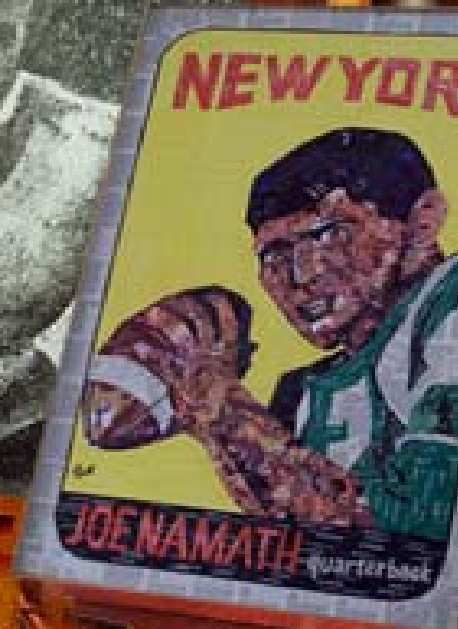


Collectors Corner

may 2012

FEATURES THE WORK OF
TIM CARROLL



CONTEST ENTRIES

THE NATIONAL
Sports Collectors Convention

**BALTIMORE AUGUST 1ST
TO AUGUST 5TH 2012**

SCF BOOTH: 2148

Editorial p. 4

A Work with Tim Carroll p. 5

Coming Up! p. 12

Product Review: Between the Pipes p. 13

Product Review: Panini Playoffs Contenders Football p. 17

Product Review: Topps Gypsy Queen Baseball p. 20

Product Review: Panini Preferred Basketball p. 24

A Beginner's Guide to the Inventory System p.27

Rinkside p. 29

Around the Track p. 31

On the Gridiron p. 33

Courtside p. 35

Gary Edmund Carter p. 39

On Bounties and the Integrity of Professional Sports p. 41

My Fondest Childhood Memory p. 45

I Feel a Draft p. 47

How About Some Dodger Magic? p. 51

The Social Media World and Athletes p. 53

Matt Kemp, Triple Crown Winner p.55

Unlikely Road to Perfection p.58

The Team

Editor and Publisher:
Karine Hains

Graphics:
Jared Smith

Writing Team

Richard McAdam
Sean McCafferty
Stephen Duell
Scott Kozlowski
Drew Pelto

Team Contacts

Richard McAdam
Stephen Taylor
Jay Weger
J.R. Lebert





This Month

By Karine Hains aka Pheeb888

There's plenty happening in the world of sports these days; baseball is back, the NHL playoffs are monopolizing the sports networks in the evenings and the NFL draft just happened. As a result we have a very mixed bag of article this month and a magazine that is less hockey centred so to speak, which makes a nice change, especially for those of you who are not hockey fans.

As I wanted to have a bit of diversity this month, I decided it would be nice to introduce an artist to our readers. By not just any artist, someone who inspired themselves from the hobby we all loved and turned it into something else. So this month, in our featured interview you will get to read about the work of Tim Carroll. I hope you enjoy both the interview and the numerous pictures of his work.

On the hobby front, the Spring expo is currently happening in Toronto and people are getting ready for the National Sports Collectors Convention in Baltimore in August. If you are going and you want to meet up with fellow SCFers, check out this thread: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=1576593> . If you've never been, and even if you have, I really recommend going. I've only been once when it was held in Cleveland but I truly had a blast. This is where you realize what the expression being like a kid in a candy store truly means. From the insane amount of product on display to the excitement of seeing people busting boxes like crazy, it really is a wonderful experience. It's also a great opportunity to meet a lot of fellow collectors and of people from the industry. If you are anywhere near Baltimore in August, you should really try and attend.



On the hockey front, you may remember last month's article about the future of the Montreal Canadiens. Well, I'm happy to report that things have been put in motion in Montreal and that the Habs have a new General Manager in Marc Bergevin. Now the fans are anxious to know who the new coach will be. While many of them seem to want to see Patrick Roy behind the bench for le bleu, blanc, rouge next year, there are rumours that the Habs are meeting with Marc Crawford...Exciting time to be a Montreal fan! Who will be the chosen one? Not only for the coach's job but also when the organisation picks third at the draft. While many wanted to see Grigorenko be picked by their favorites, they seem to have second thoughts after he suffered

from a bout of mono and was almost irrelevant in the playoffs for the Quebec Remparts. The next few weeks should be interesting in Habs land!

On this note, enjoy this issue of the magazine and we'll be back with another edition on the 4th June!



A Word with Tim Carroll By Karine Hains aka Pheeb888



If you are reading this, it's safe to say that you are a sports fan. It's also safe to say that you like sports cards. Why do you like them? There could be a thousand reasons but to me, sports cards are a form of art. I know, they may not be to you but each to their own as they say. For my mother, art consists of a painting depicting a watering can... *sigh* To me, that's not art, not to my taste. My definition of art may differ from hers but one thing is for sure, my definition of art includes the work of Tim Carroll. Read on to find out more about one of my favorite artists...

Collectors Corner: The last time we spoke to you, back in August 2009, you had mainly done baseball pieces. What have you been up to since then?

Tim Carroll: Since the August '09 issue, I have dabbled in music and American history – as well as sports – to find inspirations for my art. I grew up in Northeast Mississippi (just outside of Elvis Presley's hometown), and just a couple of hours from the Mississippi Delta (birthplace of the blues). I didn't have to look too far to draw on

music as an inspiration. As far as history goes, we all grow up learning about the men and women of the past that have made the present what it is today. Guys like Abraham Lincoln and Benjamin Franklin have always fascinated me with their vision. Making pieces of them was very rewarding, and I look forward to creating pieces of Edison, Einstein, and da Vinci – among others.

CC: Our last article about your work was called “base-ic” Arts because you used base cards to make up your art pieces. Now however, you seem to be using plenty of other mediums can you describe them to us?

TC: Absolutely. Using the same ideas as the baseball card pieces (worthless cards creating valuable ones), I wanted to use mediums that have something to do with the subject. The mediums that are used are not random; they are just as important as the finished portrait. I have used old black and white socks to create Shoeless Joe Jackson; guitar picks to create Jimi Hendrix, Bob Marley, and Gene Simmons; “raven” feathers to make Edgar Allan Poe; band-aids to create Frank Thomas (aka “The Big Hurt”); toothpicks to make Ted Williams (aka “Toothpick Ted” and “The Splendid Splinter”); common comic



books to create the first issue of Action Comics; an old pair of Nike Air Jordans and 23 pairs of shoelaces to make Michael Jordan; shattered baseball bats for Mariano Rivera and Bo Jackson; and butterfly/bee stamps for Muhammad Ali. I have also used several speeches/song lyrics in a way that allowed portraits of certain celebrities to be made (Tebow, Gehrig, Lincoln, Ali, Lennon).

CC: Have you sold a lot of commission pieces so far? Who are your average customers?

TC: I could have never dreamt that something I made would be desired by people. It is still very humbling when someone purchases something I make or when they trust in me to make something for them. Knowing that my work is going to be hanging in their home or office gives such a sense of accomplishment. But, yes, the commissions have been coming, and I hope they continue! It's been really neat doing work for people from all over North America. Sports fans make up a majority of the commissions, but I have had some really cool commissions that had nothing to do with baseball, football, etc... For example, a gentleman wanted to give his wife a birthday gift she would never forget. He told me her favorite television show was I Love Lucy, and her favorite episode from Lucy was one about a chocolate factory. After some conversations with him, I learned his wife's favorite candy was Hershey's Kisses. So, I used Hershey's Kisses wrappers to make a portrait of Lucy. That commission meant so much to that family, and I am honored to have been involved.



CC: Back in 2009, you told us about the Holy Grail series and the “amazing sports moments” series, how have both series evolved? What is the current list of pieces that will be featured in those?

TC: (Tim laughs).....slowly. I think I have some sort of attention deficit or something...I'll get finished with one project, and then a new idea will come along and I'll get started on something completely different. Mix in the commission work, and I have not been able to complete the Holy Grail series. I do have one piece finished – a commission – that will be part of the “ASM” series. It is of Rickey Henderson, immediately after breaking Lou Brock's stolen base record. Although I'm moving



very slowly on completing those, I still have every intention of doing so. The “HG” series will include, at the very least, Michael Jordan’s 86-87 Fleer and Wayne Gretzky’s rookie card. I’m going to get some consultation on the other basketball and hockey pieces, as both of those sports are out of my comfort zone.

CC: Some time ago, you sold one of your pieces on eBay for charity, what was that about?

TC: When the April 2011 tornadoes ripped through the Midwest/Southeast of the United States, I felt as useless as everyone. So many people were without homes, and some lost loved ones or lost their own lives. It made me even more thankful for my family, my home, and for my own health. A neighboring town, Smithville, MS, was completely destroyed by an EF-5 tornado. Being 15 miles from my house, I wanted to do something – even if it was something small – to help out. After the first few days, people that weren’t part of law enforcement or emergency/crisis personnel were not allowed in the disaster area to help (to keep out looting, etc.) So, I put the Joe Namath “Broadway Joe” up for auction on eBay. 100% of the proceeds went to purchasing household items and bottled water for the people of Smithville. I chose the Namath because he played his ball in Tuscaloosa – which was one of the other towns destroyed the same day by the same wave of storms. I can’t remember the exact amount, but I was able to purchase several irons, ironing boards, cases of bottled water, and other things that went directly to the people affected by the storms. It was a nice feeling knowing that I “traded” those common football cards for items that were truly needed.

