I felt for myself finally getting to see Metallica live again, I had an extra special feeling that it was to be the first time that I have seen them with my wife; it would be her first Metallica experience. We have been very fortunate to do many very special things together over the years, but this one was very important to me. She has become a bit of a fan over the years and she understands my passion, but I wanted her to experience it so that she could truly know how awesome they are. And so together, on a cool, cloudy, and windy Thursday morning, we took our spot in the VIP line. Getting there early, as it always does, paid off: as soon as the doors opened we bolted for the stage and got right on the rail, just left of the centre of the stage. I know of no other view at a Metallica show other than right at the front. The wait, and the opening bands, were an unpleasant experience to endure, in large part because the skies opened up and it poured rain for most of the afternoon. Not the warm



, humid rainfall you'd expect in summer, but it honestly felt like October out there. Nobody was having a good time.

Shortly after 9pm, as if on cue, the rain stopped, the sun peaked out for a nice twilight, and on came AC/DC's "It's a Long Way to the Top" over the PA. This is the last song that plays before Metallica. The crowd's energy increased instantly, and I could feel goosebumps. Next, "The Ecstasy of Gold" came on – the same song that Metallica has come out to since the early 1980s. The crowd roared, both Tasha and I were full of adrenaline and I knew right then that she understood what I'd been talking about for all those years. It was a great moment that we shared.

They opened with "Creeping Death," a fantastic way to energize everybody right off the bat. It has been the standard festival opener for about three years now, and with good reason. I don't turn around



much during a show, but the sight of 20,000+ fists pumping and everybody screaming "Die" is an amazing sight. The Ride The Lightning trend continued, as after five songs in the set, four were off of that incredible album. The only non-RTL song to that point was Reload's "Fuel," a pyro-filled fast-paced rocker that has always been a live favourite. I was really excited when they played the title track, as I had never heard it live in my previous five concerts. The rendition of "Fade to Black" was awesome, as frontman James Hetfield played the first half of the song on an acoustic guitar before returning to the standard metal riffage for the song's epic outro.

After "Fade" ended the transition to the middle part of the set was seamless. They played two songs off the latest album, Death Magnetic, which was great since I did not get to experience the world tour. "All



Nightmare Long” has quickly become one of my favourites and they did not disappoint with it – the ferocity of the guitars on that song are a Metallica hallmark. Also played in this section was “The Memory Remains,” which always has a cool crowd participation element that has the audience singing long after the band has stopped playing. During this part of the show we got a lot of spectacular pictures of individual band members performing literally right in front of us, which made for some spectacular photos.



The end of “Nightmare” brought with it the lights going out and the sound of machine guns over the PA. Suddenly, explosions went off in front of us and fireworks lit up the night sky. The soft melodic intro to “One” emerged, as a single spotlight shone down on James standing at the top of the ramp area of the stage. It is a part of the show that has always given me goosebumps. In 2004, when the band played their indoor tour with an “in the round” stage, on two occasions that light revealed that James was directly in front of me. It’s really an unforgettable image to any that experience it. As the song builds to its climax, all four members are closely huddled together, with James, Kirk, and Rob in a row pounding out the riffs as Lars smashes at the drums behind them. Of all the songs in Metallica’s epic catalogue, there is none that equal “One” live. The production and the build of the song is truly a masterpiece brought to life, ironic given the song’s content of a soldier experiencing a living hell.

From there, more iconic songs follow in succession: “Master of Puppets,” “Blackened,” “Nothing Else Matters,” and of course “Enter Sandman.” During “Blackened,” there is more pyro and I very narrowly missed out on catching a pick tossed to the crowd by James. I lost it in the lights and it landed on the girl behind me. Curses. “Nothing Else Matters” was the only slow song of the night, a touching moment for Tasha and I as we held hands all throughout it before rocking out to “Sandman” to close out the main set.



The encore always follows a simple formula: cover song, old song (usually from Kill ‘Em All), and “Seek and Destroy” to close out the show. There are a number of great cover tunes in Metallica’s live catalogue. The only cover tune they play semi-regularly that I do not like, and unfortunately (in my opinion) the one they played is The Misfits’ “Last Caress.” I didn’t care for hearing it in Vancouver in 2004. I just don’t like it, and given its brevity it’s somewhat like getting cheaped out of a song. They’ve done Frayed Ends of Sanity jams longer than that tune. But that’s my only gripe about the show. It was quickly forgotten about when they kicked out the intensely powerful opening riff for “Hit The Lights,” and wow was it ever cool to hear that one.

Finally, we arrived at the last song of the night, but not before James had some fun with the crowd, teasing leaving the stage and removing his guitar to boos, only to put it back on to loud cheers, and doing this a couple of times. As the riff to “Seek” began, the crew began throwing out dozens of enormous black beach balls that the crowd delightfully bopped all over the place. I had made it a mission to catch one and take it home. That mission was accomplished. After the song, the band tossed out scores of guitar picks to the crowd, and Tasha caught a cool “zombie” James Hetfield! My buddy beside me had a sign with him requesting a drum stick from Lars, which was obliged! All of the band members noticed throughout the night that we were holding up a large “Metallifax” Nova Scotia flag, and no doubt that helped a bunch in making sure we all ended up going home with something in our hands.

It was a phenomenal night, one that will not be soon forgotten. I have to make sure I never again go 7 years between shows. I’ve had a couple of people ask me if it was the best one I have ever seen, and it’s such a difficult thing to rank these experiences because each show has individual highlights that really stand out for me. It was phenomenal to get to experience two great new songs and two great old songs for the first time. Having Tasha there was a fantastic experience. Seeing Kirk in his classic pose right in front of me during “For Whom The Bell Tolls” is one of those moments that lasts long after the show has ended. If any of you have never experienced Metallica in person, I strongly recommend it; you will not be disappointed. I’ve done it six times now and every time has brought with it spectacular moments and memories.

Main Set

- | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Creeping Death | 7. The Memory Remains | 13. Blackened |
| 2. For Whom the Bell Tolls | 8. Welcome Home (Sanitarium) | 14. Nothing Else Matters |
| 3. Fuel | 9. Sad But True | 15. Enter Sandman |
| 4. Ride the Lightning | 10. All Nightmare Long | Encore |
| 5. Fade to Black | 11. One | 16. Last Caress |
| 6. Cyanide | 12. Master of Puppets | 17. Hit the Lights |
| | | 18. Seek & Destroy |



Concert Review - Metallica -Quebec City - July 16, 2011

By Karine Hains aka Pheeb888



Ah summer....what a wonderful season. For me, being a die-hard hockey fan, summer is kind of a lull in the hobby. I generally tend to stop looking into new products or new singles to buy because I apply my disposable income to other things during this glorious season...What you say? Well, each summer I can guarantee that I will see at least a few gigs. Even more so now that I am back in Canada. In a way, you could say that another one of my hobbies is to collect outdoor gigs.

Every summer since 1968, the good people of Quebec are treated to Le Festival d'été de Québec. Initially, it was conceived as a way to showcase local talent but progressively it grew into Canada's biggest outdoor artistic event. In the recent years, we've seen bigger and bigger names grace the battle-field park's stage with their amazing sound; Simple Plan, Van Halen, Stone Temple Pilots, Black Eyed Peas, Elton John and THE BAND: Metallica. Yes the band which is arguably the most influential in the history of rock music took Quebec by storm on July 16 and what a show it was!

I will not pretend to be what my fellow writer Richard is (a die-hard Metallica fan) for the simple reason that I am not. To be honest, the Black Eyed Peas' gig from last year was much more suited to my normal musical taste BUT it would have been a crime not to attend what was going to be the show of the decade in Quebec City.

Ever since the Festival's line-up was announced last spring, the anticipation had been building up and by the time mid-July came around, you could feel the buzz in town. Radio, television, papers and social medias were literally exploding with Metallica. Quebec has quite the reputation as a rock town and everyone knew that this show would be the most sought after of the whole Festival. You see, the way the Festival works is that you buy a badge which gives you access to ALL of the gigs throughout the 10 days that it lasts. This year, 300,000 of those badges were sold. Why so many? Because not everyone is going to want to see the same shows of course. However, every now and then there are shows that no one wants to miss and this year, that show was Metallica's. The main stage of the Festival is erected on the Plains of Abraham which all those years ago was the stage of the battle between the English and the French for the control of the province of Quebec. We're talking about a very large space here but nevertheless it can only hold a limited number of fans.



tive to get to the Festival early in the day to queue and therefore be guaranteed that you could see the show. As luck would have it, July 16 was a beautiful and very sunny day with temperatures in excess of 33 degrees. I personally got in downtown Quebec with my friends at 13.00. The gates were set to open at 18.00 so yes, we were gearing up for a full 5 hours of waiting in insane summer heat.

Even in the insane heat and the severe lack of personal space, it was quite a feeling to be part of this amazing experience. Yes I'm only talking about the build up here, it was just in the air, you could feel that something truly magical would happen that night. Of course, before then there were a few incidents. Quite a few people passed out because of heat exhaustion and others just because they thought drinking beer would help with dehydration (always a smart move) but overall, most fans came prepared with bottles of water, sunblock, hats, umbrellas and folding chairs. As the hours passed, more and more people joined the human sea that was once called a queue. By the time the gates were opened, it was almost claustrophobic in there. Overall, over 115 000 people managed to fit in the Battlefield Park grounds to witness an amazing show.

The gates were opened at 17.30 and it almost felt like a dogs' race, people started running like crazy to get to the front of the stage and have the best view for the evening. Of course, Metallica was not set to play until 21.45 but until then, there was still two shows to be seen. Firstly at 19.00 a local band by the name of Dance Laury Dance took to the stage and delivered a rather energetic performance most probably fuelled by the biggest crowd they had ever seen. Then, at 20.15 a legendary guitarist had his turn to shine once more, Joe Satriani graced us with some of his best work. By the time 21.45 rolled around, we had already been treated to 2 hours of great music but needless to say we were definitely hungry for more!

And boy we were not disappointed! From start to finish, the sound was awesome, the pyrotechnical effects were great and the atmosphere? It was quite simply out of this world. As I've said, I am by no means a die-hard Metallica fan but nonetheless I knew most of the songs they played, in fact it seemed that everyone who was there knew every single song. It's hard to even attempt to describe the feeling you get when 115,000 are screaming "die" to the top of their lungs during a song.

For me, the best song of the night was Master of Puppets, not only because it's a classic but also because that's the song that seemed to send the crowd into full blown overdrive. Of course, Nothing



Else Matters and Enter Sandman were also great moments and Seek & Destroy was definitely something too! In fact, it is quite hard to find any weakness in the gig itself. To me, it was as near to perfection as one could get. Sure there are plenty of people who complained about the fact that it was too crowded but then again there are those who complained that they didn't manage to get in...bottom line is, it's pretty hard to please everyone but I am confident that Metallica managed to please the vast majority of the people in attendance that night.

All in all, this is a night and even a day I will not be forgetting anytime soon. Year in and year out, the Festival d'été de Québec provides me with 10 days of sheer entertainment and enjoyment and it sure didn't disappoint this year. I am already looking forward to knowing which acts will bless us with their presence next summer. Until then, I have another festival next week and I shall be catching Les Cowboys Fringants, The Tea Party and Wyclef Jean there! Enjoy your summer everyone, whether cards part of it or not!

Set List:

The Ecstasy of Gold (Ennio Morricone song)
 Creeping Death
 For Whom the Bell Tolls “
 Fuel “
 Ride the Lightning “
 Fade to Black “
 Cyanide “
 The Memory Remains “
 Welcome Home (Sanitarium)
 Sad But True “
 All Nightmare Long “
 One “
 Master of Puppets “
 Blackened
 Nothing Else Matters “
 Enter Sandman

Encore:

Am I Evil? (Diamond Head cover)
 Hit the Lights
 Seek & Destroy





At the time of going to press, these release dates were accurate but as you know, release dates do change...

August 2011 Releases

HOCKEY

8/02 – Upper Deck Victory
8/31 – Upper Deck The Cup

FOOTBALL

08/02 – Upper Deck Sweet Spot
08/10 – Topps Inception
08/31 – Topps Finest

BASKETBALL

08/30 – SP Authentic

BASEBALL

08/03 – Topps Lineage
08/24 – Topps Marquee





Product Review: 2010/2011 Panini Luxury Suite Hockey
By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

Box Description

4 packs per box
 3 cards per pack
 Current Retail Price (online): \$159.99 - \$179.99

Box Break

- Eight autographs/memorabilia per box (at least two autographs)
- Four Group 4 Rookies, numbered to 899

Case Break

- Two SSP auto/mem rookies (Taylor Hall, Jeff Skinner, Tyler Seguin etc), numbered to 199 or less!
- Three SP autographed rookies (Nazem Kadri, Jacob Markstrom, Linus Omark, etc), numbered to 299 or less!
- FIVE Gold parallels, each numbered to just 10 copies



Highlights

- Every pack contains two auto, mem or auto/mem cards, plus at least one RC!
- A staggering 125 RCs, including 50 enhanced by memorabilia and/or autographs!
- Multiple tiers of each base card, each enhanced by a variety of memorabilia options including GAMEUSED swatches of jersey, prime jersey, patches, jersey numbers and sticks!
- Also looked for signed cards of hockey's greatest legends, numbered to just 199!
- Look for 1/1 Black parallels!

