

Collectors Corner

DECEMBER 2013

COMING SOON TO MONTREAL



CIRQUE DES SIGNATURES



You Thank
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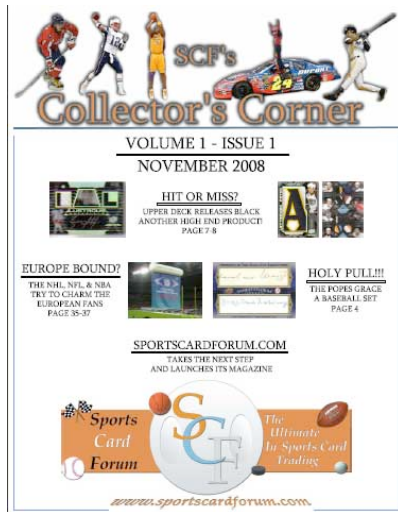
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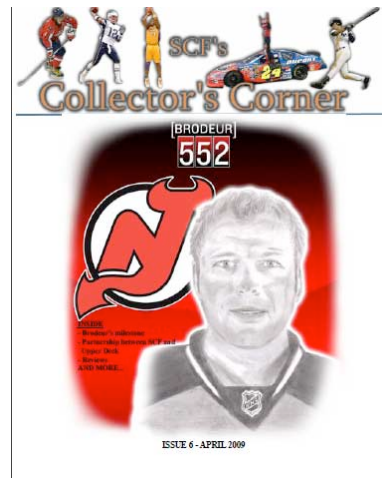


A Fond Farewell

By Karine Hains



It all started with a simple idea back in October 2008 and less than a month later, the first issue of Collector's Corner was born... Sure the layout and the graphics were basic but nevertheless, it was our first effort. I was editor in chief back then as well but just as now, I had a solid team backing me up and that has been true for the last 5 years. I'd like to take a moment to thank all of those who have helped however little during those years: Luc for guiding me through my first Pagemaker steps, Brad for the graphics and layout help, Houg for amazing graphics and headers, Jared and Anthony also for graphics, Richard who has written so many articles for the magazine that I can't even count them, Mike for getting behind this project and for even flying me over to the Nationals one year so that I could write about the event, all the team contacts such as Stephen Taylor, Stephen Duell, J.R., Jay, Mike, Brad and many others, it's been a blast working with you all. While it



does sadden me to call it a day, I have to admit that I just do not have the time necessary to put out a high quality magazine out there so it's just time to shut the books on the wonderful experience that Collector's Corner has been. I'd also like to thank you, the readers for following us through the years and also the sponsors who often gave us great prizes for our members in exchange for visibility.



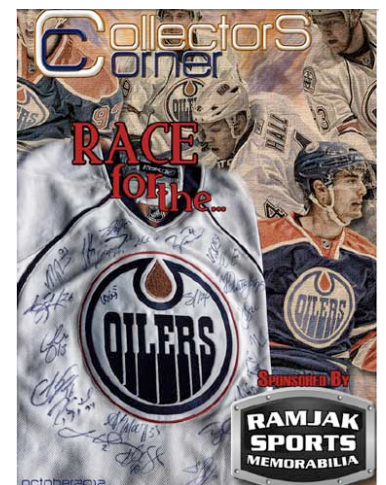
In this issue, you will learn about a great event which will shortly be coming to Montreal, the Cirque des Signatures.

If you attended or heard about Habathon last year, well, this will be somewhat similar but you'll be able to meet some wrestling greats as well as Habs players. I won't be able to attend this year but I can guarantee that you will have a great day if you do make it...I remember my day at Habathon rather fondly!

Since Christmas and the Holiday season is upon us, allow me to wish all of you a fabulous Christmas and a very happy new year. I hope Santa brings you all the goodies you've been hoping for and that the new year is full of joyous occasions for each and everyone of you. Should you receive some hobby presents, please do make sure to share them on SCF's show and tell forums! As for hockey

fans, get ready for an exciting couple of months! The World Junior Championships have just started and the Olympic tournament is not far behind either, given the time difference with Sochi, make sure you book some time off to enjoy high quality hockey!

I hope you will enjoy this last ever issue of Collector's Corner!





Cirque des Signatures is Coming!
By Richard McAdam aka RGM81



On January 12, 2014, there is going to be a circus...rather, a *cirque des signatures*!

Montreal is known for its passionate and devoted hockey fans, and on that Sunday afternoon they will be out in force to attend a mega event and public signing starring many members of their beloved Montreal Canadiens!

Already confirmed to be in attendance: Carey Price, Brendan Gallagher, Josh Gorges, and Travis Moen! The event will run all afternoon at the Place Vertu mall in Saint-Laurent, and it promises to be a day to remember. Attendees will have the option of purchasing regular admission

tickets or going the extra mile to get the VIP Package! Those who go VIP will certainly get the deluxe treatment, as their package includes:

- ☒ Each ticket also grants purchaser one 8x10 photograph of each athlete that they will sign IN PERSON.
- ☒ Each ticket also grants purchaser one additional signature from each player on their own personal item(s).
- ☒ Each ticket also grants purchaser access to a VIP photo op with both players. (Photo op to take place 15 minutes prior to signing start time.
- ☒ Each ticket also grants purchaser access to the exclusive on site memorabilia auction.

Like I said, truly an awesome event in the works! How do I know? The event is being put on by my good friend Wess Perisa, the same individual behind last year's amazing HABATHON event and the founder of Hockey Helps. As always, Wess is determined to make this the biggest and best event for the fans, and to that end there are some great exclusive offers available only to SCF members!

If you can't make it to Cirque des Signatures, we have an exclusive autographed card opportunity available to any SCF member that would like to get in on the action!

I have purchased a total of 11 Brendan Gallagher Upper Deck Canvas Young Guns, which Brendan will be signing at the event! Each card will be hand-numbered /11 and come encased in a one-touch with a tamper-proof hologram seal and will



also come with a unique COA created especially for this event! Details of this incredible offer have already been posted on the boards in the Hockey Buying/Selling section (see this thread: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/threads/2034843-EXCLUSIVE-Offer-for-SCF-Members-Autographed-Brendan-Gallagher-Canvas-YG-d-11>), but here is the information:

- ☒ Cost will be \$73.11 – this includes shipping and handling
- ☒ One card maximum per member
- ☒ Card must be paid for by January 3rd when the cards are sent to Montreal for the signing
- ☒ We will be conducting a draw on SCF after I have received the cards back – the winner of the draw will receive #1/11 !!!

Members who would like to request a specific number of the print run are welcome to do so, but remember that it will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

And that is just the beginning! For SCF members who wish to attend the Cirque des Signatures event we have secured a special bonus for you! Just mention that you are a member of Sports Card Forum at the door and you will qualify to receive a FREE bonus signature of one of the players that you sign up for at the door! A fantastic treat for any SCF member to score an extra signature of one of their favourite Canadiens players!

This promises to be a fantastic time for everybody in attendance, and we hope that SCF members in the area will take advantage of these exclusive offers!





Just to wet your appetite, here are a few pictures from last year's Habathon!





SCF Official Review: 2013/14 ITG Enforcers II By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

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

1 pack per box

12 cards per pack

Current Retail Price (online): \$67.99 - \$79.99



WHAT WE PULLED

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-7JzUK4QSg>

Base (5)



Two years ago, In The Game unveiled a new product celebrating the tough guys of hockey called Enforcers. With the success of that product, ITG has brought it back with Enforcers II. The focus is on the men who don't really show up often on the primary stat sheet, except for penalty in minutes (P.I.M.). The base set breaks down with many subsets, some of which partner two subjects. The design is a rehash from the original product, but that's fine as it maintains



continuity. It is nice to see ITG continue the card numbering where the original stopped, just to hammer home how this is a follow-up.

Aaron Downey Autograph



Curt Fraser Autograph



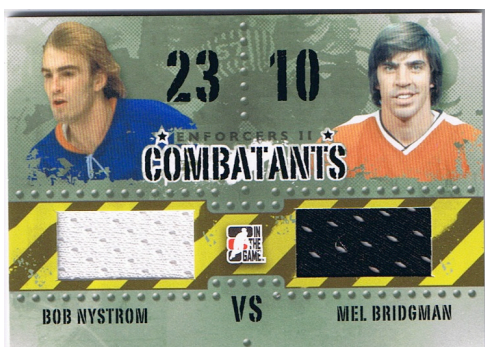
Darin Kimble Autograph



Jeff Chychrun Autograph



Combatants Bob Nystrom/Mel Bridgman Dual Jersey

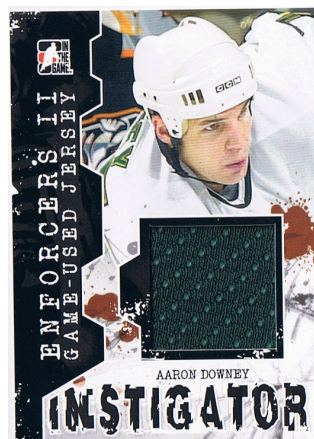


Combatants Sean Brown/Brad May Dual Jersey





Instigator Aaron Downey Jersey



Enforcers II contains an amazing seven hits (4 autos and 3 relics) per box. How many products on the market contain that kind of yield for the price point? Exactly! Most autographs will be individual players, but there are also duel (get it) autos and a triple auto. As for the game used items, that's where variety comes into play. Fans of Enforcers will recognize sets such as Instigator and Combatants, but this releases packs more punch than that. Goalies get in the action with Pugilistic Puck Stoppers and Between The Pipes Battles. Fans of quad memorabilia get their fair share with Tough Franchises, Patch Them Up as well as the always popular Complete Jerseys. Fight Straps are back along with the chance to get a unique piece, Dome Fasteners. Want a challenge, Nameplates give you the opportunity to spell out the last name of your favorite "goon". Finally, there are Tough Patches and even Duel Patches.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Base - 4/5

Design - 4.25/5

Fun - 4.5/5

Value - 5/5

Rebuy - 5/5

Overall - 22.75/25 (91%)

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





SCF Official Review: 2013 Topps Chrome By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

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

24 packs per box

4 cards per pack

Current Retail Price (online): \$69.99 - \$84.99

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

AUTOGRAPH CARDS - 1 Per Hobby Box!