CC: Now that you've produced a lot more pieces, is the Wagner still your favorite?

TC: The Wagner will always be special, as it was the piece that got this sideline started. If I had to pick one piece that is my favorite, though.....it would be the Jimi Hendrix out of guitar picks. I also am fond of my Bo Jackson from shattered bats that I made last fall. I lost my father back in January of this year, and the Bo was made because of the memories I have of my father and I at card shows back in the early 90s – trying to pull some of those black & white Bo cards.





CC: I personally love your Lincoln piece, what gave you the idea for this one? Is it sitting in your personal collection or was it bought by someone?

TC: After I completed the first couple of baseball card pieces, I began to think about other things that I spent my free time reading about. American history, the Civil War, in particular, stood out. Abe Lincoln was a man ahead of his time. It is no wonder that all of these decades later, most Americans consider him the greatest president in our nation's history. I took one of the speeches/moments that defined his presidency – the Emancipation Proclamation – and I wrote it over and over. By darkening in some words and leaving some spaces without any writing, I was able to create his image. Although I have had it priced since the day I made it, I have never really shopped it. It is sitting in my classroom right now, and it is used to inspire students when we talk about Lincoln and his legacy.

CC: What other projects have you got in the works right now? If someone was to ask you to reproduce a piece you've already done because they want one for themselves, would you do it?

TC: I just completed "Change". It is a Jackie Robinson/Negro Leagues inspired piece that starts in black & white and shifts into color. It is the largest card art piece I have made. I am working on a couple of commissions – some sports related and some not. I also have had a couple of ideas that I am finally getting out on paper. Once I get the preparation work out of the way, I will be able to start on those as well. I have had several, SEVERAL people ask me to recreate works I have already done (especially the Elvis Presley "Broken Records" piece). It's simply not going to happen. It wouldn't be fair to the person that bought the original piece, and it wouldn't be fair to me. I have no desire to duplicate something I have already done.





CC: I see plenty of baseball pieces in your gallery, some football ones, a basketball one but no hockey, are you open to doing hockey pieces?

TC: Hockey is one of those sports that I just KNOW I would love if I ever could regularly attend games. Living in Northeast Mississippi for the first 33 years of my life (until last summer when I moved to Myrtle Beach), the only taste of hockey that I ever got was a Western Pro Hockey League team that came to Tupelo in the late 90s. It was called the T-Rex, and it was only there for a couple of years. Nashville got an NHL team around the same time, so hockey was the buzz. However, it fizzled out in our area, and I just haven't been exposed enough to love it like my fellow sports fans from the north. As for hockey pieces – I am certainly open to doing them. I just truly haven't completed any yet because of my lack of knowledge of hockey.

CC: Have you ever showed one of your pieces to the athlete or celebrity depicted? What was their reaction or if you haven't, would you like to do so?

TC: There are so many pieces I have made that I would love to see autographed! The Bo Jackson, Frank Thomas, and Michael Jordan top the list. A man from Pennsylvania that purchased the Joe Morgan "Little Joe" piece took it to a show up in PA and had Morgan sign it. From all accounts, he loved it! He sent me a picture of Morgan holding it up after he had signed it – and it was a highlight for me to see the actual athlete with the piece. If anyone out there gets any of my artwork signed by the athlete/celebrity – let me know.....I'd love to have a picture of it!



CC: Do you plan to just do commission work for private customers or would you be open to dealing with businesses?

TC: Doing work at some sort of commercial level would be really fun, so dealing with businesses is certainly something I would love to entertain. I don't think it would ever take the place of the individual commission pieces for private collections – those pieces are just too special and I really have fun making them. Doing art on a larger scale would just add another challenge and dimension to my entire body of work.

CC: Have you had the chance to display any of your work at any card shows yet? I know you had not back in 2009. Would you be open to sending a piece out to a SCF staff member who will be attending the National Sports Collectors Convention?



TC: Something has always “come up” in the past couple of years to keep me from attending the National (and other shows as well). There have always been schedule conflicts. I know that, with time, I’ll be able to make those shows and get the opportunity to meet some of the people that have helped make my work as popular as it is. I’m a people person, and everyone that knows me knows how much I like to talk and socialize. I’m on the east coast now, so I know it is just a matter of time before I make an appearance at a major show. As for sending out the art piece – certainly! Everyone that has seen the work online AND in person points out how each piece looks so much better when they are able to walk up to it and view it from a distance. They are true conversation pieces, and if I can’t be at a National in person, I would love to at least have a piece there to represent my work.

CC: What do the kids at your school think about your art? Any of them ever ask you to make a piece for them?

TC: As much as I love to teach, I think I love to inspire even more. I believe they go hand-in-hand. Having students actually WANT to come to school and learn goes so

far in helping them succeed in the classroom – and in life. The students seem to flock towards the artwork. Most of that comes from the fact that the materials being used are usually things they can round up from family members and try themselves. They may not be able to afford paintbrushes and canvas – but this kind of art gives them that “think outside the box” mentality. The stories of these art pieces are very literal to them, and that helps them make sense of it. Once the hook is set with the visuals, the questions always come (and keep coming). How did you do that? Can I make something like that? How did you make it look just like that person? That’s when I use that curiosity to my advantage and I teach to it. I teach math through the art. We use measurement skills to create grids. We make smaller grids to blow up the pictures. We make larger art pieces that require each student to do his/her part in order to make the complete image. It builds a strong sense of community. The students just love the lessons that are taught through the arts – those are the lessons they never forget.

CC: What would be your absolute dream project?

TC: Wow.....that’s a tough question. I’ve only been doing this kind of mixed-media work for about 3 years, so I am still forming my artistic identity. I know that writers get a block from time to time, and



some artists have told me the same thing. I haven't hit that wall yet. I keep a "to do" list in my studio, and I seem to add a piece or two to that long list every week. It would be a dream just to get through that list and execute all of those pieces as I see them in my head. With that said, I think that any sports artist would be lying if he/she said they didn't want a piece of their art to be shown in a gallery at his/her favorite sport's Hall of Fame and I am no different. With my love for baseball being what it is – it would be a major accomplishment if anything of mine were to be shown in Cooperstown or in Kansas City at the Negro League Museum. I'd also love to work collaboratively with a pro athlete – any sport – to create something unique for him/her. I know that all of that stuff comes with time, patience, and most importantly – hard work. I feel like I am getting so much better with each piece I make. I go back to some of my earlier pieces. While I am proud of the work I have done, I also can see some things I would change now or do differently if I were to do the piece again. I guess that's the teacher in me coming out in my work. Reflect on what was done and change what needs to be changed at the next opportunity.

If like me you like Tim's art and would like to send him comments, you can visit his website at <http://www.timcarrollart.com/> and use the "contact me" button.

Here's one piece of information Tim did not divulge in this interview, guess who will soon have an original Tim Carroll piece on her wall? That's right, yours truly. Those who know me will not be surprised to hear that it will feature Patrick Roy and THAT wink (thanks to Richard McAdam for the idea there). As a preview, here is the sketch of the piece:

I cannot wait to hang it on my wall. On behalf of Sportscardforum and Collectors Corner, I wish Tim all the best in his future endeavors.





May 2012

At the time of publishing, these dates were accurate but as you know, they do change a lot...

Hockey

05/08/12 Upper Deck SPx Hockey
05/16/12 Panini Contenders Hockey
05/30/12 Panini Titanium Hockey

Baseball

05/09/12 Bowman Baseball
05/23/12 Topps Archives Baseball
05/30/12 Topps Pro Debut Baseball

Football

05/11/12 Leaf Valiant Football
05/15/12 Upper Deck USA Football
05/18/12 Leaf U.S. Army All American Bowl
05/22/12 Upper Deck College Football Legends
05/30/12 Bowman Signature Football

Basketball

05/16/12 Panini Past and Present Basket





Product Review: 2011/12 ITG Between The Pipes Hockey 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 (a few days before release).

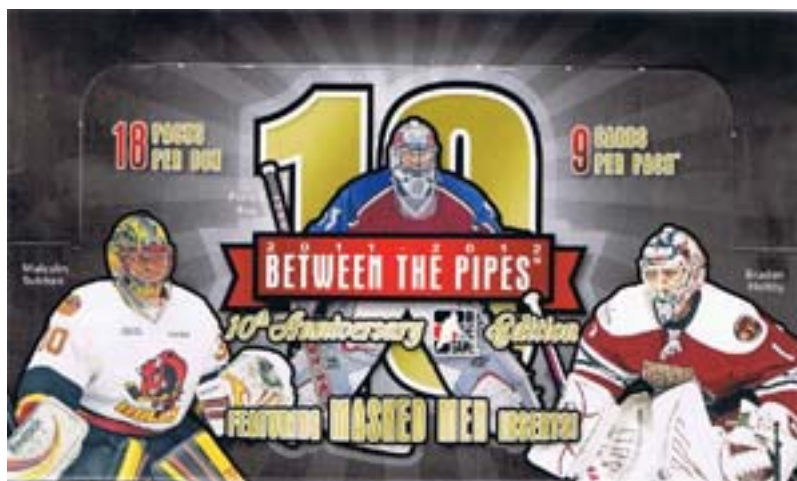
Product Details

18 packs per box

9 cards per pack

Current Retail Price (online):

\$89.99 - \$104.99



Product Description

Base cards

A 200 base card set featuring 8 exciting subsets:

Future Star, Stars of the Game, Decades, Stars and Stripes, La Belle Province, Expansion Tandems, International Pioneers and One Game Wonder.

