

December 2011

Collector's



*feature: the best there is...
the best there was...
the best there ever will be?*

SCF

FROM THE SCF STAFF AND WRITERS WE WISH YOU ALL
A MERRY CHRISTMAS, A HAPPY NEW YEAR AND A
BRILLIANT HOLIDAY
SEASON!



Collector's Corner will be taking a well deserved break next month so that our writers can also make the most of the holiday season and get some well deserved rest. We will be back with a new issue on February 6th. Until then, enjoy the festive season, the new year and be safe!

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A Busy Month

By Karine Hains aka Pheeb888

Wow, I'm not even sure where to start...It has been a busy month both on the boards and off the boards. November saw the seemingly never-ending deadlock in the NBA come to an end and gave basketball fans an early Christmas present: the promise of a (shorten but still) NBA season. Basketball fans weren't the only ones to get an early present though, puck heads were also in for a treat when Sid the Kid returned to the ice to grace us all with his incredible talent and I'm happy to say that Crosby has not missed a beat. He is as good as ever and anyone who feared that he might not be able to play the game in the same way can be reassured, he is back and he is his former self! While those were great news/events, I saw something on the SCF boards which was even better...

As collectors, we all spend a lot of time interacting with one another and eventually we start feeling like we know each other to an extent. For instance, if I say "AOA" the hockey forum regulars will know that this stands for: "The Adventures of Austin". In other words, very popular threads in the Show and Tell forum featuring Barrie Grice (Prime B) and his son Austin, everyone's favourite in-person autograph chasers. We've seen plenty of pictures of Austin and have all grown fond of the boy but this month, we learnt that there has been a new addition to the Grice family.



Yes, Barrie's wife gave birth to their second son: Blake Charles Grice. The little man came a little bit too early however which means that he has been closely followed in hospital. At times like these, any family needs the support of their friends and loved ones. I'm happy to report that the Grice family also got support from an unexpected source though, while they live in Colorado, they are big Kings

fans and have taken every chance in the past to go see the Kings and cheer them on. Seems like the Kings took notice because when they visited the Avs, they sent their mascot Bailey to the hospital to show Blake their support and they took Austin to the game with them, making him feel like one of the boys!

This is an amazing story and I do not think I can tell it well enough to make it justice, so please, check out Barrie's thread for the full story and I'm sure you will be moved too...I will admit that I did shed a tear. Thumbs up to both the Kings and the Avalanche's organisations for making this happen and what a wonderful story just in time for Christmas. Check it out here: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=1515271>



December 2011

Here are this month's releases. At the time of publishing, the dates were accurate but as you know, release dates tend to be pushed back from time to time. I hope you'll find some of these under your Christmas tree!

Hockey	Football
2011/12 Panini Pinnacle 12/21/11	2011 Panini Gridiron Gear Football 12/09/11
2011/12 Upper Deck SP Game Used 12/27/11	2011 Bowman Sterling Football 12/14/11
2011/12 Panini Limited 12/28/11	2011 Panini Gold Standard Football 12/14/11
	2011 Upper Deck College Football Legends 12/20/11
	2011 Panini Limited Football 12/21/11
	2011 Panini Plates and Patches Football 12/28/11
Basketball	Baseball
NO RELEASE	2011 Bowman Sterling Baseball 12/21/11
	2011 Panini Limited Cuts 12/28/11
Racing	
NO RELEASE	





2011 Bowman Chrome Baseball

By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

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

Product Details

18 packs per box

4 cards per pack

Current Retail Price (online): \$54.99 - \$69.99

Product Highlights

Bryce Harper ON-CARD Autograph Cards!

1 Bowman Chrome Prospect ON-CARD Autograph Card per Box!

USA Baseball 18U National Team Autograph Cards!

110 Never-Before-Seen Bowman Chrome Prospect Cards - 2 Per Pack!

New & Hobby Exclusive USA Baseball 18U National Team Set Redemption Cards!

Hobby Exclusive 1/1 Printing Plates!

Hobby Exclusive Super-Fractor Parallels!

All new Inserts with select Hobby Exclusive Parallels!

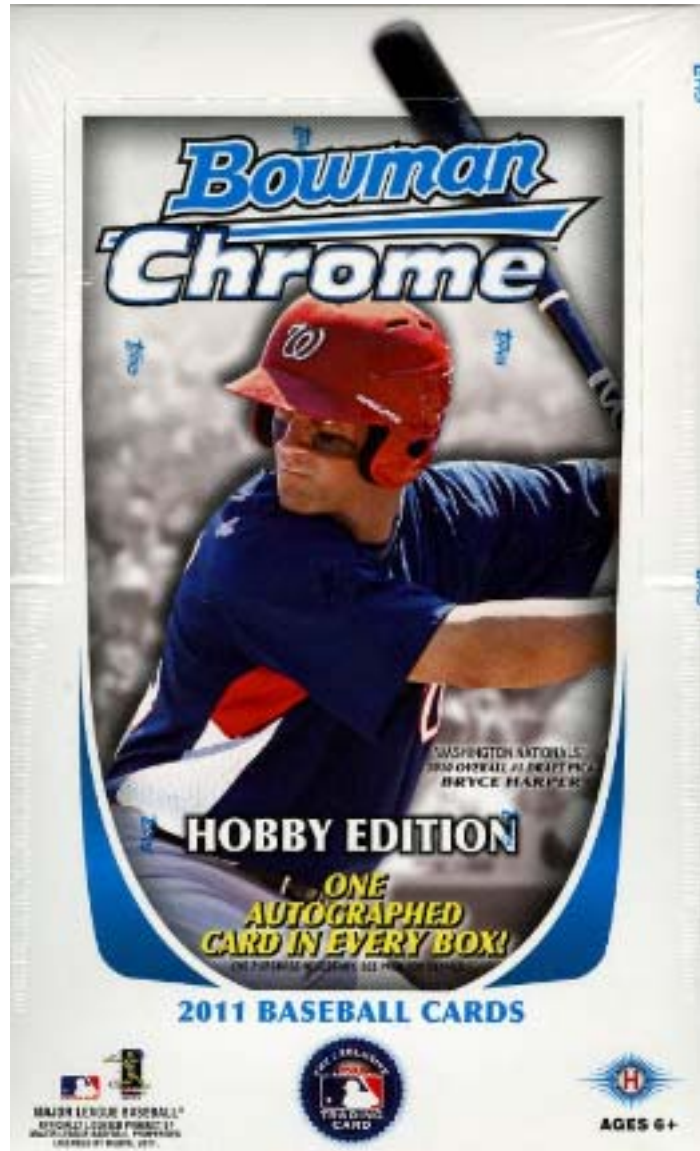
Product Description

BOWMAN CHROME PROSPECT ON-CARD AUTOGRAPHED CARDS - 1 PER BOX!

37 Non-Major League Prospects show off their MLB uniforms and personally sign each of their cards!

Available in the following numbered Refractor parallels:

- Super-Fractor: HOBBY EXCLUSIVE! ONE OF ONE!
- Red: Numbered to 5.
- Orange: Numbered to 25.





- Gold: Numbered to 50.
- Blue: Numbered to 150.
- Refractor: Numbered

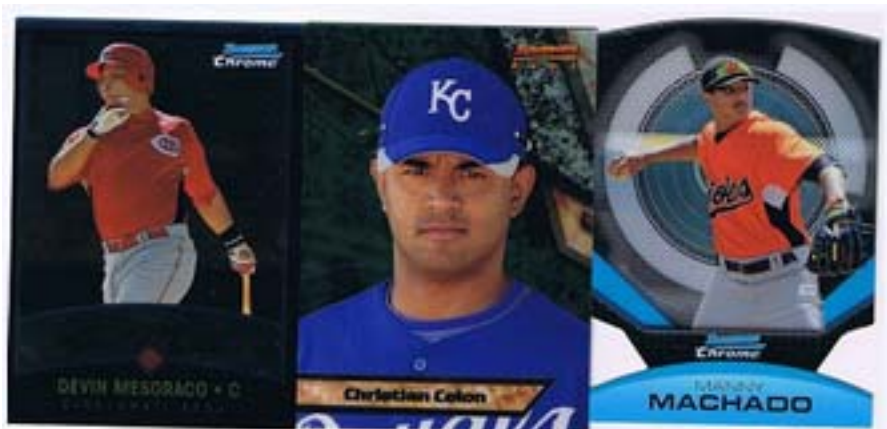
What we pulled

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0Tq62Q8YWI>

Base: 23/200 (11.5%)
 Prospects: 34/110 (30.1%)
 Refractors (4)
 Blue Refractor /150 (1): Brandon Belt
 Prospects Refractor /500 (1): Zack Dodson



- Bowman Chrome Throwbacks (3)
- Bowman's Best (2)
- Bowman Chrome Futures Die-Cuts (3)





Matt Lollis Prospects Autograph



Final Ratings

Base - 3/5
Design - 4/5
Fun - 3.5/5
Value - 4/5
Rebuy - 4/5
Total - 18.5/25 (74%)

Positive points

On-Card Autographs
Prospect Focused

Negative Points

Low yield of base, less base than prospects
Not designed for average collector, more for prospectors
No indicator to denote base refractors
Card warping due to chrome and foil

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.



2011 Panini Absolute Memorabilia
By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

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

Product Details

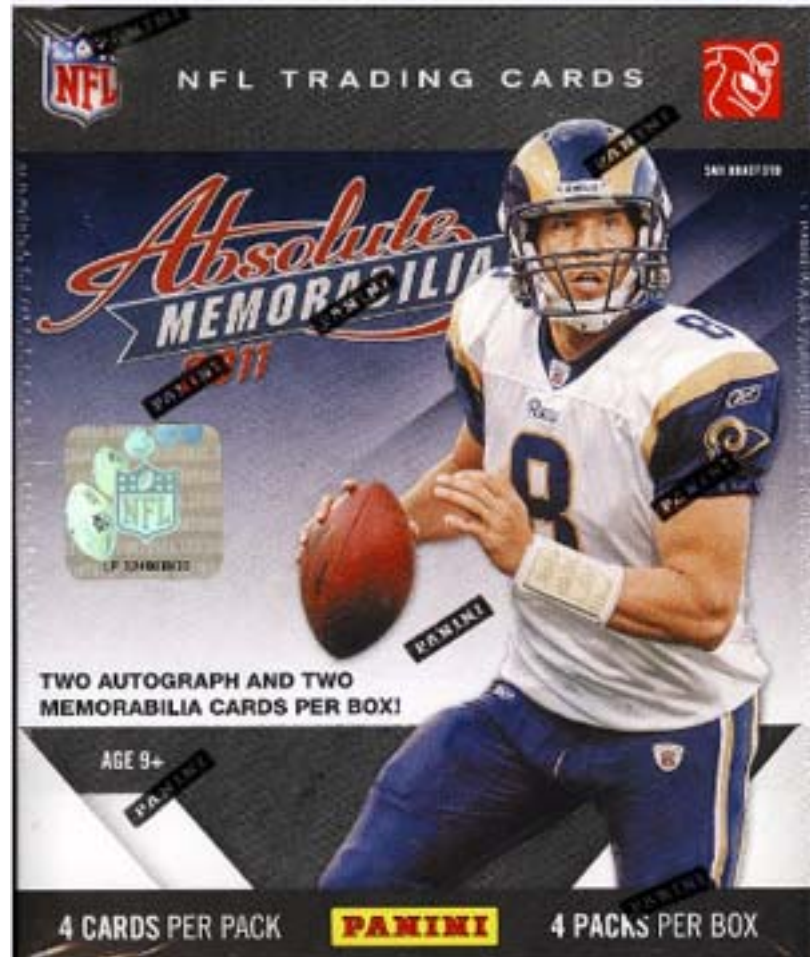
4 packs per box
 4 cards per pack
 Current Retail Price (online): \$154.99 - \$169.99