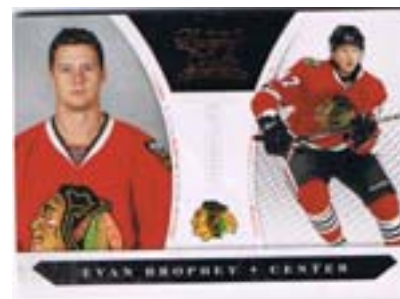
What we pulled

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y9AvUN8JYE5>

Rookies /899 (4) -
 Jamie Arniel



Evan Brophy





Trevor Gillies



Kevin Poulin



Patrick Kane Jersey /599



Henrik Lundqvist Jersey /599



Marc-Andre Fleury Jersey /599



Nathan Horton/Mark Recchi Dual Jersey /599



Milan Lucic 2-color Patch/2-color Jersey /20



Scott Gomez - 3 colors stick/jersey /10





Andres Lindback Rookie Auto /499



Private Signings Chris Neil Auto



Final thoughts

Base (Rookies) - 4/5

Design - 4.5/5

Fun - 5/5

Value - 4/5

Rebuy - 4.5/5

Total - 22/25 (88%)

In winding down their first year in the world of hockey, Panini introduces Luxury Suite to the masses. Luxury Suite is high profile with base cards that are actually single memorabilia cards of the players, numbered to 599. Rookies are captured twice on their respective card in a side by side design, numbered to 899.

Each pack contains a rookie and two autographs or relics. Typically, the base jersey appears in every pack. When it doesn't, it is usually replaced by an autograph from Private Signings. The third card can be from a multitude of sets and parallel versions. You will find rookie auto, multiple player relics and dual relics of the same player.

Luxury Suite simple is not for everyone. Low budget collectors be forewarned! While it does carry a hefty price, the product itself is amazing. Streamlining the base and making them jersey cards has been done before, but it is preferable in a high-end, high-quality product. The dual pic rookie cards are a nice touch. I like seeing other companies using other items for relics other than jerseys, though one company has been doing it for years.

Each pack contains its own air of excitement. While you know the breakdown, you have no idea how it will break down. While the secondary market may scoff at value based simply on dollars, the value is in the fact all cards are numbered and that some pieces will be sought after. Just like high-end sets from other companies, set builders will feel a sense of accomplishment with completing something that is limited in nature.

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 today at www.paniniamerica.net.



Product Review: 2011 Topps Rising Rookies

By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

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

Box Description

24 packs per box

10 cards per pack

Current retail price (online): \$69.99 - \$84.99

Product Description

NEW! 2011 Topps Rising Rookies Football

The First Topps 2011 NFL Rookie Cards Featuring Top 2011 NFL Draft Picks

Product Highlights:

- 4 Hits in Every 24-Pack Hobby Box!
- At Least 2 Autograph Cards Per Box!



HOBBY EXCLUSIVE!

- On-Card Rookie Autograph NFL Draft Logo Patch Cards
- On-Card Rookie Autograph NFL Shield Logo Patch Cards
- Autograph Patch Cards
- Autograph Jumbo Relic Cards
- Autograph Jumbo Patch Cards
- Rookie 1/1 Parallel Cards
- Rookie & Base Card 1/1 Printing Plates

Case Guarantee: Multiple autographs of the 10 most collectible Rookies and/or Draft/NFL Shield Rookie on-card Autograph Patches.

5 Rookie Cards in Every 10-Card Hobby Pack!

What we pulled

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hesF_08xmr0

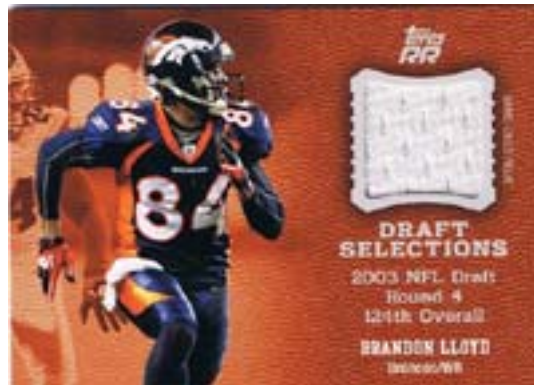


Base - 93/100 (93%)
 Dupes - 5
 Rookies - 97/100 (97%)
 Dupes - 0
 Gold - 19
 Blue /1339 (4) - Christian Ponder, Luke Stocker, Edmond Gates, Casey Matthews

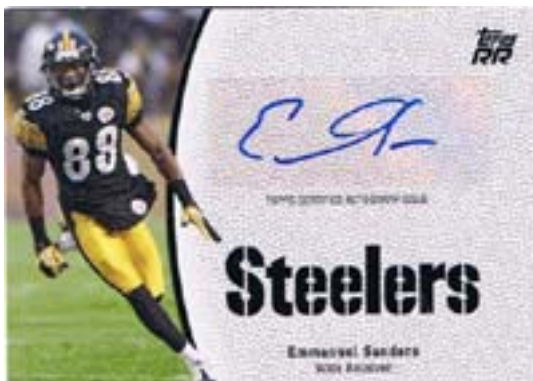


Combine Competition (6)
 NFL Draft (8)
 Draft Selections (3)
 Playmaker (4)

Draft Selections Brandon Lloyd Jersey



Emmanuel Sanders Auto



Andre Roberts Jersey

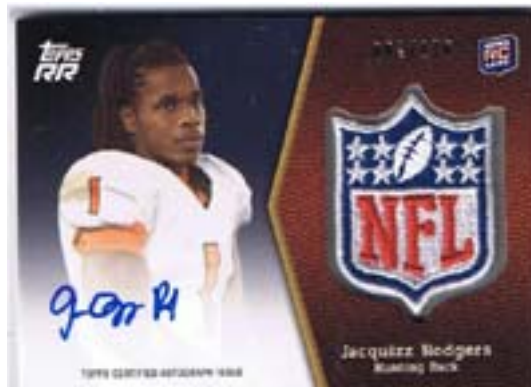




Jacquizz Rodgers NFL Shield (Manufactured)/Auto
(091/170)

Final Ratings

Base - 4.5/5
 Design - 3.5/5
 Fun - 2.5/5
 Value - 3/5
 Rebuy - 3.5/5
 Total - 17/25 (68%)



In another reincarnation of a former product, Topps unveils Rising Rookies to the masses. The base set comprises of 100 veterans and 100 rookies. While I'm not a fan of mentioning another company in a review, I must state that the card design is too reminiscent of Upper Deck's Sweet Spot from years past, especially with the "football" design on the bottom. While the veterans are featured in a full-color photo, the rookies are shown with head shots and the NFL Draft logo in the background. Outside of the obligatory Printing Plates, the veteran cards do not have any parallels. However, the rookies make up for that with numerous levels from an unnumbered Gold to a Black 1/1.

There are four insert sets in Rising Rookies. Veterans are highlighted in Draft Selections and Playmakers. Draft Selections takes some current NFL stars and denotes when they were drafted. Playmakers showcases some of the highlight film worthy players in the league. The rookies get their time in the spotlight with Combine Competition and NFL Draft. Combine Competition centers around grouping two rookies and comparing their stats from the Combine. NFL Draft, for the lack of better words, is eerily similar to Panini's Prestige version of NFL Draft (whoops, there I go again).

A mix of four autographs and relics are in each box on average, with at least two autos. The only Rookie "hits" are the NFL Draft and NFL Shield logo autos, unless you manage to hit a multi-auto card. The rest center around 2nd year players and former draft standouts.

Rising Rookies is the latest concoction by Topps to have a relevant rookie product for football. For years it was Draft Picks & Prospects and then there was the utter failure of Rookie Progression. In a box, the rookies are in abundance as they appear as often as the veterans in packs/boxes. Problem is, it hurts the value of most of them as you get almost 1 of a player in every box. And then mirroring the design work of other companies is saddening. even though the cards do look nice. And how about the way the packs are collated. In this break, I was able to determine which pack would yield a certain parallel or insert as all four stacks were the same. Pack searchers have to love that! But the biggest faux pas that stands out to me is...do you remember when an NFL Shield card was rare?

Once again, I'd like to thank our wonderful sponsors at Topps for giving us the opportunity to open and review this release. For more information on all their products, visit them today at www.topps.com.



Product Review: 2011 Topps Series 2
By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

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

Box Description

36 packs per box

10 cards per pack

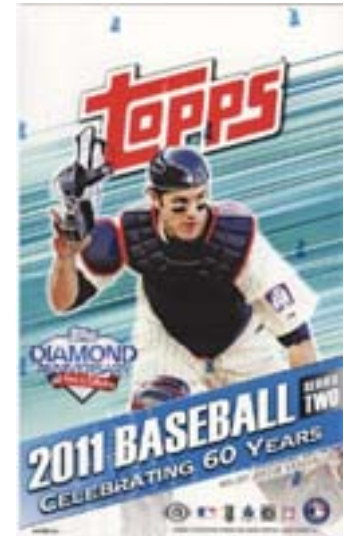
Current Retail Price (online): \$49.99 - \$64.99

Product Description

2011 Topps Baseball Series 2 - The Diamond Anniversary Celebration Continues

2011 Topps Baseball continues its 60th Diamond Anniversary gala with Series 2 - a dazzling celebration of the Major League Baseball cards that have been collected, flipped and traded for the past 60 years!

Topps inaugurates the next 60 years by showcasing the most exciting players of today and tomorrow on thrilling base, insert, relic, sketch, continuity, autograph and parallel cards!



Each pack contains 9 Topps Baseball Series 2 Diamond Anniversary cards Plus 1 Topps Attax Code card.

ALL NEW FOR SERIES 2!

- Diamond Anniversary Base Parallel Variation Cards
- Before There Was Topps
- Diamond Stars
- Hall of Fame Buybacks
- Dual Relic Cards
- Topps Attax Cards

What we pulled

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVlmbnAvT14>



Base: 293/330 (88.8%)

Dupes: 0

Diamond Parallel (10)

Gold /2011 (4): Justin Verlander, Adam Jones, Anibal Sanchez, Leo Nunez

Before There Was Topps (2)

Diamond Duos (9)

Diamond Stars (6)



Kimball Champions (9)

Topps 60 (9)

Topps Prime 9 Promotion (2)

Eddie Mathews Topps Reprint Original Back (1)

60 Years Of Topps (12)

ToppsTown (6)

Diamond Giveaway Code Cards (6) - not scanned



Topps 60 Marco Scutaro Jersey

Final Ratings

Base - 5/5

Design - 3/5

Fun - 3.5/5

Value - 5/5

Rebuy - 3.5/5

Total - 20/25 (80%)





The second round of Topps' regular set continues where the first left off. Like the first set, it is a 330-card set with the numbering starting at 331. The design is exactly the same and a lot of the inserts are continuations. When you have this many packs and cards in one box, it is really nice to see that you do not get any duplication. Be on the lookout for all the SPs. Some are in the form of retired players in which the card will be the same as a current player and the highly popular Sparkle cards. The Sparkle cards feature the player with a shiny, light mark somewhere on the player. There are also three Double Sparkle cards, cards that have two sparkles. If you get all three, you have a chance to redeem them towards an autographed bat from Topps.

As always, Topps is insert heavy. The base set has its normal parallels of Gold (/2011) and Black (/60), but they also have the Diamond Anniversary parallel. This card is easy to spot as the entire card looks like it is covered in diamond flakes. Be on the lookout for more of the Kimball Champions card as the next batch of 50 are in Series 2. There are also Prime 9 Redemption cards. There are 9 in all and each signifies a specific week that Topps will select their player of the week. You redeem the card by going to your local HTA/Hobby store and showing the redemption card to receive a special card of the Player Of The Week.

Typically, each hobby box yields one autograph or relic. While there are a lot of nice pieces inserted in various subsets, the most common will be centered around the Topps 60 theme. For those questioning what is Topps 60, this is the 60th year of Topps in the sports card industry.

Much like its predecessor, Series 2 is designed with the set collector in mind as well as the kids to an extent. It used to be very kid-oriented, but has since taken on a life of its own in the eyes of collectors. While the stunning SPs draw attention, the biggest attraction is actual something simple and that is the Diamond Giveaway code cards. An offshoot of last year's Million Card Giveaway program, collectors will find a code card in random packs in which they can enter online to unlock a card from any of the base sets Topps has released over the last 60 years. In addition, the code entitles you to a "dig" on a baseball field to unearth rings. Collect all 60 and you earn a ring of your own.

It is hard to call opening 36 packs with 10 cards a lot of fun. However, Topps has given added excitement with the various "new" entries into the packs. While it is a great product for the youngsters, it is now relevant in the eyes of the everyday collector.

Once again, I'd like to thank our wonderful sponsors at Topps for giving us the opportunity to open and review this release. For more information on all their products, visit them today at www.topps.com.



Product Review: 2010/2011 Panini Totally Certified

By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

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

Box Description

6 packs per box
 5 cards per pack
 Current Retail Price (online): \$94.99 - \$109.99

Product Description

6 packs per box. 5 cards per pack.