Rookie Autographed CARDS

Up to 45 NFL Rookie cards from the base set featuring both on-card and sticker autographs.
Available in the following numbered refractor parallel versions:

- Rookie Autograph Refractor #d to 150
- Rookie Autograph Military Refractor #d to 99
- Rookie Autograph BCA Refractor #d to 75
- Rookie Autograph Black Refractor #d to 25
- Rookie Autograph Prism Refractor #d to 15
- Rookie Autograph Gold Refractor #d to 10
- Rookie Autograph Red Refractor #d to 5 Hobby Only
- Rookie Autograph Super-Fractor #d 1/1 Hobby Only

Rookie Autograph Patches

Up to 40 subjects featuring rookie autographs and jersey patches #d to 50 Hobby Exclusive

Dual Rookie Autographs

Up to 5 cards featuring 2 rookie autographs. #d to 30

Triple Rookie Autographs

1 card featuring 3 rookie autographs #d to 15

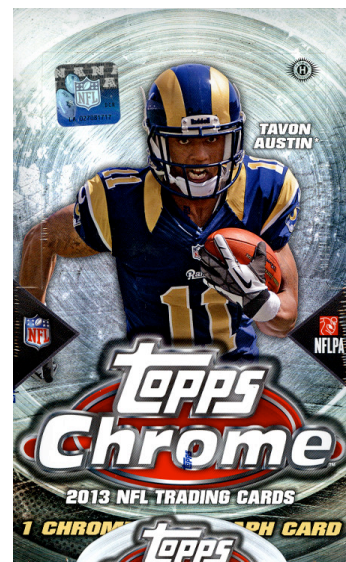
Rookie Autograph Variations

Up to 25 subjects featuring new images along with their autograph Hobby Exclusive

INSERTS and AUTOGRAPHS - NEW!

1969 Topps Football

Up to 30 rookie subjects featured on a limited Chrome 1969 Topps Football design.





- 1969 Topps Football Refractor #'d to 99
- 1969 Topps Football Refractor Autograph: Featuring ON-CARD autographs on refractor technology. Hobby Exclusive

1959 Topps Football

Up to 35 rookie subjects showcased on the 1959 Topps Football design.

- 1959 Topps Football Refractor #'d to 99
- 1959 Topps Football Red-Bordered Refractor #'d to 75
- 1959 Topps Football Prism Refractor #'d to 50
- 1959 Topps Football Autographs: Featuring ON-CARD autographs on refractor technology. #'d to 15

1986 Topps Football

Up to 35 rookie subjects displayed on the 1986 Topps Football design.

- 1986 Topps Football Refractor #'d to 99
- 1986 Topps Football Gold-Bordered Refractor #'d to 75
- 1986 Topps Football Prism Refractor Die-Cut #'d 50
- 1986 Topps Football Autographs: Featuring ON-CARD autographs on refractor technology. #'d to 15

1965 TOPPS FOOTBALL Tall Boys

Up to 30 rookie subjects highlighted on the 1965 Topps Football design.

Chrome Rookie Die-CutS

Up to 35 rookie subjects featuring perimeter die-cut cards on refractor technology.

- Chrome Rookie Die-Cut Blue Refractor #'d to 50
- Chrome Rookie Die-Cut Red Refractor #'d to 25
- Chrome Rookie Die-Cut Super-Fractor #'d 1/1 Hobby Exclusive
- Chrome Rookie Die-Cut Refractors Autographs: An Autographed parallel. #'d to 15 Hobby Exclusive

BASE CARDS

BASE CARDS (220)

Veterans -111 subjects

- Veteran Card Variations - 30 subjects

Rookie Cards -109 subjects - 1 per pack

- Rookie Card Variations - 25 subjects

BASE PARALLEL CARDS

- Refractor Parallel (220 subjects): 1:3
- Blue Wave Refractor (220 subjects) NEW!
- Military-Bordered Refractor Parallel (220 subjects): #'d to 499
- BCA-Bordered Refractor Parallel (220 subjects): #'d to 399
- Prism Refractor Parallel (220 subjects): Seq #'d TBD. 1 per box. Hobby Only NEW!
- Black-Bordered Refractor Parallel (220 subjects): #'d to 299



- Blue-Bordered Refractor Parallel (220 subjects): #'d to 199
- Sepia-Tone Refractor Parallel (220 subjects): #'d to 99 Hobby Only
- Gold-Bordered Refractor Parallel (220 subjects): #'d to 50
- Red-Bordered Refractor Parallel (220 subjects): #'d to 25
- Super-Fractor Parallel (220 subjects): #'d 1/1 Hobby Only
- Printing Plates (220 subjects) - Non-framed printing plates of each base card subject. Hobby Only

WHAT WE PULLED

Base: 73/220 (33.2%)

Dupes: 2

One of the most popular lines in football, Topps Chrome is back for another go around. Though it will be hard to replicate the hoopla of last year due to the draft class, it will still be sought after. Chrome contains a 220-card base set that mixes veterans with rookies. In fact, it is almost even with 111 veterans and 109 rookies. Be on the lookout for SP Variations as 25 subjects received this treatment. SPs appear to fall once per case.



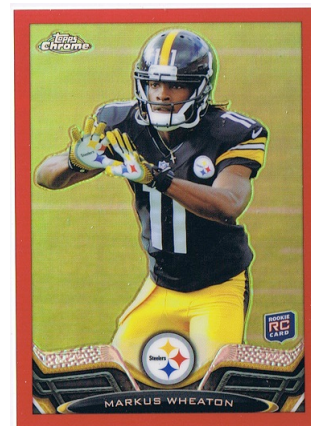
Refractors (8)

Blue Wave Refractor (1)

Camo Refractor /499 (1): Kenny Stills

Prism Refractor /260 (1): Chris Long

Red Refractor /25 (1): Markus Wheaton



Each card in the set has multiple refractor versions. In fact, there are eleven refractors as well as the printing plates inserted into packs. The Prism (new to this year), Sepia and the SuperFractors are Hobby only. The Blue Wave refractors are pack pulled this year, unlike the redemption program last year. Overall, expect to get a refractor of some type once in every two packs.



1959 Topps Minis (2)
 1965 Topps Tall Boy (1)
 1969 Topps (2)
 1986 Topps (4)
 Rookie Die Cut (1)



All of the insert sets are rookie based. Each set contains 30-35 cards. Four of the sets utilize design of a previous year to showcase the rookies in what it would have looked like had they been around during those times. The final set is a Die Cut series. The sets also have parallel and autograph versions.

Jordan Reed Autograph /600 (on card)



Each box will yield 1 rookie autograph. In general, they will be of the individual variety, based off of the base card. In a twist this year, Topps has serial numbered the base autographs. Most are numbered to 600, though there are some short prints among the 45 subjects. In addition, three subjects are included that do not have a regular base card (Cards 221-223). Like the base cards, keep your eyes open for SP Variations. There are also dual and triple rookie autographs. Finally, one of the case hits is a rookie autograph patch card. These are Hobby Exclusives.



FINAL THOUGHTS

Base - 4/5

Design - 4.5/5

Fun - 5/5

Value - 3.5/5

Rebuy - 4/5

Overall - 21/25 (84%)

NPN Information

NPN 2013 Topps Chrome Football
PO Box 2220
Duryea, PA 18642

Limit 1 Request Per Household

Postmarked By: 2/19/14

Received By: 2/26/14

Canada Skills: $16 + 9 \times 4 - 1 = ?$

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 of their products, visit them today at www.topps.com.





SCF Official Review: 2013 Bowman Draft Picks And Prospects By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

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

24 packs per box

7 cards per pack

Current Retail Price (online): \$64.99 - \$79.99

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

BASE CARDS

Draft Picks (130 subjects) 2013 MLB Draft Picks

- Blue Parallel #'d to 500.
- Orange Parallel #'d to 250.
- Red Parallel #'d to 5.
- Black Parallel #'d 1 of 1
- Printing Plates #'d 1 of 1

Top Prospects (45 subjects)

- Blue Parallel #'d to 500.
- Orange Parallel #'d to 250.
- Red Parallel #'d to 5.
- Black Parallel #'d 1 of 1
- Printing Plates #'d 1 of 1

Rookies (45 subjects)

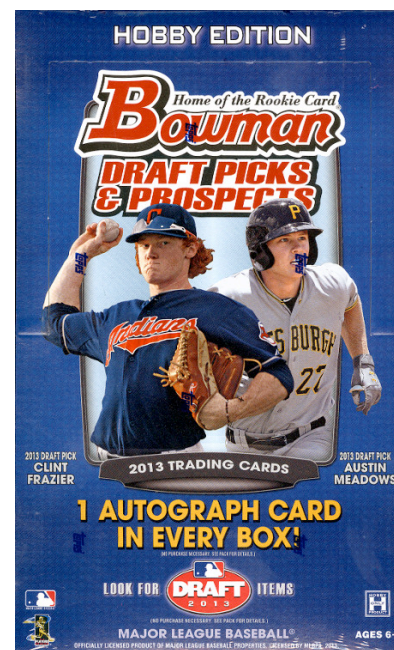
- Blue Parallel #'d to 500.
- Orange Parallel #'d to 250.
- Red Parallel #'d to 5.
- Black Parallel #'d 1 of 1
- Printing Plates #'d 1 of 1

CHROME INSERT CARDS - Inserted 2 Per Pack

Chrome Draft Picks (130 subjects): Bowman Chrome cards of 2013 MLB Draft Picks

Refractor Parallel

- Blue Refractor Parallel numbered to 99.





- Green Refractor Parallel numbered to 75. NEW!
- Gold Refractor Parallel numbered to 50.
- Black Refractor Parallel numbered to 35. NEW!
- Orange Refractor Parallel numbered to 25.
- Red Refractor Parallel numbered to 5.
- Superfractor Parallel numbered 1/1.
- Printing Plates numbered 1/1.

Chrome Top Prospects (45 subjects)

Refractor Parallel

- Blue Refractor Parallel numbered to 99.
- Green Refractor Parallel numbered to 75. NEW!
- Gold Refractor Parallel numbered to 50.
- Black Refractor Parallel numbered to 35. NEW!
- Orange Refractor Parallel numbered to 25.
- Red Refractor Parallel numbered to 5.
- Superfractor Parallel numbered 1/1.
- Printing Plates numbered 1/1.

Chrome Roo kie Cards (45 subjects)

Refractor Parallel

- Blue Refractor Parallel numbered to 99.
- Green Refractor Parallel numbered to 75. NEW!
- Gold Refractor Parallel numbered to 50.
- Black Refractor Parallel numbered to 35. NEW!
- Orange Refractor Parallel numbered to 25.
- Red Refractor Parallel numbered to 5.
- Superfractor Parallel numbered 1/1.
- Printing Plates numbered 1/1.