Product Highlights

- NFL Shield & NFL Shield Signatures featuring: Cam Newton, Tony Romo, A.J. Green, Peyton Manning, Julio Jones, Blaine Gabbert, Jake Locker, Christian Ponder and Mark Ingram
- Jumbo Prime Swatch and Jumbo Prime Swatch Signature Cards featuring: Adrian Peterson, Cam Newton, Aaron Rodgers, A.J. Green, Julio Jones, Dan Marino, Jake Locker, Peyton Manning, Blaine Gabbert, Brett Favre, Christian Ponder, Troy Aikman, Mark Ingram, Emmitt Smith, John Elway, Bart Starr and Jerry Rice
- Rookie Premiere Materials NFL Signature Rookie Cards sequentially numbered 299 or less featuring 2011 Rookies: Cam Newton, A.J. Green, Julio Jones, Jake Locker, Blaine Gabbert, Christian Ponder and Mark Ingram
- 100 Commons
- 100 Rookies, Seq #'d to 499 or less
- 36 On-Card Autographed RPS Rookies, Seq #'d to 299 or less

Box Break

- 2 Autographs cards Seq. #ed to 299 or less
- 2 Memorabilia cards Seq. #ed to 100 or less
- 2 Insert / Parallels
- 2 Rookies





What we pulled

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJrx2mCMeLI>

Base: 8/100 (8%)

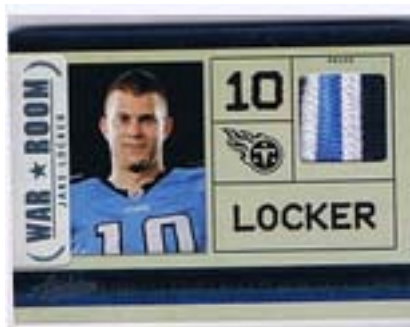
Rookies /399 (2): Scotty McKnight, Muhammad Wilkerson

Silver Spectrum /50 (1): Ras-I Dowling



Canton Absolutes /100 (1): Adam Vinatieri

War Room Prime Jake Locker 3-color Patch /50



Shane Vereen RPM Jersey/Ball/Jersey /99

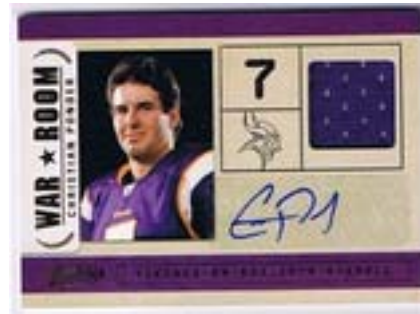




Ryan Whalen Spectrum Autograph /299



War Room Christian Ponder Jersey/Autograph /49



Final Ratings

- Base - 4.5/5
- Design - 4.5/5
- Fun - 4.5/5
- Value - 3.5/5
- Rebuy - 3/5
- Total - 20/25 (80%)

Positive points

- Nice sleek design, not too busy
- Rookie Oriented
- 1 "hit" per pack
- 1 numbered rookie, parallel or insert per pack

Negative points

- Steep price for return on investment
- Not for the average collector
- Dreaded sticker autographs for rookies

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.



2011 Press Pass Wheels Main Event

By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

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

Product Details

20 packs per box

5 cards per pack

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

Product Highlights

- One autograph and two memorabilia cards per hobby box

- All new Race-used Memorabilia Cards including:

*Lead Foot - HOBBY ONLY authentic race-used shoe cards!

*Gloves Off - HOBBY ONLY authentic race-used glove cards!

*Headliners - Driver-worn hat cards!

*Main Event Materials - Race-used memorabilia cards featuring a variety of items from top NASCAR drivers!

- Autographs featuring Main Event Marks with three levels to collect and Main Event Matchups with dual autographs highlighting 1-2 finishes from 2011 races!

- Box Topper Packs - one per hobby box featuring exclusive parallel cards, Miss Sprint Cup autograph cards, or an archive autograph or memorabilia card.

- 90-card base set!

What we pulled

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

Box Topper - Joey Logano Red Parallel /20





Base - 90/90 (100%)

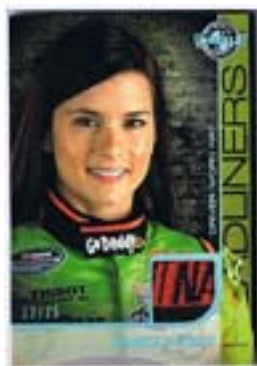


Black & White (1)
 All Stars (5)
 Joe Gibbs (1)
 Rear View Mirror (2)





Headliners Danica Patrick 2-color Patch Hat ("NA" from NASCAR) /25



Main Event Marks Greg Biffle Autograph /50



Main Event Materials Dale Earnhardt Jr. Firesuit /99



Final Ratings

Base - 5/5
 Design - 4/5
 Fun - 4.255/5
 Value - 4.25/5
 Rebuy - 4/5
 Total - 21.25/25 (86%)

Positive points

Complete Base Set
 Features stars from all three main circuits
 Moved away from a new theme (Poker and Boxing last two years)
 Excitement with Box Topper
 On-Card Autographs (which is normal for Press Pass outside of Premium)

Negative points

Lack of numbered cards (added value to box)
 No SPs added to end of the base set (added value and chase)

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



Welcome Back Mr. Crosby!
By Richard McAdam aka RGM81

Heeeee's baaaaack!

In his first NHL game in nearly 11 months Sidney Crosby showed that he hasn't missed a beat. Two goals, two assists in a dominating performance against the hapless Islanders. He had a quiet night in game #2, and then had three assists in the first period of a Penguins victory against Ottawa. He was named the NHL's First Star of the Week to cap off a glorious seven days. The best player in the world is back!



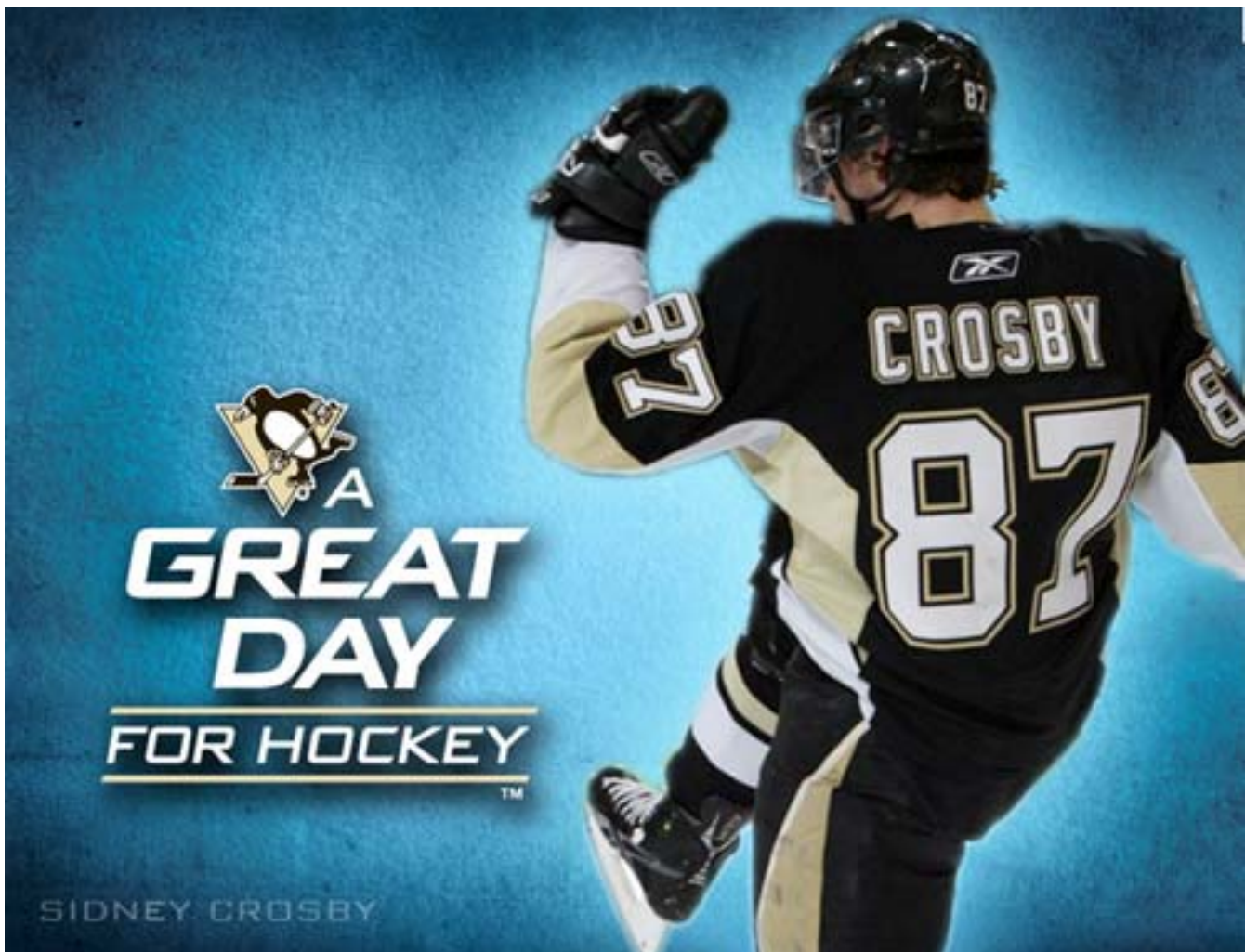
Beyond Crosby, there's certainly plenty to talk about in the game these days. Coaches have been axed in Washington and Carolina, allowing two fresh faces to enter the coaching community. Dale Hunter takes over for Bruce Boudreau in Washington, leaving behind a strong legacy with the OHL's London Knights program, an organization that has churned out some of the NHL's top players. Meanwhile, Kirk Muller succeeds Paul Maurice with the Hurricanes, leaving the AHL Milwaukee Admirals after just half a season. Speaking as a Canadiens fan, this one hurts a bit. Muller was a fantastic assistant coach with Montreal, keying the power play and being a real inspirational voice behind the bench. Seeing him leave the Habs was hard enough, but now he's direct competition. Good luck to both Hunter and Muller in their first NHL gigs!

Off the ice and into the hobby, we are well underway in the 2011-12 campaign. November was a very busy month, as it saw the release of ITG Ultimate Memorabilia 11, Upper Deck Series 1, and Certified. Ryan Nugent-Hopkins rookie cards easily lead the pack for this year's freshmen class, and his Young Guns cards were the hot items at this year's Fall Expo in Toronto. As long as the fresh-faced Oilers rookie continues to produce on the ice, look for sales of his cards to remain strong. Many SCF members were able to attend the big event and by all accounts it looks as though everybody had a fantastic time. Couldn't make it? Don't worry, we'll have some contests coming your way very soon to score some Expo wrapper redemption exclusives!



Christmas is fast approaching, and there's no shortage of fantastic options for collectors to unwrap under the tree on December 25th. In addition to the great products already out on the market, Upper Deck will be releasing Black Diamond in December, while Panini steps forward with Pinnacle and Limited. In addition to the cards, there are certainly a good number of sources to check out sports memorabilia for signed photos, jerseys, and so forth. Many of SCF's Affiliates can provide you with authentic memorabilia, and our frequent contest sponsor Legends Depot can certainly cater to your needs. Be sure to check them out and look around for the best options available, either for yourself or that family member that deserves something awesome!

