

Collector's Corner

MAY 2011

ISSUE 21

INSIDE: Product reviews
Contest articles
and more!



FEATURE

31 A Very Happy Birthday

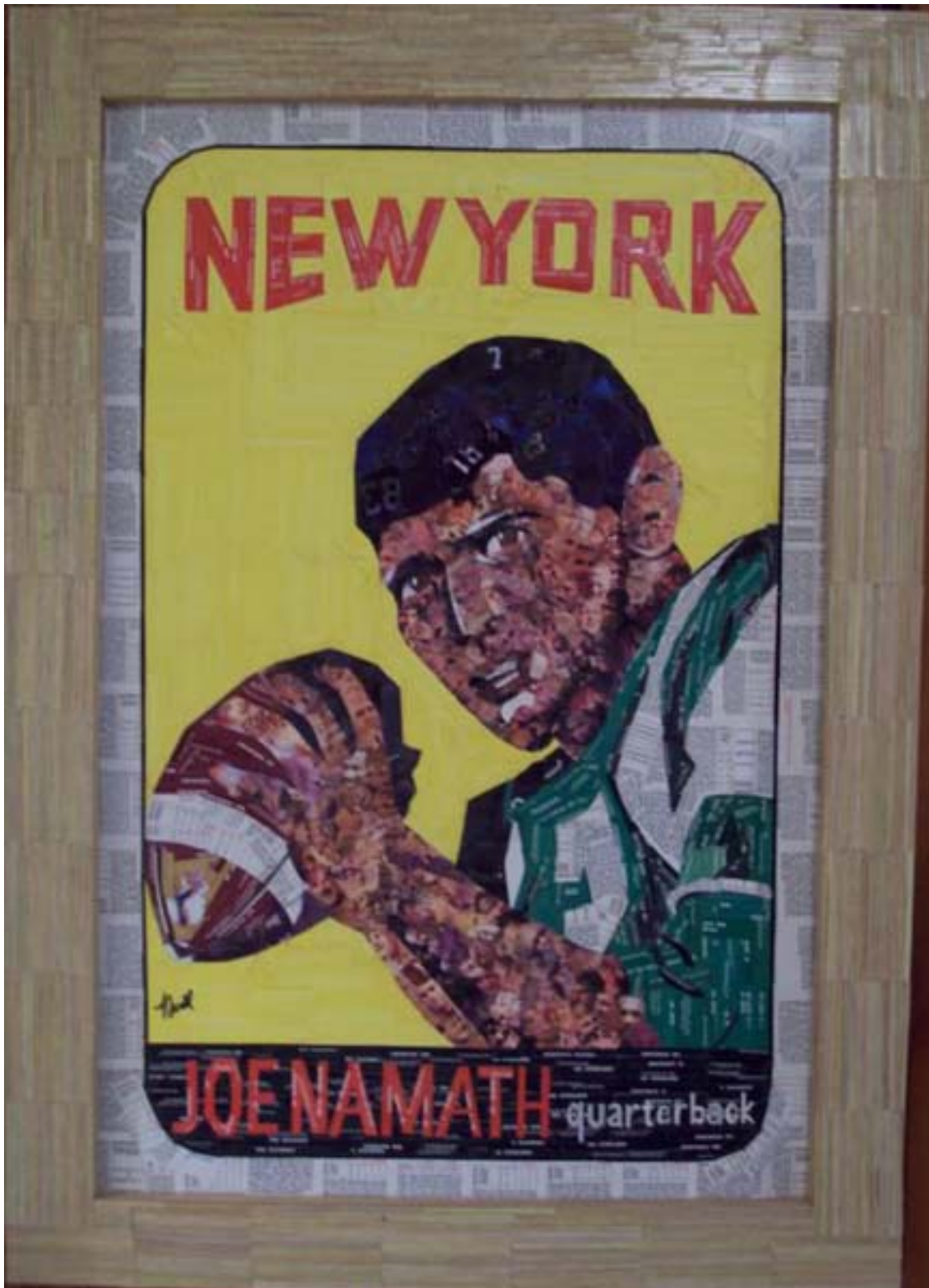
By: Richard McAdam



Want to own a special art piece and help the tornado relief effort in Smithville, Mississippi? Here is your chance:

<http://cgi.ebay.com/ws/>

eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=160581206646#ht_500wt_1156



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Will this be your team in June?





Never too Busy By Karine Hains aka Pheeb888

As collectors, we all have cornerstones to our collection. They can be high-value cards pulled out of a pack, a rare McFarlane figure that you spent way too much money on, a game-used jersey or even something you got signed in person when you met the athlete you collect. As any collector will tell you, meeting the object of your collection is truly an amazing experience especially if it goes well and you go home happy. Let's not kid ourselves here, not every athlete will happily meet their fans, pose for a picture and sign what they are asked to sign.

Personally, I had the chance of meeting Patrick Roy (twice in a two weeks span) and I will admit that I was a bit nervous, wondering if he would live up to my expectations. I grew up idolizing the man and later in life started to collect his cards with a passion. What only started with cards then turned into posters, stickers, McFarlane's and jerseys to name a few. What is even better than a jersey though? That's right, an autographed jersey! In December 2009 I decided to take my chances and attempt to get Roy to sign my Habs and my Avs number 33 jerseys. I attended a Quebec Remparts' game and I waited until Roy (who is their coach and general manager) came out of the staff area to ask him to sign and pose for a picture. On that night, he had a lot of work, it was the start of the period during which teams can trade players in the QJHL. I had to be very patient but when he came out at half past midnight, he was incredibly nice and agreed to sign both of my jerseys and pose for a picture. To date, this remains one of the greatest moments in my life.

This is probably why I was so glad to hear about fellow SCF staffer Richard McAdam's birthday extravaganza! If my short meeting with Roy made me that happy, I can only imagine how it must feel to have the guy you collect attend your birthday dinner and sing Happy Birthday to you! Turn to page 5 to read Richard's story.

I believe that an athlete who takes time out of their life to meet the fans and give them a night to remember deserve some recognition for it. I mean, they do not have to do it, they are not paid to do that and they could easily think; "Why should I sign this jersey? I sign thousands of autographs for card companies; if they want my autograph they can just buy a card". It is refreshing to see that some athletes are willing to take time out of their schedules to please their fans. As I told Richard when I heard the story, great things happen to great people (and to people whose wives go above and beyond to set up THE ULTIMATE 30th birthday weekend).



Were you lucky enough to meet the athlete you collect? Do you have a story to tell about that? If you do, please submit it as an article on SCF and you may make the magazine! We await your article submissions here: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/forumdisplay.php?f=446>
MAY 2011



The Greatest Birthday Ever, or, How Carey Price Sang Happy Birthday to me **By Richard McAdam aka RGM81**

The festivities began at around 10:36pm on Thursday, April 7th. We had just returned home from the pub, and I tried to push my luck and ask if I could get one of my birthday presents early. Tasha was very happy to oblige, but first I had to give Orion (my cat) a kiss. Apparently I wasn't going to see him all weekend – my first thought was, "Where are you sending him?" Then she pulled out the tickets to Toronto. Right away I knew we were going to be going to the Canadiens-Leafs game on Saturday. What I didn't know was that the plan she had been plotting since late January was about to be executed.

We arrived in Toronto right around 9AM. Even on just 3 hours of sleep the adrenalin was pumping and we were both really excited to hit the town. I haven't been to Toronto since 2004 when I went to a Metallica concert, but this was really the first time since late 2003 that I really had any opportunity to see the city and all its incredible attractions. As it was Tasha's first time in Toronto I really wanted to make sure that she had a great time too. Even though it was my birthday, knowing that she'd already done this much for me to make it a special day really made me want her to have just as great a time as me.

Which made the first stop a very easy choice. Once we dropped off our stuff at the hotel we headed to the CN Tower, the largest free-standing structure in the world. I'd been there before but the incredible stature of the tower and the amazing views of the city are enough to take a person's breath away even if you've seen it a dozen times. We headed to the observation tower and looked down over everything from the harbour and Lake Ontario, to the SkyDome (it will always be the SkyDome to me), to the ACC. Spectacular, even on a cloudy day. Then it was up to the glass floor. It was just as cool as I remembered it. There's that moment when you're just about to step on it that your brain wants to stay back because of impending peril of falling almost 1,800 feet. You really do have to shelve it and just GO FOR IT! Tasha was a bit nervous at first but within a couple minutes I had her jumping on it! It's just such a cool thing to be able to lay down on the glass and stare all the way down to the ground so far below. The Sky Pod was also awesome. To go yet ANOTHER 100m above the ground just made the perspective that much more amazing. Not a bad opening act.

From there it was time for a quick bite to eat. We headed into a food court and went to this Mexican place for quesadillas. It was a little too hectic and we didn't get the most ideal lunch, but hey it hit the spot and re-fuelled us enough to go to the Hockey Hall of Fame. It's really a place where a person could spend hours enjoying the great history of the greatest sport on Earth. Some of the jerseys in the Hall of Famers wing were just amazing. The 1959-60 Maurice Richard jersey was tattered and torn, and a Joe Mullen Penguins jersey was something that as a hockey card collector I envisioned chopping to bits—it was COVERED in puck marks, scratches, and other battle damage. Of course, for myself as a Habs fan it's pretty tough to top the replica dressing room they have. I sat at the benches with the game-used



Patrick Roy and Ken Dryden pads as Tasha snapped pics. Fun moment. The place has a lot of room for interaction, and I really liked doing the “Classic Calls” most especially the famous goal scored by Guy Lafleur after Don Cherry forgot how to count to five. From there it was on to the trophy room. So much history. We looked at the original Stanley Cup, marvelled at the Hart Trophy and envisioned Carey Price’s name being inscribed on it soon, and stared in awe of the mighty Vezina Trophy. Of course, the centrepiece of the room is Lord Stanley’s Cup. We got our picture taken together with it for the second time—the first was back in 2009 when Sidney Crosby brought it back after the Penguins won the Cup. Fun fact: when we saw it then, the Penguins had yet to have their names inscribed on it, so it was neat to finally see that!