Silver Ice Parallel (220 subjects): 1 per box

- Red Ice #'d to 25
- Purple Ice #'d to 10
- Black Ice #'d 1/1 Hobby Only. NEW!

INSERT CARDS

Dual Draftees Dual cards featuring top 2013 draft picks from the same franchise. NEW!

- Dual Draftee Autographs #'d to 25.
- Autograph Purple Parallel #'d to 10



- Autograph Black Parallel #'d 1/1

Bowman DRAFT PICK & PROSPECT DIE -CUTS NEW!

- Chrome Die-Cut Refractor Parallel
- Die-Cut X-Fractor Parallel #'d to 99 Hobby Only
- Die-Cut Superfractor #'d 1/1
- ?Autographed Die-Cut #'d to 24
- Atomic Refractor Autograph #'d 1/1

AUTOGRAPH CARDS

Bowman Chrome Autographed Prospects On-Card Autographs Refractor

- Blue Refractor sequentially numbered to 99.
- Green Refractor sequentially numbered to 75. NEW!
- Gold Refractor sequentially numbered to 50.
- Black Refractor sequentially numbered to 35. NEW!
- Orange Refractor sequentially numbered to 25.
- Purple Refractor sequentially numbered to 10.
- Red Refractor sequentially numbered to 5.
- SuperFractor sequentially numbered 1/1.
- Printing Plates numbered 1/1.

AUTOGRAPHED & RELIC INSERT CARDS

Draft Night Autographs

Featuring images of draftees taken from the actual 2013 MLB Draft Night, Chrome technology. Numbered to 10 NEW!

2013 SiriusXM ALL-STAR Futures Game Relic Cards

Jersey relic cards from the 2013 SiriusXM All-Star Futures Game, Numbered to 99.

- Purple Parallel #'d to 10 NEW!
- Black Parallel #'d 1/1 NEW!

Bowman Black (25 subjects) #'d to 25.

AFLAC /Perfect Game/Under Armour Autographed Cards

Autographed cards from past All-American H.S. games. Sequentially numbered.



MLB Draft Day Memorabilia Redemption

Redemption cards good for a player-worn hat, shirt or other item acquired from the MLB Draft Studio on draft day. NEW!

MLB Draft Ticket entry for a drawing to win 2 tickets to the 2014 MLB Draft.

BOWMAN CONTINUITY PROGRAM

Continuity Program

"Best Bowman Players of All-Time" Blue Refractors A continuity program in all Bowman products featuring the top players ever featured in the brand, reprinting their first Bowman card.

WHAT WE PULLED

Base Rookies: 23/45 (51.1%)

Base Rookie Chrome: 9/45 (20%)

Base Draft Picks: 66/130 (50.8%)

Base Draft Picks Chrome: 22/130 (16.9%)

Base Top Prospects: 24/45 (53.3%)

Base Top Prospects Chrome: 6/45 (13.3%)



The final main prospect set is here with 2013 Bowman Draft Picks. There are three base sets to chase within one product, each of which has a chrome set to match. The main base set comprises of 45 rookies. The other two sets have 130 draft picks and 45 top prospects. You can expect to get around half of each regular set within a box.

Rookie Blue /500 (1): Zach Wheeler

Rookie Chrome Refractor (1)

Draft Picks Chrome Refactor (5)

Draft Picks Chrome Blue Refractor /99 (1): Michael Lorenzen

Top Prospects Silver Ice (1)



Top Prospects Chrome REfractor (1)



As is the norm with Bowman products, there are a multitude of refractors and parallels for each card. The regular cards have four color parallels plus plates. The chrome versions have seven color parallels, along with a base refractor and plates. Even the Ice Parallel has four versions. There are even die cut versions for the cards, two of which are autographed. Super Collectors Beware!

Bowman Best Players (1)

Bowman Breakouts (1)

Dual Draft Picks (1)

Future Of The Franchise (2)



There isn't much in the way of inserts as compared to all the parallels. The Bowman Best Players Of All-Time continuity program appears again. Breakouts features minor leaguers who "broke out" using the 2013 campaign. Dual Draft Picks centers around two top picks within an organization in 2013. Future Of The Franchise is a mini card set highlighting players (veterans included) that are expected to be the face of the team for years to come.



Reese McGuire Autograph (on card)



Perfect Game Robert Kaminsky Autograph /210 (on card)



On average, each box will yield 1 autograph. This will be a prospect auto. Each one also has eight refractor types plus printing plates. Bonus autograph and relic sets include the ever-popular AFLAC/Perfect Game/Under Armour series. These feature prospects that were invited to High School All-American Games. There are also Draft Night Autos, featuring images directly from the 2013 MLB Draft. Relic cards are featured from the Futures ASG and come with two parallel versions. There are redemptions for items worn by draftees during the Draft as well as entry tickets for a chance to attend the 2014 MLB Draft.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Base - 4/5

Design - 4/5

Fun - 3.5/5

Value - 4.25/5

Rebuy - 4.5/5

Overall - 20.25/25 (81%)

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 of their products, visit them today at www.topps.com.





SCF Official Review: 2014 Press Pass By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

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

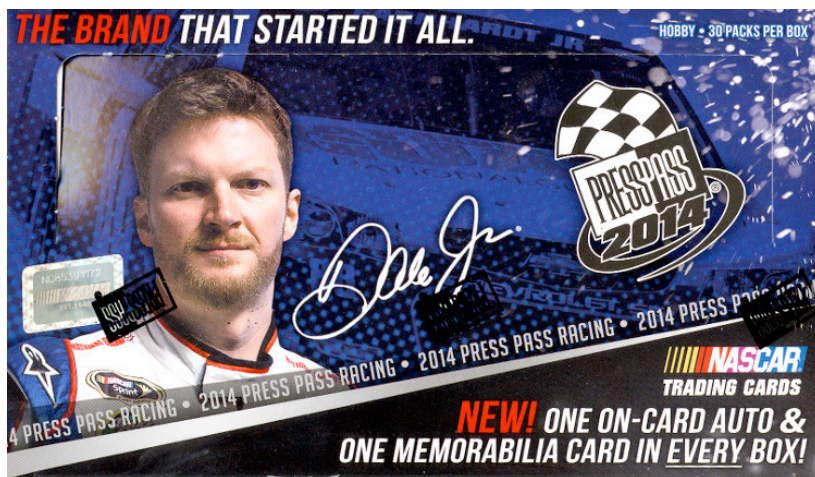
30 packs per box

6 cards per pack

Current Retail Price (online): \$64.99 - \$74.99

PRODUCT HIGHLIGHTS

- NEW FOR 2014: ONE on-card autograph and one memorabilia card in every hobby box!
- 100-card base set with 7 subsets including SNAPSHOTS, GIVING BACK, GROUND CREW and HOT SEAT.
- Color Proof Base Set Parallels-3 #D Cards Per Box
- REPLAY, VELOCITY, HALL OF FAME, ZERO CARD, and CUP CHASE Insert Cards-Look For REPLAY SP's!
- On-card autographs include press plate autos of PRESS PASS SIGNINGS and AERODYNAMIC AUTOGRAPHS.
- Look for race-used memorabilia cards, including the return of BURNING RUBBER, BURNING RUBBER LETTERMAN EDITION, FOUR WIDE and THREE WIDE.



PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

AUTOGRAPH GALLERY

One on-card autograph in every box!

on-card autographs include press plate autos of "press pass signings"and "aerodynamic autographs"

Aerodynamic Autographs

DIE-cut autographs with two levels to collect!

Press Pass Signings

All Autographs Are On-Card Four Levels To Collect Plus Look For Autographed Press Plates!

Certified Winners

Autographed Victory Tire Cards Highlighting Key Winners In 2013

2014 Signature Series

Featuring On-Card Autographs And Race-Used Memorabilia From The Most Popular Names In Nascar!



RACE-USED MEMORABILIA GALLERY

Burning Rubber

featuring swatches of race-used victory tires from 2013 -- multiple #'d parallels

Four Wide

Four Pieces Of Race-Used Memorabilia On One Card!

Three Wide

Featuring Race-Used Memorabilia From The Driver And Car

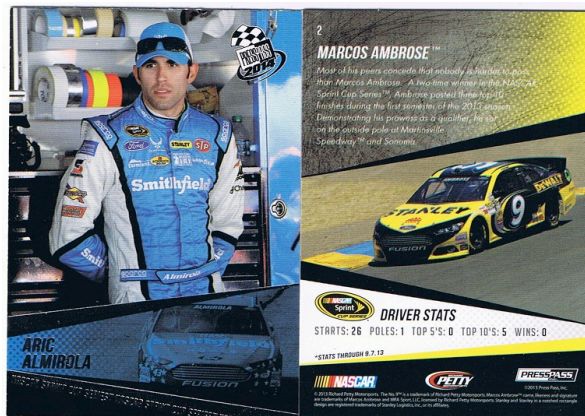
Burning Rubber Letterman Edition

Collect The Letters From The Manufacturer

WHAT WE PULLED

Base: 100/100 (100%)

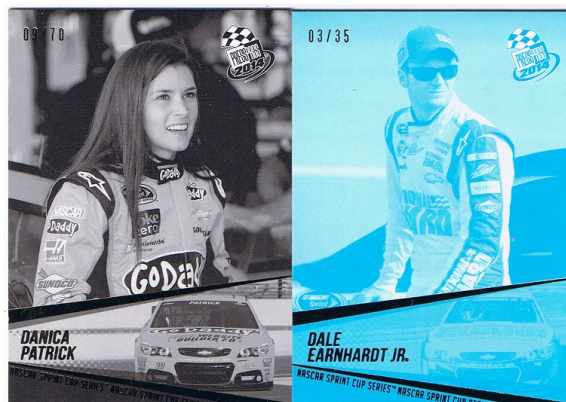
Dupes: 66



As is tradition with Press Pass and its Racing line, the new season starts at the tail end of the year. Press Pass Racing contains a 100-card base set with a bonus "0" card that is found once in every nine hobby boxes. The set profiles the main drivers in Sprint Cup, Nationwide and the Craftsman Truck Series. Other subsets include Giving Back (which features the drivers and their charitable foundations), Hot Seat (close-ups on the drivers behind the wheel), Ground Crew (Shots of cars in the pits along with the Pit Crew) and Snapshots (various pictures taken from the second half of the 2013 season). Final card is the checklist.