That's all that's happening right now. Enjoy the games, have a safe and happy holiday season, may Santa bring you all the hits, and we will see you again in 2012!





The Best There Is, the Best There Was, the Best There Ever Will Be

By Karine Hains aka Pheeb888

As I challenged all the team contacts to write about the best there is, the best there was and the best there ever will be in their respective sport, it's only fair that I do the same in hockey. I will admit that this is far from an easy task...With so many great players to chose from at all position it is rather tricky to settle on just one, so as this is my game and I make the rules, I'll write about what would be my 2 best line-ups of all time. You don't have to agree with my choices of course and I'll be happy to discuss them at length should you wish to do so on the boards! Oh, and by the way, we are all human and probably all a little bit biased so...do not criticize me because Patrick Roy is in there!



Goaltenders

1st team: Patrick Roy

Roy finished his career with an astonishing total of 551 wins although this is not what's most impressive about him. To me, what justifies his choice as the best goaltender of all-time is that he really was a clutch player. When it was time to bring his A-game Patrick Roy was always ready to deliver. Mission 16W anyone? Remember when he guaranteed a win against Brodeur's Devils and was true to his word? Or when he backstopped the Canadiens to the Cup in '86 even though he was still a youngster? Who could forget his magical performances in the spring of '93 when the Canadiens had no business at all taking the big prize but still did it after Roy guided them to 10 consecutive overtime wins? So for that and for his contribution to the sport by popularizing the butterfly style, Roy deserves to be the goaltender of my first team.

2nd team: Martin Brodeur

This is not based on his current play as Marty is nearing his retirement and his numbers are no longer what they were but it remains that he is the current leader in career wins, most shutouts, most overtime wins and most 40 wins seasons to name a few. Brodeur has a strong pedigree and no-one can criticize his dedication to his team. He started a Devil and will finish as a Devil. One can also admire not only his on-ice skills but the fact that throughout his career he often accepted to take less money to allow his team to be better. Without an agent for years, Brodeur really isn't all about the money and you can bet that he will hold many of his records for years to come.



Defensemen

1st team: Bobby Orr

He might have only played 657 games in his career due to injury but that was enough to make him the best defenseman of all time in my opinion. Orr was the first d-man to really go out there and score the big goals. From his first strides on the NHL rinks, everyone knew he was something special. He won the Calder trophy in 1967 and the Art Ross Trophy as the NHL top point getter twice in 12 NHL seasons (even though only 9 of these were complete seasons considering the amount of games missed). In 1970-1971 he set the points record for a defenseman with 139! Today, even the forwards struggle to reach that mark. Finally, who could forget that he was the one who scored: THE GOAL. As a hockey fan, I still get goose bumps when I see that picture and I am far from a Bruins fan believe me.

1st team: Nicklas Lidstrom

If there ever was a building block for the Detroit Red Wings, it's Lidstrom. Sure Yzerman was important but the Swede has to be the best silent leader the Wings ever had. First European captain to lead his team to the Cup, he will go down in history as the inspiration for entire generations of defenseman. So far, he's won 7 Norris trophies, 4 Stanley Cups and 1 Conn Smythe Trophy. His career numbers are also shockingly good with 1108 points in 1494 games (at the end of last season) and a +429 across 16 NHL seasons. Wings fans rejoiced during the off-season when it was confirmed that the smooth Swede would be back for another year. It's a pleasure to see him play and I hope we can carry on watching him for another couple of years but as they say, all good things must come to an end.

2nd team: Raymond Bourque

It took him time, but he did get his Cup. In Colorado mind you and not in Boston where he bled Black and Gold. He is the all-time leader in points and goals for a defenseman (1,579 and 410), grabbed the Norris trophy 5 times and was an inspirational player if there ever was one. His trade to the Avalanche made the headlines and when he fell short of his goal in his first playoff campaign with the Avs, the whole world was heartbroken. He would only have to wait one more year though and he finally got to raise Stanley above his head. His number is now hanging from the rafters in both Boston and Colorado and he is a deserving member of the Hall of Fame.



2nd team: Doug Harvey

He might very well have been Bobby Orr's predecessor as the first offensive defenseman and tallied up



7 Norris trophies in 8 seasons which is no small feat. He also wore the “C” in Montreal in his last season with the team which is a big honor for any player. His incredible puck-control skills allowed him to pace the Habs offense and he will always be remembered as arguably the best D-man ever to wear the Bleu, Blanc, Rouge.

Right Wingers

1st team: Maurice Richard

It’s hard not to pick the Rocket for this one. First player to reach the 50 goals mark and in 50 games as well, his on-ice displays were the main attraction of the Montreal Canadiens for years. A dedicated and proud player, Maurice Richard was a model for generations of French-Canadian players. When he hung them up, he was the NHL all time points leader with 965 points in 978 games. Of course, this number was crushed by the Great One but back then, it was a very impressive milestone. Richard is also remembered for the suspension he got after hitting a ref which resulted in a riot in Montreal, the Habs fans were not impressed with losing their best player.



2nd team: Mike Bossy

To me, he is one of the most underrated players of all time. His name rarely comes up in the best players discussions and yet he sure was a force to be reckoned with. A player who manages to score at least 50 goals for nine seasons in a row certainly has impressive skills. At the end of his career, Bossy had 1,126 points in 752 games for an incredible point per game average of 1.49. It’s impossible to know what level he would have reached had his career not been cut short by injuries. One thing is for sure, the Islanders dearly missed him once he retired and he is still remembered by many as their best player.

Left Wingers

1st team: Bobby Hull

Hull concluded his NHL career with 1,170 points in 1,063 games, averaging 1.1 point per game and capturing the Art Ross trophy 3 times. He was the first NHLer to score over 50 goals in a season in 1966. He formed a dynamic duo with Stan Mikita and had one of the most feared shots in the NHL. The “Golden Jet” contributed to the game of hockey by also giving it one of its best right wingers in his son Brett who soon received the “Golden Brett” moniker.



2nd team: Alexander Ovechkin

Yes, Ovy is currently having trouble but one cannot deny that he is a skilled and exciting player and that he would be welcome on any NHL team. His offensive skills are scary for any opponent and his high-light reel plays drive fans crazy. At the end of the 2010-2011 season, Ovy had tallied 614 points in 475 games. I am confident that he will find his touch again and rack up big numbers shortly. Having a new coach might help as well; Ovechkin is a fan of physical play and who better than Dale Hunter to encourage him to play in this way?

Centres

1st team: Wayne Gretzky

For me, this one goes without saying the Great One was, is and will remain the best. His career was amazing from his early days with the Oilers to his stay in California where he helped put hockey on the map and the buzz he created when he landed (shortly but still) in St.-Louis and joined his old friend Mark “the Moose” Messier in the Big Apple, the media, the fans, the game, everyone and everything loves Gretzky. The NHL record book could actually be renamed the Gretzky book as he holds so many records many of which may never be broken. Think about it; is it possible for a player to rack-up 215 points nowadays? How about 92 goals? 163 assists in a season? Seems to me those records will stand the test of time if not eternity...The fact that his number 99 is retired league wide speaks for itself. Never again will we see a Wayne Gretzky.

2nd team: Sidney Crosby

It is still early in his career but to me, Crosby fully deserves to be on my 2nd team already. In fact, had he been playing at another forward position he might well have made the 1st team. Crosby’s talent is amazing but what’s even more amazing is the fact that he has the ability to make everyone around him much better...just like Gretzky did in his glory days. It’s impossible to know the heights Crosby’s career will reach but one thing is for sure, the NHL has missed him dearly during his battle with post concussion syndrome and he has taken it by storm upon his return. His first game back was long-awaited and it was even televised nationwide in Canada. All normal programming was cancelled for the country to once again be able to marvel at Sid the Kid, the man who gave it its latest Olympic gold.



Well there you have it, those are my choices...if you feel like it, feel free to write about yours and submit them as an article!



The Best There Is, the Best There Was, the Best There Ever Will Be

By Brad Wingate aka Bbonds25

The 2011 season is in the books, and what a season it was! Pitchers dominated (again), several rookies stepped up, and the Dodgers were a mess, both on and off the diamond. But my assignment for this issue is not to discuss this past season, but to discuss the best players in the game. But instead of making one all encompassing team, I decided to break it down a little. First, I will not be selecting players whose careers were played prominently before 1950. Next, I made 2 separate teams; the first made of players from 1950-1979, and the second from 1980-2011. This may seem like a cop-out, but I think it is a little more accurate, as it helps reflect the changes made in the game over the past 60+ years. So, without further delay, I present my best teams.

1950-1979

Catcher – Yogi Berra (1946-1965) – 3 time MVP, 10 Time World Champion, 15 Time All-Star. Even though his debut was in 1946, his first full season was 1948, and the majority of his games were played in the 1950's. Berra was selected into the Hall of Fame in 1972 by the Baseball Writers Association (BBWA).

First Base – Ted Kluszewski (1947-1961) – From 1953-1956, Big Klu averaged 43 HR and 116 RBI for the Cincinnati Reds. Unfortunately, his career took a downward turn after the 1956 season due to lingering injuries. Kluszewski finished in the top 10 of MVP voting 3 times in his career (53, 54, 55).

Second Base – Joe Morgan (1963-1984) – Made his debut in 1963 with the Houston Colt .45's, and was traded to the Reds after the 1971 season. Morgan went on to win 2 MVP awards, and 2 World Championships with Cincinnati. Morgan would play in 10 All-Star Games, and was a first ballot inductee to the Hall of Fame in 1990.

Third Base – Brooks Robinson (1955-1977) - Perhaps the best defensive 3rd baseman in the history of the game, Robinson was the 1965 AL MVP, a 15 time all-star and 12 time Gold Glove recipient. Brooks helped lead the Orioles to 4 World Series, winning 2. Unfortunately, his 1969 team was on the losing end of the Series against the Miracle Mets.

Shortstop – Ernie Banks (1953-1971) – Even though Mr. Cub only played 9 seasons at Shortstop, it was enough for him to make this team. He was the most dominant while playing the position winning both of his MVP awards (1958 and 1959), and his only Gold Glove there in 1960 (though the award was not created until 1957). Banks was an 11 time All-Star, a member of the 500 homerun club, and was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1977.



Hank Aaron (1954-1976) – Any team that does not contain the former Home Run King is not worth reading. He was an All-Star in 21 of his 23 seasons, and though he led the league in homeruns and RBI 4 different times, he was voted MVP only once (1957). Hammerin’ Hank finished his career with 744 HR, 2297 RBI, and a lifetime .305 batting average. The Hank Aaron award is given each year to the leagues’ top offensive player.

Mickey Mantle (1951-1968) – During the 1950’s and 60’s, The Mick was the hero to so many baseball fans, not just Yankee backers. Mantle won the Triple Crown in 1956 (52, 130, .353), was a 16 time All-Star, and a 7 time World Champion. Mantle may have been the greatest player to ever step onto the diamond had he not been plagued with knee injuries. After his death in 1995, The Topps Company issued a commemorative card in its 1996 flagship set, card #7. After that, the company retired the card number until 2006, when it issued a new Mantle card. Every year, Topps reserves card # 7 for the Mick.

Willie Mays (1951-1973) – The Say Hey Kid was the New York Giants answer to the Yankees Mickey Mantle. Mays was a great multi tool player, hitting for power and average, showing speed on the base paths, and flashing serious leather in the field. His catch in game 1 of the 1954 World Series is still regarded as arguably the best play in baseball history. Mays was the 1951 Rookie of the Year, as 2 time MVP, 20 time all-star, and 11 time Gold Glover. Mays and the Giants moved to San Francisco in 1958, but he returned to New York to finish his career after a trade to the Mets in 1972. He was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1979.