After we were finally done at the HHOF, we headed back to our hotel to catch a quick power nap and figure out what to do for dinner. I thought it would be sorta neat to check out Gretzky’s, as I’d never been there before, and it would be a neat way to continue the hockey theme for the weekend. Within two minutes of suggesting it, a commercial for Gretzky’s came on, at which point Tasha declared that the matter was settled and we HAD to go there. Little did I realize....

So 7pm rolls around and we get a pic of me standing at the 99’s and then go inside. Since it’s a “seat yourself” type of establishment I go and seek out a table and sit down. I noticed that Tasha wasn’t with me, though, but rather she was talking to the hostess at the desk. She motioned for me to come back with her and that since it was my birthday she asked if we could have a spot that was a little more quiet. Such a romantic. So they lead us into a room with an empty table for twelve people. At this point I’m thinking that this is all a little awkward; there’s just two of us. And then....

In walks James Wisniewski. Then Travis Moen. I am just sorta staring in disbelief...what’s going on here?!? And right behind them is none other than Carey Price. Jaw. Meet. Floor. Handshakes for all, and then I see the mastermind behind it all, my good friend Wess. I really would have liked to see the

look on my face for all of this. It was absolutely surreal.

In addition to the guys, there were also two fellow great Habs fans that I’ve had the pleasure of speaking with online a few times, Bill Jacques and Kevin van Steendelaar. Bill created the Carey Price Facebook Group and Kevin runs the awesome Habs On The Prize website. The guy that designs Carey’s masks, David Arrigo, was also there – really cool guy. And with that, the greatest birthday dinner was ON!



The Birthday Boy and The Goalie

There were a lot of jokes and laughs. The guys all have incredible senses of humour, and Carey told us that it’s like this every time they go out. Wiz and Moen had a



great back-and-forth regarding a fight they had when Wiz was still in Chicago and Moen was with Anaheim – if you like, you can see the fight here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHqVssOZeyE> – Wiz showed it to everybody at the table on his phone and I think in the interests of diplomacy we all agreed that it was a really good fight. LOL Carey and I also talked about the playoffs series he had against Kelowna when he was with Tri-City in 2003 – I went to one of those games! Shout out also to Sturgeon Hall, as Carey's a fan of the steak sandwich. Some other great yarns were told, which will stay with those of us in attendance. I was still somewhat in shock at all of this – was it really happening? Was I really spending my 30th birthday dinner with three members of the Montreal Canadiens? Yes, yes I was indeed! Wess gave Tasha a lot of props for her persistence in making sure that my birthday was truly memorable....yeah she definitely did that! Just a great experience, and it was all capped off by having everybody serenade Travis and I (his b-day was April 6th) with a rendition of Happy Birthday. I've got to get something put together for Wess, who has his birthday on the 14th. After the singing and the cool little puck cakes were eaten, it was about time to wrap up the affair. Fortunately for me, Tasha smuggled along my Carey Price jersey along and I was able to get it signed, and of course a picture was taken.

I also got shots with Wess, Moen, and the fellas, but somehow we managed to miss Wiz. Darn. Wess mentioned to Tasha that they'd be in touch about Saturday night, confirming that oh yeah there's going to be a hockey game to go see! David Arrigo stuck around for a bit and we all chatted with him – it was really interesting to learn about the politics of mask-making in the NHL, and I've now got a little project to see if I can find some cool cards of goalies that sport the masks he designs. In addition to Carey's I also LOVE what he's done with Jason LaBarbera's many Metallica-themed helmets. After he left, Bill, Kevin, Tasha, and I milled around and chatted for a while before parting ways. What an incredible evening! I will absolutely remember my 30th birthday for the rest of my life!!!!

On Saturday we went out shopping and checked out some more of the many sights of downtown Toronto. It was around 6pm that I heard from Kevin again, so we met up for a quick drink before the game and chatted some more. Really cool guy so if you haven't yet checked out his site: <http://www.habseyesontheprize.com/> – fantastic and a great resource for info and insight into the Canadiens! After saying our goodbyes we headed back to the ACC to pick up our tickets from the Will Call (thanks Wess and Carey!) and took our seats. We were in a rather mixed area between Habs and Leafs fans, which was actually pretty common throughout the arena. We had a great view of the Habs scoring two quick goals in the first, and during the second period we got to see Carey make some pretty sweet stops. Things got a little heated at one point between myself and a Leafs fan in front of me, who at one point tried to say that “the game isn't played in French” when contesting a penalty call against the Leafs; I informed him that I was from KELOWNA, BC, and he shut up pretty quickly after that! In the third period it was a treat to see Plekanec break in and seal it with a SHG to make it 4-1...from there it was inevitable: soon the Leafs fans were filtering out and that just left the many boisterous Habs fans to start the Ole! Ole! Ole! chant. I just about sang myself hoarse. We got the video of Carey and Subban doing the famous triple low five too! After the final horn sounded we spilled back into the arena and



again the Ole! chant broke out, which continued all the way into the streets. Some alcohol-emboldened Leafs fans tried to rain on the parade, but suffice to say they had about as much chance of success as their team does. Nuff said!

So let's recap the last 48 hours: surprise announcement of trip to Toronto, CN Tower, HHOF, dinner at Gretzky's with the guys, primo seats at the game, and an absolute TON of fun with my amazing wife that made it all possible. If I'd known that turning 30 was going to be such a crazy awesome affair, maybe I would not have been dreading it so much in the weeks leading up to the big day. LOL



But this was not yet the end. Even though she told me there were "no more surprises" early on Sunday, I had a hard time buying that theory. Too many spectacular reveals had me thinking that somehow this wasn't all over yet. The day itself was pretty blah, as it was raining pretty hard in Toronto. We pretty much holed up in our awesome hotel room – a spectacular breakfast buffet at the Intercontinental, let me tell you – in the super-comfortable bed and watched the HDTV. Even though Chicago blew it against Detroit, they still backed into the playoffs. Finally it was time to get on the plane and leave behind the spectacular memories of this awesome weekend.

The final surprise... After we got back Tasha told me to go into the closet as there was still one more present. I opened the door and saw a MASSIVE framed photo wrapped in bubble wrapper. Instantly I knew what it was. There was just no way it could be any but. I pulled it out of the closet, unwrapped it, turned it around, and there it was....CENTENNIAL! This is Wess' greatest creation, and a truly spectacular thing to behold. A beautiful



piece of art by Dennis Ruffange showcases 100 authentic signatures of 100 great members of the Montreal Canadiens. One final kicker? Of the limited edition run of 2009, this was # 30. Apparently this should have gone to Chris Nilan, but for whatever reason it did not. This was one final landmark for my 30th birthday. I seriously just stared at it for an hour, looking at all the signatures....Beliveau, Roy, Lafleur, Henri, Yvon Lambert, The Rocket (a cut signature, of course), Josh Gorges, Claude Lemieux, Chris Chelios, Vinny Damphousse, TRAVIS MOEN, Mike Cammalleri, Elmer Lach, Butch Bouchard, and yes, of course, Carey Price. Such an incredible masterpiece, it truly deserves the name: the Mona Lisa of Sports Memorabilia. No more surprises, she said. Yeah, except for a massive one!



So that's the story of my 30th birthday. It was definitely the greatest birthday I've ever had. I now have the unenviable task of trying to even come close to reaching that bar in return. It was said a couple of times at dinner: I truly do have the wife of the year...nay, millennium. None of this would have been possible without my amazing and truly incredible wife, Tasha. Words cannot express how much I love you.

Of course I have to send out some big thanks here. Wess, dude, this was EPIC on your part – I am eternally grateful for you helping put all of this together for me. You are a true friend! I am beyond thrilled that Carey, James, and Travis took the time out of their Friday evening in Toronto to spend two hours with me on my birth-

day. For all the negative things you sometimes hear about hockey players, these three guys made my year just by being there. Total class! It's very cool that Bill, Kevin, and David came out to this and helped make the evening that much cooler. You guys are awesome!

And again, to Tasha: you are simply the greatest person ever. I am now in the conceptual stages of Operation Payback Time. I love you!



Every month, we will aim to tell you which products are coming in the next few weeks. As you know however, release dates do tend to get pushed back more often than not so there may be some changes.

May 2011

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|--------|--|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2 | 3 Onyx Preferred Players Baseball UD SP Authentic Basketball | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 Topps UFC Title Shot TriStar SignaCuts Football | 12 | 13 Panini Zenith Hockey |
| 16 | 17 | 18 Panini Prestige Football Panini Contenders Hockey | 19 | 20 |
| 23 | 24 UD Ultimate Collection Hockey UD Sweet Spot Football | 25 Panini Gold Standard Basketball | 26 Press Pass Stealth Racing | 27 |
| 30 | 31 Topps Pro Debut Baseball | | | |



Product Review 2010/2011 Between the Pipes

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.

Product Description

18 packs per box

9 cards per pack

Current Retail Price (online): 84.99 - 99.99

Highlights

- Authentic Game-Used Memorabilia Cards 1:8 packs
- Autograph Cards 1:8 packs
- Non-Memorabilia Insert Cards 1:8 packs
- Masked Men III Cards 1:8 packs

What we pulled

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7T7EF2VebQ>

Base: 137/200 (68.5%)

Duplicates: 0



HSBS Points (15)

100 Years Of Collecting (1)

Deep In The Crease (1)

Inspired Masks (1)

Masked Men III Emerald (1) - Says 1 of 1 on back, but is an error as reported by Dr. Price. There are 340 of each Emerald per player

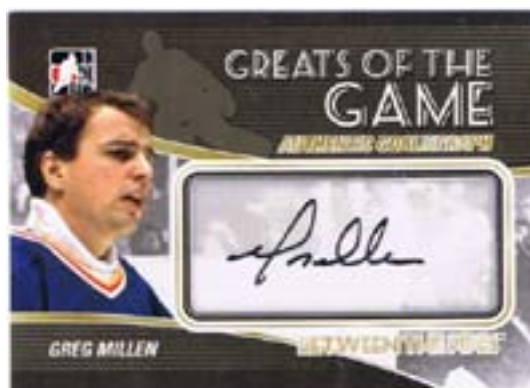
Masked Men III Silver (1)



Future Stars Braden Holtby Auto



Greats Of The Game Greg Millen Auto



Golden Goalies Gold Jonas Hiller 2-color Patch (1 of 10)



Ready, Willing and Able Gold Alex Auld / Carey Price (1 of 10)



Final Ratings

Base - 4/5

Design - 4.5/5

Fun - 4/5

Value - 5/5

Rebuy - 5/5

Total - 22.5/25 (90%)



In The Game is once again on top of their game with Between The Pipes. If you love watching the netminders, then this is the set for you. ITG bumped up the base set this year from 150 to 200 and it now includes a personal favorite, Women of the Nets. While ITG is not able to showcase the players in NHL logos, they capture every player wonderfully through full-color pictures (outside of the Immortals series).