Black Proofs /70 (2): Danica Patrick, Sam Hornish Jr

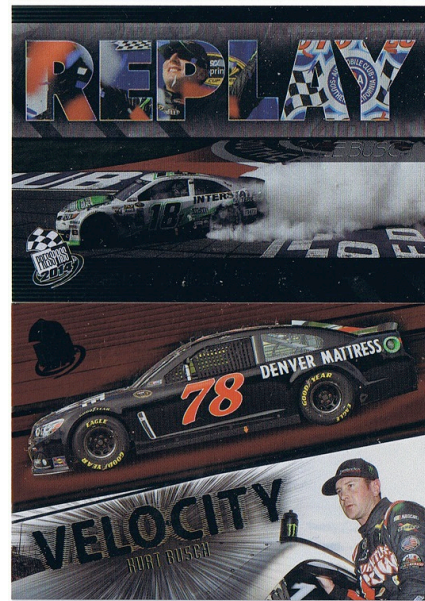
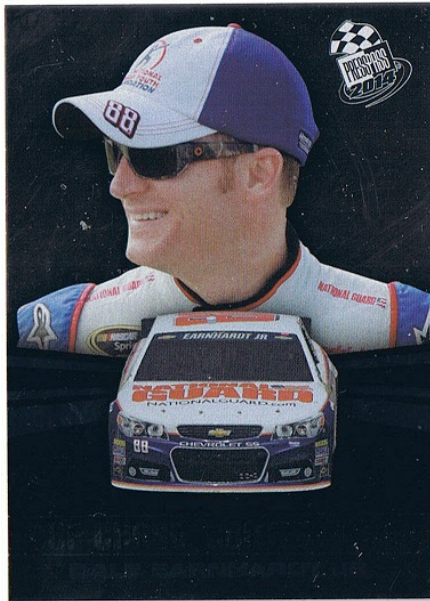
Cyan Proofs /35 (1): Dale Earnhardt Jr



There are four color proofs parallels that matches the colors used for the printing plates. The Magenta version can only be found in retail products.



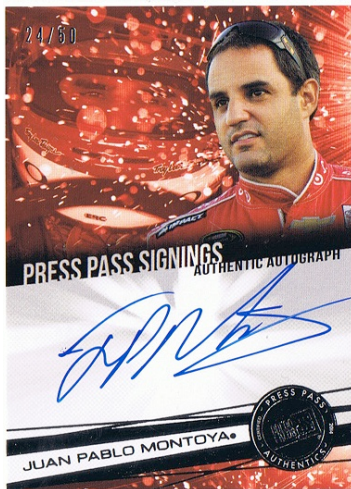
Cup Chase Contenders (1)
 Replay (5)
 Velocity (2)



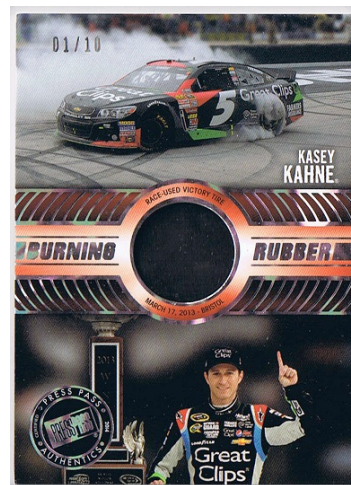
Cup Chase Contenders fall one per box and while collectible, it is really a contest card. On the back is a code that can be entered on the Press Pass website. The code corresponds with the driver on the front (outside of the Field Card). Should the driver make the Chase, you will receive a special set of cards devoted to the Chase field after the season is over. If you happen to have the winning driver, you will receive a specially made tire card from the championship car.

There are three insert set in 2014 Press Pass Racing. Replay (1:6) is a 24 card set that highlights the winners off the various Sprint Cup races before the Chase. Be on the lookout for five Short Prints. Velocity (1:15) contains a set of 9 cards that immortalizes drivers who set new speed records at tracks during the year. Finally, the HOF Continuity Program (1:30) sees the light for another year. The card set features 5 different cards for the five new inductees to the Hall Of Fame. Unfortunately, we did not receive one in this box.

Juan Pablo Montoya Autograph /50



Burning Rubber Kasey Kahne Tire /10



Each box contains one autograph and one relic. Typically, the relic card will be from the Burning Rubber series, which are swatches from winning tires. There is a Letterman series which features the letters imprinted on the tires. Also, there are Three Wide and Four Wide cards, which feature three or four different race used swatches. While Press Pass Signings is the main type of autographs, three other sets are interspersed. Two are hobby only (Signature Series and Certified Winners). Both are memorabilia autographs. The final set is a die cut series called Aerodynamic Autos.



FINAL THOUGHTS

Base: 5/5

Design: 4/5

Fun: 4/5

Value: 4/5

Rebuy: 4/5

Overall: 21/25 (84%)

NPN Information

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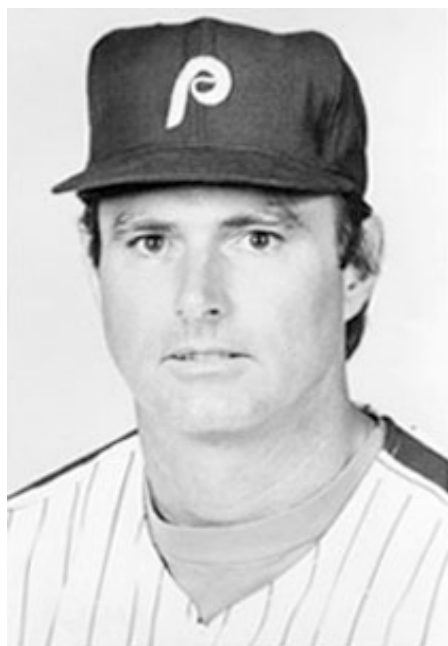


The Day that I Remembered By Chas Brailey aka LegendaryVintage

I suppose that a contest entry should be something catchy, savvy, and appealing to all readers. My entry is probably none of these things, at least to many readers but to someone, somewhere, this story will ring a bell in their own mind and will also make them remember.

I was born in 1981 in Covington, GA which is just a hop and a skip from Atlanta. In 1991 at the ripe age of 10, I attended my first baseball game. I went to see the Atlanta Braves play the Houston Astros. It was immediately apparent to my uncle (who took me to the game) that my love for the game was going to be something deep. I was glued to every play, I could smell the different foods, I could hear the fans shouting, and I could see them smiling. I was only 10, but I can't forget the enjoyment that day brought to my life. At that time, I couldn't really explain why I loved baseball so much and even today it would have been hard for me to explain if not for a special occasion I had with my daughter.

My daughter is sort of a tom cat. She likes climbing trees, throwing rocks, making mud pies, and she really loves sports (baseball most of all). I consider her my collecting buddy as she knows more about sports than most men in their 30s. We attend card shows, conventions, and many things of the sort whenever it is driving distance from us and it was just a few months back that I learned a lesson from my daughter (and I've learned plenty from her). We were at a show in which a few old legends were attending (the only one that matters is Steve Carlton). We had purchased a ticket to get him to sign a baseball and I was thrilled to be able to meet the pitching legend. There were signs everywhere " No ticket, No autograph " and other signs that said " Do not ask players to sign an item unless you have a ticket ". Well we were at nearly the end of the line for Steve Carlton and when I made it up to the table he signed my ball and I moved on, but before I could get my daughters hand and continue my journey through the convention, she said to Steve Carlton, " Hey, can I ask you a question? " He smiled and said sure.



She looked at him square in the eyes and said " Why do you charge people for your autograph?" and Carlton sorta grinned and said " Well, it is kind of hard to explain and I don't think you would understand ". As I tried to tug my daughter away, she said to him " I bet I already know the answer, I bet you charge people for autographs because you know most of them are just going to turn around and sell them." At this point, I let go of her hand and decided to back off and let her take on Steve Carlton. After all, I knew Carlton had met his match. He said " Well....., yes It has become to much a business but it wasn't always like this and to be honest I wish it weren't like this". At this moment I saw Steve Carlton sorta gaze up as if he was thinking, and he looked at my daughter and said, "I remember back when I was a player, I loved baseball, I loved the smell of the grass, I loved to hear the cheers, and I loved the fans" and do you know what else I loved to do?" My daughter said " what did you love to do "? he replied " I loved to sign autographs " He reached down on the table and picked up a Phillies post card and wrote my daughter a note on the back which reads " To Brooke, Thanks so much for helping



me remember how much I really love this game” Love, Steve Carlton Romans 10:9

She reminded Carlton of how he felt back in the 60s and 70s but she also reminded me of how I felt in the 90s. I too had remembered why I love baseball so much. I love it because it is about so many things.

IT IS ABOUT TEAMWORK! IT IS ABOUT COMPETITION! IT IS ABOUT SPORTSMANSHIP! IT IS ABOUT FAMILY! IT IS ABOUT HARD WORK! IT IS ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT AMERICA WAS FOUNDED ON!





What is your Childhood Worth?

By Tyson Michie aka Wickabee

I collect hockey cards. Do you want to see my favourite one? Here it is.

That's a 1991-92 Pro Set #531 Niklas Lidstrom Rookie Card. It's not worth much; the book value is \$1.00, and it's not a team or player I particularly like. I mean, I like Lidstrom, he's the only guy in my mind who comes close to Bobby Orr in terms of best NHL defensemen, but he played for the Wings and just isn't a guy I would collect. More than that, I have cards worth much more than a dollar in my collection. I have cards in my collection that are so rare that Beckett, the pricing authority on all things card related, won't even take a stab at placing a value on them. This card, though, this basically worthless picture of Mr. Lidstrom, is my favourite. I'll tell you why.

I've had this card for a long, long time. Since sometime in the spring of 1992, I believe. Hockey cards were huge back then and everyone, old and young, was collecting them. I was 6-7 years old and all I wanted to do was pull a Rookie Card out of a pack. I had bought several packs with my allowance, but was never lucky enough to pull an elusive RC. One day, I found myself in front of the comic shop with a couple of bucks in my pocket and my mom let me go buy a couple of packs. I remember it like it was yesterday. I bought two packs of Pro Set, and waited until we got home. I went into my room and opened the first pack. A few cards in I saw a Red Wings logo and the word "ROOKIE" over the name of some dude I'd never heard of. I was over the moon. I finally pulled a Rookie Card!

I opened the second pack and saw that "ROOKIE" again. This time, though, it was a St. Louis Blues logo and I had heard the name, Nelson Emerson, before! That didn't matter, though, he'd come in second. This "Niklas" guy was on my new favourite card. When my dad got home I showed him the two cards. His response:

"Nice! Emerson is supposed to be really good. Never heard of the other guy."