RHP – Bob Gibson (1959-75) – Potentially the most feared pitcher in the history of the game, Gibson absolutely dominated the National League during the 1960’s. His 1968 MVP season is perhaps the best ever by a pitcher (22 wins, 268 K, 1,12 ERA). A 2 time Cy young Award winner, Gibson led the Cardinals to 3 World Series appearances, winning 2. He was elected to the Baseball HOF in 1981.

LHP – Sandy Koufax (1955-66) – His career was cut short after only 12 seasons, but he made the best of those 12 seasons. A 3 time Cy Young Award winner, Koufax took home League MVP honors after the 1963 season, and finished second in both 1965 and ’66. Koufax led the Dodgers to 3 World Championships, led the league in K’s 4 times, and ERA 5 times.

The Line-Up:

Joe Morgan
Ernie Banks
Willie Mays
Hank Aaron
Mickey Mantle
Ernie Banks
Brooks Robinson



Ted Kuszewski
Yogi Berra

1980-2011

Catcher – Ivan Rodriguez (1991-2011) – Arguably the greatest defensive catcher of all time, Pudge threw out 46% of would be base stealers over his career. A 7 time Silver Slugger, he also won 13 Gold Gloves, appeared in 14 All-Star Games, and was voted AL MVP in 1999. Rodriguez helped the Florida Marlins win their second World Championship in 2003.

First Base – Albert Pujols (2001-2011) – A once in a lifetime player, Pujols is the best player in the game today, and has been for 11 seasons. The 9 time All-Star has never finished outside of the top 10 in MVP voting, winning the award 3 times. His Ruthian averages have helped lead the Cardinals back to prominence, with 3 World Series appearances, and 2 championships.

Second Base – Ryne Sandberg (1981-1997) – Ryne displayed unheard of power from the second place position, even leading the league in homeruns in 1990 (40). The 10 time All-Star and 1984 League MVP never made it past the NLCS in his 16 year career.

Third Base – Mike Schmidt (1972-1989) – There may not be a better all around 3rd baseman than Schmidt. The twelve time All-Star won 3 MVP awards in the 1980's (1980, '81, and '86), and during that decade, Schmidt led the league in homeruns 5 times, RBI 4 times, walks 4 times, and OPS 5 times.

Shortstop – Cal Ripken (1981-2001) – A true game changer, Ripken showed the league that a short-stop could be big (6'4) and powerful. Everyone knows about his consecutive games streak (2,632), but Ripken was also a 2 time MVP, a 19 time All-Star, and 8 time Silver Slugger.

Outfield

Ken Griffey Jr. (1989-2010) – The Kid took the league by storm in the early 90s, with his excellent fielding ability, infectious smile, and fun loving way of playing the game. Griffey was a 13 time All-star, and 1997 AL MVP. His career was cut short by several injuries, and despite missing enough games to cover 2+ seasons, Griffey still currently ranks 5th in all-time home runs (630).

Rickey Henderson (1973-2003) – No one could run like Rickey, or talk like him either. The all time stolen base leader (1406), Henderson holds the record for stolen bases in a season (130), career runs (2,295), and also times caught stealing (335).

Barry Bonds (1986-2007) – The all-time homerun king, as well as the single season record holder, Bonds showed a sense of flash and style not readily seen in the major leagues. The 7 time MVP is not



without his controversies, and he has all but been found guilty of using illegal steroids and human growth hormones. Despite this, Bonds was still the most dominating player of the 1990s, and is arguably the best player of all-time.

RHP – Nolan Ryan (1966-1993) – The all time leader in strikeouts was the most dominating pitcher the majors had seen since Bob Gibson’s heyday. Ryan holds the record for strike outs (5714), walks (2795), hits per 9 innings (6.6), and career no hitters (7). The tough Texan never won a Cy Young award, and helped lead the Miracle Mets to a World Series title over the heavily favored Baltimore Orioles in 1969.

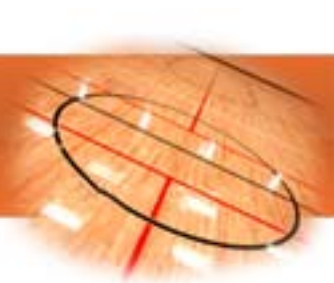
LHP – Randy Johnson (1988-2009) – The Big Unit was an intimidating presence on the mound, standing 6’10”, and starring down hitters with an angry scowl. The 300 game winner (303), Johnson is second all-time in strike outs (4,875). He took home 5 Cy Young Awards during his career, including 4 in a row from 1999-2002.

The Line-Up:

- Rickey Henderson
- Ryne Sandberg
- Mike Schmidt
- Albert Pujols
- Barry Bonds
- Cal Ripken Jr.
- Ken Griffey Jr.
- Ivan Rodriguez



So those are my teams. Agree or disagree, these are the players I would select for my all-time teams. Thanks for the read.



Basketball Happenings **By Jay Weger aka Jay520**

Contests & Winners

For the month of November the NCAA GUESS the Score Contest finally got underway. The early standings look like this: pwaldo with 2 wins and tied with 1 win each are fitchjr1, gladdyontherise and Justinhixson.

Now onto the 2011 NBA Lockout Guess the Serial # contest that is almost as the same as last months with fitchjr1 with 3, gwo311 with 2, and tied with 1 each is lastlastlast and KD35Russ0. Not sure if I will keep the contest going or not maybe start doing regular GUESS the serial # contests just to do them. With the NBA Lockout done I can announce that JesRey is the winner and will be receiving a 09-10 Absolute memorabilia Chris Paul Star Gazing GU/100 with his prediction of 11/28 @ 3 pm ET. SingleDaddyof2 came in 2nd and will get 500 cc and 3rd was BostonFan46 who will receive 250 cc. Thank you for all the predictions posted in the contest.

3 major NBA contests will be returning for the start of the NBA season. First one will be the 11-12 NBA Top Performers Contest in which you choose players and the amount of points, rebounds and assists for each day. Second is the NBA guess the Score contest and third is the Rookie of the Year contest where you predict which rookie will score the most points for the year and his point total. There may be additional contests announced in the basketball forum so be sure to check us out in December.

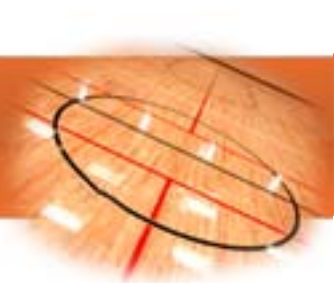
Hobby News

Throughout November collectors were going old school with buying late 90's boxes trying to catch the insert and RC craze. Boxes from 96-97 to 99-00 have seen a dramatic increase in price as of late due to this and the no new releases from Panini for the 11-12 season. Now, with the lockout over future release dates will be announced shortly from Panini. UD has announced a Fleer Retro basketball release in the spring. This product will have Autographics with 97-00 designs as well as Precious Metal Gems red/150, blue/50 and green/10 respectively. With the return of the Autographics and PMG's many of the hard to pull inserts are returning too like Golden Touch, A Cut Above, Noyz Boyz, Big Men on Court and Ultra Court Masters amongst others with odds between 1:90-1:360. 20 Packs per box - 10 Packs Per Inner Box. 5 Cards per pack

3 Autographs per Inner Box - 6 Per Full Box. There will be 12 Boxes per case. Expected Price Point: \$200 Full Box - \$100 Inner Box.

NBA News

The month of November started off bleak as it looked like the NBA Lockout would last through out the season. On November 2 media outlets were starting to question the working relationship between

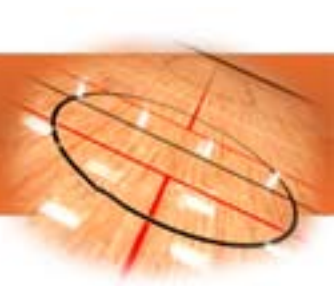


are on the same page. On the 3rd the owners and players began talking again to try to work out a deal while star players eyed decertification of the players union. November 6th the owners put out an offer to the players of a 51/49 BRI split which would be on the table till Wednesday the following week. Stern cautioned that if the offer was refused the next one would be worst. 2 days later the players rejected the offer but continued talks with the owners through the Wednesday deadline into Thursday. No deal brokered but owners put out a new proposal of a December 15 start date with a 72 game season. Dislike of a D-league demotions and luxury tax stipulations the players rejected the offer putting the NBA season in jeopardy. Stern called the players' rejection a tragedy at this stage of the game when so close to a deal. November 14 players decertify their union and file anti-trust suit against the NBA in Minnesota and California. First missed pay checks of the 11-12 season for the players. According to CNBC the average player lost \$220,000 as a result of the stalemate with the owners. Players consolidate the 2 anti-trust suits to 1. November 23 the owners and players re-open negotiations through the Thanksgiving break to attempt to get a deal done by Monday. And finally, at last, the owners and players have come to a deal to end the NBA Lockout in the early morning on Saturday. The NBA will start on December 25 with a 66 game season. As a basketball fan I am thrilled to have the NBA back!

Pack & Box Breaks

November saw many old school breaks to go with 11-12 SP Authentic. Starting with 11-12 SP Authentic Agent 7o2 pulling Jordan Brand Classics GU of Josh Selby, By the Letter autos of Lonnie Shelton/50 and Russell Westbrook/75, Home Court Signatures of Bob McAdoo and a LeBron James auto from only 12 packs. 44 Magnum got a box and got a JBC GU of Tobias Harris, UNC floor card of MJ and nice By the Letter auto of J.R. Reid /15. NyFanCam01 hit a J.R. Reid By the Letter auto /15 from 1 pack bought by a random person at his LCS. kbeast pulled a Kenny Smith UNC floor card, JBC GU of Tristan Thompson, By the Letter auto of Laettner/10 and a sweet LeBron James auto as well. Blake23Griffin got 2 boxes and got JBC GU of Tristan Thompson and Josh Selby, Home Court Signatures of Bob McAdoo, College Pride auto of Tubby Smith/10 and By the Letter auto of Glenn Rice/25. Jprk31 a Sam Perkins UNC floor card, Keith Benson RC auto/25 and a Home Court Signatures auto of Sam Perkins. theu003 hit a Jack Sikma auto /50 and a By the Letter auto of Robert Horry/100.

10-11 Panini Black gave us some nice breaks with Jprk31 getting a Jack Twyman Private Signings auto/99, Gordon Hayward 2clr patch/99, Greivis Vasquez and Darryl Dawkins autos each/149 and Curry/Collison/Griffin triple patch /99. tierra brown got 2 boxes pulling GU's of Blake Griffin, Manute Bol and Olajuwon/99, Michael Cooper auto /99, Greg Monroe/Joe Dumars Passing the ToRCh logoman GU/99, Stephen Curry USA flag patch auto/99, Dave Cowens USA flag patch auto/25, Wade Crusade patch/25 and a Kobe USA flag patch auto/99. spamtyhd broke a box and getting Mullin/Bird/Robinson UAS triple GU/99 and a sweet Griffin/Gordon/Williams Teammates triple auto/25. Blake23Griffin got a box of 09-10 Season Update and hit a LeBron All-Star patch and also opened a box of 10-11 Season Update pulling All-Star GU of Kobe and Rose and a dual RC auto of Ebanks/Stephenson/99. theu003 got 3 boxes taking in RC Challenge GU/799 of Monroe, Harden and Gordon, All-Star GU of KG,



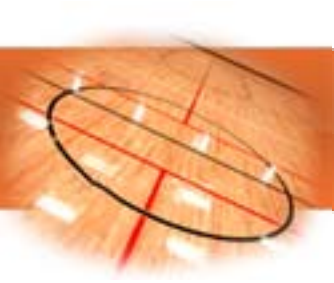
Amare, CP3 and Dwight Howard, Green Week 2 clr patch of Andre Miller/49 and a RC Challenge DeJuan Blair patch auto 4/5. Then Derrick Rose (member name) pulled a real Derrick Rose auto/99 out of 10-11 Ult. Collection. Jprk31 busted 3 boxes of 09-10 Ult. Coll. Pulling autos of Mark Jackson and Rick Fox and a nice Bill Walton auto/75.