Panini Totally Certified Basketball offers collectors five serial #'d Parallels to chase, including short-printed Totally Gold (#'d/25), Totally Green (#'d/5) and Totally Black(#'d/1)

Box break

- 30 Cards
- Including
- 6 Autographs or Memorabilia Cards (at least 2 Autographs #'d/599 or less)
- 2 Mirror Reds (#'d/499)
- 4 Other Inserts (#'d/499 or less)

What we pulled

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KSk8u2L7Fw>

- Base /1849 - 16/150 (10.7%)
- Totally Blue /299 (3) - Brandon Jennings, Linas Kleiza, Anthony Randolph
- Totally Red /499 (4) - Trevor Ariza, Ron Artest, Manu Ginobili, Darko Milicic
- Certified Potential /249 (1) - James Harden





Fabric Of The Game Jersey Number
Manu Ginobili Jersey /99



Fabric Of The Game Jersey Number
Prime Andres Nocioni 2-cl Patch /25



Fabric Of The Game Team Name
Kobe Bryant Jersey /299



Rookie Emerald Andy
Rautins 3-cl Patch/Auto /5



Totally Gold Anthony Randolph Auto /10





Totally Red Rudy Fernandez Jersey /249

Final Ratings

Base - 4.5/5

Design - 4.5/5

Fun - 5/5

Value - 4.5/5

Rebuy - 4.5/5

Total - 23/25 (92%)



By combining two solid products, Panini has unleashed Totally Certified upon the collecting world. Certified Materials has been a staple product of the company for years. They infused it with a wonderful product from Pinnacle in the 90s to create this mega-hit. There is a 150-card base set with each card veteran (150 total) numbered to 1849 and rookies (35 total) numbered to 599. There are parallel versions known as Totally Red, Totally Blue, etc. that match the color of the card and are numbered to 499 or less. In addition, there is only one insert set called Certified Potential. Cards are numbered to 249 and you will also find five parallel levels.

Each pack yields either a relic or autograph. A huge bonus is that the rookie autos are all hard signed, something collectors have been in favor of for years. Certified Materials fans will be pleased to see the Fabric Of The Game series. The relic windows are cut to show a player's jersey number or team name. In addition, rookies are given a separate card design with the word "rookie" cut out to house the relic swatch and a clean white field at the bottom of the card for the signature. Outside of that, you have "Totally" relics and autos that match the parallel color and are numbered accordingly.

And if that's not all, some boxes will contain a redemption for a Panini HRX card. This card features one of four players (Kobe Bryant, Kevin Durant, Blake Griffin or John Wall) on a video trading card. The player is highlighted in the video. There are only 50 of each player, with 10 being autographed. In addition, each has a gold 1/1 autographed version.

After being around for decades, card companies tend to run out of ideas on new products to develop and introduce to the market. This is why there has been a push over the last couple of years to bring back sets from yesteryear. Each one tends to have a gimmick attached to try to appeal to collectors. Panini goes in a different route with the union of two products that were solid on their own.

There is a lot of upside to Totally Certified. For one, every card is serial numbered. For a product that is price-pointed like it is, that says a lot. On top of that, you are guaranteed an autograph or relic in every pack. If that's not enough to get your attention, every rookie autograph is hard signed.

Every year, there is a small handful of products that appear on the market that creates a huge buzz and this is one of them. Collectors will enjoy many aspects of Totally Certified from price to enjoyment as well as yield, not to mention the chase to find one of the HRX cards. All in all, if you are looking for that one product to get in basketball, look no further.



Product Review: 2011 Press Pass Stealth

By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

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

Box Description

24 packs per box

5 cards per pack

Current Retail Price (online): 84.99 - 94.99



What we pulled

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mf02NR4c0Kk>

Base: 100/100 (100%)

Dupes: 10

Shield /99 (1): Dale Earnhardt Jr.

Flyover (1)

In Flight Report (4)

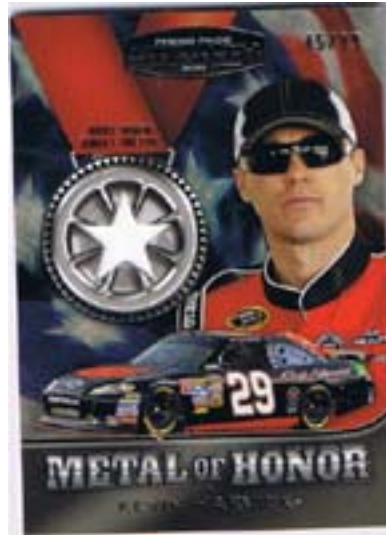
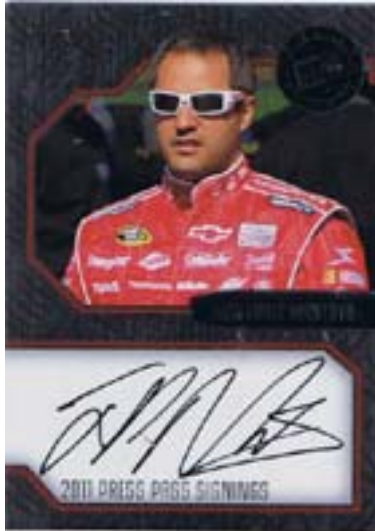
NASCAR HOF (1)

Supersonic (2)





Press Pass Signings Juan Pablo Montoya Auto /50



Metal Of Honor Kevin Harvick Sheet Metal /99

Final Thoughts

Base - 5/5
 Design - 5/5
 Fun - 3.5/5
 Value - 3/5
 Rebuy - 3.5/5
 Total - 20/25 (80%)

Press Pass went all out this year to tie Stealth in a military theme. Releasing right around Memorial Day in the U.S., Stealth is in a lot of ways a salute to the brave men and women who have, who are and who will serve the U.S. via the Armed Forces. Even the motto on the box lends to the motif, "For Those Who Serve And Collect."

The base set is stunning. The background appears to be the outside of a jet fighter for all the drivers, even differentiated between the NSCS and NNS stars. The first twelve drivers on the checklist actually have three cards: a photo, picture of the car and a snapshot of members of the pit crew. When you combine the three cards and flip them over, they create a picture of the car's hauler. It's not the first time that's been done in sports cards, but it is always neat to see when it is done. Two parallels can be found in packs, Chrome /99 and Black Ops /25 (hobby only).



Continuing the theme are the inserts (outside of the year-long NASCAR HOF set). Flyover is dedicated to the various planes that have graced the skies over a NASCAR race during a fly-by. In-Flight Report focuses on the drivers and some of their best quotes to their crew chief/pit crew during races. Finally, Supersonic is all about speed as in the pole setters of 2010.

Each box should yield one autograph and one memorabilia card on average. There are three versions on the Metal of Honor cards that adhere to this product's theme, Purple Heart, Silver Star and Medal Of Honor. The Press Pass Signings are done with a metallic background.

Press Pass does what you rarely see from other companies and that is to attempt to reinvent a product. Many times over the last couple of years, Press Pass has tried to go away from the cookie-cutter aspect of their early releases and give more excitement to the collectors. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. It definitely works here and the card design is sleek. The motif is spot on and for that, Press Pass should be saluted. However, in this day and age, it is really hard to appeal to the masses as the majority are looking simply for the "hits" and not the overall product. This change in attitude from simply collecting for the fun of the hobby to centering everything around the secondary market hurts products such as this that have a low yield of "hits" and it is a shame.

Once again, I'd like to thank our wonderful sponsors at Press Pass for giving us the opportunity to open and review this release. As well as reiterate my apology for posting this almost a month late as I had mentioned before that I thought it was already done. For more information on all their products, visit them today at www.presspassinc.com.





BGS Bulk Submissions Thread - US Members - Deadline 8/21 - OPEN

By Roger Barthelemy aka Patriotsguy

SCF is proud to announce that we will now accept sign ups for bulk grading submissions. Members must meet the following criteria in order to submit their cards for grading.

Must not have any recent negative or neutral feedback within the last 6 months or had any disputes opened up against them that were not resolved.

Must not have a No Buying/Selling/Trading Tag.

Must not have a No Buying/Selling/Trading Until Profile Is Complete tag.

Must not have a permanent Must Send First tag.

*****DISCLAIMER*****

SCF does not guarantee a certain grade of your card(s). SCF is not responsible for any card(s) that get lost or damaged if you haven't chosen to get your cards insured to the submission moderator or insured from the submission moderator back to you.

How will this work?:

When there is a grading submission sign up available we will need to have at least 100 cards to send in. This is in conjunction with the Canada Sign up thread as well (if there is one going on). This is done in order to get the special pricing given to us by BGS. Once you post in grading thread that you want a specific # of cards graded and your name is added to the list, you are then obligated to follow through. You have until the close of the grading submission to change or cancel your order, after it is closed you are obligated to SCF rules. Once the grading submission is closed all transactions will be placed in the trade manager, if you back out you will receive negative feedback, it will not go through the dispute process.

When do you ship your cards, and when do you pay for your submission?:

Each submission will be given a sign up deadline. If at the end of that deadline we have at least 100 cards then the moderator will OK the shipping of cards to him. You then have 3 business days to ship as per SCF Rules to mail your cards out. If at the deadline we do not have 100 cards then it will be up to the submission moderator to either close the submission or extend it to see if it will fill up.

Once the deadline closes members all transactions will be placed in the trade manager. All information will be played there along with my paypal addy. Please pay with Paypal Only and as GOODS (NO GIFT PAYMENTS). SCF wants members to be protected as well as the submission moderator. When sending payment please copy/paste your submission details (see below), SCF user name. Paypal fees apply at 2.9% of your total + \$.30



How are you expected to ship your cards?:

Members are expected to send in a padded mailer. No plain white envelopes (PWE'S) will be accepted. It is not mandatory, but members are encouraged to send with delivery confirmation so we know you sent a package out. If you are shipping a high dollar card(s) then it is recommended that you use insurance and/or tracking in case the package gets lost or damaged.

How many cards can you submit?:

Members may submit Unlimited amount.

Can I submit the same card as another member?:

If you are submitting a non serial numbered card then only one of that card will be allowed in the submission. The first member to submit that card via post will be the one to submit it. The same member may submit multiples of the same non serial numbered card. If your card can be distinguished by a serial number then multiple submissions from multiple members will be allowed.

What is your cost?:

Price per card multiplied by the # of cards being submitted by member +
\$1 if your card is an certified pack pulled auto (if applicable) +
Shipping to the grading company (includes insurance for total BV of all cards). Cost of shipping divided by the amount of members in submission. +
Shipping from grading service to submission mod \$32.00 (s/h + insurance based on total BV) divided by the amount of members. +
Shipping from the submission mod back to the members, d/c is included. Based on the amount of cards being shipped + purchasing padded mailers (Cost of mailers divided by amount of mailers = cost per mailer charged to member). Plus any additional requests by member i.e insurance or signature confirmation, will charge actual postal rates. +
Paypal fee of 2.9% of your total +\$.30

Currently Patriotsguy is accepting submissions for grading with BGS - Beckett Grading Service \$7 per card, + \$1 for auto cards at the 20 day turnaround time (normally 45 day turnaround). The deadline for submissions sign up is 08/21/2011

Submission Details per Member:

When you post your cards please use the below template.

Detailed info of your card(s) au, gu, serial #ed as well as the book value of each card.

Total Book Value of your combined card(s).



Return shipping signature confirmation, yes/no.
See example below:

1. 2010 Playoff Contenders Rob Gronkowski Rookie Ticket Au #229 \$30
2. 2006 Upper Deck Exquisite Chad Jackson Rookie Signature Patch #113, serial #ed 63/225 \$30
3. 2004 Fleer Greats Dan Marino The Glory of Their Time game used 2 color patch #GT-DM \$50
4. 1993 Bowman Drew Bledsoe #280 \$20

Total book value \$130
Return Insurance=NO
Return Signature=NO

US Postal Rates:

I will mail via padded mailer (up to 4 cards) which includes d/c automatically on all orders requiring \$200 of insurance or less. I can add insurance as well as signature confirmation. All other packages will be brought to the PO. First class up to 13 ounces is a follows:

Weight Not Over \$ Price

1 ounce.....	\$1.75
2 ounces.....	\$1.75
3 ounces.....	\$1.75
4 ounces.....	\$1.92
5 ounces.....	\$2.09
6 ounces.....	\$2.26
7 ounces.....	\$2.43
8 ounces.....	\$2.60
9 ounces.....	\$2.77
10 ounces.....	\$2.94
11 ounces.....	\$3.11
12 ounces.....	\$3.28
13 ounces.....	\$3.45

Over 13 ounces I will mail priority flat box. Those rates are:

Priority Mail Small Flat Rate Box \$5.20 (8 cards or less if thicker)
Priority Mail Medium Flat Rate Box \$10.95

Insurance Rates (maximum liability is \$5,000):

\$0.01 to \$50.....	\$1.80
\$50.01 to \$100.....	\$2.30
\$100.01 to \$200.....	\$2.85
\$200.01 to \$300.....	\$4.75
\$300.01 to \$5,000.....	\$4.75 plus \$1.05 for each \$100 thereafter

Sign up here: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=1444542>



Football Around the Corner?

By **Matthew Lamb aka bradyfanatic12**

With the optimism of a new collective bargaining agreement blooming, training camps and preseason games seem to be right around the bend. For collectors that means that we finally get to see free agents hit the market, rookies compete for jobs and the progression of our favorite teams. While the rookie class has been hyped, there's nothing like seeing your first round pick compete against live opposition. Soon we'll see answers to some of the burning questions fans have wondered about since the Packers won the Super Bowl. The NFL seems ready to enter the lightning round of transactions that will send collectors scrambling to add cards to their collections.