It didn't matter. "Niklas" came first. Fast forward about 20 years and I find all my old cards in the back of a closet. I start going through them and I see all sorts of rookie cards of stars; Mike Modano, Jaromir Jagr, Martin Brodeur, Sergei Fedorov and others, and all I could think was, "Wow, what are these worth?" (for the record, other than the Brodeur, nothing.) Then I flipped to the next card, and there he was. I saw that Niklas Lidstrom card and it all flooded back. I was 7 years old again and I loved it. Since then, I've started collecting again and, as I've said, I have some nice, valuable cards in my possession. That Lidstrom card, though, is still the centre piece and cornerstone of my collection. That is why, even if I had the money, I have no interest in buying the vast and incredibly impressive collection put together by Simon Bourque of Quebec. Bourque, now 61, began collecting hockey cards as a child and never seems to have stopped, until maybe now. Bourque is putting his collection up for auction. This doesn't seem like such a big deal until

one considers what exactly this collection is.



Classic Auctions, the auction house who sold Paul Henderson's 1972 Team Canada jersey for \$1.3 million, is selling Bourque's collection, and expect to hit well over \$1million when all is said and done. What cards could possibly go for that? The cards that should be going into a museum or the Hockey Hall of Fame. You see, Bourque's collection spans from 1910 to the early 1940s. That doesn't allow for the iconic 1951-52 Parkhurst set with RCs of Maurice Richard, Gordie Howe and many other all-time greats, but how does a 1911-12 Georges Vezina RC sound? Or how about a 1925 Newsy Lalonde graded "Mint"? A 1911-12 "Phantom" Joe Malone RC? Maybe you just want the Fred "Cyclone" Taylor card from the same set.

I would love to own these cards. Not only are they rare and valuable, they are a history lesson of the sport of hockey. A look at the people who built the sport up to the heyday of the 1950s. It's also a history of sports card collecting. When I was a kid, cards were becoming a product in their own right. Before my time, they were a way to sell gum. Simon Bourque's collection shows they were initially an extra with your cigarettes and chocolate. In fact, there's so much history in here, this collection even includes what can arguably be called the first short-printed card of all time.

Today, in the card collecting hobby, short printed cards are all over the place. There are thousands of cards bearing the markings /10, /9, /3 even 1/1. In the collecting world, this is seen as a relatively new practice, which has become quite mainstream over the past 5-10 years. Card companies do this now because collectors want to pull these rare cards and knowing they may be in a given box will sell that box. In the 1923-24 season, though, the William Patterson Company was giving away free skates to whoever could put their set of cards together. To avoid giving away too many, though, they short printed the first card ever, #25, Bert "Pig Iron" Corbeau's RC. There's one of those in this collection too.

The reason I have no interest in it is the reason I collect. In an interview, Bourque mention "passion" as a word when describing his childhood hobby. He collected for the love of it. He loved collecting, he loved hockey and that's why he has all these cards. He was a true collector, not hoarding cards as an investment, though they turned out to be a damn good one, but because he loved them the same way I, and all collectors do.

If one has the money, it's a decent investment, but I don't want my hobby to be an investment. A hobby is supposed to be fun, relaxing and rewarding. While I do buy and sell online, I am never looking to make a profit, just to keep my habit hobby going. Trying to profit on a hobby turns it into a job, and I don't want it becoming one. At the same time, as cool, rare, valuable and historical as these cards are, they don't mean anything to me personally. The players whose cards I do collect are either local guys I grew up with, such as Barry Brust and Justin Schultz, while others are favourites from my childhood or now, like Trevor Linden and Chris Higgins. The point is I don't collect Vezina, Lalonde or Malone.

Would it be nice to own these cards? You bet! I'd sell them in a second and roll around in the money! But that's it, other than their cash value, they're meaningless to me. They're not players I ever got to watch, some of the teams I was not even alive to see, and we're not talking Kansas City Scouts or California Golden Seals here.

I don't want to buy Simon Bourque's childhood, I'm busy trying to acquire my own.



Tony Gonzalez's Swan Song **By J.R. Lebert aka jrlebert**

Tony Gonzalez has not fumbled since President Obama took office, and just once in the 21st century.



Think about that for just one second. Of the 27 other players with at least 65+ receptions in 2013, just 9 have yet to fumble this year. If they can keep that pace up for 13 more seasons, they will basically have equaled one of the many incredible marks that Tony Gonzalez, the NFL's Greatest Tight End EVER, has put up over an incomparable 17-year career.

There are just three games left in the career of Tony Gonzalez. Three more times to see Picasso paint, watch Baryshnikov dance, or hear Pavarotti sing. Watching Gonzalez go over the middle, haul in a pass after boxing out a defender, and reach across that goal line for yet another touchdown is akin to watching Barry Sanders juke a defender, Joe Montana play in the Super Bowl, or see the look in a QB's eyes as Lawrence Taylor breaks through the line. There is just something magical, timeless, and, well, "legendary looking."

The numbers Tony Gonzalez has put up over the course of his career set him so far apart from ANY other tight end in history that it almost seems unfair to compare them. Only one other TE in history, Shannon Sharpe, made it to the 10,000 yard receiving mark, barely creeping over the mark at 10,060 yards. Two other active TE's, the Cowboys' Jason Witten and the resurgent Antonio Gates of the Chargers, seem poised to break through the 10K mark in the next season or two. However, with just 54 yards, Tony is set to break through a mark no TE has ever come close to. 11,000? Yes, but that was 2009. 12,000? Yes, in 2010. How about 15,000 yards! Gonzalez is set to retire, at worst, 5th all-time in yards receiving, and a full 5,000 yards clear of any other TE.



While Gonzalez hasn't been fumbling, he certainly HAS been catching, almost everything thrown his way. With just 5 more grabs in 2013, he will be on season 14 with at least 70. Sharpe had just 5 such seasons, same as Gates. If Witten does it this year, that will make just 8 such campaigns. Just four TE's have ever made it to 700 grabs, the three previously mentioned and our Tony. Gates has just cracked the 700 catch mark. Sharpe made it just past 800, and Witten may soon pass 900 sometime in 2014. Only one TE has ever reached 900. Or 1,000. Or 1,100. Or 1,200. Or 1,300. You guessed it. In fact, just the G.O.A.T., Jerry Rice, has bettered Gonzalez's mark of 1,300+ catches. No other player in the history of the league has even reached 1,103 grabs. Simply remarkable.



A TE's goal line value is what is supposed to set them apart from others on the field, and yet again, it's Tony Gonzalez as a cut above. Just 8 players have ever made it to 100 TD's receiving, and Tony sits 6th among greats with his 109, and a full 20+ TDs clear of any other TE. In fact, it's not Sharpe, but Gates who sits at #2 all-time for TE's, with 86. Sharpe and Witten sit a great deal further back, with just 62 and 51 respectively. If Gonzalez never scores again, his name will be stuck sitting alongside Barry Sanders at #15 all time in touchdowns.

Having already been named to 13 Pro Bowls and 6 1st Team AP rosters, there is little doubt of Gonzalez's place in history. The only thing that continues to set him apart from any other to play the position more than his accolades and numbers is his clubhouse demeanor and leadership. Throughout a Hall of Fame career, Tony has out-worked, out-classed, and out-everything else'd every other player he played with. Despite the likes of Elvis Grbac, Trent Green, and Damon Huard to throw him passes, Tony Gonzalez has continued to be an incredible asset both in the locker room and on the field. To put it simply, they need to re-name the Tight End Wing in Canton the Tony Gonzalez wing, after the greatest TE to ever put on cleats.





My Wish List for 2014 (And a Look Back at My 2013 List!)

By J.R. Lebert aka jrlebert

It's that time of the year again, when holiday music plays from mall elevators and radios alike, ugly sweaters are suddenly the rage, and the baseball fan both reflects on a year gone by and looks forward to what could be in the year to come.

Looking back on my wish list, let's see how nice Santa was in 2013! Here was my list *last year*, with a quick recap:



A Full Season for Stephen (Strasburg):

Check, I guess. It was a very different season for Stephen Strasburg in 2013. His Nationals were baseball's biggest disappointment, and Stephen's numbers, or lack thereof, were partly responsible for the slide. Though healthy for most of the season, his wins dropped from 15 to 8, strikeouts from 197 to 191, despite 23+ more innings pitched, and he failed to garner an All-Star bid or defend his Silver Slugger award. But... he was healthy!

Hall of Fame Love... But Not for Cheaters:

Check, again, and yet not. Yes! Baseball did it! They kept out the cheaters! Clemens, Bonds and Sosa, all first time ballot members, were shut out emphatically, with none of the three even getting 40% of the vote. McGwire and Palmeiro are both also still on the outside looking in. Well done! However...

the writers also failed to elect ANYONE else, including 3000 hit club member Craig Biggio, the greatest offensive catcher in history, Mike Piazza, former MVP and ROY Jeff Bagwell, or any of a few of the other deserving ballot members. Oops.

One More Year for Mo:

Check, check, check! The 2013 season turned in to one, long 162-game victory parade for the greatest closer of all-time. While the Yankees were held out of the postseason, a rarity in the Rivera era, the regular season was vintage 'Mo. 44 more saves for #42, and his 13th All-Star selection, taking home the MVP in his final Midseason Classic.

162 Games for Trout:

Another check! We got it, or close to it, as Mike Trout played in 157 games, finishing second (again) in the MVP vote, to Miguel Cabrera (again). He added his second All-Star and Silver Slugger selections, raised his OBP 33 points, raised his walk total by 43 (!), and struck out 3 fewer times in almost 80 more PA's!





Peace and Joy for Marlins Fans:

Well... they did get most of a season from 2013 NL ROY winner Jose Fernandez! That's at least a half-check, right?

A Playoff Appearance for Pittsburgh (or Kansas City!):

Check again! The Pittsburgh Pirates made the postseason in 2013, winning the NL Wild Card Game before falling in 5 games to the Cardinals in the NLDS. I almost made it two-for-two, as Kansas City made a 14-game improvement on its way to an 86-76 record and relevance in September.

I almost got everything on my list! So without further ado, here's my wish list for the next baseball year, 2014!

Smart Decisions by my New York Mets:

Things are not starting off very nicely in Gotham for my Mets, or for my personal sanity. Matt Harvey is on the shelf for all of 2014. Yuck. One of the longest tenured Mets, Justin Turner, was non-tendered in a relatively surprising roster move. The Mets front office signed OF Chris Young, yes, *that* Chris Young, who batted .200 and struck out in more than 25% of his PA's, to a \$7.25M, one-year contract, while not yet resigning the younger, faster, and probably cheaper Eric Young, Jr.