Now on to the “Old School” breaks by year starting with FoRCe Majeur who opened 2 jumbo boxes of 95/96 Stadium Club hitting a MJ Spike Says insert, whole set of Reign Men (MJ,Hill&Pippen) and a Beam Team of Olajuwon. Hommiesan killed a box of 96/97 Metal pulling a Kobe and KG Freshly Forged inserts, Shaq Molten Metal insert and a sick Kobe Precious Metal RC parallel (BV=\$80). 96/97 Skybox Premium was a hit with McPug pulling RC’s of Kobe, Nash and Iverson, Intimidators inserts of Shaq and Ewing and Wesley Person Ruby. Blake23Griffin got 2 Kobe RC and Charles Oakley Autographics. jlcamaroz28 pulled RC’s of Kobe and Nash and Autographics of Eric Montross and Sam Mitchell from 2 boxes. basketball fiend pulled a Barkley Intimidators insert from a few packs of Skybox and got a sweet Shawn Kemp Slam Cam insert (1:288 odds) out of 4 packs of 96/97 Z-FoRCe. gbosz got really lucky with these hits: MJ, Hill and Shaq Best Performance inserts and a sick Glenn Robinson Atomic refractor auto (bv=\$125 & odds 1:5,961) from 97/98 Bowman’s Best. basketball fiend pulled a MJ Rock the House insert from 97-98 Hoops. McPUG hit a Dennis Rodman Competitive Advantage (1:96) from 97/98 Skybox and a MJ Planet Metal insert from 97/98 Metal Universe. Then he also got MJ inserts of Seasons Best and Topps 40 to go with a KG Rock Stars refractor and a Mitch Richmond auto from 97/98 Topps. Agent 7o2 did well with 97/98 Topps getting an Alonzo Mourning Rock Stars refractor. triplehatrick21 went big with 4 boxes of 97/98 Ultra hitting RC’s of Duncan and McGrady, 3 McGrady Gold Medallion RC, 2 MJ Gold Medallion, KG Platinum Medallion (bv=\$90) and a sick MJ Ultra Stars insert (1:144 odds & bv=\$100)!!!! McPUG who got Kobe and MJ inserts from 98/99 Hoops and Autographics of Byron Russell, Chris Carr and Clarence Wetherspoon from 98/99 Skybox and Skybox Thunder. Best hit of 98/99 came from jlcamaroz28 who killed a box of Stadium Club pulling a Kobe Royal Court insert, Duncan Triumvirate Luminescent insert 1:96 to go with a Co-Signers dual auto of Vince Carte and Mike Bibby (bv=\$100)!!!

“Best There Is, Best There Was and Best There Ever Will Be”

This is my “best there is, best there was and best there ever will be” in NBA basketball by position. I will tell you who I think are the best stars in the league right now and who were the best in the league and finally the best to ever play at that position to have a best ever starting “5”.

Starting with point guards, right now my top 3 in no order is: Chris Paul (‘06 ROY, 4x All-Star) Deron Williams (2x All-Star) and Derrick Rose (10-11 NBA MVP, ‘09 ROY, 2x All-Star). My next 3 are Steve Nash (2x NBA MVP, 7x All-Star), Jason Kidd (10-11 NBA Champion, ‘95 ROY, 10x All-Star) and John Stockton (10x All-Star, 1st All-Time in Assists & Steals, Dream Team). Finally the best “PG Ever” is Magic Johnson (3x NBA MVP, 3x NBA Finals MVP, 5x NBA Champion, 12x All-Star, Dream



Team) at 6'9" he had the court vision to find open players with dazzling assists, while still being fast enough to get to the hoop to finish with a dunk.

The best shooting guards in the league today are: Kobe Bryant (08 NBA MVP, 2x NBA Finals MVP, 5x NBA Champion, 13x All-Star), Dwyane Wade (06 NBA Champion, NBA Finals MVP, 7x All-Star) and Ray Allen (08 NBA Champion, 10x All-Star, Career 3pt Makes Leader). My next 3 shooting guards who were the best are: Allen Iverson (01 NBA MVP, '97 ROY, 11x All-Star), Clyde Drexler (95 NBA Champion, 10x All-Star, Dream Team) and George Gervin (9x NBA All-Star, '80 All-Star MVP). Finally the best "SG Ever" is Michael Jordan (5x NBA MVP, 6x NBA Finals MVP, 6x NBA Champion, '85 ROY, 14x All-Star, Dream Team) who is in my estimation the best player in NBA History. Enough said!!

The 3 best small forwards in the game today are: Kevin Durant ('08 ROY, 2x All-Star, 2x Scoring Champion), Carmelo Anthony (4x All-Star) and LeBron James (2x NBA MVP, '04 ROY, 7x All-Star). 3 best small forwards were: James Worthy (3x NBA Champion, 88 NBA Finals MVP, 7x All-Star), Scottie Pippen (6x NBA Champion, 7x All-Star, Dream Team) and Julius Erving (81 NBA MVP, 83 NBA Champion, 11x All-Star). Finally the best "SF Ever" is Larry Bird (3x NBA MVP, 2x NBA Finals MVP, 3x NBA Champion, '80 ROY, 12x All-Star, Dream Team) who could do it all score, shoot, pass, rebound and defend and above all do it in the clutch.

My top 3 power forwards in the game today are: Dirk Nowitzki (07 NBA MVP, 10-11 NBA Finals MVP, 10-11 NBA Champion, 10x All-Star), Amare Stoudemire ('03 ROY, 6x All-Star) and Kevin Garnett (04 NBA MVP, 08 NBA Champion, 14x All-Star). The next 3 top power forwards are: Charles Barkley (93 NBA MVP, 11x All-Star, Dream Team), Karl Malone (2x NBA MVP, 14x All-Star, 2nd in Career Points, Dream Team) and Tim Duncan (2x NBA MVP, 3x NBA Finals MVP, 4x NBA Champion, '98 ROY, 13x All-Star). Finally the best "PF Ever" is Bill Russell (5x NBA MVP, 11x NBA Champion, 12x All-Star) who may be the greatest NBA Champion ever!

Now to centers and the 3 best in the league today: Dwight Howard (3x Defensive POY, 5x All-Star) Andrew Bynum (2x NBA Champion) and Tyson Chandler (10-11 NBA Champion). My next 3 centers are: Hakeem Olajuwon (94 NBA MVP, 2x NBA Finals MVP, 2x NBA Champion, 12x All-Star) Wilt Chamberlain (4x NBA MVP, 72 NBA Finals MVP, 2x NBA Champion, '60 ROY, 13x All-Star) and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (6x NBA MVP, 2x NBA Final MVP, 6x NBA Champion, '70 ROY, 19x All-Star, 1st in Career Points). Finally the best "Center Ever" is Shaquille O'Neal ('00 NBA MVP, 3x NBA Finals MVP, 4x NBA Champion, '93 ROY, 15x All-Star) who was one of the most dominant centers of the last 2 decades.

My starting 5 of All-Time: Magic Johnson, Michael Jordan, Larry Bird, Bill Russell and Shaquille O'Neal.



The Best There Is, the Best There Was, the Best There Is Ever Will Be

By Stephen Taylor aka race_crazy

Narrowing it down to a group of the five best drivers of all-time is almost impossible. Racing is different from any other sport in that there are various disciplines that although, they all require some car control and driving talent, are vastly different. One must put into context which drivers were good at only one discipline and if they were indeed able to succeed in others. Every person will have a different five best drivers in their list-but if I were to choose 5 these would be my guys, and indeed some big names (Force, Earnhardt, Petty, Schumacher, Gordon, Pearson) are not on my list. I have chosen to build this list on who I think is the most versatile and well-rounded racing car driver of all-time.



1. Mario Andretti

A lot of people seem to forget about super Mario these days. That is rather unfortunate considering he is the most well-rounded racecar driver in history. The Italian-American has won races in Formula 1, Indycar, World sportscar racing, Nascar, midgets, sprint cars, and in drag racing. He also is the only driver in history to have won the Indianapolis 500, the Daytona 500, and the F1 World Championship. No other driver on this list besides Dan Gurney comes close to Mario's cross-series accomplishments. If anyone wants to argue about Mario being the best driver of all-time look no further than the trophy's name which they give out to the best racing driver every year: The Mario Andretti trophy.



2. Tony Stewart

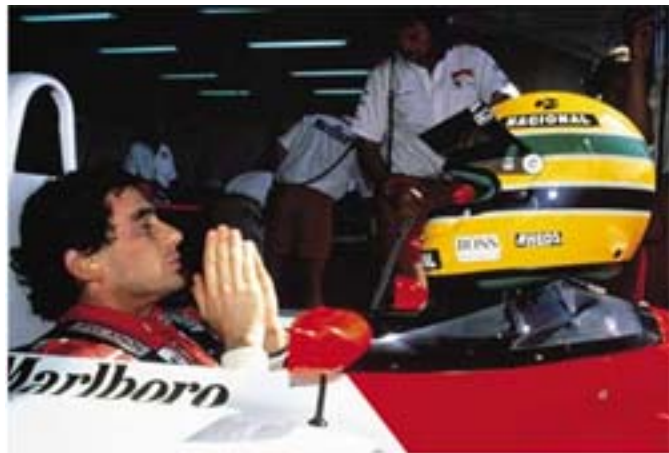
Known by most as a top level Nascar Sprint Cup Series driver today, Stewart's past includes countless wins and championships in midgets and silver crown cars, an Indycar world championship, and lots of success in sportscar racing. Stewart is a throwback driver, a big burly man who could make a grocery cart go fast if it had wheels and an engine. The 40 year-old driver



recently won a World of Outlaws Sprint car race in his off-time and also tested an F1 car recently. Stewart can drive anything.

3. Ayrton Senna

The most one dimensional driver on this list, however Senna deserves to be on it. A multi-time F1 World Champion and one of the best Go-kart and Open Wheel drivers in history Senna drove in Formula One in perhaps its greatest era. The insane turbo-charged, manual gear, 1000 horsepower, ground effects aerodynamics days of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Senna's commitment to win and to push the limits of a racecar is borderline insane. He will always remain one of the most legendary drivers of all-time and for good reason. If you needed one flying lap-Senna was your guy. He simply had exceptional control and commitment behind the wheel of his car, more so than perhaps anyone ever has had in any form of motorsport.



4. A.J. Foyt

Tony Stewart's childhood hero was along with Dan Gurney the first in a special breed of cross-talent drivers. The tough Texan raced anything with wheels and made it go fast. He was the winningest driver in USAC history, won 4 Indianapolis 500s, and he is the only driver in history to have won the Indy 500, Daytona 500, 24 Hours of Daytona, and the 24 Hours of Le Mans. A known hall of famer in almost every motorsports Hall of Fame imaginable, Foyt is a racing icon and legend.



5. Dan Gurney

Most people outside of the racing community have never heard of Dan Gurney. However he is one of the most underrated drivers of all-time and he also was a racing visionary. Gurney won races in Indycar, Nascar, Can-am, Trans-am, and in endurance sports car racing. He was the first driver to have won races in sports cars, Formula 1, Nascar, and Indycar (Mario Andretti and Juan Pablo Montoya are the only other 2 in history who have done it). Gurney's influence outside of the racecar can also not be understated. He was the one who in 1967 after winning Le Mans spontaneously sprayed the winning driver's champagne in celebration, the first driver to ever do so. Along with starting this tradition Gurney also was the first ever driver to wear a full face helmet in Formula 1 in 1968.