Usually by now we've figured out where the free agents have landed and how the teams are different from last year. With players like Santonio Holmes, Matt Hasselbeck, Randy Moss, Braylon Edwards and Nnamdi Asomugha out there, teams will surely be different. Commodities like Kevin Kolb, Donovan McNabb and Reggie Bush should hit the trade market as well. The destinations of these and many other players are still unknown, but once the market reopens the transactions should happen rapidly. From a collector's stand point, that's when the real season starts. Rushing to find those key rookie cards of the team's newest addition. Hoping that this is the year he breaks out. Knowing in your mind that this is the piece your team has needed to make it to the Super Bowl.

We'll soon know what rookies will get a chance to start. With a lot of quarterbacks drafted high, that's on everyone's mind. Will Carson Palmer retire? Where do Jake Locker, Cam Newton, Colin Kaepernick and Blaine Gabbert stand on the depth chart? Will Ndamukong Suh and Nick Fairley be a force in the NFC North? While the 2011 rookie class has been selling at a consistent rate, the hype factor isn't there yet. Seeing is truly believing. So far there hasn't been any news to make the market fluctuate. OTAs, training camp and scrimmages give people a chance to see if player progress is being made. The 2011 rookie class will have an impact on the season, but all we can do now is predict which rookies will be those play makers.



The NFL has become a year around hobby. 2011 has been tedious and frustrating for collectors so far. We all look forward to when the player movement begins and the market reflects hope. The only question we have answered so far is that Brett Favre won't be in a Vikings uniform. Well at least for the preseason.

The new CBA is now signed so: PLAY BALL!!!



Hockey Team Round-Up **By Richard McAdam aka RGM81**

Another NHL season has come to an end, and this year's Champions are the Boston Bruins. They ended a 40-year slump and overcame the Vancouver Canucks to hoist Lord Stanley's Holy Grail. The amazing goaltending of Tim Thomas throughout the playoffs ensured that he would be named the Conn Smythe Trophy winner, something which many had predicted prior to the series even beginning. He was truly spectacular, and it was nice to see one of the good guys in hockey get rewarded. For all those Bruins fans out there, there is a hobby-related way to celebrate the Cup win, as Upper Deck has released a special box set commemorating the team's march to the Cup.

With the 2010-11 season now completed, teams are well underway in their preparations for the 2011-12 campaign. The free agency season opened on July 1st, and as they always do, NHL general managers went on a spending frenzy to lure key players to new clubs. The biggest name to change zip code was Brad Richards, who decided to sign with the New York Rangers. The other big signings of the first days includes James Wisniewski with Columbus, Christian Ehrhoff in Buffalo, and Tomas Vokoun taking his talents to Washington to bolster their goaltending. Of course, trades are also a part of the summer, and the biggest deals to date involve the Philadelphia Flyers, who dealt away two of the core pieces of the team. Mike Richards was shipped to Los Angeles while Jeff Carter was sent to Columbus. The two stars of the 2003 draft were thought to be franchise-level Flyers for life, and many fans were shocked at the dealing of not just one, but both, of them. The Flyers will have an all-new look next year, and all eyes will be on them to see if Paul Holmgren's roll of the dice pays off.

In the hobby, we are now approaching the end of the 2010-11 hockey card season. Both Upper Deck and Panini have only one product left to release, and they are the premium high-end releases revered by all collectors. The Cup and Dominion will have collectors drooling over the amazing designs, super short-printed rookie cards, premium 1/1's, and new innovations to take interest in these products to an all-new level. Which will emerge as the most popular premium product? Only time will tell, but keep your eyes on the Hockey Box/Pack Breaks Forum in August for the first breaks of these products.

As the year comes to an end, SCF will be holding a comprehensive discussion about the best and worst of the 2010-11 products. We are currently developing a long-form questionnaire to solicit the opinions of collectors as to what they liked and what they feel needs to be improved. We thrive on hearing feedback from our members, so this will be an interesting discussion and lively debate. Topics will include Best Product, Favourite Autograph Subset, and many others. The discussion will begin near the end of the month, so that collectors have had the opportunity to sample every product and give a fair assessment of the 2010-11 hockey card season.

The Hockey Team would like to welcome three new members to the staff! Bgggg2001 and SkidSTL, better known as Ben and Sean, have recently become Advisors, while cdnhulk (Timm) has recently begun his training. If you ever have questions about a hockey card product, the site, or anything hockey, feel free to contact any of our staff members and we will be happy to assist you.

That's it for another month! Enjoy the summer, and remember that it's only two more months until the season starts!



Racing Newsletter
By Stephen Taylor aka race crazy

Press Pass Showcase Reclaims it's Place Atop the Nascar Card Collecting Pinnacle

Last December Press Pass in the eyes of many hardcore Nascar collectors took a huge risk. Press Pass Five Star entered the stratosphere of the super high end that so many other sports collectors are used to. It remains to be seen whether Five Star will continue but the evidence suggests that since Press Pass has already said Five Star will not be released in 2011, it did not become a hit with the Nascar collectors as they hoped it would. This leaves us with Showcase once again as our highest end release. That is fine by me and most of my brethren who cannot afford to play with Five Star but can afford Showcase. At a little over 200 dollars a box Showcase delivers six solid hits (all of solid Sprint Cup Drivers or Racing Legends...and Danica) and delivers the fun 4 gearing levels of base set parallels that made the set collectors extremely happy as well. Showcase releases July 27th and is looking again to be a hit.



Showcase ultimately works as Nascar's highest end product because it fits perfectly within the high end price range that most Nascar card collectors are willing to spend and feel that the market value is worth. Outside of Earnhardt, Gordon, or Danica collectors there are very few of us willing to pop more than 200 bucks on a single card. Showcase allows us the high end collecting we love yet keeps the price in range to score the sweet cards. Of course it also carries the 1/1 parallels for the high end guys but it is something everyone can have fun with. It has something that appeals to everyone which makes it successful and will continue to. It has a wider range of collector available to it, something Five Star never had. I for one hope that Showcase remains Nascar's highest end offer.



Who Is Going to Make the Chase...and Who Wins? One Person's Opinion...

With only 8 races left before the Chase Nascar is entering its final off-weekend of the season before the final push to the Chase and the 10 race playoff. The question of who makes the Chase is somewhat altered by the wild card aspect that exists this year and if someone within the top 20 manages to win it could drastically alter who gets in. This year is the most unpredictable in recent memory and as of right now it seems as if it is anyone's championship to win as well (although come Chase time Jimmie Johnson WILL be there). Here are my personal opinions on who makes the Chase and who wins the Championship.

The Top 12 Chasers

Carl Edwards-solid, consistent finishes most of the year have had Edwards atop the points standings for the majority of the season. His cushion makes him a lock.

Jimmie Johnson-5 time has not been spectacular this year and his pit crew must get sorted out but his on-track performance remains strong and he is also a lock to make the Chase.

Kurt Busch-after struggling mightily earlier in the season and going on a profanity-laced tirade on the radio at Richmond, Kurt Busch and his Penske team have become solid contenders to win races again. Their new found performance has vaulted Busch in the standings. Look for it to continue.

Kevin Harvick-although somewhat inconsistent, Harvick along with Kyle Busch is the leader in the wins clubhouse with 3, which makes him a lock for the Chase.

Kyle Busch-blindingly quick as always, Busch has also found more consistency this year along with his 3 wins which will allow him to better contend come chase time.

Matt Kenseth-the quiet assassin in the 17 car has already got two wins this season. Although a lock for the Chase Kenseth and RFR as a whole must improve on short tracks if they want to contend.

Jeff Gordon-the old veteran has returned to victory lane twice this year and has been very competitive for the first time in a while. Gordon will make the Chase due to his consistent finishes even on his bad days.

Denny Hamlin-with only one win and a plethora of bad luck this year Hamlin is in danger of missing the Chase after competing with Jimmie Johnson for the Championship in 2010. However he has enough speed to squeak in either in 9th or 10th or as a wild card.

Tony Stewart-although outside looking in at the moment Stewart is coming up to his best stretch of races during the season. Look for the 14 team to win a race or two and get into the top 10.

Ryan Newman-Newman has been consistent but last week at New Hampshire was the first time he showed the dominating speed needed in order to win. With the victory Newman will more than likely be one of the wild cards if indeed he falls out of the top 10.



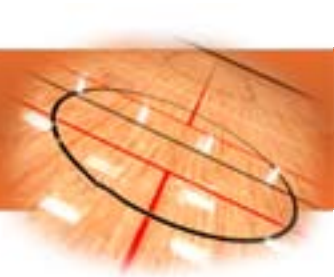
David Ragan-the man who will be the surprise in the Chase field, Ragan is solidly in the top 20 in points and with his win at Daytona will be one of the wild cards as of this moment.

Kasey Kahne-although 14th in the standings Kahne's team has momentum at the moment while the people in front of them (Dale Jr. and Clint Boywer notably) are struggling. I expect Kahne to get into the Chase either by winning a race or squeaking into the 10th spot.

Who Wins?

Carl Edwards/Jimmie Johnson-why can't I pick one at the moment? Both have major issues to sort out before the Chase. Edwards is in his contract year at Roush-if he re-signs expect him to contend strongly for the title. If he chooses to leave for Joe Gibbs Racing it makes him a lame duck driver competing for the Championship, an awkward position to be in. Mr. 5 time has his own issues right now. His pit crew has been atrociously bad all year and Johnson along with crew chief Chad Knaus are fed up with them. They must improve or Johnson will not become a 6-time champion. Look for Kurt and Kyle Busch, Kevin Harvick, and Jeff Gordon to also contend strongly for the title.





Basketball Happenings By Jay Weger aka Jay520

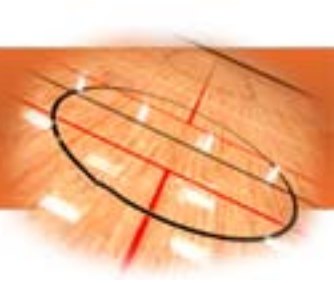
The finals for the NBA Top Performers contest wrapped up in June. JesRey won the contest with 57 points and winning a 08-09 Topps Signature Dennis Rodman auto /1299. jdlee123 came in second with 55 points winning a 09-10 Bowman 48 Andrew Bynum auto and 3rd place was tk10775 with 53 points taking home a 05-06 Topps Finishing touch Yao Ming GU. Thanks to all the participants that posted every day! Be sure to look out for the contest when the season hopefully begins in late October. Now on to the NBA GUESS the Score final results. Top person in the reGULAR member one was JesRey with 21 wins, 2nd abah58 with 14, 3rd dwighthoward with 13, 4th 2FarGone with 12 and 5th andrewhoya with 9. The Vip results look like this with JesRey once again on top with 28 wins, 2nd andrewhoya with 21, 3rd pwaldo with 17, 4th gladdyontherise with 15, tie for 5th is lil5up3erman and DunkingDurant with 14 wins. Thanks to all who played and GUESSED the scores. Contest will resume when the reGULAR season starts hopefully in October. Also in June XxViSiOnxX ran a GUESS the serial # contest through the NBA Finals. vixsportscards came in first with 10 points and picked 09-10 UD Melo/Arenas dual GU as his prize. 2nd place winner was udeckcoll with 5 points picking a 10-11 Prestige Franchise Favorites Tyreke Evans GU and 3rd place was tk10775 with 4 points ending up with a 08-09 Fleeer Genuine Coverage t-Mac GU. With the NBA lockout still in effect look for a Predict the End of the Lockout contest coming soon! Prizes to be determined later.

Hobby News



The new Panini Totally Certified hit the shelves in early July to mixed reviews with some members liking the design and some not. Large amounts were broke in the pack/box break forums. Here is some of the product detail: \$120 a box with 6 packs per box. Packs will go for about \$20. Each pack contains either a GU/299 or less or an auto/599 or less. Base are silver and #/1849 while mirror red are#/499 and mirror blue are #/199, Gold/25, Green/5, and Black/1. GU come in Red/249, Blue/99, Gold/25, Green/5, and

Black/1. Autos come in Red/99, Blue/49, Gold/25, Green/5, Black/1. Fabrics of the Game GU are back again /299 with patches/25. You also can try to find redemptions for the elusive HRX video cards of Durant, Kobe, Rose, and Blake Griffin in this product. On July 21st Panini Gold Standard made its debut to us basketball collectors at a price of \$200 a box. Cases can be had but at a steep price(10boxes). This is Panini's ode to everything in the product being gold! In each box you get 3 base/299, 4 inserts/299, 3 autos/299 or less and 2 GU/299 or less. Just like the chance of pulling a redemption of an HRX card from Certified there are Golden Tickets that yield awesome all expenses paid opportunities' to next years All-Star game, meet with Kobe and other.



2011 NBA Finals

The NBA Finals started on May 31 between the Miami Heat and the Dallas Mavericks.

Game 1 5/31

Saw the Heat take an early 3rd quarter lead on a 22-10 run and held on to win. Dirk Nowitzki injured his finger with 4 min. to play in the game but remained in the game with a splint. LeBron led the Heat with 24 points and Dirk had 27 for the Mavs. Heat - 92 Mavs - 84 Heat lead 1-0.