On top of one of the best insert sets year after year, the Masked Men series, are a couple of newcomers. Deep in the Crease is an interesting setup as it brings together the present and future of each team's last line of defense. The Inspired Masks series is wonderful, mainly for the great artwork done for each card. Returning as always is the He Shoots, He Saves point cards. Acquire 200 of these and you can redeem them towards one of thirty random encapsulated memorabilia or auto (or both) cards with a print run of 20. On a side note, there is an error with the Masked Men III series. As posted by Dr. Price, the Emerald cards state 1 of 1 on the back (which I was surprised to see in the video) but in fact have 340 of each card. As a word of warning, do not be fooled when someone tries to pass one off as a 1/1.

While the way the odds are stated on a box can be misleading, you can expect two autographs and two relics in each box. And with ITG, you know you are going to get the possibility of some amazing pulls. Sure, they use sticker autos, but the design work of the cards makes it so the stickers do not affect the appeal of the card. The memorabilia swatches are usually larger than other companies, especially on the single swatch cards.

Between The Pipes is as solid as ever, even with an increased base set. This release has most collectors in mind, from individual player to hardcore set accumulators. Nowadays, there are very few releases which you can't go wrong with investing your money into multiple boxes/cases and this is one of them.

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





Product Review: 2011 Press Pass Football

By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

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

Product Description

28 packs per box

4 cards per pack

Current Retail Price (online): 84.99 - 99.99

Once again, Press Pass Football will be the first football product on the market with on-card autographs and game-used jersey cards.

2011 Press Pass Football delivers value and excitement with:

- 5 on-card autographs in every box!
- 8 autograph levels to collect!
- Game-used jersey card from some of the biggest stars in the draft!

What we pulled

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

Base - 100/100 (100%)

Duplicates - 19

Power Picks (2) - A.J. Green, Mark Ingram

Class of 2011 (4)

Face To Face (7)

Reflectors /299 (2) - Prince Amukamara, Cam Newton / Tyrod Taylor

Reflectors Proof /100 (1) - DeMarco Murray





Cam Newton Blue Auto /50



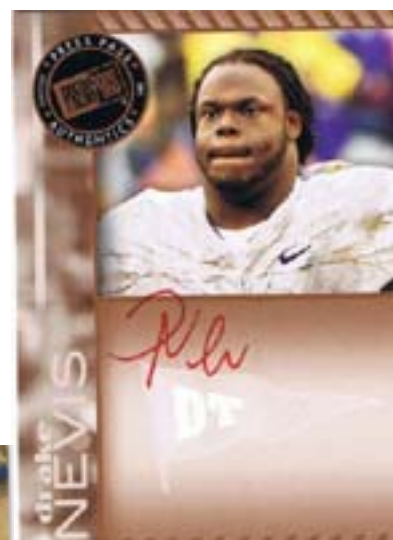
Roy Helu Jr. Blue Auto /50



Armon Binns Bronze Auto



Drake Nevis Bronze Auto ***RED INK***



Shane Vereen Gold Auto /99



**Final Ratings**

Base - 5/5

Design - 3.5/5

Fun - 3.5/5

Value - 4/5

Rebuy - 3/5

Total - 19/25 (76%)

As a collector, one of the best thrills I get is opening a box of Press Pass football. Personally, I've open one every year since 2003 and attempted to put the sets together. But there was something missing that caused my excitement to wane. While I enjoy getting the base set out of the way basically in one box, the lack of college logos really hurts this year's release. College team collectors will feel the letdown when holding a card of a player they followed for possibly years and seeing them with a blank helmet or jersey. The collectors and fans are the ones getting punished with only one licensed company for college football. While this is not Press Pass' fault, it does hurt the overall product.

With that said, I do think the design work of the primary base set cards is fantastic. Making them look like something you would see on a scoreboard/jumbotron is cool. However, I'm not too keen on the rest of the cards. Furthermore, Banner Season is now a subset instead of an insert set? One less insert set when there were only three is a buzz kill.

Each box typically has five autographs and some will contain a jersey. The tier levels are the same and the fact they are on-card autos is superb. Press Pass goes out of its way to ensure signatures get placed directly on the card so you know the player actually handled it. But the waiting game for the release of the print runs on red ink and inscription signatures is excruciating. I know the rationale for waiting to release the info, but it doesn't make it "hurt" any less.

While the price is affordable when you consider you get 28 packs in a box, it's up in the air if people go back to buy multiple boxes. Sure there's an allure to getting the first on-card autos of the new rookie crop, but you do get a complete base set and virtually half of the insert sets as well. It doesn't leave a lot to go back for unless you are dead set on the autographs.

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.



Product Review: Topps Opening Day 2011

By Tony Joyce aka Enigma



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

Product Description

36 packs per box

7 cards per pack

Current Retail Price (online): 24.99 - 34.99

Fun, Easy-To-Collect Brand Attracts Kids Early in the MLB Season

7 Entertaining Insert Sets - One Per Pack!

March 19th Street Date Delivers in the Midst of Spring Training

What we pulled

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQtg5ClFXes>

Base: 202/220 (91.8%)

Dupes: 0

Mascots: 9

Gold /2011 (7): Tommy Hanson, Dan Uggla, Josh Beckett, Dustin Pedroia, Drew Stubbs, Andy Pettitte, Matt Garza





Opening Day Stars (3)
 Presidential First Pitch (6)
 Spot The Error (6)
 Stadium Lights (Under The Lights) (4)
 Superstar Celebrations (9)
 ToppsTown (6)

Final Ratings

Base - 4.5/5
 Design - 4.5/5
 Fun - 3/5
 Value - 3/5
 Rebuy - 2/5

Total - 17/25 (68%)



Opening Day has been around for a few years. It is a lower-end version of Topps' Series 1 product. There are less base cards in the set as well as a lower price point. Mainly, the target of this product are the kids as the box clearly states for ages 6 and up. The base design is virtually a mirror image of the regular Topps cards. There is one glaring difference though; the Opening Day logo displayed on every card in bright colors and the date.

I am a big fan of the Mascot cards. This is not the first year they were issued, but it really connects to the target audience. The Spot the Error series adds a bit of fun for those who acquire them. I did find some were harder to spot than others but did manage to figure it out on all the cards in the box. Topps switches up the parallel name and border going with a blue version instead of gold. Some collectors will be in the same boat as me and just identify them as gold cards, so be prepared to be confused.

In the end, this is primarily for kids. Not being a kid, I can only evaluate it as an adult and based on that, it is not an enjoyable product for me. Even at a low price point, I cannot foresee picking up more than one box. If I were buying it for a child, it would more than likely be one of those things where I would give a pack a day and let the magic last for a month or so then hand over the box. It's nice to see products out there that do not guarantee a hit (auto or relic), but when it is a direct copy for the most part of a product already released it really loses its luster.

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 at www.topps.com.



Product Review: 2010/2011 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 Description

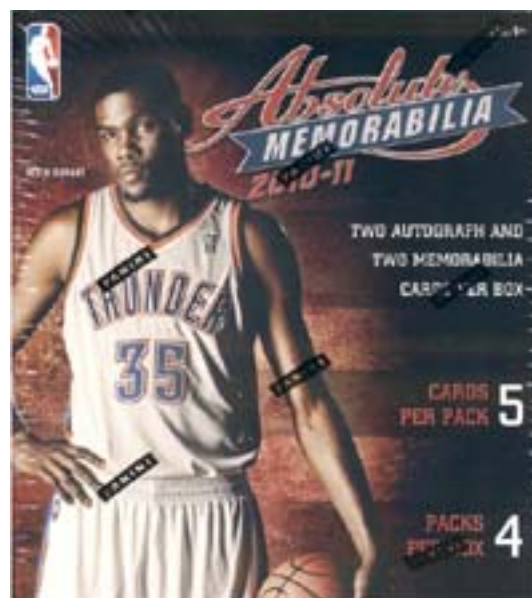
4 packs per box

5 cards per pack

Current Retail Price (online): 129.99-144.99

Box break:

- 20 cards
- 2 Autographs
- 2 Memorabilia Cards
- 4 Inserts
- 1 Retired



What we pulled

Base - 9/100 (9%)

Retired /499 (1) - Nick Anderson

Rookies /499 (1) - Landry Fields

Spectrum /100 (1) - Derrick Caracter

Absolute Heroes /399 (1) - Bob Lanier

Frequent Flyer /100 (1) - Dominique Wilkins

Marks Of Fame /399 (1) - Xavier McDaniel

Stargazing /399 (1) - Luis Scola





Rookie Premiere Materials Prime
Signatures Avery Bradley /5



Spectrum Brandon Jennings Auto /99



Stargazing Russell Westbrook Jersey /25



Team Tandems Derrick Rose / Joakim
Noah Dual Jersey /100





Final ratings

Base - 4/5
Design - 4/5
Fun - 4/5
Value - 2.5/5
Rebuy - 3/5

Total - 17.5/25 (70%)

Once upon a time, Absolute Memorabilia was one of the premiere releases of the year. Nowadays, its luster has faded. The base cards, while sleek and shiny, remind me too much of previous designs used in other products. I just don't believe high dollar products should use copycat designs. These should be the cards that stand out on their own.