While grabbing Curtis Granderson for a relative bargain of \$60M over 4 years could be a good move, wasting \$20M on former PED user Bartolo Colon reminded me that it's still the Mets' front office making the moves. We'll see what 2014 brings.

Smart Decisions by the Hall of Fame Voters:

2013 didn't go so well for the HOF voters, so here's hoping for a better showing from the 2014 class. Making it much easier this time around should be the first-year members on the ballot, including should-be shoo-ins Greg Maddux, Frank Thomas, Mike Mussina, and Tom Glavine, as well as holdovers Biggio, Bagwell, Piazza, and Raines. At least the voters are off on the right foot, with the elections of managers Joe Torre, Tony LaRussa, and Bobby Cox via the Veterans Ballot.

New Blood in the World Series:

I'm looking at you, Kansas City! The last time you made the playoffs, you won it all back in 1985. Two years earlier, the Orioles made their last WS appearance, and won. Will one of these two represent the AL, or will it be the same few teams we have seen most of the 2000's?

In the NL, how about the Dodgers? Not since the Gibson HR in '88 were the Boys in Blue a part of the Fall Classic. Ten years later, the Padres were swept from the Series by the Yankees. And it has been almost 70 years, since 1945, that the Cubbies have made it to October.





Hopefully one of these teams can bring some new life in to the World Series.

More of the Same from Trout, Kershaw, Machado, and Hernandez:

Baseball saw two players take command of the title “Best in Baseball,” Mike Trout and Clayton Kershaw. These two Left Coast-ers have dominated all comers over the past few years, and I hope for more of the same in 2014. All Kershaw did in 2014 was win his 2nd Cy Young, lead the NL in ERA and WHIP for the 3rd consecutive year, and lead the Dodgers back to the postseason. Trout looks to emerge from Miguel Cabrera’s MVP shadow, and will have to lead the way with the loss of slugger Mark Trumbo in the lineup.



Looking to take their step forward into super-stardom, Baltimore’s Manny Machado and Miami’s Jose Fernandez are ready for their close-up. Machado was on pace to break the all-time doubles mark before injuries slowed him down the stretch. He had to “settle” for a league leading 51 doubles and his first Gold Glove award. Fernandez posted the 4th lowest H/9 since 1972, won the ROY, and posted a 2.19 ERA. With both players in their age 21 season next year, they look to have the spotlight sewed up for quite some time.

A Healthy Climb Up the Ladder for Jeter:

With a forgettable, injury-plagued 2013 now firmly in the rear view, Derek Sanderson Jeter looks to continue his assault on the all-time hits list. Currently sitting 10th, one ahead of Eddie Collins and three behind Paul Molitor for 9th, Jeter could climb to as high as 5th by year’s end. Needing just 120 hits to pass Yaz (8th), Honus Wagner (7th), and Cap Anson (6th), it will take a Jeter-like 199 hits to supplant Tris Speaker in 5th, and will sit him at over 3,500 career hits. We’ll see how nice Santa is to me in 2014!

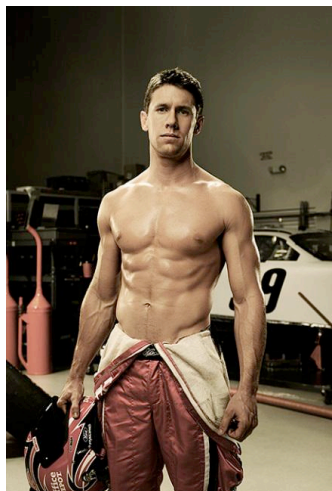




The Never Ending Debate **By Stephen Taylor aka race crazy**

As the racing season wound down and it became evident that Nascar would celebrate Jimmie Johnson as a 6-time champion and Formula 1 had already crowned their 4 time consecutive champ Sebastian Vettel, various media outlets and talking heads not familiar with auto racing began to pay attention. With this comes the naïve opinions and the misinformed quick judgments about auto racing. Most of our collective race fan group doesn't much pay attention to this nonsense unless one thing is said-and former NFL player turned Fox Sports analyst Donovan McNabb opened up that Pandora's Box. McNabb stated that Nascar drivers and racing drivers in general aren't athletes, and that sitting in a car and driving for 4 hours is not an athletic endeavor as normal people do it every day. His unpopular opinion came right after a Nascar race on Fox Sports so the majority of the racing viewers were tuned in to hear his opinion and the internet soon exploded.

Carl Edwards is one of many racing drivers whose physique and stamina match those of elite endurance athletes



There are many things wrong with McNabb's opinion mostly because he is either misinformed or ignorant, but this debate has been going on since the beginning of auto racing when it was more about the speed and daredevil nature of crazy people pushing the automobile to its limit. Racecar drivers weren't considered athletes of the time but progressively as the car technology grew and the demands on the racing driver became larger, an athletic element to driving on the edge increased. Drivers are not required to run and jump as the definition of an athlete states but their ability to maintain a mental focus under high stress along with the constant G-Forces emitted on their bodies-especially those of Formula 1 pilots, put them under the same time of athletic conditions of any other athletic endeavor. Over a 600 mile race drivers can lose up to 6 to 8 lbs. as the heat in the cockpit and G-forces torture their body. With a constant heart rate sustained for most of the duration of an event it is very similar to running a marathon.

Many tests and theories have been explored on both sides of the issue. Racing drivers have been featured on Sports Science and were among the best endurance athletes ever tested in the lab and had a quicker reaction time than NFL wide receivers. To a former athlete like Donovan McNabb none of this mattered because he chose not to care or research the topic he was told to talk about. Instead McNabb made the natural assumption it must be easy because most everyone drives everyday of their lives, these guys are just going a little faster. All the other factors that come with racing and pushing the limit of an automobile do not register into the non-racing person's mind. If McNabb would spend 10



minutes driving a high speed go-kart, or better yet, a full blown open wheel car or stock car his opinion might change. Then again-it might not.

Body Type doesn't qualify an "athlete"



It is a debate that will go on for the eternity of auto racing. In my mind, drivers are athletes. Yes there are some that can't run marathons like Jimmie Johnson or bench 375 like Carl Edwards, but the same goes for all sports. A Prince Fielder or CC Sabathia isn't exactly athletic specimens and neither are most NFL lineman. Their athletic ability consists of doing certain things well or having been given the gift of size and strength. Racing drivers have been given the gift to drive. I am obviously biased in my opinion of the question but perhaps McNabb should listen to his fellow former athlete Shaquille O'Neal, who had the pleasure of racing against Dale Earnhardt Jr. in a stock car for an ABC reality show. In a 2010 interview with Nascar.com shortly after his race the famed basketball great said this: "Whoever said these guys aren't athletes are out of their minds. That was the toughest three hours I've ever had in my life. I was fitted for a car, me and Dale raced 50 laps, and I slept for two days after that. I really did." For now the debate will continue and be hot for a while until people forget about it and the next former athlete talking head brings it up again. As race fans we all beg them to stop. Auto racing at the top level is an athletic endeavor, end of story.





Courtside

By Jay Weger aka Jay520

Contests & Winners

So far through December 8th in the NBA Top Performers Contest BigBaller23, jdlee123 and Thrillseeker are in a tie for 1st with 6 points each while Christianfriend is in 2nd with 5 points and missnesmith and toddsr are in 3rd with 4 points. missnesmith earned 100 CC for coming in 1st place in Oct./Nov and has earned a playoff bid. 2nd place was Thrillseeker earning 50 CC and a playoff bid with toddsr in 3rd also making a playoff bid. jdlee123 leads the Guess the Score contests for the regular members with 9 wins so far through the 8th of December. 2nd place is 70sbestcardboard with 6 wins while lil5uperman is 3rd with 5 wins. lil5up3rman and Rogulon are on top of the VIP Guess the Score contests with 8 wins each. gladdyontherise is in 2nd with 7 wins and following him in 3rd is rtsjr with 6 wins.

Hobby News

With the new rookie crop out now playing in the NBA the 2 hottest are Victor Oladipo and Michael Carter-Williams. With just little over a month into the season they have shown their potential to be rookie o the year candidates. And that means demand in the hobby world. The Michael Carter-Williams autos out of Hoops have been selling for \$300 to \$400 each while Oladipo's autos are close behind. M C-W and Oladipo autos out of Totally Certified have been selling for \$250 to \$300. Time will tell if they will be worth the investment down the road.

NBA News

The NBA Season so Far

This 2013/14 NBA season is only about 20 games in, but is already shaping up to be an awesome season. Despite the struggles of some teams such as the Knicks and Nets, many other teams have stepped up and are surprising a lot of people. Indiana is currently 18-3, the Heat 16-5, Portland is 18-4, and the Spurs and Thunder are both 15-4. The Eastern conference has been particularly weak this year, with just 3 teams above .500 (Indiana, Miami and Atlanta). The Western conference, meanwhile, has 11 of 15 teams at or above .500. Injuries have been bad this year, with many star players missing time. Derrick Rose will be out for the remainder of this season with a torn meniscus in his knee, and Dwyane Wade and Kobe Bryant have recently missed games with health issues. Other stars, such as Rajon Rondo, are close to comebacks but it is still unknown when they will return. All in all, it has been an exciting season thus far, and will only get better as many stars regain their health.

New 13-14 Panini Releases

2013-14 Elite Basketball is coming to collectors everywhere in late January. Each hobby box will contain 20 packs per box, five cards per pack and will include **2** autographs, **2** memorabilia cards, **2** numbered Rookie Cards and **2** numbered



Legends. 6 different inserts like all-new Face 2 Face and Franchise Future with prime parallels numbered to 25 or less including Rookie Essentials, Throwback Threads and Back to the Future. Gold and Black parallels numbered to 25 and 1, respectively, in Elite Status and Elite Series. Also autographs of the 2013 NBA Rookie Class in the New Breed subset that includes both base and prime-memorabilia versions.

2013-14 Gold Standard Basketball will hit shelves in late February. The SRP hasn't been announced but probably \$180 or more for a 10 card box containing 4 autographs, 1 memorabilia. A 275-card base set with certain players having a uniform variation, 90 Metal cards and 50 Solid Gold 14-karat gold cards. Memorabilia cards such as Bullion Brand Logos and Black Gold Threads. Four brand new autograph inserts all numbered to 199 or less as well as 2013 NBA Draft autos. New inserts such as Ring Bearers and Finals MVPs insert numbered to 20 or less.