The Best in Football

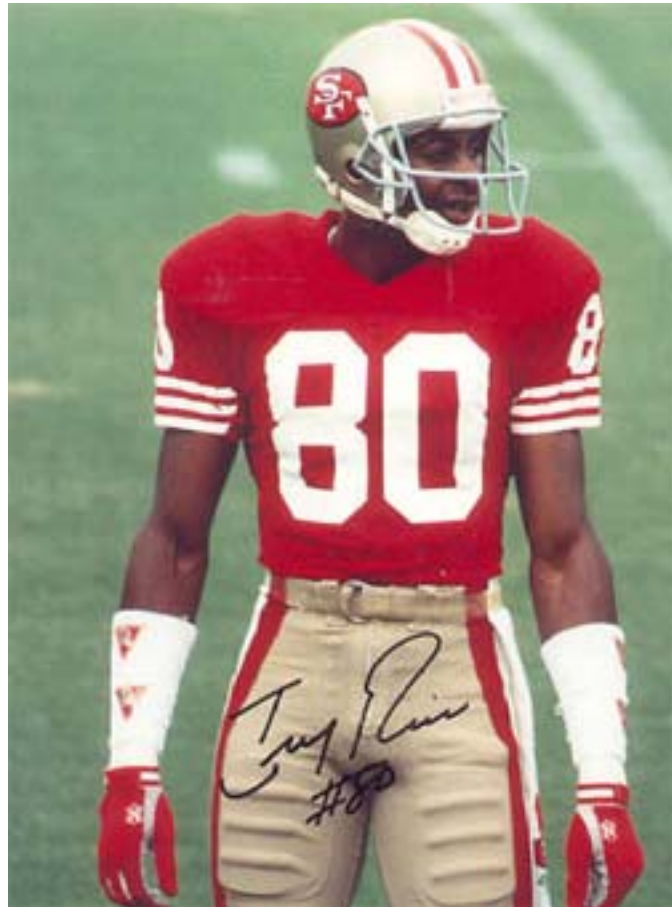
By Jason Lyke aka Jaybird_1981

This month I wanted to write about who I feel are the top players of the past, present and future in the NFL. Since I love lists and rankings I have ranked them below and wrote a little about each player:

Retired Players:

1. **Jerry Rice**
2. **Jim Brown**
3. **Peyton Manning**
4. **Joe Montana**
5. **Reggie White**

The reason I have Jerry Rice ranked as the best football player of all time is simply because he dominated his position like no other player ever dominated their position. His NFL record 1,549 receptions are 400+ catches more than 2nd place (Tony Gonzalez). His NFL 22,895 yards are almost 7,000 more yards than 2nd place (Terrell Owens). And those are just a couple of the myriad of records that Rice owns.



Second on this list is the legendary Jim Brown and I know there are other running backs who have better numbers than him but for my money nobody dominated the position like Brown. During his career he averaged 104.3 yards per game and 5.2 yards per carry, numbers which are unmatched by the other career rushing leaders with the only other running back even close being Barry Sanders.

The third slot on my list may be a bit of homer pick but I truly feel Peyton Manning is the greatest quarterback to ever play the game. If the 4-time MVP can return from his neck injury I believe he will own all the major NFL passing records by the time he retires (Currently sits at 3rd in the major categories). The other argument I have for him being the best quarterback of all time is evidenced by how mightily the Colts have struggled without him. They are currently 0-11 without him when last year they were a playoff team. He is more than just a quarterback for the Colts he is an offensive coordinator on the field for them.

Coming in at fourth is Joe Montana who is probably the greatest winner football has ever known. He didn't possess the strongest arm and he wasn't the most athletic but he was 4-0 on football's biggest



stage and led those legendary 49ers teams like no one else could. When I think of the 1980s I think of Joe Montana, Wayne Gretzky, and Michael Jordan.

I wanted a defensive player on my list so I went with the “Minister of Defense”, Reggie White, who at the time of his retirement owned the NFL record for sacks at 198. Like Manning above, this may be a little bit of a homer pick due to him also being a former Tennessee Volunteer alum, but he disrupted an opposing offense’s game plan like no other player with the possible exception of Lawrence Taylor.

Honorable Mention: Barry Sanders, Tom Brady, Walter Payton, John Elway, Lawrence Taylor

Current Players:

1. **Aaron Rodgers**
2. **Tom Brady**
3. **Drew Brees**
4. **Adrian Peterson**
5. **Calvin Johnson**



In a league dominated by quarterbacks I have the best in the game ranked as the top 3 players in football. Aaron Rodgers is having an all time season this year and has a legitimate shot to lead his team to an undefeated season which hasn’t occurred since 1972. This Packers team is better and healthier than the team that won the Super Bowl last year as scary as that is.

Tom Brady is a modern day Joe Montana. All he does is win the big games and exudes the confidence you would expect from an NFL quarterback. Out of all the current NFL QBs, if I had to choose one to lead a fourth quarter comeback it would be Brady.

Brees who may not get as much publicity as the above two quarterbacks is only a step below them in my opinion. Already a Super Bowl champion Brees has overcome his relative height disadvantage and lack of a rifle arm to become one of the best in the league. This season Brees is on pace to break the leagues single season passing yardage record and yet you don’t hear about him as much as you do Rodgers & Brady.

All Day Adrian Peterson is the first non-QB on my list and while it is arguable that he is currently not the best running back in the league, no other back has had his level of consistency in the past few years.



In a league where the running back position is as interchangeable as any other he has been at the top of his position since his rookie year.

Number five on this list is one of the most freakish athletes I have ever seen. Calvin “Megatron” Johnson, as he has been dubbed, is fitting of his moniker as he seems like something that could only be assembled and couldn’t possibly be human. Johnson receives constant double coverage every Sunday but it does nothing to hamper the numbers he puts up.

Future Players:

- 1. Andrew Luck**
- 2. Trent Richardson**
- 3. Matt Barkley**
- 4. Alshon Jeffery**
- 5. Landry Jones**

Hard not to put the Andrew Luck number one on any list of future NFL stars. Luck is the most hyped prospect since John Elway. Luck is considered a can’t miss prospect who plays the most important position in football so that is why he has to top any list such as this.

Watching Trent Richardson since he arrived at Alabama you could always tell he was something special. While he was a freshman, he looked like the best back on the team, this being a team that had future NFL 1st round pick Mark Ingram starting. Barring injuries I see no reason why he won’t be a starting on Sundays next year.

Matt Barkley who came into college at USC as the most heavily recruited player in the country has only gotten better in his time there. Carrying on a lineage of great USC quarterbacks Barkley has outplayed Luck this season to some extent. While that is very impressive is he better than Luck or is he just the beneficiary of greater talent surrounding him?

My SEC bias may be showing here again as I go with Alshon Jeffery as the top college receiver in the country over other notables such as Justin Blackmon. Jeffery has compared favorable to past SEC all star receivers AJ Green & Julio Jones. Jeffery has great size and all the talent and skills you would want in an NFL wide out.

I picked Landry Jones fifth on my list just because as I have stated earlier, quarterback is the most important position in sports and Landry who will more than likely be a 1st round pick next season is probably the next best after Luck & Barkley. Jones had led some pretty prolific passing attacks in Norman and it will be interesting to see how he transitions to the pro game.



NHL Realignment - A Radical Idea
By Scott Kozlowski aka scottkoz20

When the NHL approved the sale of the Atlanta Thrashers to True North Sports and Entertainment for the purposes of moving the franchise to Winnipeg for the 2011-12 season, the evil R-word (realignment) was going to be a necessary topic of discussion.

A lot has been said since that time regarding realignment, specifically which team(s) should go to what division. There is a lot of lobbying from various people to position their team in the slot that Winnipeg will vacate when they move to the Western Conference next season. Most people would tell you that Detroit, Columbus or Nashville would move to the Southeast Division, Winnipeg would move to the Central and life would move on, most divisional rivalries would be kept place. If a swap like this were to occur, Nashville makes the most sense because of its location to Washington, Carolina and the Florida teams.

From a financial standpoint, it would make fiscal sense to move Columbus into the Eastern Conference in order to keep Columbus stable in that market. Others will tell you that Detroit is going to be moving to the Eastern Conference because they are owed that from the last realignment. However, what happens one of the league's historic rivalries, Detroit vs. Chicago? They would only play 1 to 2 games per season. Now, the Toronto vs. Montreal rivalry was split for years; however the league is better with them playing multiple times a season.

In this realignment, there is going to be people that are happy and others that will not be happy. But why does it have to be moving one team to one conference and stay with the same structure? What about a radical idea; all 30 teams being placed into 3 Conferences! Yes, 3 conferences, Eastern, Central and Western Conference.

On the right is the breakdown of each of the conferences if my plan was to be adopted:

Eastern Conference	Central Conference	Western Conference
1. Boston Bruins	1. Buffalo Sabres	1. Anaheim Ducks
2. Carolina Hurricanes	2. Chicago Blackhawks	2. Calgary Flames
3. Florida Panthers	3. Columbus Blue Jackets	3. Colorado Avalanche
4. Montreal Canadiens	4. Detroit Red Wings	4. Dallas Stars
5. New Jersey Devils	5. Minnesota Wild	5. Edmonton Oilers
6. New York Islanders	6. Nashville Predators	6. Los Angeles Kings
7. New York Rangers	7. Ottawa Senators	7. Phoenix Coyotes
8. Philadelphia Flyers	8. Pittsburgh Penguins	8. San Jose Sharks
9. Tampa Bay Lightning	9. St. Louis Blues	9. Vancouver Canucks
10. Washington Capitals	10. Toronto Maple Leafs	10. Winnipeg Jets



but this can be addressed in the way the 82 game scheduled can be structured.

Wait, how can one get 82 games from this structure?

- 4 games vs. teams within the conference (36 conference games)
 - 9 teams x 4 games each (2 home and 2 away)
 - 2 games vs. each team from the other 2 conferences home and home (40 non-conference games)
 - 20 teams x 2 games each (1 home and 1 away)
 - 6 “Wild Card” games
 - No additional Conference Games
 - 3 Home and 3 Away
 - 1 additional game against the same opponent
 - Can be scheduled to keep past rivalries going
 - Such as Pittsburgh vs. Philadelphia and Montreal vs. Toronto
- To build upon a playoff rivalry from the previous season.

With this type of structure, each team is guaranteed a minimum of 2 games against each team in the league with no more than 4 games against a team. The schedule is a bit more balanced, but does keep the importance of playing games within your own conference.

OK, the regular season is set; now what would the Playoffs and the structure of the playoffs look like?

This is easy! The best 16 teams overall would qualify for the playoffs, regardless of conference or position within the conference. It is possible that all 10 teams from a Conference could make the playoffs.

The structure of the playoffs would be as follows:

- Winner of each conference would be guaranteed a Top 4 seed in the playoffs
 - Similar to the NBA Playoff structure where a non-division(conference winner) could have a higher seed
 - Conference winners would have at least 2 rounds of home ice advantage in the playoffs.
 - The Top seed would play the lowest seed in the first round; the #2 seed would play the #15 seed and so on.
 - 1 vs. 16
 - 2 vs. 15
 - 3 vs. 14
 - 4 vs. 13
 - 5 vs. 12



- 6 vs. 11
- 7 vs. 10
- 8 vs. 9

•There would be no reseeding after each round

The playoff bracket set as The Prince of Wales Bracket and the Clarence Campbell bracket. The teams in each of the brackets would play for the Prince of Wales Trophy and the Campbell Bowl respectively.