Moving forward, what brings people to Absolute is the 1 autograph or memorabilia card per pack and that's what it delivers. While the series has been around for years, the Stargazing set is the best designed of all of them. The celestial background is amazing and the players look like they are surrounded by an aura of light. Just a personal thought; when I look at the Team Tandems that was pulled. It would have been great to have had a picture of Derrick Rose passing a ball that was out of his hands and a picture of Joakim Noah looking like he was about to receive it. But that's just me.

Absolute Memorabilia has its niche crowd. It's hard to shell out this much money for that kind of return. It's definitely not for everyone. And on a side note, I noticed the clear plastic casings around each pack is gone. But I just don't see why 4 packs cannot be packaged like Crown Royale. Would reduce the cost of producing the product and in turn save the buyers a few dollars.

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





The New Upper Deck Distribution Program

By Richard McAdam aka RGM81

Earlier this year Upper Deck announced that it was going to change its distribution model, effectively restricting who could buy Upper Deck products and re-sell them. The consequences of this new distribution method could prove to be very far-reaching and have a major impact on the way that most collectors obtain their cards. Panini has announced its intentions to do something similar later this year, but for the time being I will only detail the Upper Deck program.

The core piece of the new distribution program is that Upper Deck has limited distribution of its products to what it terms a Certified Diamond Dealer and/or Authorized Internet Retailer. The intention here is to streamline the distribution process. Chris Carlin describes the method as follows:

Authorized Upper Deck Hobby Distributors are expected to only sell current sealed product to brick and mortar hobby shops that agree to only sell it to end-user collectors. These Certified Diamond Dealer brick and mortar hobby shops are NOT permitted to wholesale the product to other retailers, to sub-distributors, or any other entity other than the end consumer. Upper Deck is also creating a new class of trade called UD Authorized Internet Retailers (AIR's), for a select few customers that operate a brick and mortar hobby shop, and also have a presence on the internet. Upper Deck Authorized Internet Retailers have been hand-picked by Upper Deck to represent our brands online, and may be identified by looking for the Upper Deck AIR logo.

Chris Carlin, "Upper Deck Answers Questions on New Streamlined Distribution Program," Upper Deck Blog 4 March 2011. 30 April 2011. <<http://upperdeckblog.com/2011/03/upper-deck-answers-questions-on-new-streamlined-distribution-program/>>

Further to this policy, AIRs in the US are not permitted to ship to Canadian consumers. This means that larger online retailers such as Dave & Adam's Card World are restricted in their customer base, while

at the same time Canadian collectors are no longer able to take advantage of a strong Canadian dollar to purchase from American online sites that offer better pricing than their Canadian counterparts, virtual or brick-and-mortar. Additionally, the CDDs





and AIR's are not allowed to re-sell current products to anyone other than "end users" for the first 90 days after a product is released. Stores that do not sign on to the CDD/AIR program will be cut off from receiving Upper Deck products and customers will not be able to have their local card shop resolve issues stemming from redemption cards, damaged cards, or collation issues. For those stores that have signed on to become CDDs, there is obviously a great benefit: they retain the ability to sell UD products and participate in such programs as National Hockey Card Day, while gaining a little more sustainability due to online retailers being removed from the equation. The majority of online retailers have been able to undercut brick-and-mortar shop pricing, which has greatly affected the number of LCS that have been able to remain in operation.

As for those "end users" (i.e. collectors such as you and I), if they purchase an UD product they must have the original receipt and it must come from a CDD/AIR if they wish to contact UD with problems. Say that you buy a box of an UD product on eBay and it is missing a hit or has damaged inserts. If you bought from an unauthorized dealer, UD will not help you when you call in and ask for help from their customer service team. Given the number of problems that people have had with redemption cards and other customer service-related issues in the past 18 months, one would think that UD would like to take steps in the right direction to help more people. This move seems counterproductive at a minimum, and could very easily damage customer relations far worse than they have been recently. Of course, if you followed the procedure properly, you will still be served and hopefully able to have any issues properly and promptly resolved with Upper Deck.

Another area that will be affected by the new distribution method will be the availability of singles on secondary market sites such as eBay. Already we have seen on a number of hobby discussion sites that a number of well-known case breakers have been effectively cut off by the new policy, and they will no longer be able to procure large quantities of UD product to break on release day and immediately list on eBay or SCF. The initial rush of a product on the market is usually one of the most exciting parts of being a collector. However, if the case breakers cannot access the product for 90 days, then there will be far fewer singles being posted for trade or sale. This will heighten demand for singles and drive up prices. Whereas one could easily pick up a hot new rookie or autographed card from a new product within a week at a good price, if there are fewer sellers there will be fewer cards available and collectors will have to scramble to get what is available for their collections. While this is good news for the limited number of sellers that are certified by Upper Deck, the new scarcity on the market may frustrate a number of collectors.

On the surface, the new distribution program implemented by Upper Deck merely translates into collectors having to pay more for Upper Deck products. There are fewer online retailers with rock-bottom prices for wax by the box or the case, and thus collectors have to pay more at their local



Certified Diamond Dealer brick-and-mortar store or Authorized Internet Retailer. There are fewer case breakers making singles available on sites such as eBay, so the secondary market values for cards have increased. However, there is a bright side to this double-edged sword. Collectors have long been complaining about the glut on the market of game-used memorabilia cards while at the same time very much enjoying being able to buy singles to boost their personal collections at very low prices. Fewer cards out there mean that their collections are worth more if they are able to obtain them.

It is still very early in the new era of Upper Deck distribution, and it will take some time for hobbyists to determine whether or not the changes constitute a very good thing or another step towards a hobby market crash. Certainly, the notion of protecting collectors from unscrupulous sellers is a positive. Upper Deck says the new distribution program will lead to a "more stable and healthy marketplace". Carlin compared some online sellers to ticket scalpers looking to make a buck any way they can. "We put this program into place not to make life hard for collectors. We put it in place to protect them. We're trying to take the power back from those people who are not invested in the category."* While that point is a valid one, it isn't really an accurate reference: most ticket scalpers sell tickets for higher than face value to customers, not lower as is often the case with online hobby retailers that undercut brick-and-mortar shop pricing. While the jury is still deliberating on this issue, at a time when collectors are already having issues feeling that they are getting fair value for their wax investments, many will not be appreciative of Upper Deck's efforts to streamline their distribution methods and limit the number of people that can access their products.



For a full listing of Authorized Hobby Distributors, you can visit the Upper Deck website here: http://www.upperdeckb2b.com/profile_distributor_listing.aspx for more information. There are currently four in the United States and two in Canada.

For a full listing of Authorized Internet Retailers, you can visit the Upper Deck website here: http://www.upperdeckb2b.com/internet_retailer_locator.aspx for more information. There currently seven in the United States and four in Canada.

*"Upper Deck's New Distribution Policy Irks Some." Sports Collectors Daily 18 April 2011. 30 April 2011. <<http://www.sportscollectorsdaily.com/upper-decks-new-distribution-policy-irks-some/>>



MSF - What Is it and Why?

By Kevin O'Connor aka rainman67ko

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

This month I am going to address the topic of MSF or Must Send First rules. Online trading is bigger than ever. Internet forums, eBay, live streaming video, and social media outlets, have increased exposure to the hobby and provided more options for traders than have ever existed before.

As I have said previously, in on online trading community such as ours, we communicate by text and build our reputation. On SCF new traders must work to build this reputation in their first 20 trades. Traders may also request to transfer feedback from other trading forums.

Often traders are concerned or confused by the SCF new trader 20 MSF rule. Take a moment to read the following as taken directly from the SCF Rules:

II Must Send First:

As the #1 Trading and Discussion site on the net, we garner numerous new members daily. As a new member, it is imperative that you establish yourself on SCF. Therefore, all members with a trader rating fewer than 20 must send first on a transaction. It does not matter if you are buying, selling or trading. If both members have less than 20 feedbacks they must send at the same time. If one member has a permanent MSF tag, they must send first in every instance, even when dealing with new members.

However, SCF does respect and honor all feedback history from the following sites: (various sites listed)

You must notify a staff member if you would like to bring over feedback from another site in order to bypass the must send first rule. The best way to do so is to post a request in our Feedback Transfer Forum, located in our Meet & Greet Forum.

Also, there are times when issues arise and traders have difficulty completing transactions in a timely fashion or worst case, do not send at all. These traders eventually get a Must Send First on all transactions badge. Any trader with this badge is required by the site to send first under all circumstances, buying, trading, and selling.

If a member with 20 or more feedback sends at the same time with a member with less than 20 feedback, that member waives his/her right to file a dispute on SCF.



Once both parties have 20 or more feedback, then both parties are expected to send at the same time when trading (unless agreed upon otherwise). As for buying/selling, the buyer is expected to send first and the seller sends upon receipt of payment (unless agreed upon otherwise). Any agreements outside of this protocol should be documented in the Trade Manager.

You cannot create your own must send first rules and place them in signatures or force them on others.

END EXCERPT



In summary, once you have achieved 20 trades, you are not required to send first to someone with a permanent MSF or new trader MSF. It is important to note that a Permanent MSF trader must always send first regardless of the other trader's feedback. The only exception is if both traders are Permanent MSF.

Check trader feedback before you confirm any trades. Always assess the risk associated with the value you are sending. When building your reputation try to do some smaller or low value trades and get the hang of things.

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



Arresting Developments By Brad Wingate aka Bbonds25



There is a problem in Major League Baseball that goes beyond steroids, PED's, and dwindling attendance. It goes beyond blown calls during Tigers no hitters, corked bats, and the relative stupidity of Bud Selig. The problem I am referring to extends outside of the diamond, and into players personal lives away from the game.