The Final Lap

By RGM81 aka Richard McAdam



It's hard to believe that this will be the final article written by me for Collectors Corner. After many years on the Writing Team and as the Hockey Team's representative for the magazine, this final issue is a little hard to write. It's been a pretty important part of my hobby life for the past few years, and I have truly appreciated the opportunity to share my thoughts, opinions, and commentary with all of the readers from SCF and beyond. Thanks to all of you for making this a worthwhile venture!

As we head into 2014, naturally a lot of the discussion around water coolers everywhere is turning to the Olympic Games in Sochi. After the thrilling conclusion in overtime for Canada in Vancouver, fans across the nation and around the world are wondering what excitement and drama we will see on the larger ice surface in Russia. I think that with all of the amazing talent available, this tournament could be even more exciting, action-packed, and memorable than Vancouver was, and that is no small feat.

While I am naturally overjoyed at the emerging consensus that Carey Price is going to be the likely starter for Team Canada, there is still one matter that has me at times equally befuddled, perplexed, and angry: that there is even a discussion as to whether or not there is a place on the roster for P.K. Subban. We are talking about the reigning and defending Norris Trophy winner, a player capable of excelling in all three zones with a tremendous slap shot from the point. On a Montreal Canadiens team that occasionally struggles offensively, Subban is the straw that stirs the drink—he is the team leader in points, is a strong +8, and averages 25 minutes per night without playing much on the penalty kill. On a large ice surface, why would the Team Canada brass not want to go with a guy blessed with explosive speed and back-checking ability? Yes, he can be a high-risk player, but as many Habs fans can attest to, he has toned down that aspect of his game to be more responsible, and on those rare occasions where he does make a gaffe, he is often able to correct it himself before any damage can be done. I mean no disrespect to the likes of Jay Bouwmeester or Alex Pietrangelo, two fine players that I rarely get to see play, but I see P.K. 82 games a year, and I just feel that he gives any team that extra X-factor that can be so crucial in a shortened tournament format. And who am I to disagree with Wayne Gretzky's assessment that if you put P.K. Subban on Team Canada, you win a gold medal?



Moving on to some more hobby-related agenda items...

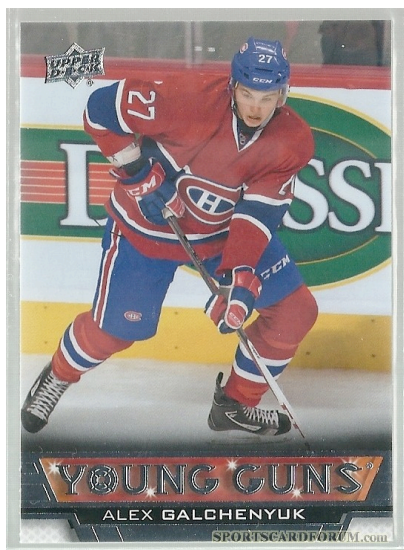
Have you heard about the Cirque des Signatures event coming in Montreal on January 12th? I've got an article in this fine magazine (still can't believe it's the final issue!) previewing the event and the spectacular EXCLUSIVE offer



available to SCF members to score an autographed and limited edition Brendan Gallagher Canvas Young Guns. This should be a stellar event and I hope that members in Quebec and the surrounding provinces will be able to attend.

How are you guys enjoying this year's Double Rookie Class offerings from Panini and Upper Deck? I must say that nearly three months into the 2013-14 card season I am having more fun with the hobby than I have probably since the Canadiens Centennial set came out in early 2009. I've broken more product and collected more hot rookies than I have in a number of years. I hope that other collectors are also enjoying the resurgence in the hobby and snapping up the hottest cards on the market. It really has been a fantastic time for LCS owners, who have seen their business increase after a moribund 2012-13 product calendar, and many hobbyists are back with a renewed vigor this year. Remember, every box you break contributes to Hockey Related Revenue and bumps up the salary cap!

To this point I've been pretty strict in limiting myself to only the "true rookies" of Brendan Gallagher and Alex Galchenyuk, while also picking up the occasional Jarred Tinordi and Nathan Beaulieu cards. I was surprised that to this point the only card produced by Upper Deck and Panini of Michael Bournival is his Canvas Young Guns. It's a very nice looking card, and hopefully they will get more made of him soon as he continues to cement his roster spot with the Canadiens. It's been a couple of years since there was a truly collectible Canadiens rookie, and here we are this year with two guys that are going to be a part of the team's core for many years to come plus some very enticing prospects. Between that and the team's on-ice performance, which has them solidly in a playoff position as we near the halfway mark of the season, it's a good time to be a Habs fan!



Have to love these three parts of the Habs bright future – and the future is now thanks to UD & Panini!

With the holidays upon us, there are some amazing product releases out already and coming very soon. Upper Deck has recently released the long-anticipated Team Canada set as well as the annual favourite Black Diamond—both feature some incredible designs, subsets, and chase cards that will keep collectors happy for a long time. Panini's last release was Select (you can see a shiny Gallagher just above) and they will be putting out Dominion just in time for Christmas. The high-end staple has moved to a mid-season release and will feature the same great on-card rookies and other treasures with a lower price point. In The Game has also made a fantastic release just in time for the holidays by releasing its Ultimate Tough Decade Superbox, which features a pack of Ultimate Memorabilia 12th edition, a box of



Decades 90s, and a box of Enforcers II, plus a series of memorabilia and autograph cards exclusive to the product. This product is already sold out and will be a great present to put under the tree!

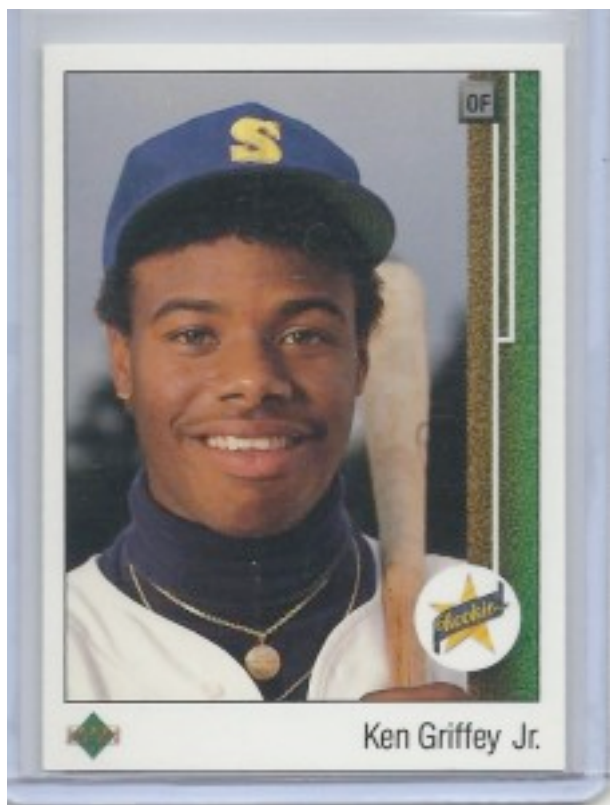
And so comes to a close the Hockey Team page for Collectors Corner. On behalf of the entire Team, I thank you all for your time, your thoughts, and your contributions. We will see you around the boards. Have a very safe, happy, and cardboard filled Christmas!





Redemptions: the Good, the Bad and the Expired **By Matt Lambe aka bradyfanatic1224**

Pulling a redemption can be a time to celebrate, especially when you look at the checklist and realize that your redemption is for a shield, one of one autograph. At the same time, it can be a time of anger, rage and disappointment. Looking at your shield, one of one autograph from 2008 Exquisite and realizing that most companies will do nothing to help your expired code. I've had my own personal positive and negative experiences with redemptions. I've noticed most people on Sports Card Forum absolutely despise redemptions. I thought we should explore the reasons why we have so many redemptions in today's hobby.



Like many collectors who've dealt with redemptions, the one that sticks out in my mind is the negative experience. In 2005, my local card shop had some packs left of 2002 Upper Deck Authentics. I hadn't ever tried opening these before, but I liked the design because it was similar to the 1989 Upper Deck (Ken Griffey Jr. RC pictured on the left) baseball set.

A few packs in, I was ecstatic that I had pulled a Troy Aikman autograph redemption. After looking it over, I realized that it was 6 months past its expiration date. Thinking that a simple phone call to customer service would help, I called the next day. I realize that their job is to follow the rules and read the policy to make sure it's clear, but you'd think they'd at least act like they felt bad. Sure the customer service representative might not know much about sports cards or sports players, but they have to realize that missing out on a card is tough for collectors. After a couple minutes on the phone with them, I knew that the redemption was nothing more than another decoy. My positive experiences have far outweighed my negative ones. From dealing with replacements to the Russell Wilson Contenders redemptions, companies can be quick and professional. I've always

treaded lightly with older products going forward because of this.

A lot of collectors will look at the companies to blame for having an abundance of redemptions. I think an equal part of the blame should be placed on the collectors/consumers. The demand for more new product continues to be strong, even with redemptions popping up everywhere. Demand is ultimately what drives more brands being created and released. Even with the uncertainty of redemptions being fulfilled, they still do very well on the secondary markets. That reason alone shows me that redemptions won't go away in favor of reducing the amount of product on a yearly basis. So far this year, Geno Smith has 288 different autographed cards and no redemptions (not counting Exquisite). Jordan Poyer has only 56 different autographed cards and has several redemptions. Sure you see people every now and again threatening to boycott a brand because of redemptions. Will this work to affect how companies use redemptions? I can't see it



working. Am I saying that I love redemptions? Of course not, I don't like the idea of waiting for a card that is owed to me. I know that I have to accept them though to keep the hobby going and the new brands hitting shelves. I'd rather have the products come out on time, and have a few redemptions sprinkled in. Let's face it, we all can't afford the 10 card pack Flawless Basketball (MSRP: \$2,035/dacardworld.com) and a chance to avoid redemptions.

Is there a reason that you'd stop buying packs/boxes? I've asked myself that question multiple times over the last couple years. I've had periods of time where I haven't purchased many packs/boxes, but I've purchased singles. If you think about it, purchasing singles is still supporting the breaking of boxes, cases and packs. Sure you didn't directly open a pack, buy a box or bust a case. That card came from someone ripping it though. More than likely by you buying the card, you're reloading the money train to head to the card station for another visit. Obviously buying singles takes the risk out of opening wax and that satisfies some. The rush and the fun you get from opening packs is what inspires others.