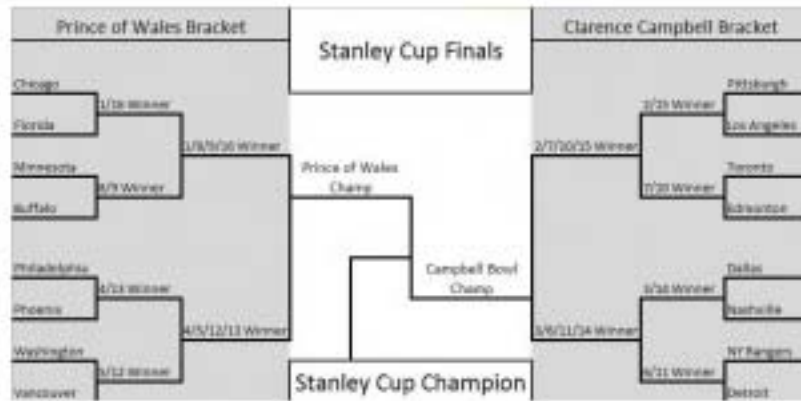


So how would the 2011-12 stand-ings look if this were in place today (standings as of November 13, 2011; Playoff teams are in BOLD).

Eastern Conference	Central Conference	Western Conference
1. Philadelphia 21	1. Chicago 25	1. Dallas 22
2. Washington 21	2. Pittsburgh 23	2. Edmonton 20
3. NY Rangers 21	3. Toronto 21	3. Vancouver 19
4. Florida 19	4. Minnesota 21	4. Phoenix 19
5. Tampa Bay 18	5. Buffalo 20	5. Los Angeles 19
6. New Jersey 17	6. Detroit 19	6. San Jose 19
7. Boston 16	7. Nashville 19	7. Colorado 17
8. Montreal 16	8. St. Louis 17	8. Calgary 15
9. Carolina 15	9. Ottawa 17	9. Anaheim 15
10. NY Islanders 11	10. Columbus 7	10. Winnipeg 13



If the season were to end today, the Playoff bracket would look like this:



The first round of the playoffs would feature the return of the Florida Panthers to the playoffs for the 1st time since 2000, the Toronto Maple Leafs for the 1st time since the lockout, 3 cross-continment matchups and an original 6 play-off matchup between the Rangers and Detroit.

If this system was in place for last season's playoffs, the 1st round playoff matchups would have been:



Author Note: New York Rangers made the playoffs last season as the 8th seed in the East and would have finished 18th overall, giving the last playoff seed to Dallas. Additionally, 2 of the 8 match-ups would have remained the same (San Jose vs. Los Angeles and Detroit vs. Phoenix).

Do you think Vancouver and Boston would have made the Finals if this were the playoff brackets?

In closing, this type of realignment is a radical idea. It places focus for teams to not only win within their conference, but forces teams to know what all teams are doing, not just the teams within their conference. Additionally, this structure also addresses the potential issue of teams looking for help on their travel costs, as Detroit, Columbus, and Nashville would all benefit from a savings in travel costs, which is what they are looking for.



Woes of a Louisiana Razorbacks
By Sarah Earhart aka swampstyle



Part of growing up in Louisiana is the expectation of bleeding purple and gold. Anyone who has ever come into Louisiana realizes that the state is as much a part of the “Tiger Belt” as it is the “Bible Belt”. While it is a forgivable sin for people in North LA to be Cowboys fans rather than Saints fans, there is NO forgiveness for those who are fans of ANY team other than the LSU Tigers. That being said, while I was born in Louisiana, all earlier generations of my family were born, bred, and raised in Arkansas, with many of them still residing there. Because of this, I was raised to say, “WOO PIG SOOIE!!!!!!” rather than “Geaux Tigers”. This caused quite a bit of frustration in my early years, before I learned to embrace the difference between me and my neighbors.

For the most part, I have no beef with the Tigers. My closet has quite a bit of purple and gold in it and I will root for the “Mighty Tigers” with the best of them as long as they are not playing the Razorbacks. One of my favorite places to be during

football season is Baton Rouge. If you have never experienced the pull of “Death Valley”, I highly recommend it. Even being a Razorback Girl, I can whole-heartedly say, there is no place like it. Those who are not from Louisiana might find it odd that you can walk up to any tailgating group and be offered a beer, Louisiana cuisine, and then be asked your name, but until game time—the tailgaters have manners. The problem is once you enter into the stadium, everything changes!

As many of you know, Thanksgiving weekend every year, really puts this rivalry to the test, when the Arkansas Razorbacks and the LSU Tigers meet for the “Battle of the Golden Boot”. Luckily for me, unless I am at the game in Baton Rouge, I am normally in Arkansas for Thanksgiving when this meeting takes place. I have no fear of damage to my vehicle that is donned with Razorback stickers. I have no fear of people trying to pick fights with me as I proudly sport my razorback jersey. I am allowed to be loud and proud as I cheer on my hogs.

For those years that I am in Louisiana for the game, things aren’t quite so peaceful. For the past two meetings in Baton Rouge, I have been fortunate enough to be sitting on the two-yard line about twelve rows up to watch the game. As proud as I am of my team, and as much as I support them, due to the harassment and danger to fans of opposing teams that deep in LSU territory, I must wear LSU gear over my razorback shirt. I have seen food and drinks thrown at opposing teams fans. I have seen porta-potties tipped over with opposing fans in them. Game time creates a different kind of tiger fan—one that I am unwilling to buck! I quietly sit in my seat, cheer alongside the band, and get SUPER happy on the inside when the Razorbacks score...lucky for me my companions at these games suffer through the



Arkansas fight song being played in their ear from my cell phone when the Hogs score. It is the one thing that I can do to show my pride that no one around me will notice in the roar of that stadium.

On the years when Arkansas pulls off a victory, you can hear a pin drop in a stadium that has registered on the Richter scale on a Friday night. The whole town mourns. The bars are full, but quiet.

The fans that were previously jolly and sharing become silent. It is really an eerie feeling in that stadium when the Tigers suffer a loss. I am able to wander to The Chimes and eat my duck and sausage gumbo and know that barely three words will be spoken by anyone around. Fortunately I manage to keep my Razorback fandom undercover until we arrive home and I fear no retribution.

On years that the Tigers win, the stadium is deafening. You cannot hear anything from the person beside you. That volume level continues from the stadium, to the parking lots, to the bars, to the restaurants, and continues well into the next day. The whole town revels like it is Mardi Gras season! Those Tiger fans hold on to the victory and will rub it in the face of any Razorback fan they come across until the next year.



As this game approaches this year, I meet it with sadness. Due to family illness, I will be in Arkansas this year, rather than Baton Rouge—where I have been fortunate enough to be the last two meetings between these teams in Death Valley. While it won't be 6 AM mimosas and donuts in front of the law center, I will enjoy getting to be just your everyday ordinary Razorback fan during the game this year. There will be no LSU gear in my suitcase. No purple and gold to hide my cardinal and white! I will not have to be an undercover Louisiana Razorback this year! I will get to be loud. I will get to be proud. I will get to call the hogs while cheering on my team! While the prospect of a victory looks dim against the #1 ranked team in the nation, I will keep my head held high, and will proudly support my Hogs no matter what the outcome of this game. I am glad that I have learned to handle the difficulties of being a Louisiana Razorback.



The NFL Year so Far By Scott Rohlffs aka souperman79

As I write this article, my World Champion Green Bay Packers stand alone with an 8-0 start. I understand that I have some bias in writing this article because I feel the Pack will repeat this year and win yet another Super Bowl. The biggest problem facing the Packers this year is their defence; especially the defensive line in my opinion. With the loss of Cullen Jenkins to the Philadelphia Eagles in free agency and the often injured Mike Neal out at the time; opponents are able to focus on Clay Matthews and shut him down with double teams. I think this has a lot to do with the amount of passing yards and big plays the secondary is getting blamed for. The line is not getting pressure on the quarterback, thus giving opposing teams time to let plays develop. Philip Rivers was able to shred the Packer defence for 385 passing yards and 4 touchdowns.



The difference maker for the Packers is number 12, Aaron Rodgers and the Green Bay offense. He has to be the runaway MVP candidate at this time. He is completing his passes 72.5% of the time and has 24 touchdowns to just 3 interceptions. His ability to put the ball into spots where his receivers can catch it is sometimes mindboggling.

At the pace Rodgers is currently on, he is set to throw for over 5,000 yards with a 71% completion rate and 45 touchdowns. All of these are worthy of a championship belt celebration without a doubt.

A team that has truly surprised me this season is tough to call. The Lions have roared out to a great start with Stafford so far staying pretty healthy and Calvin "Megatron" Johnson catching anything in his sight. The Buffalo Bills have cooled off a little bit as of late but are still doing very well. The problem that plagues the Bills is being in the same division as the Patriots and Jets. You can't look

past the San Francisco 49ers either; Jim Harbaugh has come into the once storied franchise and put them back on the map. The biggest surprise for me this season though is the Cincinnati Bengals. With a rookie quarterback in Andy Dalton starting and doing well, along with Cedric Benson picking up from where he left off last year, how can you not be surprised?

When Carson Palmer refused to play for the Bengals ever again, I think most people left them for dead. They took Dalton in the draft in my eyes with the intention that Palmer may return and they



Bengals are 6-2 leading the division. Dalton has probably exceeded a lot of the expectations out there thus far. The true test is coming for the Bengals though, as they are set to play the Steelers and Ravens two out of the next four games. Even if the Bengals would be unable to win all of the games, they have an opportunity to really put a mark on this season and prove they are not just a fluke.

You could also say the Philadelphia Eagles are surprising people this year. The so called "Dream

Team" has had a rocky start to the season. After a 1-4 start they have won two in a row; the last win against the Cowboys being a very well played game. To me though, the biggest disappointment is the Indianapolis Colts. It goes to show how important Peyton Manning truly is to that franchise. Unfortunately I have a bad feeling we might have seen Peyton take his last snap as an NFL quarterback. For a

person who has worked so hard and dedicated so much time and effort to the game, it's a shame it might have to end like it could.



The road to Indianapolis this year will be a fun journey. The first half of the season has been one of the best I can remember since I have been watching football. You have teams that have been doormats for years coming back to the forefront. You have so called "Dream Teams" severely underperforming and not meeting expectations; and you have a team

who comes from a small town in Wisconsin, known as "Titletown", doing what they do best, winning.



The Right Choice

By Noah Foreman aka TrueIrishFan616



Thanks to ESPN, the sports nation was given a glimpse into the new uniform that Notre Dame showcased for the first time in school history. The newly donned “Shamrock Series” uniform brought many Notre Dame faithful either to their feet in jubilation, or to their knees in prayer. Many love, and are embracing the change. While others have been shouting via blogs and twitter for the traditionally bland Notre Dame style to stay the same. No matter how one may see the uniforms, the new “Shamrock Series” uniforms are a huge leap in the new direction that many other schools have already chosen.

The new helmets showcase a very bright golden paint scheme. A paint scheme that has many handmade twists in the paint. Also, a noticeably large green shamrock on both sides of the helmet is hard to miss. A dramatic jump from the same solid gold color Notre Dame has used for decades. The uniforms themselves have changed as well. The “Shamrock Series” game will have the players wearing the newer Techfit green jerseys, golden gloves with adjoining shamrocks on the palms, and white Adidas cleats.