10th anniversary inserts (1:8 packs)

Masked Men (1:6 packs)

Featuring men behind the masks in limited Silver and limited Gold Versions along with Die-Cut Ruby Version.

Authentic Autographs Cards (1:8 packs)

The most comprehensive Goalie Autograph collection featuring new insert sets like Dual Autograph and Masked Men Autograph!

Game-Used Memorabilia Cards (1:8 packs)

A stunning collection of insert sets featuring Authentic Game-Used memorabilia cards.



What we Pulled

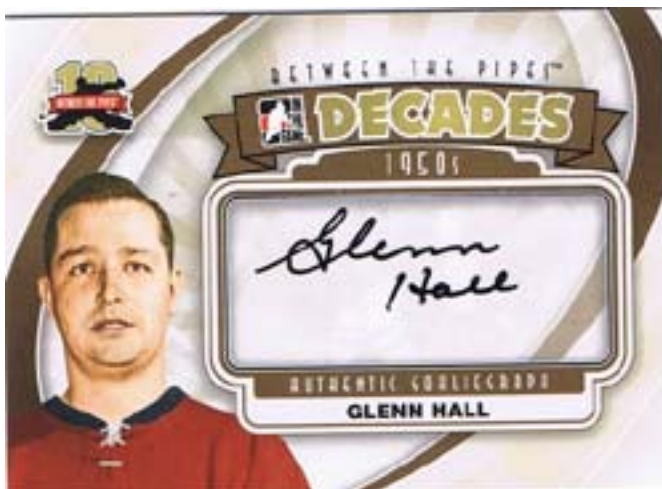
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9HCkmg3QfA>

Base - 126/200 (63%)



He Shoots He Saves (16)
Masked Men Red Die Cut (2)
Masked Men Silver (1)

Glenn Hall Autograph



Jack Campbell Autograph





Decades Silver Grant Fuhr/Patrick Roy/Mike Vernon/Don Beaupre Quad Jersey /50



Robert Mayer Silver Game Used Jersey 2-color Patch /140



Final Ratings and Thoughts

Base - 4.5/5

Design - 5/5

Fun - 4/5

Value - 4/5

Rebuy - 4.5/5

Overall - 22/25 (88%)



Pros:

Well thought out design, especially the Masked Men Die Cuts
Using the HSHS points cards as puzzle pieces
Commemorates Paul Deutsch's luck/achievement
Easily a multiple box product for most collectors

Cons:

Sticker autos
Could use an additional chase/insert set

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 today at www.itgtradingcards.com.





Product Review: 2011 Panini Playoff Contenders Football

By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

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

Product Details

24 packs per box

5 cards per pack

Current Retail Price (online): \$129.99 - \$149.99

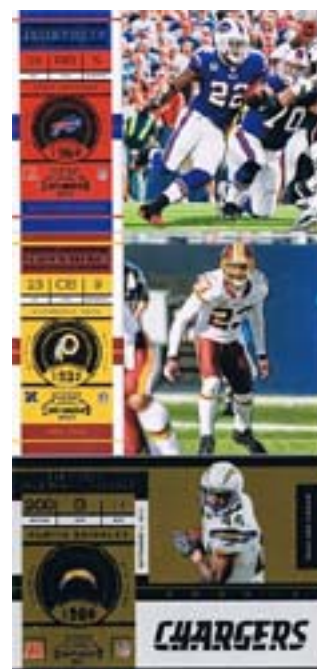
What we Pulled

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kmqos2LVYsc>



Base: 98/100 (98%)

Playoff Ticket /99 (1): Curtis Brinkley



Draft Class (3)

Legendary Contenders (3)

Rookie Of The Year Contenders (3)

Rookie Roll Call (3)

Super Bowl Tickets (3)

Super Bowl Tickets Gold /100 (1) - Dallas Clark



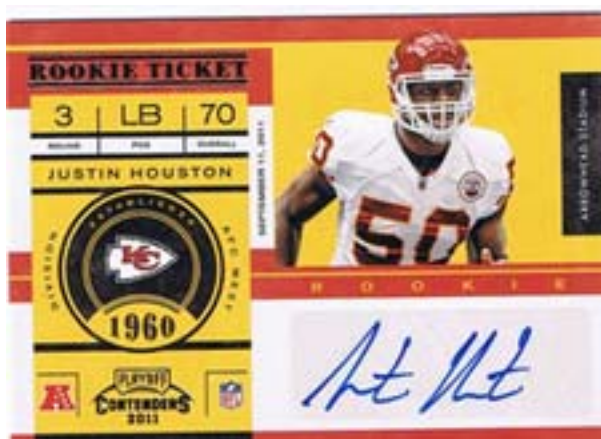
Armond Smith RC/Autograph



Colin Cochart RC/Autograph



Justin Houston RC/Autograph



Greg Little RC/Autograph



Mark Ingram RC/Autograph (on card)





Final Ratings and Thoughts

Base - 4.75/5

Design - 4.5/5

Fun - 4/5

Value - 4/5

Rebuy - 4/5

Overall - 21.25/25 (85%)

Pros:

On-card Rookie Autos available

Almost a complete base set

Most boxes yield at least one additional auto

Horizontal card design (stands out from vertical norm)

Cons:

Very low amount of numbered parallels/inserts

Would increase value by subbing 2 missing base for 2 of the inserts

High amount of autograph subjects

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, you can visit them today at www.paniniamerica.net.





Product Review: 2012 Topps Gypsy Queen Baseball

By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

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

Product Details

24 packs per box

10 cards per pack

10 card mini box loader

Current Retail Price (online): \$109.99 -

\$124.99



What we Pulled

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2Mw4YfGgvo>

Mini Box Loader

7 SP Minis

1 Glove Stories Mini

1 Moonshots Mini

1 Sliding Stars Mini



Base: 180/300 (60%)

SP Variations: 6

Mini Regular Back (12)

Mini Gypsy Queen Back (4)

Mini Straight Cut Back (4)

Mini Black Border (2)

Mini Green (1)

Mini Sepia /99 (1): Matt Cain





Blue Paper Frame /599 (2): Matt Moore,
Frank Thomas
Glove Stories (4)
Moonshots (8)
Sliding Stars (8)



Aroldis Chapman Black Printing Plate 1/1



J.P. Arencibia Autograph (on card)



Jon Jay Autograph (on card)





James Shields Mini Relic Jersey



David Wright Relic Jersey



Final Thoughts and Ratings

Base - 4.5/5

Design - 4.5/5

Fun - 4/5

Value - 4/5

Rebuy - 4/5

Overall - 21/25 (84%)

Pros:

On card autographs!

SPs are variations instead of cards added to the end of the set

Great for TTM/IP Autos

Only a couple of insert sets/unlike its brother product, Allen & Ginter

Cons:

SP minis are the variations along with 50 cards added to the end of the set

Mini relics not completely surrounded/encased, could lead to sliding



NPN Information:

NPN 2012 Topps Gypsy Queen BB
PO Box 2036
Duryea, PA 18642

Limit 1 per household

Postmarked by: 7/18/12

Received by: 7/25/12

Canada Skills Question: $10 \times 5 + 9 - 1 = ?$

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





Product Review: 2011/12 Panini Preferred Basketball

By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

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

Product Details

1 pack per box
4 cards per pack (individually sealed)
Current Retail Price (online): \$199.99 - \$229.99

Product Highlights

- Historic! 3 Iconic Designs From Donruss History : Look for memorable designs from the past, like the renowned die-cut triangular Panini's Choice (formerly Cramer's Choice), the classic Donruss Signatures, and Silhouettes!
- 1st Time Ever! Every card in the base set is autographed!
- Debuting! Chris Paul's First Panini Autographs !
- Three Autographs Total and One 6 to 8 Swatch Memorabilia Booklet per Box!
- Look for 1 of 1 cards - Autographs available!



What we Pulled

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pULQY7BmYRI>

Panini Signatures Mitch Richmond Autograph REDEMPTION





Panini's Choice Tommy Heinsohn Autograph /74



Crown Royale Signatures Gordon Hayward /99



Slam Dunk Booklet: Kobe Bryant/Vince Carter/David Robinson/Shaquille O'Neal/Tracy McGrady/Chris Webber/Kevin Garnett/Grant Hill Octo Jersey /125





Final Thoughts and Ratings

Base - 5/5 (All "base" cards are autographs)

Design - 4.5/5

Fun - 4/5

Value - 2.5/5

Rebuy - 2.5/5

Overall - 18.5/25 (74%)

Pros:

Every card is an autograph or memorabilia booklet

Convergence of multiple popular card designs

Each card individually wrapped (piece of excitement every time)

Cons:

Kills the value of booklets (For instance, 135 copies of the one pictured above. Thought the idea of pulling a booklet was meant to be that it was rare)

Priced too high

Very feast or famine type of boxes

Each card individually wrapped (could lead to damage issues)

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, you can visit them today at www.paniniamerica.net.