Game 2 6/2

The Mavs fell 15 points behind in the Heat early in the 4th quarter when Wade hit a corner 3 and held the pose. That sparked Jason Terry and the Mavs to go on a run and take back the lead on a 3 by Dirk in the final minute. Chalmers tied it with a 3 of his own on the next possession. Nowitzki drove to the basket and put in a lay-up to give the Mavs a 2 pt lead and win when Wade missed a 3 at the end. The Mavs 15 point comeback in the 4th was the biggest since the Bulls/Blazers gm 6 in '92. Wade had 36 points in a losing effort while Nowitzki put in 24 for Dallas. Mavs - 95 Heat - 92 Tied at 1-1.

Game 3 6/5

Miami led most of the game even going up by 14 at one point. Dallas would battle back to a tie in the final 40 seconds. James would pass to Bosh sinking a jump shot that put Miami back up 2. Dirk attempted a fadeaway shot at the buzzer but missed giving the Heat the win. Dirk scored 34 for Dallas while Wade had 29 for Miami. Heat -- 88 Mavs - 86 Heat lead 2-1.

Game 4 6/7

A back and forth game going into the 4th with the Heat up 74-65 Dallas stormed back to take the lead with 5 minutes to play. Only up 82-81 with 15 seconds to go Dirk hit a driving layup to put them up 3. Wade returned with a quick dunk to cut it back to 1. Terry is fouled and knocks down 2 free-throws and lead back to 3. Wade fumbles the inbounds pass but gets it to Mike Miller for a desperation 3 that misses giving Dallas the win. Dirk with 21 points and Wade with 32. Mavs -- 88 Heat - 86 Tied 2-2.

Game 5 6/9

Wade ran into Brian Cardinal injuring his hip in the first quarter and had to leave the game but returned before the half. Miami took a lead of 99-95 in the 4th with 5 min to go on a 3 by Wade. Dallas coach Carlisle pulled Terry from the game for missing a defensive assignment. With a refocused Terry the Mavs down 100-97 went on a 13-2 run that sealed the game. Terry sank a long 3 over LeBron to put Dallas up 108-101 with 30 seconds to go leading to the win. Dirk finished 29 points and Wade had 23 for Miami. Mavs - 112 Heat - 103. Mavs lead 3-2.



Game 6 6/12

Miami jumps out to an early 20-11 lead after LeBron hits his first 4 shots after being criticized for his poor 4th quarter play last 2 games and mocking of Dirks illness in game 4. Dallas returns with a 21-4 spurt and goes up 40-28. Wade and Miami rip off a 14 straight points to take a 42-40 lead. And continue to lead at halftime. Dallas took control early in the 3rd quarter and lead 81-72 at the start of the 4th. Miami tried to cut into the 12 point lead built by Dallas but just couldn't do it. Dallas would go on to win game 6 and the NBA Championship. Dirk Nowitzki is named the 2011 NBA Finals MVP. Jason Terry put in 27 points for the Mavs while James had 21 for Miami. Mavs – 105 Heat – 95 Dallas wins their first NBA Title and the series 4-2.

The NBA Draft Lottery was held on June 17 with the Cleveland Cavaliers winning the no.1 spot with help from a trade earlier in the season from the Clippers. They also got the 4th pick. Minnesota selects 2nd and Utah selects 3rd. Throughout the week leading up to the draft Kyrie Irving was a no doubt no.1 pick but Derrick Williams was making a case that he should go no.1. The 2011 NBA Draft got underway in Newark, New Jersey. Cleveland drafted Kyrie at no.1. Minnesota drafted Derrick Williams 2nd. Utah was 3rd and picked Enes Kanter. Cavaliers – Tristan Thompson 4th, Raptors – Jonas Valanciuanus 5th, Wizards – Jan Vesely 6th, Kings – Bismack Biyombo 7th(traded to Bobcats), Pistons- Brandon Knight 8th, Bobcats – Kemba Walker 9th, Bucks – Jimmer Fredtte 10th (traded to Kings), Warriors – Klay Thompson 11th, Jazz – Alec Burks 12th, Suns – Markief Morris 13th, Rockets – MaRCus Morris 14th, and Pacers – Kawhi Leonard 15th (traded to Spurs).

NBA Lock-out

The NBA Lock-out was announced on July 1st because the leaGUE and the players could not come to an agreement on a salary cap and revenue sharing among other issues. What does the lock-out mean for the upcoming NBA season? Means if they can't come to an agreement before September 5th the 2011-12 season could be in jeopardy. During the lock-out there is no business being done between the leaGUE and players (no contracts, free agency or trades). Also there is to be no contact between team personnel (owners, coaches or trainers) and the players or player "reps". The disincentive for contact will be a possible \$1 million fine.

The owners' side and wants for a new CBA. One is they want a "flex salary cap" of up to \$62 million per team. With that would bring a minimum and maximum per player. This would eliminate the luxury tax altogether that the owners pay for going over the salary cap currently. Second is a close to 50/50 split of revenue for teams and players (57% players/43% owners currently). This would allow more "net" income to help the lower market teams. Third on the list is player contract lengths to be shortened to 3 to 4 years instead of the 5 to 6 years they are now. And lastly is \$2 billion annually for player compensation over a 10 yr. CBA down 8% from 2.17 billion. That would limit the player's participation in NBA growth projects (new broadcast contracts in 2016).

Players' side and wants for a new CBA. They want to keep the "soft salary cap" in place. If the "flex"



or “hard” cap is used it would be more difficult to emulate the Miami’s “Big 3” approach to team building. Next is to reduce the revenue split to 54.3(players)/45.7(owners). That would be a \$500 million give back to the owners over 5 years. And finally to keep the contract lengths of players at 5 to 6 yrs.

Are the players and teams being paid during the lock-out? What about benefits (health insurance)? Yes the players are getting paid during the lockout because many of them have negotiated a 12 month pay cycle into their contracts for the 2010-11 season and most other players will get paid in Oct. 11 for the season. Now if the lockout lingers into November players will stop getting checks. Players getting paid lose health insurance during the lockout because it is considered a benefit. Teams are being paid as well by getting revenue from sponsorships; TV broadcast deals and season ticket sales which vary by team. Teams may have to refund portions due to any missed games. When does the lockout need to be ended to keep the pre-season or regular season intact? By Sept. 5 which is when some teams start meeting with their players. It is said that ABC/ESPN and TNT could lose up to \$1.25 billion if the season is lost.

In other NBA news came the retirement of Shaquille O’Neal who said goodbye to the NBA after 19 long seasons. In my opinion he was one of the most dominant big men the game has seen. But don’t worry he isn’t going to fade away from us because he signed a deal with TNT to be a NBA broadcaster when the season starts. Also just recently Yao Ming decided to retire after 8 years in the NBA. After only playing 5 games in the 10-11 season and missing the rest with a hairline break in his foot he called it quits. Once the NBA lockout started Deron Williams announced he would be going overseas to play with a Turkish team if any of the season was missed. A few other NBA stars have come out and said they will possibly go to Europe to play if the season doesn’t start on time like Dwight Howard, Steve Nash and even possibly Kobe. Bizarre but true is that Ron Artest has filed paperwork to have his name changed to Metta World Peace. The word “metta” is a definition for Buddhist virtue of kindness.





Remember the Legends **By Mike Green aka Indyreds**

I'm always amazed by the number of posts in Autograph Central asking for other members thoughts on who to write an autograph request to. It seems obvious to me that you would write to a person who you would love to have an autograph from. I personally have asked celebrities and sports stars for all sorts of reasons. My collection is full of autographs of sports stars, authors, actresses, actors, politicians and others that have caught my attention. No one can tell you who you want for your collection and what signature will mean something to you. I might have a suggestion to look into the past and to look sooner rather than later. It seems that we have lost a good number of sports legends in the last few years. George Kell, Duke Snider, Sparky Anderson, John Wooden have all been taken from us, were all great signers for mail requests and all will be missed.

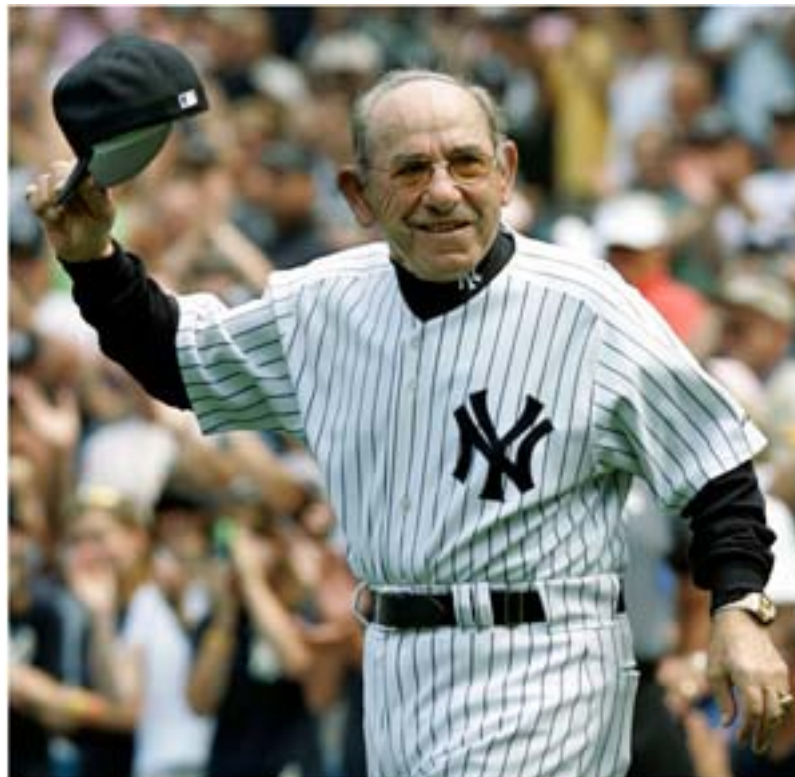
In baseball statistics are king and fans will tell you how current players stack up against greats of the past. I love writing to players who have been retired for decades as they as a group seem to be very gracious with fans. Bobby Doerr, Jim Bunning, Yogi Berra and other Hall Of Fame players are frequent targets of requests and have been wonderful friends of the TTM community for years without fees. There are also a long list of players who will sign for a fee. Al Kaline, Nolan Ryan, Stan Musial, Andre Dawson and Gary Carter are a few of the Hall Of Fame members who sign great for fees. Some of those fees are for charity and very reasonable. I would suggest looking at players from the past who had wonderful careers, but do not receive the press that Hall of Famer players do. Bobby Shantz, Virgil Trucks and Al Rosen are some of the legends of the game that fall into that category. They are only a few of many players who were on championship teams, won awards or were league leaders in different categories. Why would you not want to get these legends of the game instead of chasing current stars and prospects that are compared to them? Take the time to learn the history of a game you like and go get the autographs of the guys who have already done what you hope that prospect might be able to do. I am not saying to not get the Joey Votto and Josh Hamiltons of the world or even prospects you think will be great like Jerry Sands or Mike Trout. Get those that you want and hope that they become legends.

Basketball is a sport that does a horrible job at highlighting its past for fans. Dirk Nowitzki is about the only current superstar who signs his mail consistently in the NBA and I have heard it referred to as the NoBody Autographs league. Believe me when I tell you that there are many great basketball players besides Dr. J, Larry Bird, Magic Johnson and Michael Jordan. Those poor guys get so much press and so many autograph requests that I doubt you will ever obtain their signatures without paying for them. Should you be an NBA fan looking back to the legends is the only way to go in my mind. Oscar Robertson, a player who should get more press as the best player of all time, leads a list of wonderful signing legends. Robert Parrish, Elgin Baylor, Gary Payton, Dave Cowens are only a few of the former NBA stars to join my collection after mailing them a request. Gail Goodrich and Nate Archibald both returned my cards signed just this week and either of them would be a treasured item for any Lakers or Celtics fan. Do not waste your stamps on the likes of LeBron James and Kevin Durant. Look for the guys who paved the road for the NBA to be what it is today.



The NFL is by far the most popular sport in America and we are blessed with so many living legends of the game. Football has huge rosters and a good number of current stars do sign autograph requests. Peyton Manning and Bret Farve were even answering their mail last year. I would still suggest looking at some stars of the past in this sport. Mike Ditka, Bruce Smith, Y. A. Tittle, Bob Griese and Lawrence Taylor are among the former greats who freely sign autographs. I would say that they have the highest percentage of Hall Of Fame players who will sign mail out of the big three sports. You name an NFL team and it is easy to find a former legend to add to your autograph collection with a mailed request.

The next time you are unsure of who to mail an autograph request to just look a little back in time. Let the legends of the sports you love know that they are not forgotten. I have even added a few dollars with requests to some of the old time players as you would be shocked at how little they were paid while paving the way for today's millionaire players. Thank them for what they did and for being so great to fans. Realize that many of the players before free agency played the game for the love of the sport and for the support of the fans. Be sure to thank them and never forget the legends of the game.





Delivery Confirmation, Tracking and Insurance

By Kevin O'Connor aka rainman67ko

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 sending a trade through the mail and using Delivery Confirmation (DC), Tracking, and Insurance services offered by the US Postal Service and Canada Post.