As most baseball fans know, Cincinnati Reds starting pitcher Mike Leake was recently arrested for shoplifting 6 t-shirts from a local Macy's department store. Total value; \$59.94. He reportedly purchased 6 shirts during a previous visit to the store, and did not actually try to steal the items, but instead thought he could walk in and do an even exchange without the help of a store employee. When he was arrested, he had \$250 cash plus several credit cards in his possession. As ludicrous as the situation is, even more so is the fact that he made his next start for the Reds. This was just the latest incident of a professional ball player breaking the law, and getting nothing more than a slap on the wrist.

In the early days of Spring Training, Tigers first baseman Miguel Cabrera was pulled over and charged with drunk driving. Cabrera allegedly told police officers that he was going to kill them and blow up several buildings. One week later, he was playing first base for the Tigers in Lakeland Florida. Detroit has hired a private investigator to follow Cabrera during the season to ensure he does not fall off the wagon, but he received no other penalty from the team or Major League Baseball.

In the Summer of 2009, Rangers manager Ron Washington tested positive for cocaine, a drug he had done just a week before his number was called for testing. He claimed he had done it just the one time, as a way to deal with heavy anxieties he was feeling from both the game, as well as his personal life. He was put through a drug treatment program, and, as we all know, led the Rangers to not only their first postseason series win, but the franchise's first ever World Series.

In 2009, Tim Lincecum was cited for marijuana possession after he was pulled over in his home state of Washington. Earlier this year, A's outfielder Coco Crisp was arrested and charged with a DUI. Mariners outfielder Milton Bradley was arrested this past January for allegedly making criminal threats (though he always seems to be in trouble). The list of player arrests goes on and on.



Now, I am not saying that these are bad men, or that they should be banned from baseball and vilified by fans everywhere. There are people everywhere, everyday, in all walks of life who are arrested for the same things as these professionals. But the big difference between us and them (besides the multi-million dollar contracts), is that if we were arrested for these crimes, or anything else for that matter, we would most likely lose our jobs. I know it's true at my place of employment. In fact, I would probably not even be given the chance to plead my case, and I just work for a national retail chain. It's not like I'm a doctor, lawyer, or teacher. But my employer puts a strong emphasis on integrity, accountability, and responsibility. Apparently MLB does not think the same way. A player can take an over the counter drug to help fight the common cold, but if he tests positive for said drug, he is suspended for 50 games, no questions asked. Barry Bonds is being dragged through the mud because he allegedly took steroids while he was playing, and everyone wants to erase everything he did during his career, yet shoplifters are let to continue on as if nothing happened. If Bud Selig wants to make a positive impact on the game, he should make an example of any players who break the law, or better yet, those who cause any bad publicity to MLB through their own stupid mistakes, and suspend them. I think it is absolutely absurd that these professionals, who make thousands if not millions of dollars, are allowed to do as they please with no consequences. Perhaps the union is too strong in Major League Baseball, or perhaps Selig just doesn't want to rock the boat. Either way, nothing good can come of turning a blind eye to these growing issues.





On and Off the Court **By Jay Weger aka Jay520**

Contests and Winners

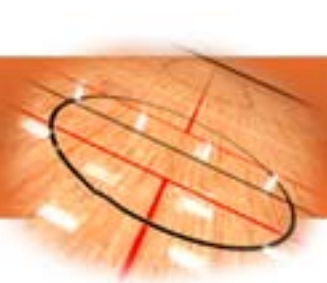
For the NBA Top Performers contest this was a short with only 12 games to guess. AiThor came in first with 12 points earning 100 cc and JesRey and tk10775 in a tie for 2nd splitting 50 cc. March leaders were tjvisco with 31 points getting 100 cc and Thrillseeker receiving 50cc for 2nd. AiThor, jdlee123, JesRey, tjvisco, Thrillseeker, rocketfan86, tylermckinzie, tk10775 and toddsr earned the right to continue into the playoffs by being in the top 3 in each of the months. The playoff rankings thru 4/25 looks like this: jdlee123 - 13, AiThor - 12, JesRey - 11. Now for the NBA GTS leaders for regular members are JesRey - 21 wins, 2FarGone and dwighthoward - 12 wins, abah58 10 wins, and scooby10672 - 7 wins. VIP leaders are JesRey with 21, andrewhoya 18, lil5up3rman and pwaldo at 14 an gladdyontherise with 13. Also this month saw quite a few nice cards submitted to Theme Weeks. Theme Week #2 tristan20 won the best retired or HOF gu. Week #3 Phlash and Bullsfan747 tied for best dunk photo on card. Week #4 there was another tie between reolreodeal and tristan20 for nicest 1/1 card. Week #5 tristan20 was top card with logoman entry. If you have nice cards and think you can win please enter the Theme Week contests in the Show & Tell section in the basketball forum! The 2011 SCF "March Madness" Bracket Challenge contests wrapped up early in the month with SingleDaddyof2 winning the regular member one with 940 points and getting 500 cc. bouncer came in 2nd with 920 points and 250 cc, 3rd doG sl kcivraH with 720 points and 150 cc, 4th jdlee123 with 650 points and 100cc and 5th JJJ5278 with 630 and 50 cc. The VIP contest was won by JordanFanatic who chose a 10-11 Donruss Kevin Love auto / 25 from the prize vault. 2nd was stang66dad who chose a 09-10 Prestige "Draft NY 09" Auto Jrue Holiday and RenegadeLonghorn getting a 09-10 Certified James Johnson gu/auto /399.

Hobby News

Panini announced that they will have a First ever HRX video card in their Panini 2010-11 Totally Certified product. Each card has the capability to hold up to several minutes of video footage that will also include exclusive player interviews and possibly game highlights. These HRX video trading cards — 51 each featuring the company's four exclusive NBA spokesmen: Kobe Bryant, Blake Griffin, Kevin Durant and John Wall. 40 base, 10 Autographed and one Gold Autographed version (made with authentic 14-karat gold). Each five-card pack carries a \$20 SRP and each six-pack box will deliver 30 cards, among them six autograph or memorabilia cards (including at least two autographs numbered to 599 or less), two Mirror Red parallels numbered to 499 and four additional inserts numbered to 499 or less.

NBA News

The NBA season wrapped up on 4/13 with the Chicago Bulls having the best record in the league (yes Chicago Bulls). They finished at 62-20 in the East for the first time since some guy named Michael



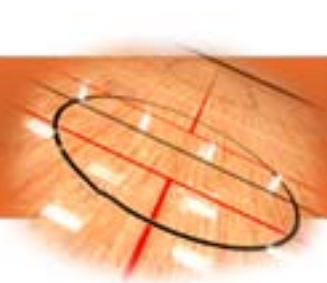
Jordan was on the team. The Miami Heat came in 2nd at 58-24 after beating Boston on the last weekend of the season. The Celtics finished 3rd with 56-26, Orlando 4th 52-30 and Atlanta 5th at 44-38. San Antonio finished best in the West at 61-21. The Lakers finished 2nd at 57-25 going 5-5 in the last 10 games. Dallas finished 3rd 57-25, OKC 4th 55-27 and Denver 5th 50-32. The team with the worst record this season was the Minnesota Timberwolves at 17-65 and will have the best chance at the no. 1 pick in the NBA Draft. Cleveland and Toronto came in 2nd and 3rd worst respectively. There were a few season awards handed out like 6th Man and Most Improved Player. Dwight Howard won his 3rd straight Defensive player of the Year award. Lamar Odom was awarded the 6th Man averaging 14.4 points coming off the bench for the Lakers. Kevin Love was named the Most Improved Player this season after increasing his scoring from 14 to 20 and rebounds from 11 to 15 a game. Durant led the league in scoring for the second year in a row at 27.7 ppg. LeBron finished in 2nd at 26.7 and 3rd Anthony with 25.6. Tops in rebounding were Love at 15.2, Howard 14.1 and Randolph at 12.2. Steve Nash edged out Rajon Rondo in assists with 11.5 to 11.2 and Deron Williams 3rd with 10.3

2011 NBA Playoffs

The playoffs got off to a strange start with the top 2 teams in the west losing their first game and a near upset to the top team in the east. Starting in the East the Bulls are playing the Pacers in the 1-8 match-up and had to make a furious comeback to win the first game. Bulls lead the series 3-1. Miami is up 3-1 over the Philadelphia 76ers in the 2-7 match-up. The Boston/NY series at 3-6 was the most intriguing for analysts saying the Knicks duo of Melo/Amar`e would give the Celtics a challenge. Not the case as the Celtics swept them 4-0 but Chauncey Billups and Amar`e missed a couple games due to injury. And the last match-up in the east is the Magic/Hawks 4-5 pairing. Atlanta is up 3-1 on Orlando after winning game 1 and both at home. In the west San Antonio and Memphis are paired in the 1-8 match-up. The Grizzlies who were 2-2 during the regular season against the Spurs shocked them in game 1 (first playoff win in franchise history) and now lead 3-1. Defending champs Lakers lost game 1 to the Hornets after a stellar game by CP3. The Lakers won the next 2 games but New Orleans won game 4 to tie the series at 2-2 going to L. A. for game 5. 3rd seed Dallas won the first 2 home games over the 6th seed Portland but lost the next 1 on the road. Brandon Roy sparked the Blazers to a 23 point comeback win in the second half of game 4 to send the series back to Dallas at 2-2. 4th seed OKC Thunder is up 3-1 over 5th seed Denver Nuggets and look to close out the series in game 5 at home.

2011 NCAA Basketball Tournament

The Final 4 showdown saw (3) UConn beat (4) Kentucky 56-55 to move on to the title game. And in the battle of the Cinderellas (8) Butler defeated (11) VCU 70-62. The National Title game was won by the UConn Huskies 53-41 with Kemba Walker being awarded the Most Outstanding Player award. UConn held the Butler Bulldogs to 18.8 % shooting for the game (worst ever for title game).