The only game that Notre Dame will wear these uniforms was last week against The University of Maryland. Not to be outdone, Maryland donned their own unique uniforms that seem to portray the Maryland state flag across the entire uniform. The fact that the Notre Dame helmets in that game were so expensive to make, and very time consuming in the painting process, each helmet was to be returned without question at the end of the game. Apparently, many players have gotten away with keeping certain game helmets and mailing them to loved ones after games. Not even a question with these new helmets. It seems that Adidas, the creator of the new uniforms, knew that the Irish faithful would be drooling over a chance to get their hands on one of these new helmets. Myself included. The people at Adidas decided to make 11 Shamrock Series Promo Boxes to be given away.

Each promo box contains the Shamrock Series helmet, green jersey and gloves, and a bunch of other cool goodies such as collector’s pins, gold iPod Nano, and some golden noise-cancelling headphones. Ten of the boxes had in one way or another, found homes already. However, one box was given to the



Notre Dame Football page on Facebook. The people behind the Notre Dame Football Facebook page were to give this promo box away to the most deserving fan. The page simply asked that you put up a picture with a description describing why you think you're the most deserving of this promo box. Over 500 people, including myself, put up a picture and description of why they were the most deserving. I honestly thought I had a chance...until I saw who Notre Dame had picked. After reading why this family was chosen, my jealousy and nausea quickly turned to goose bumps and reminded me why I love Notre Dame Football and all the fans.

The lucky Brooks family from Hampton, VA were chosen to receive the promo box. After reading their story, it's hard to argue with whom Notre Dame chose.



“My husband (Huge ND Fan) is in the military and serving a one year tour in Korea. When the game doesn't air over there, he Skype calls us and we have to turn the computer towards the TV so he can watch the game. That's dedication! Our son watching the Irish with his dad... half way around the world!”

This story is probably one of thousands that showcase how faithful Notre Dame's fans truly are. I fill my basement with Notre Dame stuff. Everything from old autographed footballs, autographed mini helmets, old stadium trinkets, bobble heads, and every Notre Dame football card I can find. During my tours overseas, I never once thought of Skype calling my wife to have her spin the computer around just so I could catch the game. This is a great story. This is a true fan. He seems to be raising his son to become a true fan. I know this promo box has found the right home. I can only hope that this family realizes just how great of a gift they have in their home. I offer my congratulations to the Brooks family, and my best wishes to the Notre Dame Football Team, and to all the Notre Dame faithful.



What Does Card Collecting Mean to You?

By Jeff Hackett aka txtaz1102

What does card collecting mean to you? To me, growing up it was another way to connect with my parents, they would buy the packs of cards and we would open them and spend time together going over the cards we had gotten and the ones we still needed. My mother and I could sit for a few hours a week talking and putting together the sets that we were working on. It was a great moment in time and something I still remember when looking at all those boxes of cards that are still sitting on the shelves in the closet. The value of those cards still is not in the money that sits in those boxes, but in the value of the time spent with those I love. The memories are much greater in worth than the rookie cards and base that fill those dusty boxes.

We stopped collecting in my teenage years due to various reasons and I fell out of collecting all together. Sports and high school activities began to take a more pronounced role in my life and baseball cards did not fit into the time I had for all my activities. As time passed and my young adult life began to take shape, there was still no room for collecting cards. Then, marriage and work began and my adult life left little opportunity for anything but taking care of my family and paying bills. Even though I had my obligations, and we all have some form of obligations, I missed those moments when my mom and

I would sit and look over the players we loved to watch on television and the moments we had shared during those years growing up.



On a whim one day doing the grocery shopping, I saw and purchased a blaster box of 2011 Bowman Chrome from the local Wal-Mart store just to see what had become of the



That statement and his excitement for what we were doing brought back the same memories I had with my mom. Collecting cards will be something we do in my home for our family from today forward. The time spent sharing memories and creating new ones with both my son and my mom are going to be the best payment for returning to a hobby I had loved so much as a child. Sitting at the kitchen table with fresh packs of cards and teaching my son

how to open the pack, how to handle the cards, and how to admire the heroes that he will have in the sports world. Teaching him how and why things are important (or not) and using something we can enjoy together as the vehicle to those conversations.

So I ask again, what does collecting mean to you? To me the most important part of collecting anything is the memories that are made while doing what you love. The paper and pictures will fade and the corners may round on that beloved card, but the memories of sitting there with family and friends will stay with me for as long as I live. Collecting is not about the money spent or the money made, there is no amount of money that will replace the feelings I had when we would sit around that table marking checklists. It was a wonderful time then, and it will be just as wonderful sharing the same experiences with my own child. Hopefully, he will remember it just as I do and cherish those memories when he is my age.





For the Love of the Rangers **By Sarah Earhart aka swampstyle**

While I have been a Texas Rangers fan most of my life, I have really enjoyed watching them more the past few years than in the past. One might argue that is because they have been pretty freaking hot in the past few years (until they were one strike away from winning the World Series, that is). However, that is not why my level of enjoyment has increased.

If you have not spent much time watching the Rangers, prior to playoffs, much of their antics may seem odd. You see them behave more like a team of high school kids or little league kids. Such as signalling “ducks on the pond” when one Ranger gets on base. What are you thinking when they signal each other with antlers or claws? How about their manager that runs in place as his players are running the bases, jumps up and down when they get a hit or score a run, who talks to them like a coach is supposed to without fear of retribution? This is why I love watching the Rangers play ball!

In professional sports today, you have a lot of professional teams that have I in the word team. You have superstars that care more about their next contract then they do their team and the game before them. You have players that do not respect or listen to their coaches. You have coaches who are unwilling to coach a superstar for fear of retribution by team owners if the “stud” player gets mad at them. That mentality has even trickled over into college teams and college coaches. Rarely do you see a team truly celebrate the small stuff in the same way they celebrate big victories.

When you see this team together, you see them seem to really enjoy one another. You see them congratulate one another on a hit. You see them chit chatting in the dugout and before games. You see them encourage one another. I have seen them dog pile on home plate after a regular season game just because it was won in a cool fashion. I have seen them stand behind players who are slumping, injured, suffering and be there for one another.

Seeing players play with this kind of enthusiasm and love of the game makes me believe that there is some good still left in the world of professional sports. So much of sports news is filled with professional athletes getting into trouble. Maybe it was because they couldn't behave themselves on a night out on the town, maybe it was because they thought they were above the law and that the law didn't apply to them, or sometimes it's just athletes not being able to keep their mouths shut in front of reporters and/or on social media sites. Whatever it is, there always seems to be some professional athlete in the headlines for doing something wrong.

That being said, the Rangers are not without their token bad boy. Josh Hamilton's story is one that is well known throughout professional sports. He is one of the “bad boys” who got his act together and has kept it together. The team rallies behind him and does what they can to be supportive of him and the demons that haunt him. He has taken responsibility for the damage his demons have caused in the past and he has even apologized for them. How many super star athletes would have apologized to the team that they wronged many years later? As he did when the Rangers were playing in the playoffs in Tampa Bay. That not only speaks of him as a player, but as a man.



No wonder his team is so willing to adjust traditional celebrations to meet his needs!

Also when talking about team players, no one can forget Michael Young. Michael Young was displaced, for lack of a better term. When the Rangers were unable to trade him, and he lost his field position, he did not let that affect his play. He went on this season to have one of the best seasons of his career. He stood up and did what a team player should do, and in doing so became one of the most important pieces of the puzzle to the success of the Rangers this past season.

Hopefully the Rangers will have success for a third season, and maybe the third time will be the charm for them. Regardless of the success they have on the field, the standard they set is one that all professional teams should use as a model. When the players are having obvious fun, it makes it a lot more fun to watch. I am hopeful that they will not make too many changes in the off season and that this team will be just as much fun to watch next season as they have been the past few! I strongly encourage everyone to watch them play anytime the opportunity arises!





Where Is the Passion?
By Joe Alaimo aka Jaydoublez

There's something I haven't been able to understand for a while now. Something that has really bothered me. We all sit down to watch our favorite sports whether it is football, baseball, basketball, hockey and even racing. The one thing I always ask myself now is ; "Where has the passion in the sport gone?" A lot of people will argue that it is still there, and there is nothing wrong in the world of sports today, is that the truth though?

It's not just one specific player or one specific team, who are guilty of this infraction, but many. Take a look at one glaring example this year; Chris Johnson. I mean last year 1,364 yards and 11 touchdowns an excellent year no question about it. This year, Johnson holds out and misses some of training camp, is there anything wrong with that? Well, yes and no. Now days players won't set foot on the field unless they get the amount of money they want, and maybe stupidly owners and franchises always give into them. In this case, 53.5 million dollars. What has Johnson done this year? 366 yards rushing and 1, one, uno, touchdown. I checked it's still one in every language. His output has been horrible and it is not because he is a victim of circumstances, the team's healthy, the line's healthy, he is just not there. Even if he is just struggling, all his efforts on the field this year have been flat and sub-par at best! Which makes me question where his passion is, was his passion to grab 53.5 million and take it easy, or is it to play football and entertain his fans like he has for the past three years? In the old days this type of money was never thrown around and everyone played. Broken bones, bloody uniforms and brutal hits, it didn't matter, they played and they played hard. Chris Johnson you should be ashamed of yourself. You're not Jim Brown, Walter Payton, or Gale Sayers for that matter, you're another gluttonous player whom I used to highly respect, until you decided, to take the backseat and have a rest for the season.

How about LeBron James Aka LeQueen, LeBrick, LeFraud, well you get the point. This kid amazes me and yes I say kid because I 'm older than him. He stayed in Cleveland and he took some tough seasons but for the most part had a lot of great ones. When the Playoffs came though, where was he. Well if you go back and watch Cleveland games during the Playoffs, about 80 percent of the time he was sitting out by the three point line, not slashing to the hoop, not posting up, not taking control of the game like a dominant superstar should. Then he cried foul because they would lose and there wasn't enough talent around him. LISTEN KID, maybe if you got up and actually played like a Larry Bird, Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson you would have won, you did nothing. So you played some great games a few times, to be a champion or want to be a champion you better want to, or actually play a great game every time, you didn't have the passion.

SOOO ok lets go to the Miami Heat and get to the Championship, and do the same exact thing there!



plays with his money more than he ever will with passion, EVER! Call Kobe for some lessons on clutch games LeBron.

It's easy to pick on the big guys though, there are lesser stars that are guilty of this also, but there is just too many to name. The NBA as a whole right now is a great example of money hungry players. **WHAT ARE YOU GUYS DOING?** As fans, we want to see you on the court, you should want to play and get this settled, not argue over a 1 percent difference. **PLEASE** Derek Fisher shut up and you do not know what you're talking about. This is an embarrassment to all sports, absolutely asinine. We might not have a NBA season because you guys aren't getting enough money? No, not acceptable. There used to be pride in wanting to play and actually wanting that Championship and bringing it home to your city. These old players look at you and smile and laugh but inside, they hate what you're doing to the game, they are as disgusted as we are. The game will never be the same thanks to these young players and the same so called passion is not there.

People say all the time, this guy plays with passion or this guy plays with passion. That's not true. Competitiveness is not to be mistaken for passion. At the end of the day , in every sport there are rivalries between certain players that make someone look passionate when they are really just in a jocking, macho man match to see who is better. When did it become about the individual? There are true passionate players out there but few and far between. As far as I am concerned, we have all con-

formed to going through the motions every year and have become monotonous. We cheer, we laugh, we get mad, we have more passion than the players playing. **THAT'S MY POINT.** Don't look up to these guys anymore, you are the passion, you are the one that keeps all these sports going. No athlete is better than me, or anyone else. They are just overpaid, spoiled brats, that unfortunately, we have come to accept. It's really sad isn't it?