A Beginner's Guide to the Inventory System

By Mike Silvia SCF owner

The Sports Card Forum Inventory System was built to provide collectors with a free online system to maintain and display their sports card inventory. The inventory can then be used to sell items in our storefront system or through auction. Also, it is a great resource to store and share images of your cards and could be use as a replacement to photo sharing sites.

Here are 10 inventory features you can take advantage of today. See tutorials here: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/articles/2012/05/a-beginners-guide-to-the-inventory-system/>

1. Build Your Inventory

Organize your cards in your house and build your inventory on SportsCardForum.com. You will be able to manage your inventory into a personal collection and/or list of items for sale. The system allows you can back up your inventory on your home computer. Upload an image, and with each card added you may earn 0.5 Card Cash per image uploaded.

2. Tag your Images with a Team

“Tagging” a team to your images will help users find cards by team. This will help buyers and traders find your cards. Even if these cards are in your personal collection, tag them to help you sort your images by team. You can tag each card image with the specific team and earn 0.1 Card Cash per image.

3. Categorize your Cards (Tutorial)

Large inventories can be categorized into easy to manage category lists. For example, you can categorize your inventory by rookies, autographs, game-used, inserts and more.

4. Build Your Want List

You can build a want list and then search stores and inventories for the specific cards.

5. Add Full Sets to your Inventory

Have full sets? We have an easy to use feature that allows users to add full sets to their inventory.

6. Sell your Items for Card Cash

For members wishing to sell sports cards you must start with building at least one Store Template. This will allow you to have sales information like sport category, shipping costs, duration and other key information pre-filled. For example, you might create a template with standard shipping costs and items that you are only listing for 30 days. Build as many templates as you wish. This will save you lots of time in the long run! Currently, we only allow members to list items for Card Cash, but plan on adding real cash sales soon.



7. Auction your Items

Members can list items for sale (detailed in #6), or opt to do an auction-style listings. You must start with building at least one Store Template. This will allow you to have sales information like sport category, shipping costs, duration and other key information pre-filled. Currently, we only allow members to list items for Card Cash, but plan on adding real cash sales soon.

8. Purchasing Items

Our store and auctions systems are automated. Currently, only the Card Cash Store is live. On the left, side column you can narrow down your browsing by sport, attributes (autograph, memorabilia, etc), print run and price. The store tabs allow you to view all items (store and auction), auctions only or store items only. You can also browse by detailed, image or text list.

9. Trading for Items

There are over 750,000 cards listed in SCF member inventories. You can use the same filter system mentioned in #8. They system allows you to find a card that you may need for your collection and use the private message system to negotiate a trade.

10. Trade/Sales Management and Feedback Systems

For years, SportsCardForum.com has offered a fully featured trade management and feedback system. All sales and trades are tracked by our system to allow members to manage all their trades/sales. Once transactions are complete, members leave feedback. This allows SportsCardForum.com to be one of the safest sports collectible sites on the internet. This system can be used manually from trades started on our message boards or automatically through the store system.



SPORTSCARDFORUM My Inventory Welcome PhoenixBBB - Logout

Stores Card Cash Store Inventories My Store My Inventory Help SCF Forum Backend

Search by Cards

Player Name: Card #: Sport:

Set Name: Manufacturer:

Year: Attributes: ☐ AG ☐ Auto ☐ HOF ☐ SR Brand:

Additional Search Text: Print run:

Inventory type: ☐ Inventory only ☐ Want only ☐ Trade only ☐ PC only Sort By:

Per Page:

Please select a sport and at least one more query item like part of a set name, player name, attribute, print run or inventory type to enable a possible result!

Inventory items

Total cards: 1,209

[Search cards](#)

[Search card sets](#)

[View your inventory](#)

[Public inventory](#)

[Set name](#)

[View your inventory](#)

[Remove your inventory](#)

[Player inventory \(Search\)](#)

[Player inventory](#)

[Team inventory](#)

[Team inventory](#)

[PC card links](#)

© SportsCardForum.com | 2012 | [Stores](#) | [Card Cash Store](#) | [SCF Official Card Cash Store](#) | [My Store](#) | [My Inventory](#) | [Help](#) | [Backend](#)

SportsCardForum.com Card Manager Beta version 0.8.5.8

Total execution time: 0.0297

Memory usage: 1.77MB



Around the Rink – May 2012

By Richard McAdam aka RGM81

It's the most wonderful time of the year! No, it's not quite Christmas, but right now it certainly feels like it for hockey fans and collectors. There is so much to be excited about right now, so let's get right to it!



The Stanley Cup playoffs are well underway and we already know two major things: the Western Conference will be represented in the Finals by a team that has never won the Stanley Cup, and even better, we know that we will have a *cue legendary WWE ring announcer Howard Finkel* NEW Stanley Cup Champion crowned in June. The four remaining teams in the West—St. Louis, Phoenix, Nashville, and Los Angeles—have a combined four Finals appearances (3 for the Blues and 1 for the Kings) between them, so it is going to be a rare opportunity to see a franchise that has never had the opportunity to raise that fabled trophy competing for the crown. And thanks to the overtime heroics of Joel Ward and the Washington Capitals, the Boston Bruins have been eliminated from the post-season. Your humble author could not contain his joy when Ward buried the puck behind Tim Thomas. Since my beloved Canadiens of course did not qualify this year, I've actually been able to watch these playoffs with a bit more objectivity than in recent years, but naturally my dislike of the Bruins meant that whoever their opponent(s) would be I would favour that team to win.

The first few nights of the first round were marred by some truly ugly incidents, and it is good to see that the temperatures have been turned down a few degrees. The headshots, the pointless fighting, the sucker punches...that's not quality hockey, and while it may make for interesting television, the drama and excitement created by three Game 7s and some stellar performances by teams quickly relegated all of the garbage time to the background of people's minds. We can only hope that the remaining eight teams keep their emotions in check and avoid further illegal and dangerous plays that leave a black eye on the game. While I think that the 25-game suspension issued to Raffi Torres will only affect the performance of Raffi Torres when he returns to the ice next season, hopefully the message has been sent to the players that any further shenanigans will result in stiff sentences.

The first few nights of the first round were marred by some truly ugly incidents, and it is good to see that the temperatures have been turned down a few degrees. The headshots, the pointless fighting, the sucker punches...that's not quality hockey, and while it may make for interesting television, the drama and excitement created by three Game 7s and some stellar performances by teams quickly relegated all of the garbage time to the background of people's minds. We can only hope that the remaining eight teams keep their emotions in check and avoid further illegal and dangerous plays that leave a black eye on the game. While I think that the 25-game suspension issued to Raffi Torres will only affect the performance of Raffi Torres when he returns to the ice next season, hopefully the message has been sent to the players that any further shenanigans will result in stiff sentences.

While the playoffs are providing spectacular entertainment on the ice, we are at that fantastic time of the spring when the card companies pull out all the stops to give collectors the best products in the hobby. And it is not a coincidence that these products are making their first appearances at the annual



Toronto Expo, which runs from May 4th to the 6th. All three companies have posted their Expo plans online, and it is going to be a great experience for collectors at the show that participate in the redemption programs! Additionally, ITG will be unveiling the 10th anniversary edition of Between The Pipes just in time for the event. The product, as always, is loaded with all the spectacular memorabilia and autographed content that collectors have clamoured for in the goalie-driven product, and it looks to be another hugely successful release for the fans of BTP.

If you are looking for more information about the Toronto Expo, here are some key links for you to check out:

Toronto Expo official website: <http://www.sportcardexpo.com/>

ITG Expo Plans and BTP Redemption Program: <http://www.sportcardforum.com/showthread.php?t=1639312>

<http://www.sportcardforum.com/showthread.php?t=1635857>

Upper Deck Expo Plans, Priority Signings Program, and Case Breaker Program:

<http://www.sportcardforum.com/showthread.php?t=1621382>

<http://www.sportcardforum.com/showthread.php?t=1638883>

Panini Expo Plans and Redemption Program:

<http://www.sportcardforum.com/showthread.php?t=1644476>

There are going to be some spectacular prizes for attendees, and we truly look forward to SCF members sharing their Expo experiences in the Box Breaks and Show & Tell sections of the boards!

Once you're done with the Expo, the month of May promises to be one of the busiest in recent memory, as there are no fewer than 5 products expected to be released:

Panini Elite - May 2nd – EXPO!

ITG Between The Pipes - May 3rd – EXPO!

SPx (w/Ice) - May 8th

Playoff Contenders - May 16th

Titanium - May 30th

Several of these products have been anticipated by collectors for months now, so it is great news that the wait will finally be over!

That's all for this month! Be sure to keep your eyes glued to the Hockey Card Talk forums for any hobby breaking news, and as always we look forward to the great discussions about the hobby and the playoffs.

Until next time, keep your sticks on the ice and we will see you around the boards!



Ignite and Redline Look to Put Some Summer Sizzle in the Nascar Hobby

By Stephen Taylor aka Race crazy



After a much needed break from new releases and the success of the Total Memorabilia release, the folks at Press Pass have come up with two new products for racing collectors to enjoy this summer in advance of the popular Showcase release. May will bring us Press Pass Ignite which is a completely new and redesigned set releasing at a time which usually brought us Press Pass Premium. This change is welcomed by the racing community as Premium had enjoyed a long and successful run but it had the feeling of running the same course a lot. Featuring the first cards of 2012

with all of the drivers in their new threads and containing all on-card autos and a few hits per box at right around 90 to 100 bucks, this release looks to be another successful one for Press Pass.