Pack/Box Breaks

This last month 10-11 Absolute and 10-11 Classics were the big breaks for collectors. Jbrian96 pulled a Denver dual gu of Melo/Billups, Joakim Noah gu/25, and a sweet Kobe auto /25 from a box of Absolute. BKBcards4ever broke 2 boxes and got a Michael Beasley patch auto 1/5 from 1 and Dallas triple gu of Kidd/Dirk/Terry/100, Derrick Rose gu/25 and a Kobe Bryant Spectrum auto/25. telicious hit a few nice cards like a LeBron gu/49, Cole Aldridge rpm patch auto/10 and a Deron Williams patch4/5. DrGabel only bought 1 pack but pulled a DeMarcus Cousins rpm auto/499 and a sweet Russell Westbrook Stargazing Spectrum black1/1 auto! Hommiesan pulled a Jrue Holiday auto/199, San Antonio dual gu Parker/Duncan and a Alonzo Mourning dual patch3/5. Atrain81 pulled a LeBron gu/49, Dwight Howard gu/49 and a nice Rajon Rondo patch auto/10. Onto 10-11 Classics with 10ballboy pulling a Stephen Curry auto redemption, John Wall rc auto and a sweet Kareem auto2/10. hickson#21 hit a A. C. Green auto/99 and a Duncan gu from 8 packs. ronfir pulled a Ed Davis rc auto and a Larry Bird/Robert Parish dual patch/25 from just 12 packs. McPUG got a Deron Williams gu, Larry Johnson gu, Amar'e patch auto/25 redemption and a nice Larry Bird auto/33.



Topps Chrome pulling a Vince Carter rc refractor. polamalu43farve04 opened a box of 96-97 SP basketball and pulled 3 Kobe rc, 2 Nash rc, 3 Iverson rc, SPxForce Penny/Camby/McDyess/Dampier (1-360odds) and a Alonzo game film (1-120 odds). Najera86 found 1 box of 96-97 Fleer on eBay and got 2 huge hits! First being a Kobe Bryant Rookie Sensations inserted at 1-90 packs with a bv of \$60 and second a Michael Jordan Thrillseekers inserted at 1-240 packs with a bv of \$100. He also got a box of 97-98 UD and pulled a MJ red audio inserted at 1-72 with a bv of

\$25. The case break came from vinny407 who opened 15 boxes of 09-10 Panini HOF. He got several nice Famed Sigs: Parish, Dominique Wilkins, Bill Walton, George Gervin, Cynthia Cooper, Cheryl Miller redemption, Isaiah Thomas redemption, Bob MacAdoo, Wes Unseld. Fabrics of Kevin McHale, 2 Scottie Pippen, Parish, Olajuwon, Ewing. Monikers of Cynthia Cooper, Connie Hawkins redemption. Dream Team gu of Stockton, Stockton patch, 2 Karl Malone, Magic Johnson, Ewing, Chris Mullin, Larry Bird.

If you want to join a group break click this link: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=1362543>



Spring is here! Time for...
By Richard McAdam aka RGM81

With the change of seasons from winter to spring, there is one thing at the forefront of the minds of all hockey fans: the Stanley Cup Playoffs! After a gruelling 82-game regular season, sixteen teams have earned the privilege to compete for Lord Stanley's mug, and if the first round is any indication we could be in for the greatest Stanley Cup series ever! There have been so many fantastic storylines, be it the thirty-third time that the Montreal Canadiens and the Boston Bruins have met in the playoffs, the third consecutive year that the Vancouver Canucks and Chicago Blackhawks have met in the playoffs (indeed, as this issue goes to press we are mere hours away from what should be a fantastic Game 7, following a rally from three games down by the defending Champs), or the first time ever that the Nashville Predators have advanced to the second round of the playoffs. We have been very fortunate to see some incredible games, goals, and saves to this point, and the best is yet to come!

Off the ice and into the hobby, the change of seasons is also the harbinger of some of the most in-demand products on the release calendar. After a brief lull, April has seen the release of ITG's Between The Pipes, Upper Deck's SP Authentic, and (barring a last-minute delay) Panini's Pinnacle, as well as the Hall of Famer-based ITG product, Enshrined. These products have been met with great approval by SCF's members, and the breaks have been coming fast and furiously. Collectors have been thrilled to pull such fantastic cards hard-signed Future Watch RC's of Taylor Hall and Jordan Eberle, incredible goalie memorabilia cards and super short printed autographs, and many more are looking forward to the return of Pinnacle after a 13-year hobby absence. The low numbered vintage memorabilia hits and autographs promised in Enshrined should also have collectors jumping!

In addition to the great products that were released in April, the coming weeks will have even more exciting releases. It is that time of the season when the companies are unveiling their heavy-hitting products that give collectors a real bang for their hobby bucks. Many will feature hard-signed autographs and spectacular memorabilia pieces, as well as innovative inserts that continue to add value to products. At this time, the following products are scheduled for a May release:

Panini Zenith – May 13 Preview: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=1333144>

Upper Deck Ultimate Collection – May 24 Preview: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=1276484>

Panini Contenders – May 25 Preview: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=1299085>

ITG Decades – 1980s – June 2 Preview: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=1300691>



There is one major notice to put out there, in case some members may not have heard: the Between The Pipes Masked Men Emerald inserts, supposed to be #’d to 340, were all inadvertently marked as 1/1 on the back. Dr. Price has posted in the SCF Hockey Card Talk Forum to apologize to collectors, as well as to announce that there will be a special redemption program where collectors can submit their error cards to ITG for a replacement. Keep your eyes peeled in the Hockey Forums for further details on this program.

The 2010-11 Race for the Trio is rapidly approaching its conclusion! This year long contest has featured several excellent contests along the way, in which SCF members have received such prizes as a 2009-10 Between the Pipes International Crease Triple Memorabilia Martin Brodeur / Roberto Luongo / Patrick Roy card #’d to 60. With the playoffs now underway, the end is near! We are also getting prepared for the 2011-12 year-long contest! Goalie fans, you’re going to be very excited for this!

Be sure to check out the Hockey Forums for all the latest contests, product previews and reviews, box breaks, and all your trading needs!

Until next month, keep your sticks on the ice, and we’ll see you on the boards!

The Hockey Team





Wind of Change

By Jason Lyke aka Jaybird_1981

I would like to introduce myself to the readers of Collector's Corner. My name is Jason Lyke and I am the new Football Team Manager on Sports Card Forum.

I started collecting cards when I was around 8 years old, which just so happened to coincide with the release of the 1989 Upper Deck baseball set. I remember going down to the local card shop with my dad and opening pack after pack looking for that Ken Griffey Jr. that seemingly everyone was searching for. Eventually I did in fact pull that Griffey Jr. and I still have it today and it means as much to me as any card I have pulled since. Collecting cards has always been something that I associate with my father. Growing up my family didn't have a lot of disposable income but he found a way every week to come home with a few packs for me. I remember he loved opening them as much as I did, since a lot of time the packs were already opened before he got home.

Now over twenty years later since I first got bit by the collecting bug I no longer live in the same city as my parents and only get to see them a few times a year on weekends or holidays but every time my dad comes to my house I get excited to show him all the new stuff I have picked up since his last time in and he is always interested and amazed by all the things that have evolved in the card industry.



That was just a little about me but going forward I would like all members to know that my PM box is always open to any questions, concerns, or issues that one may have.

I would also be remiss if I didn't thank the outgoing Football Team Manager, Craig Hill (ChillyDoggy) for all that he has done for that section. He has done a remarkable job and has put in countless hours to help SCF grow. All the work he has put in cannot be understated and it will be challenging to try to replace him. I am happy that he has decided to stay on in an advisor role and to help ease this transition. So thanks again Craig for everything!



Burning Needs

By Stephen Taylor aka Race_crazy

New Releases and the Reintroduction of Old Ideas

Press Pass is set to release the popular 2011 Premium set in late April (the first set that features the drivers in their new uniforms for this season) and 2011 Stealth during the summer. Both are looking to



be solid despite some nitpickiness from collectors (sticker autos for Premium-the only release it is done in in Racing, and small, small swatches of memorabilia used for the Stealth race-used; another gripe of some). To me neither is a big deal; I love Premium and will again be buying a few boxes this year and then buying the stealth singles for my PC. However what does have me intrigued about each release is that while it is developing new ideas Press Pass has brought back a few old favorites of our past collecting years. After a 3 year hiatus the Double Burner race-used are back and inserted into the Premium release. It looks to be a nice looking design and I for one am glad to have them back. In Stealth the re-introduction of the 3 cards in

a row of the same driver make a picture on the back as we saw in the early 2000s (and before Press Pass with Pinnacle in the 1990s) is going to be something fun for the collectors whose driver is in the X3 program. With these new old ideas it appears Press Pass has been listening to the collectors as to what they would like to see back-and it got me thinking-so the following is a list of what I would like to see return to the hobby, and a few new ideas thrown in for good measure.

Need to Bring Back:

- Triple Burners-If they can bring back Double Burners they should definitely bring these bad boys back, which were highly popular in the early 2000s and still some of the coolest cards around.
- Lugnut Cards-part of the Triple Burners was often a lugnut-recently both Dale Earnhardt Jr and Joey Logano have had lugnut cards in the Main Event release but no other driver has. It is something actually missing from my personal collection since my driver has never had a lugnut card released; it needs to be brought back.
- Stealth EF-X or something similar-these hard to get insert cards had different levels and different odds depending on the driver and it ended up being a great challenge to collect. Recently with some exceptions like the Pocket Portraits variations inserts have been relatively easy to come by and rather meaningless to pull. Inserts need to have more importance.
- VIP-the Five Star experiment is still up in the air but I definitely miss VIP. It was such an iconic set through the years (especially with Emerald Proofs and cool blues) but it seemed in recent years it became neglected and eventually dumped. It was a cool set and one I always looked forward to.



- Driver/Crew Chief Dual Autos-In 2008 Speedway there were a few such cards released, mainly of only big name drivers. I think this idea could be successful if the set was expanded to 10 to 15 driver/cc combos. It would fit nicely into almost any release.