I have seen several disputes involving higher value cards and no tracking or insurance whatsoever. How is it traders can spend the money we do on product and then skimp on shipping? Generally speaking no one wins in this situation. It's a good practice to use a delivery confirmation service and it provides an added protection and peace of mind for both traders. When selecting the service you need to consider the value of what you are sending, where it is going, and how well you know the other trader.

Delivery Confirmation or DC: This service offers a traceable number to track the delivery of a package through to its destination. This option is available through the US Postal Service for very small fee. Signature Confirmation is also available for slightly higher. In Canada Post offers Registered Mail service for a significantly higher fee. This provides tracking and signature confirmation. International tracking services are available from both the US and Canada.

Tracking: After selecting a mail service you will be able to track the status of the package on the Internet by entering your tracking number. There is also a place to enter the information in the SCF Trade Manager so you and your trade partner have record.

Insurance: Liability Insurance against lost or damaged mail is available to protect your item during shipping. Always consider the replacement value when selecting this service.

Detailed information on all postal services are available directly on the official websites:

(www.usps.com/) (<http://www.canadapost.ca/>)

Best practices: Don't skimp on your shipping. Assess the replacement value of the trade and the trader reputation when selecting a DC or other services. Always retain your postal receipts until the trade is completed. Good communication and follow through are the keys to a positive reputation.

Please contact me on 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.

Your Love for your Hobby Will Find a Way By Tommy Gast aka Munchiesthemonkey



Like most other card collectors out there, I wake up each day, I make coffee in the morning, I even have a job I have to go to, mainly to support my various collecting habits. Hey it could be worse, I could be snorting drugs or boozing it up Chris Farley style, or even smoking two packs of Marlboro's a day, all habits much worse than collecting cards. Yeah of course the bills have to be paid, but you need to really understand the psyche of the card collector to appreciate that sometimes the rent or car payment have

to wait if the opportunity presented itself two days before rent was due to acquire that coveted multi colored jersey or 1/1 card of your PC guy. What's a \$50.00 late fee or taking the bus to work compared to holding up that 1/1 card triumphantly like He-Man holds up his sword while belching out "By the Power of Panini!" I'm just a regular guy that likes his comics with chromium holographic foil limited multiple variant covers, his football cards with 10 different colored parallels which when all obtained resemble a handful of Skittles, can you "taste err see the rainbow?," or even toys, specifically super-hero action figures and those peachy keen McFarlane sports figures. I enjoyed setting them up in mock battles Iron-Man Vs. Cal Ripken, The Juggernaut Vs. The Bus Jerome Bettis like we kids did back in the good old days with tiny green army men, only to later knock them all down with a sling shot pull of a rubber band while cheering. Unfortunately my antics and tomfoolery were not understood by all and I had to stop my girlfriend or kids from calling the Crazy Coach, you know that big white Chevy Suburban filled with guys in white that chase you while holding a straight jacket. I just tell them straight up, "I'm not crazy, just crazy for cardboard."

I can trace the root of this passion to my childhood long ago. It was 1980. I liked bands like Journey, The Romantics, Survivor, but mostly Def Leppard and AC/DC. Me and my friends wore bandanas under our knees, over our necks, and on our heads like headbands. You were not cool if you didn't know how to tie a bandana properly or wore at least two or three. But back to the roots thing and I don't mean Kunta Kinte. Cereal boxes in the late 70s and early 80s had the coolest toys and cutouts on the cardboard boxes they came in. The toys were small, definitely a choking hazard, and had parts that broke off and ended up in kids' noses or mouths much to the chagrin of Emergency Rooms nationwide. They were so awesome so who cares if you had to dangle your life by a string like suspending a mouse by its tail over a hungry snake that hasn't eaten for days. The cardboard cutouts featured comic and cartoon super heroes and also current popular sports figures but especially baseball players. I remember my mom buying new boxes of cereal and all I could think about was opening that box, digging my unwashed arms deep into that crispy ocean of sugary goodness all the while hoping to grasp that dusty plastic baggie filled with cereal box treasure. Me and my sister would try to wake up earlier than each other to



claim the prize for ourselves and we fought like two starved gerbils fighting over a slippery peanut. I got it!, no I got it ahahaha. Fighting for the treasure made it that much more meaningful if you were the victor.

1984, The Police were cool! Dune was an epic movie starring Sting! And around that time I started buying Topps baseball and football cards at 7-11 along with candy bars, gum, and Slurpee's before going to the local Video Arcade. I treated my cards very badly back then. Put them in my sweaty pocket sharing space with coins, a Star Wars or G.I. Joe action figure, or worse a cool shiny rock I found while playing in the dirt. I ran rubber bands tightly around my cards to keep them together. I even taped them to my banana seat bike so the wheel spokes would click and clack like a motor cycle. I also drew pictures and colored handlebar moustaches on my baseball cards giggling at how rad I improved their looks. Not until 1987 did I begin to collect comics, and sports cards actually caring about keeping them in good condition. Unfortunately for football and baseball cards 1987-1991 were the death valley days of collecting, void of any value and deserving to be buried in the desert.



Adulthood, the death of a hobby. For many years (1991-1997) I stopped collecting sports cards and concentrated on toys and comics wallpapering my pad with toys top to bottom. This began the first of my friends and families problems with my collecting habits. Often I would get teased by everyone I knew. My friends would say "Are you nuts, look at this place, you'll never get another girl-friend!" My mom would say "When did my son become this obsessive compulsive hoarder of worthless junk! You'll

never find a wife or start a family!" I just shrugged my shoulders thinking to myself about that funny music video by Suicidal Tendencies "Institutionalized." Everyone is telling this guy this is the way normal people dress act and behave. He rebels by screaming "All I want is a Pepsi and she wouldn't give it to me, just a Pepsi, I'm not crazy!" Then my Mom looked at me oddly and I realized I acted out loud that part of the song. "You know very well we drink Coke in this family!" OK Mom I was just... oh never mind.

1998, Sonny Bono dies, Will Smith's son Jaden is born, and the NFL draft had the best group of prospects the football world had seen for a very long while, loaded with awesome players. I listened to local sports talk radio, Jim Rome, watched ESPN, football news, and the entire draft on TV and online. I was deeply involved and interested in knowing and learning about that year's draft prospects but was interested mainly in two guys Randy Moss and Ryan Leaf. We can all look back and laugh at my choices today but I honestly believed those two were the diamonds of that draft class. Hey one out of two isn't that bad! It was also after this draft that I began my descent into eBay addiction. I bid on hundreds of Randy Moss and Ryan Leaf rookie cards. The problem surfaced when my apartment's mailbox would get so clogged full my mailman would either leave yellow pick up slips on my door, or a full translucent white U.S. mail bin full of bubble mailers and small boxes with my manager. At first

she was OK with it, but after 2-3 months of constant overload she cracked. “What in the world is going on here, what is all this stuff?” After I told her she said, “You’ll never meet a nice woman having these strange obsessions with collecting everything!” She was already privy to my massive horror memorabilia and movie collection, also my pewter dragons, comic & x-men toys, star wars, Godzilla, power rangers, transformers, lady death, spawn, and boxes upon boxes full of comics. I lived in a packed 2 bedroom apartment with my two daughters and no significant other at the time. It was wall to wall toys, movies, comics and now again sports cards. My mom would occasionally visit to see the girls and every time she did, she would look around my apartment and say, “When are you ever going to get rid of all this (stuff).” Except stuff was another commonly used S word. And then she would once again remind me, “The only reason you’re still single is because you won’t grow up and stop acting like a child, women want a real man, not another baby to take care of!”

2001: The Year I made contact, and I don’t mean Stanley Kubrick. Years had passed, the collecting (or as my mom would say hoarding) continued. And then one day my apartment manager asked me to look at a new neighbor’s computer, she was a single mom from Ohio with a two year old daughter, my daughters were ages seven and eight. I was the resident computer guru at my complex, the I.T. guy, and electronics wizard who could hook up stereos, VCRs, and could even solder things. I knocked on my neighbors door, she answered. She was 5' 8? tall, a long haired blonde, tan and very cute, also out of my league. I introduced myself and she had a broke Dell PC, I gave it a preliminary look through and wow was that machine a mess. BHO’s, spy-ware, viruses, even a root-kit.. Her computer was part of a bot-net, not a good thing at all. I told her I could come back later to fix it and she invited me to dinner. Later when I arrived with my kids and fix-it utilities in tow I noticed something I hadn’t noticed before. A bookshelf full of VHS movies, horror movies. The selection was both good and bad. George Romero’s living dead trilogy... awesome. Da Hip Hop Witch and Killjoy... ROFL. Then i saw a Godzilla toy and comics on a table, o_O? She was everything I thought I wanted and after hanging around with each other friendship became something more.

Several years later, living together, we upgraded both our two bedroom apartments for an odd 4 bedroom apartment, and that’s when I learned our tastes in decor varied and sometimes that phrase “too good to be true” actually holds some weight. She insisted on minimalism for our place and only nice framed items on the walls. But i had around 14 long boxes of comics, and several hundred toys, and thousands of cards. Where was I going to put all this stuff? We compromised and converted a room to a computer office and it was there that I was able to decorate the walls with my most prized collectibles, Randy Moss memorabilia, and collection of old Macintosh computers, my favorites an LC-520 bought from an elementary school full of educational software, and an awesome Mac Color Classic complete with image-writer dot matrix printer.

Living with my significant other was full of challenges, but buying collectibles and sports cards was not one of them. In fact we both wore matching Randy Moss jerseys on game-day, although mine was a bit larger and wider. And she bought me unique Randy Moss oddball items whenever she saw some-

thing while out shopping. One of my favorite items she bought me was an original framed air brush painting of Moss by an urban street artist in New York City. She picked it up while vacationing with her aunt. Even-though most of my collection was segregated to one room she was never outright hostile or negative about my collecting habits. Jammed packed mailbox and all she was supportive and allowed me room to express myself as an individual and even found humor in some of my quirky collecting habits.

Present day. I'm sorry to inform you all but things didn't work out between us as after several years together we split up after a separation. But my friends and mom were indeed wrong when they said I would never meet or find anyone simply because my pad was jam packed with collectibles including sports cards. Love knows no boundaries and always finds a way.

I'm once again a single guy and a lot has happened recently in my life forcing me to face and endure new challenges. I have been living in a hospital setting since May of 2010. I unfortunately became stricken with a rare disease called Guillain-Barre Syndrome. I was paralyzed from head to toe for months and did not gain enough mobility to use a laptop until October of 2010. My hand used the track-pad as I was too weak to move a mouse. Guess what the first thing I bought was while living in a hospital? A Randy Moss football card. And guess who became very angry and disappointed in me for spending my money on worthless junk. "I don't understand you, why are you buying cards? I'm sick and tired of all this mail filling my mailbox and more sick that I have to bring bags full of envelopes (cards) to you in the hospital." I used my mom's address and she was furious when 50 bubble mailers filled her mailbox a week. She calmed down a bit after I explained to her that I found joy in adding cards to my collection. It's very hard living with paralysis and even harder finding joy and happiness when you're living with an illness, in constant pain, with hopes of walking again appearing more grim as time passes. I'm happy to say my mom no longer teases or complains and says everything I buy is worthless junk. She no longer gets angry at me for buying cards because she finally understands how happy it makes me to collect things, and that type of joy and fulfilment is worth more than money can buy. If you can help your mom or dad, or wife or significant other understand how integral your hobby is to your happiness, and no one gets hurt in the process, the mere fact that you'll be able to enjoy yourself without anyone holding you down with negativity, will make everyday like Christmas, and every envelope opened will seem like a present under a Christmas tree.

Thanks for reading, god bless, and here's to hundreds of happy and joyous mail days at SCF! You deserve them and don't let anyone convince you otherwise.