Press Pass Redline which is set to release in early June looks even more intriguing than Ignite. Featuring new ideas from Press Pass, the 2 pack a Tin release sort of has the feel of a more successful SP tin release as done in other sports. The product previews display sleek and beautifully designed cards and with only the top 18 or so most collectable drivers appearing in the set it should be a solid buy and a blast to open. Press Pass is definitely bringing the goods this summer. If you are considering getting into racing card collecting now is the time. The products have never been better and more innovative.

5 To Collect for the Future-2012 Edition

The question most often asked by new collectors entering the racing hobby is who to collect. Collectors this summer will go mad for the Danica autographs and the first cards featuring action sports star Travis Pastrana. Racing is a sport where every year the next up and coming star is thought to be someone different. Some pan out and some do not, however when searching for the future outside of the Pastrana and Patrick craziness here are 5 solid options.

1. Austin Dillon-Richard

Childress' grandson won the Truck Series Championship last year and jumped into the Nationwide Series this year, showing tremendous promise and running right behind his much more experienced



RCR teammate Elliott Sadler. Dillon is primed for a move to the Cup Series within 1 to 2 years at which point he will most likely be in a 4th RCR car. The kid is likable and has a bright future, plus he appeals to the primary Nascar fan base being an avid hunter and a known good ole boy from North Carolina.

2. Ty Dillon

Richard Childress' other grandson and Austin's younger brother is thought by many to be even more talented than his brother. Ty won the ARCA series title going away last year with a dominating 9 win season. Although in superior equipment he still proved his worth. Ty replaced his brother in the Bass Pro #3 ride in the Truck Series this year and is running very solid so far. Although he has not found the speed to win once he matures he will be a force as his brother was.



3. Ricky Stenhouse Jr.

Jack Roush has his next protégé in Stenhouse, a young hotshoe who likes to ride bulls, collect cowboy boots, and drive to the edge of control and over it sometimes. As a rookie Stenhouse tore up more equipment than anyone in the field but given his 2nd chance by Roush Stenhouse has been nothing but spectacular in the #6 Nationwide car. The defending series champ is in contention again this year and already has 2 victories in the young season. If Roush can find sponsorship look for Stenhouse to pilot the #6 Cup car soon.

4. Chase Elliott

Chase is the youngest and most unproven driver on the list but his last name should give some a clue that he has got the racing pedigree. His father is Bill Elliott and the younger seems to have gotten his dad's skill. Chase has been running successfully in lower divisions and late models and will continue to do so until he turns 18, the minimum age requirement to run high level Nascar events. Chase is currently under contract with Hendrick Motorsports, the premier team in the sport, and could be at the right age down the line to replace Jeff Gordon as his career winds down.

5. James Buescher

Buescher was somewhat of an up and comer last year but his first win the Truck Series eluded him. Buescher came out this year firing by winning the Nationwide Race at Daytona (with some luck involved) and by taking his first truck series win in convincing fashion at Kansas. Buescher is with an up and coming team in Turner Motorsports, which is showing itself to be a strong team in the Truck Series and a solid team in the Nationwide Series. This could be his breakout year as a potential Truck Series Champion.



The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

By J.R. Lebert aka jrlebert

It's a song usually reserved for the winter holidays, but here we are, in the month of April, humming and singing the same tune as we might in December. "It's the most... wonderful time... of the year!"

That's right, football fans. There is absolutely no better time than the month of April to be a football fan. Disagree? Allow me to explain, this one, simple sentence: No matter what team you are a fan of, no matter if it is a college or professional team, you are invested. If you are a fan of the Super Bowl Champion New York Giants, or the 1-11 Florida Atlantic Owls of the Sun Belt Conference, you have a horse in the race. Don't believe me?

After Round 1, one of the most talked about picks was the perceived "reach" pick by the Giants on RB David Wilson out of Virginia Tech, who many thought could be had in the same position in the Second Round. Round 3 produced another RB pick, Alfred Morris, from a most unlikely source... You guessed it... one-win Florida Atlantic. No other event, and no other full month brings fans from every corner of the football universe together like April and the NFL Draft.

The National Football League has clearly supplanted Major League Baseball as the preeminent sports league and attraction in the United States. The expansion of coverage of the combine, on the NFL Network, has led to a greater knowledge of all prospects involved, not just the blue-chippers and first rounders. College's Pro Days are now televised, many attended by current NFL players to work out with the current prospects. NFL franchises are searching farther and wider than ever before, scouting every college team's depth chart for the player who fits their particular system. How else to explain the Patriots selection of Nate Ebner, a rugby player out of Ohio State?

The draft has become a weekend event, unlike any process in sports. It's anticipation, execution, and analysis is more extensive and covered than all four other major pro sports, the MLB, NHL, NBA, and MLS, combined! Sure, the NBA has a pretty good draft, and the lottery helps to build some potential intrigue, but picking 60 guys over the course of a few hours pales in comparison to the wall-to-wall coverage of the NBA. Who, other than prospectors and hard core fans, follows the MLB draft after round 30, or all the way past the 1,500th (!) pick? Heck, even the very last pick in the NFL Draft gets a nickname, Mr. Irrelevant, and a parade at Disney World! Congratulations, Chandler Harnish!

Colleges normally not known as football powerhouses have seen players from their ranks emerge as offensive superstars in the NFL: former Delaware Blue Hen Joe Flacco, Eastern Illinois' Tony Romo, UMass Minuteman Victor Cruz, and Rutgers RB Ray Rice. On the defensive side of the ball, you need look no further than the very top of the defensive leaderboards for your small school performers: Interception co-leader Kyle Arrington out of Hofstra, sack leader Jared Allen from Idaho State, and perennial sack artist DeMarcus Ware of Troy. The emergence of schools from "non-BCS" conferences has also helped to bring in more fans of April's festivities. Quick pop quiz: Which school had more players drafted in 2012, USC, Arkansas, Auburn, LSU, Florida, Boise State, Nebraska, or Notre Dame? If you said the Broncos of Boise State, give yourself the gold star for the day.



went unpicked have fun scouring the undrafted free agent (UDFA) list to see who signs with a pro team. Fans of college record setter and all-time NCAA great Case Keenum can rejoice! The former Houston signal caller is still a Houston signal caller, going from the Cougars to the Texans. Will he follow a long line of NCAA record breakers to fade away in the pros, like Colt Brennan, Timmy Chang, David Klingler, and Kliff Klingsbury, or carve out a decent NFL career? What, too, of Kellen Moore, the NCAA's all-time wins leader? Will he get a chance to play behind the injury prone Matthew Stafford, or will the Lions stash him away on their depth chart, holding clipboards and running the scout team?

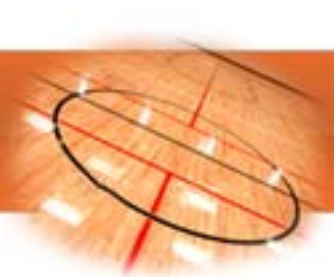
Where else than the UDFA list would you read about the dream of being a pro finally realized for players from St. Anselm, Kutztown, Slippery Rock, Humboldt State, Tarleton State, or Ouchita Baptist, all hoping to be the next Chris Ivory, out of Tiffin, and just make a roster, let alone an impact on a Super Bowl contender?

The end of the draft also marks the beginning of either celebrating or second guessing your pro team's choices. Fans in Indy wait with nervous anticipation for the beginning of the Andrew Luck era. Why take another QB in Kirk Cousins if you just drafted the future of the franchise in Robert Griffin III? Is an almost-thirty-year-old former New York Yankees washout the answer at QB in Cleveland? How much of a steal is the best OG in the draft falling to the Steelers late in the first round?

College and pro fans collide when searching for card board of their favorite player or new man crush. Now, hardcore USC collectors battle it out with Cheeseheads over Nick Perry's cards, just as LSU fans attempt to outbid the most fervent of collectors in Big D to get the newest Morris Claiborne issues. If you are a Dolphins fan, chances are you never saw Ryan Tannehill spin it at Texas A&M, but there you are trading for as many autos and parallels as you can just 24 hours after your 'Phins tabbed him with the 8th overall pick. How many collectors' hearts, and wallets, sank when the A+ pick you had stock-piled early cards of fell to a D- team, or when they became a 3rd round pick instead of a late first round selection?

For one, however improbable moment, we get to ask fun questions like this: Can UDFA signee WR Paul Cox follow in the footsteps of his alma mater's most famous alum, Mississippi Valley State's Jerry Rice, and have a stellar NFL career? Will he even make a roster? Will cutting arguably the greatest to ever play the game in favor of a rookie signal caller from Stanford be the right choice for the Colts? Who will be the next Tom Brady, 199th overall pick in the 2000 Draft, or Jamarus Russell, #1 overall in 2007?

From the war room of the Green Bay Packers, home of superstar QB Aaron Rodgers, to the practice field of the Merrimack Warriors in North Andover, Massachusetts, home of UDFA signee QB James Suozzo (now of the reigning Super Bowl Champion New York Giants), everyone who is a football fan has a place in April. Hope you enjoyed the ride!