That little voice inside each of our heads still gives us the thought that we'll pull that huge hit. I won't lie, that's what keeps me going back for another box. In conclusion, the bottom line for me is that I can't blame the card companies because I'm encouraging them through buying. Redemptions are just a product of the beast. Sometimes it's a love to hate them and sometimes it's a hate to love them situation.





Changes to the MLB By Jared Serre aka jaredthe79

Baseball is a great game. From powerhouses like the entire lifespan New York Yankees with twenty-seven championships to turn around teams such as the 2013 Boston Red Sox after a sixty-nine win campaign in 2012. The sport is a great getaway from the stresses of daily life. But the problem is that the sport has some major issues that need to be worked out. One of these problems is the whole instant replay ordeal. It was recently okayed by the owners, but why wasn't this in effect before? Instant replay was available in most major sports like football and basketball, but baseball wouldn't get it until now. Where was instant replay back in early 2012 when Jerry Hairston, Jr., playing with the Dodgers, was called out by umpire Tim Welke and Todd Helton was more than a foot off of the first base bag?



What about back in June 2010 at Armando Galarraga's "I'm-Perfect Game" (I'm an Indians fan and still say Jason Donald was out.)? Galarraga got to the bag waaaaay before the hustling Donald did. But Jim Joyce called him safe...



If we had had instant replay earlier, calls like these wouldn't have happened.



Another thing I think that Major League Baseball should do is add two expansion teams. Much like how the National Football League is considering adding expansion teams in new countries, I think that the MLB should do the same.

Although the league has teams located in San Diego, Los Angeles and Phoenix, I think the league can create a much larger fan base in the country by adding at least one expansion team there. I believe one team should be added in Tijuana, which is the largest city on the Baja California Peninsula. Although when last checked in 2010, the city of Tijuana has a growing population of currently 1.3 million. Although there is a team of the Golden Baseball League currently in Tijuana, they are inactive due to finances. The MLB could easily buy out the GBL and have more places around the continent to place expansion teams. Additionally, the city is located very close to the headquarters of the National League team, the San Diego Padres, and could create a good rivalry with each other.

Another place the MLB could expand to is the city of Calgary, located in Alberta, Canada. The city hasn't had a baseball team since the Pacific Coast League's Calgary Cannons left for Albuquerque in 2002. Calgary is the largest city in Alberta, with a population of around 1.1 million people. I believe that the MLB needs to add another Canadian team, ever since the Montreal Expos relocated to Washington D.C. and became the Washington Nationals in 2004. Calgary isn't as close to the other Canadian team, the Toronto Blue Jays, as the Expos were. Toronto is more towards the east coast of the United States while Calgary is closer to the west coast. If a team was implemented in Calgary, baseball fans in Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba would not have to go so far to catch a game and could just go to Calgary which is closer.





And I bet many Canadian baseball fans who would pay a good amount of money to see Canadian players, such as Justin Morneau, Brett Lawrie and Joey Votto, come play in the land up North.

The last thing that the MLB needs to do is something that fans around the country have been talking about for years: reinstate Pete Rose. I think the MLB should reinstate “Charlie Hustle”. Why? He never did anything wrong in my opinion. Yes, he bet on the game, but he didn’t take anabolic steroids and cheat like Ryan Braun. He didn’t shred records and other players’ stats with muscle growth enhancers, he trained and worked hard. Rose leads the MLB in career hits, games played and at bats. He went to seven-teen all star games, won an MVP award, and three batting titles. Also in his trophy case is a rookie of the year award, two gold gloves, three batting titles and three World Series rings. Yankees third baseman Alex Rodriguez tested positive for anabolic steroids not once, but TWICE. He even admitted to taking them. Has he been kicked out of baseball yet? No. But Pete Rose gets kicked out for supposedly betting on baseball? What? There was no evidence that Rose did bet on the game, and it is idiotic that he was ruled permanently ineligible.

The MLB has many great things about it but also many major flaws. If the league can fix these issues, it will will not only be better for the game, but the fans as well.





Get Them While They're Young **By Pat Murphy aka yankeesfan1324**

What do Mike Leake and Xavier Nady have in common?

Mike Leake and Xavier Nady are the only 2 players who have had their MLB debut in the past 15 years to go straight to the MLB without playing in the MiLB or international professional teams. Mike Leake also played in the Arizona Fall League, which is usually around a AA or AAA level, and Xavier Nady only played in 1 game in the MLB before being sent down to AAA.

Why is this important? Sure, if you ever are asked this on a game show you can thank me, but that isn't the point. The main reason I bring this up is because it means that with very few exceptions, nearly every single player you see playing in the MLB once played in the minors.

Many of the stars in the MLB don't sign autographs often. Miguel Cabrera, Derek Jeter, Alex Rodriguez, Prince Fielder, Albert Pujols, all are considered bad signers. They just don't have the time to sign autographs for everyone who wants them. Every single one of them played in the minor leagues at one point, and every one of them signed in the minors.

Let's apply this to the minor leagues now. There are thousands of minor league players now, and eventually, many of them will play in the MLB. Looking back to just earlier this year, there was a young man who began the season in the minors by the name of Yasial Puig, often overlooked and unwanted. He probably didn't sign every day, but if you wanted an autograph of him it wouldn't have been hard to get. In only a few months, he became one of the most talked about players in baseball. If you are a baseball fan, it is almost impossible not to know of him. There are millions of people who would love an autograph of him and would be willing to pay a decent price for one.

For an idea of popularity, let's look to Twitter. I'm from Ohio, so I'll use the Indians as an example. Justin Toole, @Tooleyj24, is a player on the Columbus Clippers (AAA). I would say he is about an average AAA player and has a good shot at making the majors in 1-3 years. At the time I am writing this, he has 2,383 followers. If you want to, it would be easy to connect with him and talk. Once the baseball season starts up, I'm sure he would be more than willing to sign through the mail or at games.

Now, let's go look at the MLB. Jason Kipnis, @TheJK_Kid, is probably about an average MLB player. He has played 337 games over 3 years in the MLB. At the time I am writing this, he has 75,398 followers, more than 25 times as many as Justin Toole. While it wouldn't be impossible to talk to him on twitter, it wouldn't be as easy. He sometimes signs through the mail and is decent at games, but not nearly as much as a minor leaguer signs.

What can we take from looking at Twitter followers? There is only 1 logical conclusion – most baseball fans completely ignore the minor leagues unless they are specifically told players are top prospects, and only pay attention to the MLB. This gives us hardcore fans more chances. Go out and find a few MiLB prospects (or more) that don't get a lot of attention. Follow them on twitter and interact with them. Buy some of their cards if they have them, and if possible, try



to trade the nicer ones (numbered parallels) for game used bats, gloves, hats, batting gloves, shoes, or anything you want. Send a through the mail request to them, or if you live close, go to a game. Really start a connection with them. If they make it to the MLB, you will not only already have their autograph/cards, but also a connection with the player. Players absolutely know which of their fans jumped on board when they got popular and which ones made a connection earlier on. You never know the opportunities that may come with making that connection. If you know them personally and they make it to the MLB, there is a decent chance that they will be able to get that tough signer to sign for you. If they are in the minors, especially single-A, there is a good chance that they will get the entire team to sign for you. Even if they don't become anything special, at least you have some autographs and had a fun experience.

A note to fans of other sports – this works to some extent with other sports. The NHL and NBA have “minor leagues” (NHL has the AHL and ECHL, plus a few teams have other affiliates in smaller leagues such as the FHL and the NBA has the NBA D-League), but it is more common for players to skip them, especially if they are higher prospects. The NFL doesn't have anything that compares, but many college athletes are good signers, especially if they do not go to top colleges.





Make Collecting Fun Again

By Pat Murphy aka yankeesfan1324

It seems like there is always a pattern in collecting. Buy a box or case, get half of what you bought the box for in cards, and repeat. Even if you don't care about the value of your cards, it is disappointing knowing that you could have bought the contents of your box and saved a whole lot of money. It seems like it is almost impossible to have fun collecting without losing lots of money. All you need to do is think outside the box.

- Collect a new player

Find a young player that doesn't have much of a following and start collecting their cards. They can be from your favorite team, your college, your city, or have similar political or religious views as you. You don't even need a reason, you can just choose someone. One of the best parts of this is that younger players who aren't top prospects are often more friendly with their fans. You can contact them on Twitter and show them your collection. If you are lucky, they will be willing to trade for some of their cards or sign through the mail for free (hint – they get their equipment and uniforms for free, your chances of getting a hat, bat, or jersey in a trade are good).

- Start a TTM project

If you don't do TTM, you would be surprised to see how many players will sign cards and pictures for just the price of 2 stamps. It can be as big or as small as you want – your favorite minor league team, your favorite set, a cool insert set, living hall of famers, alumni from your college, or players from a historic team. If you don't have cards, print out some pictures. In your letter of request, you can also ask the player some questions and a decent number (especially retired players) will answer your questions.

- Collect a new A or AA team

If you graph MLB teams, you will often find large crowds and players unwilling to sign. However, if you go down to A or AA baseball, you will find a much different situation. Some players will be almost honored that you want their autograph, and unless there are top prospects, the only time you should get turned down will be starting pitchers when they are starting. If you get autos in person, you will also over time become friends with the players. Getting a picture signed by a whole team could potentially take only a few games, rather than nearly the entire season.

- Go for cheaper products

If you can't get away from breaking boxes, go for the cheaper boxes. Higher end collectors may laugh at products like opening day or older products (late 80s and early 90s) but for the price, they are a lot of fun to open. If you still like the hits, go for products that aren't popular. There are so many products from just a few years ago from minor companies like Razor, Tristar, ITG, and Just Minors that are really cheap and come with hits. You might even hit some autos of players who are solid players in the majors now.





- Just ask

Especially with lower level teams (MiLB, NBA D-League, AHL, ECHL, CFL, etc.), you would be surprised what they are willing to do if you just ask. Did a player break a bat or a stick that you want? Why not ask for it? There is a decent chance that they will give it to you, and the worst thing they can do is say no. Want an autograph from a player? Contact them on Twitter and ask them if they would sign stuff you send to them. Do you live away from a team and want the items they give away for free (such as schedules, magnets, cards, and promotional items they didn't give away)? Just send them an email or a large SASE and ask. The most important thing here is to be honest. Don't tell every player and team that they are your favorite.

I hope these tips help. Collecting is getting more expensive as the economy is getting worse, and more collectors are finding they need to cut down on their purchases. Make sure you know your option, it is possible to have a bunch of fun collecting with nearly no cost.