Card Collecting - A World of Misconception

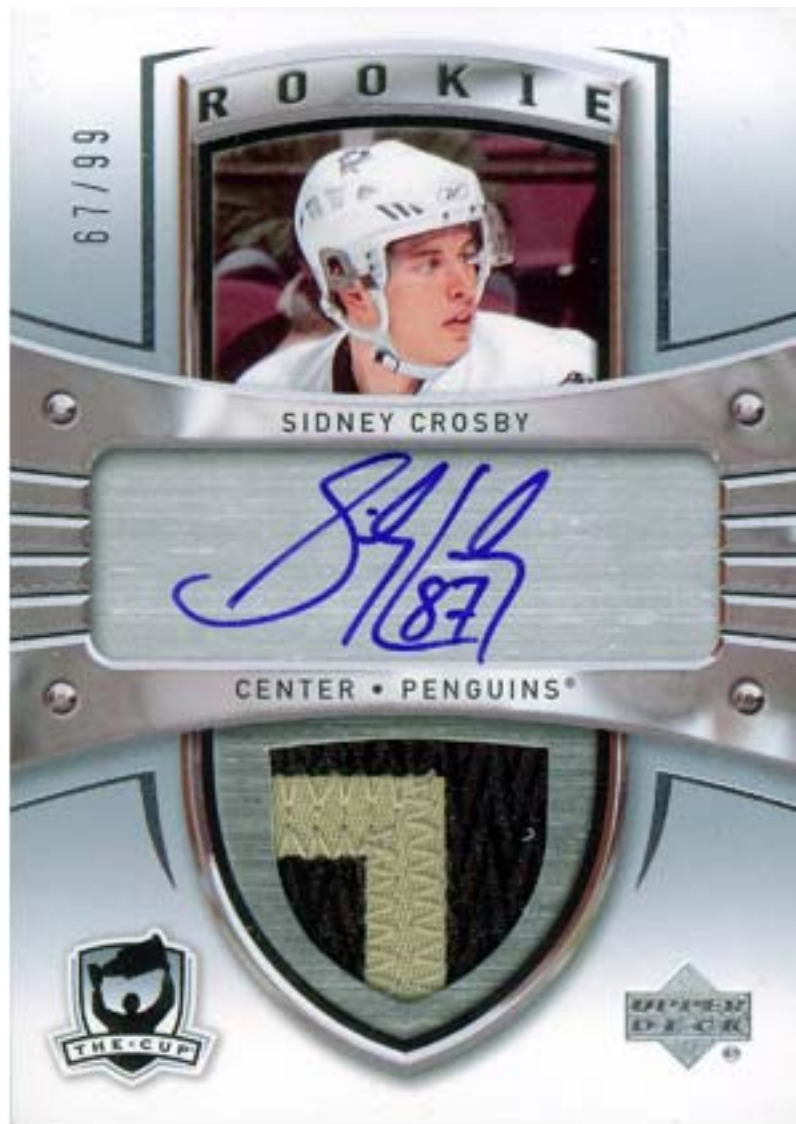
By Joe Mosley aka LGB Cards

I have collected cards for many years now. I started collecting due to my love of basketball, I started collecting basketball cards when I was about 11 and collected for about 5 years. I enjoyed collecting my favorite players and all of the conversations that arose between friends and I over who was the best, who was better, who was going to be a star, and so on. At that time card collecting was viewed as acceptable due to me being young and it was supported by family and friends. Eventually I stopped collecting towards the end of the 90s due to the same multiple reasons that many did, the low times of the NBA and the realization that cards were over printed and basically worthless. The excitement associated with cards was partially due to having something that depicted your favorite athletes but the other side of it was opening pack after pack and sorting through them for that big pickup card. Especially at the time of being a kid the cards seemed like gold to us due to them being the only thing we really had that would carry any kind of value to anyone else. Eventually all of my stuff was put into safe containers since I did want to keep them but I no longer wished to collect.

Now fast forward to the current time. I am slowly working my way out of my 20's and have been back into collecting for about 2 years. Life was moving fast for a while but eventually I lost employment like many did due to rough economic times. At that time I started doing more things around the house, found all my old cards and stuff and decided to pull them out and start collecting again. I figured this would be good in a few ways, they are worth money and I could build a collection that could be used to make a few bucks if needed in the future, it would give me an outlet to do something, and one thing I did retain from being a kid was my love of sports. When I told my friends and family about starting to collect again most of them thought it was just a waste of time. Most of them couldn't even imagine where card collecting had risen to since the time they remembered. They had never heard of jersey cards and had no idea that autograph cards were as common place as they were. I am a huge hockey fan and when I told them of the Upper Deck The Cup cards it blew their mind that there were cards that were worth thousands and that boxes sold for \$500 or more.

Even now after explaining to people they still disbelieve. I talked to an old friend and told them I collected card and do not work. She said to me "You quit your job to sell card? That can't possibly be paying the bills for you." She just expected that I quit my job for that which was wrong and comical but I told her "No, I just lost my job but let me send you a few links to a few cards that have been on eBay." Sent her a Crosby The Cup Rookie for over \$4,000, a rare Jordan 90's limited that sold for over \$7,000, and a few other card that sold for a nice price. She quickly changed her tune then and just said how she couldn't believe that cards sold for that much, not realizing what people are willing to put into their collections and doubted just how much people love this hobby and sports in general.

Like most things in life cards are measured by an unfair scale. It is considered acceptable if a notable money value can be placed on it and is viewed as childish or a waste of time for most people I have met. I have still maintained my love of cards that I had as a child but like most of us life does have a tendency to get away from us and we lose time to do things we enjoy. I do sell some of my card but it is mainly so I can obtain cards that I can not afford from my favorite players. At the same time I do know what I have in cards and take care of them as a relic of time and sports but also as an item of value.



It's Not the Money

By Richard Mock aka Paintball

In the majority of the discussions I have read, most adults blame the high cost of cards as the main reason kids don't seem to be as big in card collecting as they were in the past. Most of these articles reflect back on when a kid could go to the corner store and buy a pack of cards for 25 cents. They surmise that the card companies should go back to these days of cheap cards. I strongly disagree. In my humble opinion the product has never in its history been better than it is today. The problem isn't that a pack of Topps retail now sells for \$1.99 or that there are high priced cards that now sell for \$50.00 per pack. The problem is that the card companies are very, very poor at marketing their product to the current group of kids and their parents. If a 12year old kid is asked by his parents what he wants for his birthday, how many kids now will ask for a \$100.00 hobby box of cards, and how many will ask for \$100.00 worth of games for their game system. If a parent would spend \$100.00 for a child's birthday on 2 games, then they would spend \$100.00 on a hobby box of cards, if that is what the child wanted. So, the question becomes: "How can the card companies get a child to ask his parents for cards for their birthday present instead of video games?" The problem in my opinion is in the poor marketing divisions of the card companies. Topps might have a very good marketing division, and I am the first to admit that at 63 years of age I might not be aware of the marketing they are directing towards the kids and their parents. If so then just disregard this entire article as the ravings of an uninformed old man.

Father-son events: Card companies should help finance father-son events in every city that has a local card shop. Card collecting was always a father/son adventure between me and my three boys. I have many fond memories of these days. A parent doesn't get this type of experience from buying his son a video game and having him go into isolation in his room for days on end while he plays the game. Every child craves his father's attention and every father should look forward to one on one experiences with his child. If card collecting created this undivided attention between a father and son, then every child would want this attention over playing video games. If the experience I had as a parent can be marketed and sold then not only will the parents buy the child cards for the child's presents, but the child will buy cards for his father's presents.

Well done websites run by the card companies for kids to discuss their favorite player with discussions started by adults on who is hot and who is cold, always coming back to cards available for these players would in my opinion help. There can be games geared toward the 12-15 year old kids. Discussion forums with kids discussing the players and the cards among themselves are a must in today's market environment. The websites of all the major card companies in my opinion are a joke.

I know Becket is geared toward the adult collector, but there needs to be a lot more emphasis in this magazine on father/son involvement. How many adult collectors are excluding their children from the hobby because they want to make a profit and don't trust their children to know enough to give them good sound advice? The smartest stock broker I ever knew told me to watch what the children wanted, find out who makes this object, and buy stock in that company. I have never lost money following this advice. The same is true with card collecting.

The children's heroes of today will be the most valuable cards when these children are adults. That is why I believe that Barry Bond's, Mark McGwire's, and Sammy Sosa's cards will go back up in value in another 10 years. They were my children's heroes and my children don't give a flip about the steroid scandal. Just look at Pete Rose's cards today. Becket needs to do more to encourage their readers to involve their children in their hobby. They need to convince every father in the hobby that their children will be grown before they know it and that every minute they share with their son in the hobby will be priceless. This will not only help get children interested in card collecting, it will benefit society. It would be a win/win situation of both the card companies and family.

Although expensive, a parent will spend a lot less on a hobby box of cards than he will spend for a day at an amusement park. Convince the parent and child that opening this box of cards will be just as much fun and create the same or a better relationship and the cost becomes irrelevant to the parent. It's not my job to market the product, it's the marketing division of the card companies and right now I think they stink. As far as making money in the hobby, the answer is very simple: Buy low and sell high.



Wow, You Collect Sports Cards and You're Female?

By **Khendra Murdock aka DunkinDurant35**



I have been collecting sports cards since the tender age of 7½ years old. I can still remember the first pack of sports cards my dad got for me back in 1992: 1991 Score football. I was excited to get a Guy McIntyre card out of the pack because I was a big San Francisco 49ers fan at the time (they were probably the most fun team to play on my favorite video game back then, Tecmo Super Bowl on the old original Nintendo!).

Basketball took over football as my number one favorite sport in 1993, but all through the years, I have maintained an interest in the card collecting hobby since that fateful day in the Spring of 1992. I have taken a few small breaks now and then, sure, but there have always been some cards around the house no matter if I was actively collecting or

not.

I am happy to say that no one close to me has ever commented negatively on my sports card collecting hobby. My parents still think it is nice that I have such a harmless and fun thing to do in my spare time, and even though my fiancé can't relate to the hobby at all (he watches and participates in mixed martial arts, but he is not into any other sports and has never collected anything), he likes how I have a lot of my own individualized interests.

As a female, I am certainly in the minority of what is probably a 90% or more male-centered hobby (there was a poll done on SCF awhile back that resulted in such a percentage), but I am also happy to report that the vast majority of guys I have traded with here on SCF and elsewhere have been very cool about me sharing their interest no matter how atypical it may be. I have experienced only a handful of irritating comments over the years, and most of those comments had to do with physical appearance. Unfortunately, among an immensely small minority of collectors, there are a few guys who think women who are into sports are usually buxom bombshell types whose men would support their interest solely because of that; some other guys, meanwhile, think we are all supposedly "ugly lesbians" (and I have gotten this comment before, at least the "ugly" part that I can recall; thankfully, the posters who said this are no longer active on the forums).

The reality is that most women who are into sports card collecting love and analyze sports just as much as the guys do, and most of us look like women you would see any day of the week no matter what some others might say. Some of the women may be beautiful by traditional standards, and yes, some

may be lesbian, but there are all kinds of women who like sports, and we should all be treated with similar respect. Thankfully, most guys in the hobby do just that, and so it would not be fair to judge the entire demographic of male collectors by a handful of those who are overly centered on appearance and stereotype.

If anything, I would say most of the other responses I have gotten for being a card collector have been pretty indifferent. No one has ever told me I am into what they view as a “kids hobby,” for example, so I have been fortunate there. There are a few who have been amazed that I collect cards at all, but I can’t blame them for their surprise: they are not acting that way out of rudeness – women in the hobby are a minority, like it or not – and so I just smile and tell them how I have always been kind of different.

As I prepare to become a teacher in the coming months, I wonder if I will have an opportunity to share my card collecting hobby with new people, and what they might think of it. Teachers are encouraged to use rewards systems in certain situations, so I could use cards for that reason! I suppose that, in time, I may come across some incredulous students who are astounded that a female English teacher would collect sports cards. If so, that would be pretty funny! If history continues, I imagine most students will just think it is kind of neat, and the students who like sports will enjoy the perk of putting forth more effort into writing to obtain some new cards.



My Wife is a 1/1

By Henry Salazar aka FL Henry

My wife and I went to high school together so we have known each other for over twenty years. At sixteen years old she won the beauty pageant in our small town. She finished third in her high school class and went on to a 4.0 GPA in college. She also earned the highest academic honors for her master's degree in accounting and now has a fantastic job in financial management. As one might imagine there are plenty of reasons why I may have been attracted to her way back in the day. I clearly remember the day that I knew she was THE one, however.

My wife had just spent countless hours studying for the SAT. She sat through the exam after almost no sleep and then rushed to Southwest High School to join her dance teammates in the high school dance regional finals. After winning the regional finals with her teammates she and I headed back to her place so she could take a shower and change clothes so we could go out and celebrate. While she was in the shower I got a call from my local card shop asking me if I was still interested in trading or selling my 1992 Stadium Club Shaquille O'Neal rookie card. Since this was pre Internet the selling and trading of cards was handled a little differently than it is today. He offered me all of the comics in the Doomsday/Superman battle that eventually led to the death of Superman. The only catch was he needed the card that evening as he was in the process of trading that card to yet another card shop owner for their personal collection. As a side note, that Shaq card does not sell for much today but at the time it came out it was a pretty big deal and very high book value for a while.

My future wife emerged from her shower looking fantastic and she was ready to head out and let loose. There was little doubt that she deserved it. That night, however, we spent the next few hours digging through what seemed like an endless amount of cards in my bedroom until I found that Shaq rookie card. Watching her patiently go through my boxes of cards with good humor and endless amounts of patience was a watershed moment for me. I knew right then that she was special and that I would be an idiot not to hold onto her as long as I could.

On a side note, that was also the catalyst for me to organize my collection.

So here we are twenty years later and I cannot tell you how many card shops, comic book stores, and conventions we have attended together. She has become an expert on the hobbyist lingo and is no stranger to sitting on the floor sorting cards by teams, by serial number, by types, and just about anything else I could think of over the years. I have known a lot of collectors over of the years. Some of them collect sports cards, some comics, some star wars memorabilia; I even knew a guy that collected the movie ticket stubs to every movie he ever watched. This guys collection started when he was seven years old and I attended the party he threw to celebrate his 1,000th ticket stub. The bottom line, though, is that it did not really matter what they were into collecting. The ones with supportive significant others were inevitably ten times happier than the ones without support.

My wife has always supported displaying the memorabilia I have collected over the years. When we lived in a studio apartment there were boxes of cards and comics lined up against the walls and as many in the closet as we could manage. We even had comics under the folding table that tripled as a dining room table, a study area, and hobby center. Now we live in a six bedroom house and we still have collectibles in just about every room in the house. Granted, collectibles of any kind are now forbidden from going anywhere near her walk-in closet in the bedroom but at this point I feel like she has more than earned this one small concession. This is literally the least I can do considering what she has put up with over the years.