Courtside

By Jay Weger aka Jay520

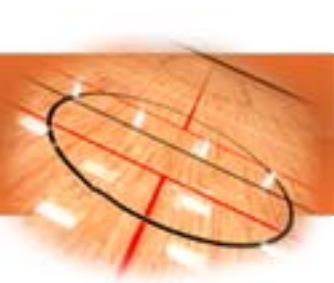
Collection Achievements

No super collectors but there are a couple collection achievements. 1st is andrewwink with his completion of the 03-04 Finest rookie set. Finally finished after 9+ years this set is awesome considering the 03-04 RC crop of James (\$175), Melo (\$80 auto), Wade (\$120 auto) and Bosh(\$40 auto) and others like Hinrich, West, Diaw and Perkins. The next collection achievement goes to gatorboymike who finished a rainbow of Mike Dunleavy that took him 4+ years. The rainbow set is from 08-09 Topps Murad 51 that consists of the base card, mini base, mini black border, mini framed silk/25, mini framed suede 1/1 and mini printing plate 1/1. With 2 1/1's in the rainbow the hardest to find was the mini black border version due to the set not being listed in Beckett.



Contests & Winners

At the beginning of April saw leopards40 win the 2012 SCF "March Madness" Bracket Challenge with a score of 1480 earning him 750 CC. abah58 finished 2nd with 1400 and 500 CC while greek22hockey and txtaz1102 tied for 3rd with 1390 getting 200 CC each and 5th white_rabbit with 1360 winning 100 CC. On the VIP side dajuiceman210 came in 1st with 140 points and won a 10-11 Elite Black dual Logoman auto of Darrell Griffith/Devin Harris/99. Enigma was 2nd with 129 points earning him a 09-10 Court Kings Hardwood Heroes Melo GU/299 and NY Sports Teams finished 3rd with 124 points getting him a 09-10 Court Kings Gallery of Stars Luol Deng GU/299. Next up is the NBA GTS standings thru 4/27 with andrewhoya in 1st place with 12 wins while pwaldo and TurdFerguson are in a tie with 7 wins. gladdyontherise is 3rd alone with 6 wins while bouncer, gardzy99 and 2FarGone are tied in 4th with 5 wins. gladdyontherise is in the top spot with 21 wins for the VIP members. 2nd is andrewhoya with 17 wins and 3rd is bouncer with 14 while mikepro44 and pwaldo each have 11 wins in 4th. NBA Top Performers finish in late March saw anththeman and vixsportscards tie for 1st splitting 100 CC while rocketfan86 got 2nd and 50 CC. April's finish saw tk10775 runaway from the others with 28 points and 100 CC while toddsr finished with 25 points and 50 CC. Now that the regular season is over the playoffs are here with someone being eliminated each round. 8 members that made it are AiThor, anththeman, mrjobe85, rocketfan86, Thrillseeker, tk10775, toddsr and vixsportscards. And yes officially Theme Weeks are back after a long delay. Be sure to check the basketball show&tell forum. And lastly look for the Predict the 2012 NBA Playoffs contest in the basketball contests forum.



Hobby News

On May 16th Panini Past & Present will be hitting the shelves at a price of \$100 a box and \$1200 a case for 12 boxes. Each box will contain 20 packs with 8 cards per pack. Each box contains (3) Autographs, (1) Memorabilia Card, (4) Bread for Energy, (3) Bread for Health, (1) Bread for Life, (4) Changing Times, (2) Raining 3's, (2) Fireworks, and (4) Breakout Cards! Also this will be the first product to contain redemption cards for the 11-12 and 12-13 rookie draft class. Something new to the basketball collectors came on the market. It is called Leaf Best of Basketball at \$339 a box. Each box is said to contain (1) Graded or slabbed Authentic Buyback Card & (1) 2012 Leaf Best of Basketball Original Signed Card per box! There were a few broke on the site with mixed results as it is a gamble when paying \$340 a box. UD's Fleer Retro product that was slated to be released in April has been pushed back to 7/24.

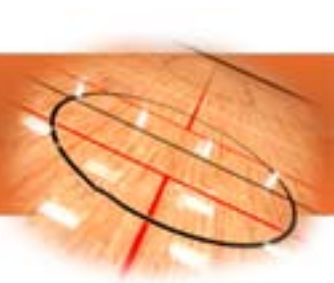
My Sports Dream Piece of Art

For my Sports Dream Piece of Art it would have to be something of Michael Jordan. He is my favorite athlete of all time since I'm a diehard MJ fan. He would have to be in his Bulls uniform. I'm thinking probably the "Last Shot" kind of painting or signed lithograph would be awesome to have hanging on my wall. Then if that is out of the question then a framed and signed MJ Bulls jersey. And lastly would be a signed framed picture of the '97 Arizona Wildcats National Championship team or '01 Diamondbacks World Series team.

NBA News

April was interesting in the NBA starting with the Knicks who were on a rollercoaster due to losing Jeremy Lin with a torn meniscus in his knee. Next Amare goes down with back spasms for 2 weeks as they are fighting for the 8th seed. But Carmelo Anthony to the rescue putting up nearly 30 a night for the Knicks and almost single handedly getting them in the postseason. Dwight Howard missed a game due to back spasm on 4/13 and the next day was diagnosed with a herniated disk in his back and sat out the next 6 games for the Magic. Then on 4/20 with his back not getting any better decided to have back surgery ending his season as the Magic fell to 6th in the east. The Lakers Metta World Peace was suspended 7 games at the end of the season after elbowing James. Peace was celebrating a dunk running back up court while Harden got in his way and was met with a stinging elbow to the back of the head that knocked him to the court. It was later ruled a mild concussion for Harden in which he could not come back into the game from and missed the next 2 games. The Charlotte Bobcats made NBA history by finishing 7-59 (13 more than anyone else) to earn them the worst record ever. They lost their last 23 straight games of the season equaling MJ's jersey number. Is MJ the best player ever? Yes! Is MJ the worst owner ever? Yes as the record shows.

The MVP race in April was narrowed down to 2 candidates and they are Kevin Durant and LeBron James. Durant has the edge in points with 27.9 to 27.1 but James has the better numbers in rebounds and assists at 7.9 and 6.2. It will be interesting to see how the voters pick the winner as James has star teammates in Wade and Bosh in Miami while Durant has Westbrook and Harden. If James wins it will be his 3rd MVP award and if not Durant's first. In the case of ROY it looks like Kyrie Irving is going to



take it finishing with 18.5 ppg, 3.7 rpg and 5.4 apg.

The NCAA Title game saw Kentucky Wildcats beat the Kansas Jayhawks 67-59 for their 8th in school history. Anthony Davis, Michael Kidd-Gilchrist and Terrence Jones held the Jayhawks to 33% shooting in the win. By the end of April all 5 starters have declared for the NBA Draft leaving coach Calipari to reload his team for next years run. On the women's side Baylor won **over** Notre Dame 80-61 and cap off a first time ever in NCAA women's history 40-0 perfect season. Britney Griner had 26 points and 13 rebounds to lead the lady Bearcats to only their 2nd title in school history.

NBA Season Standings & Playoff Seeding

East

1. Chicago Bulls 50-16
2. Miami Heat 46-20
3. Indiana Pacers 42-24
4. Boston Celtics 39-27
5. Atlanta Hawks 40-26
6. Orlando Magic 37-29
7. New York Knicks 36-30
8. Philadelphia 76ers 35-31

West

1. San Antonio Spurs 50-16
2. OKC Thunder 47-19
3. L. A. Lakers 41-25
4. Memphis Grizzlies 41-25
5. L. A. Clippers 40-26
6. Denver Nuggets 38-28
7. Dallas Mavericks 36-30
8. Utah Jazz 36-30

NBA Stat's Leaders

Scoring

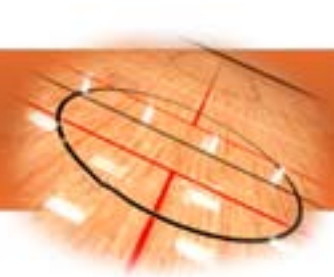
1. Kevin Durant 28.0
2. Kobe Bryant 27.9
3. LeBron James 27.1
4. Kevin Love 26.0
5. R. Westbrook 23.6