- Memorable Moments-this insert set from the Legends release was probably one of my favorites of the last decade. It was replaced by Motorsports Masters and Past & Present insert sets. Memorable Moments taught the history of the sport, made for a great looking card, and it made me want to keep them-something most basic non-PC insert cards don't do.



Some New Ideas

- Gallery-I have been preaching for a set like this for years. What would amount to very little of anything other than amazing photography of racing in general, this set would focus on the beauty of the sport through the camera lens, similar to Topps Stadium Club and later Topps Gallery did for other sports. Racing photographs very well. If Press Pass were to hire out the Action Sports Photography guys they would have a brilliant product that I would definitely try to put together.

- A family oriented set-As Nascar fans and collectors we often see and know the driver's immediate family and often even feel a part of it. Very rarely is this aspect of our driver's life included in cards. Other than racing brothers or racing fathers/sons hardly any family cards are made. Family Portraits would be a wonderful set for the Gallery release.

- Drivers/Significant Others Dual Autos-Off of the family set idea I believe this would be a huge success. In the 2008 Legends release Darrell Waltrip's wife Stevie ended up signing a few of Darrell's cards. This dual signature aspect made the cards extremely popular. I think it would be a cool addition.

The Who to Collect Question

This is often the question most often asked from new collectors to people like me who have been collecting racing for years, and sometimes it is not an easy one. Personal bias exists and in reality the fan needs to make a connection to someone. However for those entering or considering entering the world of Nascar card collecting and Nascar fandom here is a list of the 7 best drivers to start collecting in 2011 in no particular order (just one person's opinion).



- Kyle Busch-Volatile and arrogant in the eyes of many, talented to all, and a lightning rod for Nascar Nation in general, Busch is either someone you love or someone you hate. For the people that dig the aggressiveness, dig the talent, and can deal with the haters, Kyle is your guy. His on track performance generally won't disappoint and his card market is surprisingly cheap. Although solid, Kyle's cards fetch nowhere near the amount Jrs, Stewart's, JJ's, or Gordon's. Plus the M&M's car is just plain cool and easily collectable-for these reasons Busch is a good pick.
- Carl Edwards-In a way the complete opposite of Kyle Busch minus the aggressiveness and temper on the racetrack, Edwards shares a similar talent level, similar statistics, and along with Busch appears headed for Cup Championship glory soon. Edwards' fan friendliness is also among the best for top level drivers in Nascar. Besides back-flipping and then running into the grandstands after winning races, in an ESPN Nascar Now poll of who was the friendliest driver to meet in person Edwards got almost 40% of the vote. A fair warning-Edwards cards fetch a fair price-the people who collect him collect him hard and often will bid high-but there is still room for more.
- Ricky Stenhouse Jr-Before you say I am crazy try watching some Nationwide races. Stenhouse in his 2nd year for Roush Fenway is leading the points standings and appears to be the only driver who can keep up with the Cup guys who come to play on Saturdays. Stenhouse is also very fan friendly, easy going, and likable. If he keeps performing like this expect his card values to rise and more cards to be produced of him. Right now is the time to take a chance on someone like Stenhouse.
- AJ Allmendinger-Allmendinger is a guy who tries his hardest all the time. An open wheel ace adapting to Stock Cars, Allmendinger has found a comfortable home at Richard Petty Motorsports driving the famed #43. Allmendinger's appeal is that he is a joker, appears extremely normal, and he is often very good with fans. As his on track performance improves his market will go up, but as of right now it remains fairly cheap to get in.
- Darrell Wallace Jr-or maybe this will be. Wallace (no relation to Rusty, Kenny, or Mike) is a standout in the K & N series for Revolution Racing and is a development driver for Joe Gibbs racing. Although cards have not been produced expect them to be soon. Wallace Jr not only stands out for his talent but also for being the first African American driver to win a race in Nascar since Wendell Scott. The implications of such history (Wallace looks to be Nascar's best shot at having a successful African American driver today) will bring new eyes and new attention on the sport and on Wallace, which in turn would boost his collectability.
- Brad Keselowski-The new driver of the Blue Deuce in the Cup Series for Roger Penske, Keselowski is coming off of a Nationwide Championship and is a young gun in the sport. Although his Cup Series performance has been less than Stellar, Keselowski's fan friendliness is very good. He is not afraid to speak his mind (see his Twitter page) and he is also not afraid of anyone or anything. In a way he is Kyle Busch-lite. Brad is one of the few drivers who refuse to abide by the unwritten rules of the sport, instead choosing to do it his way and his way only. This appeals to some people. If it appeals to you then he is your guy.



Can you Make the Cut?
By Mike Greene aka Indyreeds

Do you collect autographs through the mail? Has your collection grown to legendary standards? The autograph community here at SCF has been growing and it is known that we have members with amazing collections. SCF is announcing a new program to add some recognition to members who have these jaw dropping collections. We now have a TTM SUPER COLLECTOR program. The program has been broken into four different categories and you would have to select the type of badge you want to make a submission for. Here are the choices:

#1 Team TTM SC - team specific- Yankees, Colts, Bulls, etc.

#2 Non-Sports TTM SC - All Categories combined

#3 Non-Sports TTM SC - celebrities, government officials, royalty, etc

#4 Multiple-Sports TTM SC - all sports

The members who earn these badges will get a link to their photobucket posted in the SCF SUPER COLLECTOR thread in the show and tell sub-forum of Autograph Central. Anyone who wants to see the standards to get your collection in this select group can follow this link: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=1380350> I am looking forward to see those collections you submit. Honestly whoever gets tired of looking at successes?

Thanks to all you members as you are what makes SCF the best sports card based forum ever!





Enshrined - Is it Gold or Just Shiny
By Linda Mankefors aka Razzamaztaz

ITG's new flagship Enshrined which is now on the horizon has risen more than a few eyebrows, most in sheer anticipation and joy, some in scepticism when the retail price has been announced.

An all Hall of Fame checklist makes it unique in its kind. We've seen old timer products, 06-07 Parkhurst and 08-09 Masterpieces come to mind, but none of them contains 100% HoFers. With a new concept, new design and their most luxury product yet to date, I felt it was time to ask Dr. Price a few questions on his new creation.

The base card design in Enshrined is something that caught my eye immediately, and it is just stunning, simple but stylish with an artistic touch. Let alone we don't have to live with either grainy black and white photos or modern photos of old geezers. So how did you come up with that Dr. Price?

The style was similar to the Fan Craze style of the 20s.

But the autographed portrait cards are even more stylish, and I must say completely different from anything you've done before. Have you changed anything in your usual work procedure or did you just decide to do a complete overhaul of looks?

This set features only Hall of Famers. The real history of hockey. We wanted to have a simple style so it did not take away from the players themselves. A classic style of card that would not be dated and could be collected in the future.

The rest of the inserts feel similar to ITG Ultimate and Superlative, some will still say it is too similar, any thoughts on that?

No thoughts, people are entitled to their opinions. We are very pleased with the designs that our design department have created for this product.

How did you reason when you decided to only have one "hit" per pack (one autograph, game-used or cut per pack /9 or less)? To get a cut people can buy Famous Fabrics, and to get very limited game-used or autographs they can buy a box of ITG Ultimate and get 3 more. Now quantity is never the issue in my opinion (if it is we can all buy Be a player and get 10 hits in one go), it's about quality. So what extra special can we collectors expect, and dream of? I assume Enshrined is your Flagship up to date and must be something special.

First of all you must understand that the only autographs in this product are from Hall of Famers. The only memorabilia in this product is from Hall of Famers. The price for the signatures and the price for the memorabilia are much more than some third string rookie who signs for \$1 each or some event worn memorabilia that is very cheap to buy.



Rocket Richard memorabilia is not easy to come by. In addition, each memorabilia card is out of 9 or less. Not 1/350 or 1/900 they are 1/1 or 1/9.

That too is expensive to produce.

It is for true HOFer collectors yes, but it's such a high price point it's making it impossible for many to ever buy a box, and it keeps pushing up the high-end product prices. Why this higher price level compared to, say, ITG Ultimate or Superlative?

This product is not for everyone, there are only 7,000 packs being produced and they are very close to being sold out. So I understand what you are saying. In the automobile business there are many levels of cars to buy, some people can't afford a Rolls Royce but they should not criticize the car because they can't afford it.

In this product the collector also has the opportunity to not buy a box but pick up whatever singles they want to collect on the secondary market. If this product takes collecting to a higher level, then I am even more proud of it.

As for retail prices...

We sell only to the hobby not Costco or Wal-Mart. So we have a wholesale price and the dealers set the retail price. That's the way we do it and have done so since we started in business.

Yes but I'm sure you put a higher wholesale price to start with?

I am not trying to segregate collectors and leave some out. I am trying to make the best product possible of Hall of Famers and to do so is expensive. I also have a business to run, staff to pay and would like to make a small profit at the end of the day.

I have products priced at every level, but you can't put a Steve Yzerman autograph in a pack of cards and charge \$3.99 per pack. I 'm sure you understand.

Thank you for your time Dr. Price, it did sort out some vital points!

Thank you Linda for taking the time to correspond with me on this product.

All being said and done – Am I the only one who can't wait for Enshrined to be released? Personally I think it will blow everything else away. It's regrettable it has to be so expensive but I do understand Dr. Price's reasons for it, the 100% Hall of Fame selection simply can't make it cheap(er). The first ever Art Ross game-used card alone must have cost ITG a small fortune. We'll see if there will be an SCF review on this product!



Our Hobby - How Dishonest Can it Get **By Stephen Duell aka Spuds1961**

Let me preface this article by saying I'm 49 years young and have seen a lot going on in this hobby. When I first started collecting it was the late 60's and there weren't game used or autographs in the packs, but they did have see thru cello packs and the first kid to get to the store after they restocked always had his pick of the cello packs, bad but still not completely dishonest. The same goes for the 70's and 80's nothing really major put in packs that could be searched out by a feel of the packs.

Onto the late 90's this is where the fun begins, the inclusion of GU and autographs has hit the market, very cool concept and the odds were astronomical to pull one, so pack searchers really weren't at too much of an advantage as they could feel thousands of packs and still come up empty handed.