There are many reasons that have always made me feel like I won the spouse lottery. Naturally, these reasons far exceed her tolerance and support of my sports card and memorabilia collecting. With that said, I have always been so thankful that she did not simply step aside and let me collect. Instead, she took an active interest and learned as much as she could about my passion.

As I write this I have three autographed jerseys, two autographed baseballs, and several basketball cards in the mail on the way to me. My wife is excited that I am excited and this confirms to me that all those years ago I pulled the spousal equivalent of a 1/1.



An Avenue to Return Kids to the Hobby

By Brandon York aka UofLnMU

Stop me if you've heard this one before: collecting sports cards is one of the few multi generational hobbies America has. Right now, we risk severing that tie. When I think about the glory days of sports card collecting, like most of you folks, I think back to the dusty box of cards from my grandfather's attic (I pulled a 1974 Mike Schmidt and a 1975 Johnny Bench from that "box break"). I heard stories from my older relatives about fabled (and likely fictional) 1951 Mickey Mantles placed inside bicycle spokes and tales of Ted Kluszewski's biceps that read more like a Cincinnati-area Paul Bunyan than a sports page. This was my baptism into the church of sports cards. To be honest, I didn't know much about the sport other than hearing the names intoned reverently by my father and his brother during long days pulling tobacco plants on the farm in Kentucky. (A farm, coincidentally not terribly far from a farm owned by Don Gullett—that subsequently went under, and forced Gullett to return to coaching...or at least so my uncle said).

One of my first religious experiences was one I shared with my father. The Reds had traded for Tom Seaver, whose name I only knew from the hushed reverent tones that it was spoken in. I was opening packs of cards that I'd carried home from the store. I was still at the age that team affiliation trumped all things—I was interested in the Reds, and specifically the uniform. I knew little more than it was my team, an inheritance that I had received from my father and uncle. At any rate, that fateful afternoon was the first occasion that one of the cards pulled from the pack came with it a name I recognized. It never went down in the annals of sports lore as one of those iconic pieces of cardboard, but nevertheless, it was one that found its way into my jeans back pocket—and subsequently turned to cloth.

I collected cards, and specifically baseball, because I enjoyed baseball. I enjoyed baseball mainly due to the fact that I received the cues that I should enjoy baseball. It was a connection that I shared with a previous generation of my family, and an arena that I could share with my father, even during my petulant early teen years when I sat on the couch watching Mike Scott square off against the New York Mets (who soon became my "other" team). This ultimately is what attracted me to sports cards—it was meaningful to me. It offered me definition and location for my identity. I enjoyed baseball because...well, it's just because it's who I was as a member of my family.

I've heard that same story intoned by countless other men and women at conventions and in lines to acquire autographs. I have yet to hear anyone talk about the magical moment that they pulled their first chase card or the first time they pulled a redemption card. The thing that we want to see return to the hobby is the sort of beauty and innocence that we fancy existed in that bygone era. An era in which kids strolled up to the counter and were able to buy a pack or two with their own money, and were excited to get cards of their favorite team or player—and no one ever used the phrase "base card" (or at least not in a derogatory sense). An era when kids would talk about cards and everyone chased after the same set. The marketplace is cluttered with so many different products. Pete Rose had one rookie card. How many does Joey Votto have? If it's that confusing for a 36 year old to navigate the card market, what do we expect a youngster to do?

a hobbyist today, even with a decent job. How can we expect kids to? The hobby historically was founded on the backs (or bicycle spokes) of working class kids. Not only is the market glutted with product, but it's glutted with product that is priced at an insane sticker price. The problem is the same as the one plaguing professional sports. Sports have priced themselves out of the range of the diehard fan. I certainly didn't grow up in the era where a Coke was a nickel, but in about 15 years, I've seen ticket prices increase beyond 100%. When I go to a baseball game, the trip has been budgeted for quite some time. The experience of sport is qualitatively different now. If we're serious about a return to the "good old days", we have to return to those values.

Enough gimmicks. I don't need to pay six bucks for a pack of cards because I have a slight chance of landing an autograph from a player who won't see a major league stadium for another 3 years.

Enough subsets. I want to piece together a set—a meaningful set, not hunt for a handful of radioactive, reflecting, refracting pieces of plastic. If there are more cards in existence for Aroldis Chapman than Bob Gibson, we have a problem.

Enough with the high-end product. I didn't fall in love with my significant other after some sort of lengthy cost-benefits analysis (happily, she didn't look into my earning potential, either.) Sure, cards

will always have value based on desirability, but we shouldn't be sending the message to kids upfront that the only reason we should value cards is because of the insane money that they bring.



The next generation of collectors needs to find the joy and love to collect through similar channels that we did. Get the speculators out of the hobby, and return it to where it was when it was done for love of the game and the thrill of chasing your favorite stars.



The Baseball Road Trip

By Sean McCafferty aka 30ranfordfan

I'm not going to write another cliché filled article about why Toronto's Rogers Centre is a bad place to watch baseball. If you go to Google, and spend about 30 seconds searching, you'll be able to find lots of them.

Rogers Centre

Truth is the Rogers Centre (formally known as Skydome) is a great place to watch a game. The seats are as comfortable as you'll find throughout Major League Baseball, and there isn't a seat with a bad sightline in the house. It might get a little stuffy in there when the roof is closed, and it may lack in atmosphere when fewer than 20,000 people show up, but it's a pretty darn good place to watch a baseball game.



That doesn't mean other places aren't nice too. There's something to like about any MLB park you're in. That's why the trips there are so much fun. Driving, even if it's a really long trek, also provides a great chance to see a lot of America, that you otherwise may never get to. (Yes, to my fellow Canadians there's a load of nice places in Canada to visit too, but we lack the necessary teams to do a road trip for the purpose of baseball.)

When I include my hometown Jays, I'm now a veteran of visiting 19 MLB teams, in 20 different parks (I've been to both old and new Yankee Stadium). I've only completed one division (AL Central) but only have one that I haven't yet started (AL West). I've also taken in games at 11 different MLB parks, and they are truly one of the underrated gems of North American sports.

Progressive Field

I don't know what exactly it is that got me hooked on baseball. I can certainly remember watching the Blue Jays teams of 1992 and 1993 win the World Series, and I can say that my first ever game was in 1990, on a family summer vacation to Toronto (I didn't move to Ontario, from Canada's East Coast, until 1995). I'm not even sure what prompted my first road trip (Cleveland) other than thinking it'd be a good way to spend a long weekend.



Maybe it's the fact that it's summer time, and the weather is (generally) great, that adds so much extra appeal. Spending an afternoon outside, watching what's got the potential to be a great game, while enjoying one of the



few months of the year where shorts & a t-shirt pass for normal clothes, really is a great way to spend an afternoon. Hitting the open road with a couple of friends, driving to a destination that's still hours away – it's really a lot more fun than most people like to admit.

Showing up in another team's building, wearing the visitor's jersey is always a fun time too. From my own experiences, the home town fans will be obliged to make a few comments at you, but most people generally treat you with a lot of courtesy, and are pretty welcoming to their home town.

Boston's Green Monster

At least that's how I found Boston, Detroit, and Kansas City to be, while cheering for the Blue Jays (I will admit – Philadelphia is nothing but hostile to anyone cheering for the away side. I left that town thinking that "The City of Brotherly Love" was actually a term of irony. The fact that any Philadelphia native reading this is thinking to themselves "damn right" only proves my point further!).

The longest trip I've done to date took place in the summer of 2007. Over nine days I caught eight games in five different Major League Cities, and two Minor League ones.



Boston's Green Monster

Two friends and I started off by watching a packed Lugnuts game in Lansing Michigan (Travis Snider went 3/4 for the home town team), then we moved onto to Chicago to the New York Mets beat the Chicago Cubs, and see Tom Glavine earn his 300th career victory. We followed this up by heading to Minnesota, where the home team was blanked by Cleveland.

We stopped in at the (now closed) Johnny Rosenblatt Stadium in Omaha, to watch the (then) Royals. After a late night continuing down the road following the Omaha game, we had an early morning to get to Denver in time for 1:00 Rockies game (where we did learn that beer will hit you harder, 5280 feet above sea level).

Kauffman's Fountains

After a morning tour of the Coors brewery, we drove 500 miles down I-70 and rolled into Kansas City. We got to watch Shaun Marcum pitch one of the best games I've ever seen, as the Blue Jays defeated the Royals. Went back for a second game the next day, only to watch the Royals even up the series (which they would eventually win). The next morning it was time to drive home, but not without



Kauffman's Fountains



making a pit stop in St. Louis, for a Cardinals game.

In a few days I'll be heading out and beating that trip, like Jose Baustisa would to curve ball left hanging over the plate; in terms of total days (16), number of miles (give or take 3,000) and likely number of games (figure I'll be seeing at least 12, maybe more).

I'll be starting this trip off with my third trip to Cooperstown. I'm going to be on hand to watch my favourite player, Robbie Alomar, take his place with the game's all-time greats. Next I'm planning to catch a few games from the historic Cape Cod league. I'll be following that up with a couple of nights in Myrtle Beach, and then nearly a week in Florida. I'm pumped to see the Jays take on their division rival Rays (twice!) while finishing off the AL East teams on my list of places to go. Before starting the long drive home, a Marlin's game is a must, finishing off the NL East for me too. Not exactly sure how many MiLB games I'll hit up along the way, but I'd imagine it will end up being close to a "one game per day" pace.

The only sad part of this is that I've pretty much run out of MLB teams I can (reasonably) drive to. All that will remain are the two in Texas, Arizona, and everyone along the West Coast.

I'd encourage baseball fans everywhere to do it. Go see the fountains in the outfield of Kauffman Stadium. Be there in person to watch balls smacked off the Green Monster at Fenway. Marvel at the confluence of three rivers just past the outfield, when you're watching a fly ball at PNC Park. See the retro look at Comerica Park or Camden Yards.





Everybody in the Pool!

By Stephen Duell aka spuds1961



I know weird title for a sports card article, but read on and you'll see why.

I was going through some of my older cards, not really old just circa 2001 thru 2007. As I was doing this it made me realize how much I miss some of the cool cards Donruss had put out before their contract for baseball was revoked. I was looking at my fabric of the game Tom Seaver GU autograph numbered 3/5 with him in his Mets uniform with a nice blue pinstripe on the jersey piece. This one card made me realize how much I wish they had their major league license back.

I don't like the fact that as consumers we had a lot of awesome products taken away from us due to the MLBPA and the card companies not being able to come to an agreement. For me the more product and the more choices the better. I don't like the fact that as consumers we are put in a position to rely on only one company that puts out cards that have major league logos, now don't get me wrong I think Topps is doing a fine job but with the lack of competition complacency is sure to set in.

I also do not like the fact that Panini was basically shoved down our throats as the new kid on the block for basketball products, they are doing an okay job but not spectacular. Without a contract for 2 of the bigger names in basketball, being Michael Jordan and LeBron James they were already starting off on a bad note. I think a lot of their products look too similar in design and with Kobe Bryant as their leading spokesperson we are seeing a lot of his stuff saturating their products and thus leading to a downgrade in value. I sure miss opening Topps chrome and the basic Upper Deck product as the photography in both of those sets was always well done, plus the rookie autographs and various refractor parallels were always nice to look at.

Okay let's move on to football shall we? This is a sport I used to collect heavily, notice I said used to. The whole landscape changed when Upper Deck could no longer produce cards with the NFL logos and uniforms. This in turn made Press Pass lose its college license which makes for a very drab product when all you have is mug shots. Once again Panini is getting more of the slice of the pie than they deserve, I mean they have the exclusive rights to basketball and now you let them and Topps be the only companies that can use the NFL logos. I understand Panini had the money and with Donruss products they had a good foundation to start off. With that being said I really do miss Upper Deck NFL sanctioned products, they were always more innovative and their big hits were big hits.



Okay onto Hockey we go,I'm glad Upper Deck still is the major player in this sport,I don't collect much hockey but when I do buy it it is most likely to be Upper Deck.Once again that darn name Panini,why so much was handed to them I don't know...they are a good company yes,but I would much rather see another company that puts out great cards get the NHL contract. You guys and gals know who I'm talking about,yes the company owned by Dr. Price IN THE GAME PRODUCTS.I would love to see what this company could do with an NHL license as their unsanctioned products are awesome. I mean if you want something really cool just look at some of their game used items they are some of the best produced in any sport in any product.



Here is my idea,in the year 2013 when all the current contracts run out let all the companies produce cards for all the major sports,thus the everybody in the pool title. I am putting my trust in us as the consumers that we will be able to weed out the bad sets and bad products. I would think with competition being very heavy for our money we would see some innovation for a change,no longer resting on your laurels and putting out the standard product us consumers are getting tired of. With having to

outdo each other card collecting might get very interesting again,but for the next couple of years we will just have to settle for the bones these companies are throwing us. Remember if you don't like a product try not to settle and just buy it because as consumers our wallets speak louder than our words. I hope you guys and gals found this article a little entertaining and remember collect what you want not what is thrown at you!