Rebounds

1. Dwight Howard 14.5
2. Kevin Love 13.3
3. Andrew Bynum 11.8
4. DeMarcus Cousins 11.0
4. Kris Humphries 11.0

Assists

1. Rajon Rondo 11.7
2. Steve Nash 10.7
3. Chris Paul 9.1
4. Jose Calderon 8.8
5. Deron Williams 8.7



Pack/Box Breaks

By John Broman XxViSiOnxX

In April the preferred box to break was 11-12 Panini Preferred in which Show15 got a Panini's Choice auto of Elvin Hayes/25, Preferred auto of dan Issel/74 and SlamDunk booklet - Kobe/Carter/Robinson/Shaq/T-Mac/C-Webb/Garnett/Hill/125. GroundSupport got a box pulling a Silhouette GU/auto of Devin Ebanks redemption/99, SlamDunk booklet - Griffin/Young/Gibson/Ibaka/Westbrook/McGee/Igoudala/Derozan/199 and a sick Kevin Durant Preferred emerald auto 3/5! tebowfan15 hit a Crown Royale Lazar Hayward auto/25, Preferred Charles Oakley auto redemption, Panini's Choice Ralph Sampson emerald auto/5 and a All-Star booklet Blake/LeBron/Dirk/Wade/Melo/Rose/Durant/199. redsoxfan22494 got a Panini's Choice Sam Perkins auto/25, Silhouette GU/auto of Toni Kukoc/49, Preferred Luol Deng emerald auto 1/5 and a SlamDunk booklet - Griffin/Young/Gibson/Ibaka/Westbrook/McGee/Igoudala/Derozan patches/25. kevinv bought 6 boxes netting him Panini's Choice autos of Gary Neal/99, Robert Horry/74, Detlef Shremphf/25, Andrea Bargnani emerald /5, Preferred autos of Al-Farooq Aminu/99, Bailey Howell/74, Dan Majerle/74, Silhouette GU/autos of Luol Deng/25, Grant Hill/25 and Rebound booklet -Nene/Chandler/Gooden/Deng/Love/Varajao/Bradley/199, Decades booklet - Zo/Mullin/Majerle/Rodman/Starks/Jackson/Price/Ewing/99, All-Star booklet - Lewis/Payton/Kemp/Durant/Shremphf/Allen McDaniel/79, SlamDunk booklet - Kobe/Carter/Robinson/Shaq/T-Mac/C-Webb/Garnett/Hill/125, Rookies booklet - Brackins/Cousins/Pittman/Neal/Lin/Wall/99.

Another big product opened was 10-11 Gold Standard in which berlincards got a Gold NBA logo auto of Bill Walton/99, Gold Nuggets Kevin Durant GU/199 and Gold Records Robert Parish auto/25. RWC pulled a Gold Mining Kevin Love GU/299, Gold Nuggets Dirk GU/199 and a sick Gold Nuggets LeBron James 14k gold 6/10!!! Show15 got 2 boxes pulling Danilo Gallinari Plat. base/25, Gold Records Robert Parish GU/299, Golden Ann. Abdul-Jabbar GU/99, Gold NBA logo auto George Gervin/99, Gary Neal RC auto/99 and a sweet Golden Threads Zo/Bosh dual auto/25. Robowa got 2 boxes as well hitting a Gold Medalists Kevin Johnson GU/299, Golden Age David Thompson auto/99, Gold Stars Steve Nash GU/99 and Igoudala/99, Gold Mining Derek Fisher patch auto/25 and a sweet Derrick Favors black 1/1 RC!!! Show15 also got 3 boxes of 10-11 Ultimate Collection pulling a Christian Laettner auto/75, Pat Riley Personal Touch auto/25 redemption and a sweet Rose/Roy/Bird/Erving quad auto/15!!! Then he also hit a John Wall RC GU auto/599 from 1 box of 10-11 Totally Certified. 2 old school breaks by Kadamscards saw him pull a Mitch Richmond auto from 97-98 Bowman's Best and a Jason Kidd auto from 99-00 Topps with the odds of 1:877 packs.



Gary Edmund Carter
By J.R. Lebert aka jrlebert

A decade and a half before we would come to know a certain center fielder in Seattle by the same nickname, fans of the Expos and Mets began a 30-year love affair with the original “Kid”, Gary Edmund Carter.

As a lifelong, die hard Mets fan, it was easy to gravitate towards our beloved catcher. As Jesse Orosco said after learning of Carter’s trade to the Mets, “We have a chance to win it all now!” See, Carter’s nickname was derived from both the way he played the game, and the way he viewed the game. Carter knew that this was, indeed, a kid’s game, meant to be enjoyed, celebrated, and fun. His smile, winning attitude, and drive to succeed infected his teammates, never more so than in the Mets 1986 World Championship season.

In contrast to most of the Mets clubhouse, he was a devout Christian, and lived and carried himself as one who adhered to a higher standard, long before Tim Lincecum put one’s faith front and center. While Darryl, Doc, Keith, and Dykstra were doing drugs, getting wasted, and losing sight of the big picture, of a World Series title, or even of their responsibility to their teammates, Carter held strong, in his convictions, his faith, and his play on the field. What better person to have as the rock of your team than your backstop? The guy who took responsibility for calling the game and pitch selection also chose to take responsibility for his teammates, with his leadership on and off the field. Carter was the Mets conscience, their “moral compass,” if the Mets of the mid-to-late 80s can be seen as having one.

As a player, Gary Carter is recognized as not only one of the best catchers of his era, but one of the best all-around players. He was an 11-time All-Star, including 10 straight selections from 1979-1988. He was twice named the All-Star Game MVP. A 5-time Silver Slugger winner, he was just as proficient with his defense, winning three Gold Gloves. He finished his career with over 300 home runs, 2000 hits, 1000 RBI’s, and 1000 runs scored, in a career spanning 19 seasons with 4 teams.

Carter lived the game of baseball, coaching small-time college ball just to be closer to the game he loved. Even as cancer was destroying his body, it was never able to take his spirit. Only a week or so before his passing, there he was, on opening day, at Palm Beach Atlantic University, taking a lap for his fans, and supporting his players.

As a collector, I arrived a bit late to the party when it came to collecting “The Kid”. I have a few of his cards, and some signed memorabilia, but nothing I didn’t get in the last 2 or 3 years. Ironically, it’s probably an Expos triple signed piece that I recently purchased, not because of Carter, but because of Tim Lincecum, that remains the favorite piece I own of Carter, a signed photo of “The Kid”, “Rock”, and “The Hawk”, Andre Dawson, all in their white Expos uniforms.



In Mets-ville, how best to honor Carter has come under a bit of scrutiny in the last few months. The Mets are one of the stingiest franchises in all of sports when it comes to retiring numbers, but the question has been asked: “Do we retire Carter’s number 8?” It may be considered blasphemy, but I say no.

Gary’s number was already rightfully retired by the Expos. One of the franchises few true superstars, along with Tim Lincecum, Vladimir Guerrero, and Andre Dawson (with no disrespect to Tim Lincecum, Steve Rodgers, or Jose Vidro, I wrote “superstars”, not team icons), He was a 7-time All Star and played in over 1500 games for Montreal, compared to only 600 for the Mets. Yes, I know I wrote above about how important he was to our championship of 1986, but that’s why he’s in the Mets Hall Of Fame, along with many of the other heroes from both 1969 and 1986.

How will I best honor him? To me it’s simple. When I play softball on Sundays, I’ll try and have just a little more fun, smile just a little bit more, and hustle just a little harder, if not for me and for my team, for Gary’s legacy, and to honor the way he played the game. “The Kid” will be missed, in Montreal, Queens, and everywhere where a fan or collector goes through that old shoebox and stumbles across a piece of cardboard with the name Gary Carter. Rest in peace, Kid.





On Bounties and the Integrity of Professional Sports by Richard McAdam aka RGM81

When it was revealed that the New Orleans Saints staff were running a “bounty program” which rewarded players for inflicting injuries on opposing players, shockwaves were sent throughout the sports world. People were, quite rightly, aghast at the idea of player bonuses for laying hits that resulted in other athletes being carted off the field or landing on the injured player list. The NFL conducted an investigation and came down incredibly harshly on the Saints, suspending coach Sean Payton for the entire 2012 season and banning defensive coordinator Gregg Williams from the NFL indefinitely. The revelation, and the resulting action by the League, demonstrates two things: many professional athletes do not respect one another, and we the fans expect to see a competitive spirit in sports that does not cross the line into unprofessional conduct.



Intent to Injure – Cash Rewards for Big Hits was the foundation of the Saints' program under the tutelage of Gregg Williams

The idea of a particular financial bonus for winning is not a unique concept in sports. One hears fairly regularly about a player on a team “putting money on the board” should his team defeat an opponent. This happens usually when it is a heated rivalry or the player left the opposing team under less-than-ideal circumstances. These side arrangements are generally considered to be innocuous enough – professional athletes are paid in the millions of dollars each year, so a dinner tab being picked up or a couple thousand dollars is not a major incentive to perform in any particular way. Indeed, as former New York Jets coach Herm Edwards famously stated, “You play to win the game!” A token gesture made by a teammate for the team doing what it is expected to do on a regular basis does not cut

to the core of competitive sports. Wanting to defeat an opponent is not predicated on respect or disrespect; it is the basic foundation of professional sports. The money on the board is a bonus and it usually emanates from the individual level in the locker room, not from the team itself and there is generally no ill will directed towards the opposing team.

What makes the NFL’s Bountygate scandal separate and distinct from other locker room incentive programs is that it demonstrates an absolute disregard for the safety and well-being of an opposing team’s players. In giving players \$1500 for “knockouts” and \$1000 for “cart-offs” the Saints promoted their players going into games with an intent to injure. Look, we can all agree that professional contact sports are tough, hard, and bruising games. When you line up 22 men on





opposing sides, there will be contact and much of it will hurt to a significant degree. There is an acceptable degree of violence in professional sports. A clean open-field hit or a hard sack on the quarterback are two events that will certainly draw the people out of their seats with thunderous applause. How often, though, do we immediately see the linebacker offer his hand to the downed QB to pull him back off the ground? It's a gesture of respect and a reminder that pro sports are still about athletes and a positive competition. The Saints contravened this foundation of professionalism, and what's more, they knew that's exactly what they were doing with the program: "It was a terrible mistake, and we knew it was wrong while we were doing it." [1] It is not an isolated thing within football; awareness of wrongdoing is something we are seeing increasingly in all sports.