Let's fast forward to the 2,000's and the here and now, meaning the advent of selling cards on eBay and card trading sites such as sportscardforum.com. The companies figured that if one GU or auto in 2,500 packs was good one per box was even better, we as collectors obviously agreed as that is why we bust wax, more for the big hit than to put a set together. I have seen pack searchers first hand and I guess it's a skill as one of the card shop owners in New York would crack a box of 97 UD legends football and show me how he could always pull the pack with the GU card. I should have known right then and there that this hobby was going down the wrong path but still I kept collecting.



Now let's forward to the fiasco known as Topps rookie premiere football autographs, possibly the most forged autograph set of all time. For some reason Topps let unsigned versions of these cards get on the outside market and the forgers had a field day, the red versions which supposedly had a print run of 10 were all of a sudden showing up in truckloads.

Let's move onto patch cards shall we, when GU cards first came out there were usually only one color swatches and if you got really lucky you pulled a 2 color swatch. Sp authentic football started coming out with rookie patch autographs which was an innovative and great idea. I pulled an Antwaan Randle el and it was a 1 color patch auto but I was still satisfied. Now comes some more dishonesty in our hobby, the sellers on eBay didn't seem satisfied with the money they were making from their 1 color patch auto's, so what's a seller to doyen that's right switch the



patch out for the most awesome fake patch your eyes could see, the most mind blowing is the faked Adrian Peterson Viking head. To this day I will not buy a more than one color patch unless I saw it pack pulled myself.

Okay I'll be honest the reason I started this article was because of the Topps diamond giveaway codes. I had bought a mixed Topps pack for 14.99 that came with 2 guaranteed giveaway codes. I was lucky enough to pull a code from one of the packs and entered it and everything was fine, now here comes the problem, the 2 codes that came with the box did not work showing up as invalid. I guess when Topps packaged these things they didn't take into consideration how dishonest today's collectors areas I noticed after the fact that if you turned the package a certain way you could read the codes without actually buying the product.

I love this hobby and I love pulling great cards and autographs, but lately the dishonest scum are making collecting a very hard thing to do. I would rather go back to the good old days of the 60's where you traded and put sets together with the help of your schoolyard friends, and book value didn't come into play as you got a card you needed and so did your trading partner. I will still collect as hard as I always have, but I will do so with both eyes wide open, and I would suggest you my fellow collectors do the same, as if we can get rid of the scammers and dishonest people in this hobby one true collector at a time things just might get better. Have a great collecting day, take care!





Visors - It's Time they Became a Rule **By Sean McCafferty aka 30Ranfordfan**

Grandfather it in if necessary, but the NHL needs to make Visors mandatory.

A recent Hockey News survey shows 59 percent of NHL players are now wearing visors. Trends are showing that younger players use this simple safety device in even greater numbers than the league's veterans.

The reason is simple. Players can't move faster than the puck, and that little rubber disc can change direction in an awful hurry. There are a lot of injuries that a doctor can patch up, but fixing an eye is rarely one of them. You take a puck (or a stick) in the eye, and there's a great chance you'll lose at least some use of it for life.



On March 16th, Vancouver Canucks center Manny Maholtra became the latest victim of his own stupidity. A shot hit a stick, deflected up, and caught him in the eye. Stories out of Vancouver are now saying that Maholtra is fighting to save some vision in it. He'll probably never play in the NHL again.

That incident happened almost 11 years (to the day) from Bryan Berard's tragic incident on March 11, 2000. The night when a wild shot from Marian Hossa would result in Berard nearly losing his right eye. Hossa's stick tore Berard's retina. With the help of contact lenses, Berard was able to continue his NHL career. They were able to bring him up to the league's minimum requirement of 20/400 vision; but he was never the same player.

When you see injuries like these, you realize what strange people hockey players can be. Protection that players don for most of their lives gets tossed away as soon as you let them. From the time they start playing the game, until they turn (at least) 16 – all minor hockey players are required to wear a full cage while playing minor hockey. In Canada, players are then old enough to play Junior Hockey (be that Junior 'B', 'A', or Major Junior) and the rules change. Instead of a cage they're now permitted to wear a visor.

So the best of the best make the NHL. After spending a couple of years in Junior Hockey, maybe even a stint in the AHL, players then get to the big league – and what happens? The eye protection they've used some variation of their entire lives, comes off. How can they be this stupid?



It's not a matter of "not being used to it" (that only a handful of NHLers, like Mark Recchi, could honestly claim). The answer isn't "they can't see with it on". 9 of the NHL's top 10 scorers (as of late March) seem to be seeing just fine with one.

Nope. The answer lies somewhere between the promotion of a tough guy image, an "it will never happen to me" mentality, mixed together with the idea that it's more comfortable without one.

They're all really bad excuses.

Honestly – the tough guy thing is nonsense. Wearing one, or not, doesn't change anyone's perception of you out on the ice. Maybe it did in 1987, but it doesn't today. If you want to fight, fine. Fight. Take your helmets off first. Problem solved.



Comfort? Maybe. The whole helmet is clearly lighter if you don't have a visor attached to it. Does that make it more comfortable? Yes, but marginally. Certainly not so much so that the safety risks are worth it.

That leaves "it will never happen to me". Truth is, eventually it might. And for this guy, last Sunday it did.

Never in a million years would I compare NHL Hockey to what the rest of us playing in recreational leagues. The pace, the ferocity, and the skill that professionals play with is so far beyond what players like I can do – I don't want to suggest otherwise.

But there I was last Sunday, two days removed from celebrating my 31st birthday, in the first game of our league semi-finals. Playing defence a shot came in from the point, hit a stick, deflected up, and hit me in the face.

What makes my personal story even more stupid – is I've been playing with a visor for the last 4 years. After about 15 minutes on the ice with it, you barely notice the difference.

So what was my excuse? Well, I was playing in a pond hockey tournament at the end of January, and I removed my visor for the weekend. With the toque and / or ski mask, plus sunglasses I was wearing all weekend, wearing the visor made the helmet just a little more awkward to put on. After I came back from the weekend, I genuinely forgot to put it back on before playing in my regular Sunday night league game. Since then – the added perception of comfort, with a healthy dose of "it will never happen to me" had kept it sitting on my bedside table.



I'm happy to say I got lucky. The puck missed my eye by about half an inch. 7 stitches is all it took to patch me up, and when the swelling is gone in a few days, I won't be any worse for wear. But that's the distance I'm talking about. Half an inch lower and I'd likely be blind in my right eye.

There just isn't any compelling reason for the NHL not to mandate them. Even if they follow the 1979 rule that 'grandfathered' Helmets into the league (all new players were required to wear them) it would be better than what they're doing now. In a few years, the last handful of players sans visor would look as odd as Craig MacTavish did in 1997, while still playing without a helmet.

The sooner the league does it, the better. Hopefully Manny Maholtra will be the last player to have his career cut short due to such lack of self regard by the players. Unfortunately it's just way to obvious that until the league forces players to protect themselves, too many of them won't.





Will They, Won't They?

By Brett Johnson aka Chargerfan46

I have been an NFL junky all of my life and this is the worst possible thing to happen all the way around. Unfortunately the true underlying motive is GREED! Both sides are guilty of this. The players want a bigger piece of the pie while the owners want to keep it. My take from both sides is as follows:

The players do not want to play an 18 game season and I do not blame them for that. The wear and tear on their bodies is great enough without adding two more games. I would be all for eliminating two of the pre-season games as well to eliminate some of the wear and tear that the players are already are exposed to. The owners want those extra games to increase revenue. It is as simple as that. I side with the players on this one.

Rookie wage scale. The players want to get as much money as they possibly can. The salaries are way out of line. No player should be guaranteed the type of money they are getting as rookies without ever playing in the NFL. Rookies are getting paid way more than proven vets. The wage scale needs to be implemented and now!! TO provide an example, class of 2009 received \$585 million in guaranteed money. That is outrageous!! I side with the owners on this one.

Drug testing. The players balk at this idea and claim invasion of privacy. Sorry players, you are getting paid a lot of money and owners are investing a lot in you. Drug testing should be mandatory and test for ALL illegal drugs!! Positive tests should continue to result in suspension and placement into a mandatory rehabilitation program. When you are paid that much money and are that visible, you do have some sort of obligation to those who buy the tickets, purchase your merchandise and cheer for you. We call it being a role model. The chance players have to be a positive light in an often dark world is immense. I definitely side with the owners on this.

Increased coverage for retired players. This is a huge, emotional topic. The NFL has taken steps to fix this already but still has a way to go. Retired players, unless they were super stars, were pretty much forgotten about. These are the players that helped make the NFL into the multibillion-dollar industry that it is. While they struggled with health issues, the NFL shunned them. It wasn't until recently that the NFL took note of some health issues that





have plagued former players. PCS (Post Concussion Syndrome), which has caused early onset of dementia. This has also caused other mental health issues such as depression, which has led to an increased number of suicides in former players. This is not to mention joint replacement surgeries do to the damage caused during their playing days. I side with the players on this.

Finally, player safety. The NFL is going way over the top trying to protect players. Even some of the players in the league have complained about the new rule proposals. Football is a violent game and is meant to be played at a high collision level. I am all for player safety and do believe that illegal hits or hits placed on defenseless players should be punished. There is no place in the game for cheap, dirty players. But, putting rules into the game such as moving the kickoffs up 5 yards (take away the excitement of the kick return?? Most kickers will be able to kick the ball out of the end zone) takes away some of the excitement of the game. They have already prevented the human wedges on returns so why this? Too many rules take away from the play and flow of the game.

In closing, I do believe that the NFL season will go on as planned. Way too much money is on the table that will be lost if no season is played. Not to mention that the longer it goes on, the more damage will be done to the fan base which already sees the players and owners as greedy people. My two cents, lower player salaries, lower ticket prices, make the game affordable for everyone to be able to enjoy, keep the rules as they are and let's PLAY FOOTBALL!!