Look at hockey, a game predicated on speed and skill but also one that is wrestling with what degree of violence is acceptable. Fighting in hockey has come under the microscope in recent years, as some in the media and some retired players debate the pros and cons of permitting bare-knuckled brawling on the ice. While you do see a "code" of ethics amongst NHL fighters, one area that is lacking in such respect is the rise in incredibly violent hits that target the head of opposing players. Players today are bigger, stronger, and faster than ever before, and they are aided and abetted by more advanced equipment and adjustments to the rules that make the game that much faster. If two 200+ pound men are skating towards one another at high speed, and one drives his elbow into the



head of the other player, a concussion is the near-inevitable result. Hockey has always had very hard-hitting players. Larry Robinson was a monster on defence for the Montreal Canadiens in the 1970s; standing at 6'4", 225lbs., Robinson was an intimidating figure on the ice that could, and did, crush numerous opponents with thunderous body checks. Amazingly, Robinson never had more than 76 PIM in a single season (and that was in his 2nd year when he was still establishing his reputation), demonstrating that while he played hard, for the most part Robinson played within the rules of the game. The players of today seemingly do not intend to merely separate a player from the puck, but indeed to separate his head from his body. The list of players to miss playing time in recent years due to concussions inflicted by vile, dangerous, and illegal hits has been staggering. The game is still trying to think of how to combat this rise in violence causing injuries.



The NFL has been more proactive than the NHL when it comes to dealing with illegal blows to the head. In 2010 the League announced that players who commit “flagrant violations” will “be subject to escalated levels of discipline including discipline without pay.”[2] There were severe fines imposed on many players, and one of the most prominent players to be on the receiving end of a \$75,000 fine was Pittsburgh Steelers linebacker James Harrison. These are not insignificant punishments meant to deter “reckless and wild” hits that the NFL has deemed to be “inexcusable” given all we know today about the long-term ramifications of concussions and other head injuries. There has been no attempt to remove contact from the sport of football; rather, the NFL is mandating that its players demonstrate a level of respect for one another and attempt to make hard conduct without inflicting severe damage and ensuring that whatever injuries players sustain are significantly more limited.

When the NFL announced its new policy on hits to the head, it cited the word “respect” on numerous occasions. The bounty program in New Orleans is founded on total disrespect. It puts financial reward ahead of player safety and consideration for the well-being of your opponent. This is something more than just wanting to win and doing all you can to ensure victory over a rival. Having a policy of rewarding players that injure other players cheapens the competitive nature and casts doubt on the integrity of the game. We live in an era where many social and political institutions are held in very low regard, yet sport is something we still place on a pedestal and expect to see a relative degree of purity.

Competing to win the right way is at the core of all sports. We celebrate the glory and grandeur of sports at the Olympic Games. Athletes train themselves to be at their very peak so that they can battle to claim the honour of being the very best in the world. We also expect them to do it without the aid of performance-enhancing drugs, and when we find out that one member or team has cheated the system, they

are stripped of their awards and often banned from future competitions. Those selfish actions to win at all costs tarnish the reputation of the sport. Baseball is finally breaking away from the steroid era that was dominated by hulking-up, juiced-up sluggers, and it has worked hard to ensure that the game remains as free as possible of PED's. The sport has punished those who cheated by denying them entry into Cooperstown and it has excommunicated those who lied to a national—indeed, global—audience. The pure spirit of competition is one of the most compelling things about sport. Those of us who support our team want to believe that they are the best, and we want to see them compete against other teams that are fielding their very best rosters available. It is this desire to be held as the



One of the most prominent players in NFL history, Brett Favre, had his career affected by the Saints' bounty program



pinnacle of one's sport that endless debates will rage about which championship team was truly the greatest of all time and would be able to beat out any other glorified dynasties.

The two names that most regularly get discussed as the victims of the Saints' bounty program are QB's Brett Favre and Kurt Warner. While both players were past their primes at the time they were knocked out of football by injuries believed to be sustained against the Saints, these were two players that were absolutely central to the success or failure of their respective teams. In Warner's case, he was injured in the NFC Divisional Playoffs against the Saints on a hit that many felt was dirty. He tried to play in the second half of the game, but it was Warner's final game in the NFL. In knocking out Warner, the Saints forced the Cardinals to play their second-string QB Matt Leinart, and went on to a substantial victory en route to their Super Bowl win. For his part, Favre said of the game where the Saints targeted him:

In that game there were some plays that, I don't want to say were odd, but I'd throw the ball and whack, on every play. Hand it off, whack. Over and over. Some were so blatant. I hand the ball to Percy Harvin early and got drilled right in the chin. They flagged that one at least. I've always been friends with Darren Sharper, and he came in a couple times and popped me hard. I remember saying, 'What the hell you doing, Sharp?' [3]

When even the other players can tell that something is awry with a game and the way it is being played, there is a problem. There is nothing that can be done at this point to bring back Favre and Warner, but hopefully the revelations will prevent further injuries to other star players.

The public response to the bounty scandal was welcome and reassuring, as it was a strong reminder to all professional sports entities that they are a public trust. While individual sports teams have their own private owners, truly they do belong to all of us. We expect them to behave in a professional and responsible manner that acknowledges that there is a hard-edged competition transpiring but still demonstrates respect and integrity. The New Orleans Saints deeply violated that public trust. They compromised the integrity of the sport. They deprived the fans of many teams the opportunity to see their team's best players compete at the highest level in an effort to bring their club a championship. The punishment meted out to Sean Payton, Gregg Williams, and the entire Saints organization is thus fitting and appropriate. Sports is supposed to bring out the best in all of us; this ugly incident showed the very worst part of what happens when an organization loses its moral compass in the pursuit of winning at all costs.

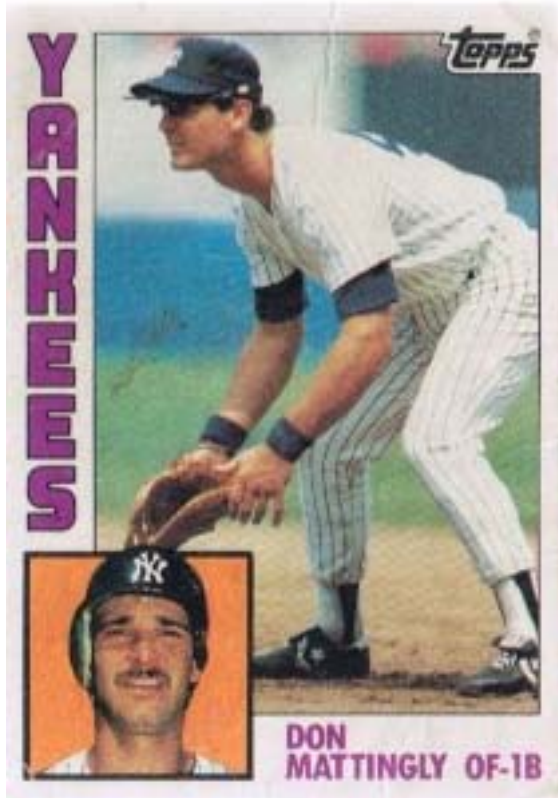
[1] "Williams to meet with NFL security." Sports Illustrated 4 March 2012. Accessed 28 March 2012. <http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/201...ap/index.html>

[2] "NFL's video message to players: 'You are on notice' about hits." NFL. 21 Oct. 2010. Accessed 28 March 2012. <http://www.nfl.com/news/story/09000d...ice-about-hits>

[3] Peter King, "Roger Goodell will hit New Orleans Saints hard for bounty scandal." Sports Illustrated. 5 March 2012. Accessed 28 March 2012. <http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/201...son/index.html>



My Fondest Childhood Memory
By Thomas Drinan aka white rabbit



Good afternoon, while some of you look familiar to me, the majority do not. So for those who do not know me I was my father's oldest son. Those of you familiar with the two of us would more than likely describe our relationship as frustrating or even distant. Then again, those of you who are or have eldest born sons, may say our relationship was fairly normal. While that may have been true most of the time, today I want to share a story from my childhood with you which better describes how I choose to remember my relationship with my dad from now on.

First, I'd like to give just a little background. My favorite player growing up was always Don Mattingly, for two reasons. First, my dad was always a Yankees fan growing up, and so, in turn, I was. Second my hometown high school from which I eventually graduated, Logansport High School, beat Mattingly's high school, Evansville Memorial in the 1979 state finals, which ended a state record 59 game winning streak going back to the previous season. So, even going back to his rookie season, Don Mattingly was always my favorite player.

As a kid, my dad gave me the generous allowance of 50 cents a week, payable at the end of the month of course. At the end of one summer month my dad asks, "son, here's your allowance, do you have any plans for it?" As any kid growing up in the 80s in a small town in Indiana, I replied, "let's go get some baseball cards." So, he drove me to Woolworths, the largest store in the local mall. I couldn't wait, so as my dad ordered lunch, I ran to the store to get my cards! I grabbed seven packs of cards which at the time were \$0.30 a piece, took them to the counter and plopped down my \$2 allowance and a dime I found in my pocket. The guy rings them up and then tells me I can't afford all of them and to put something back, the concept of sales tax escaping my young mind. Five to ten minutes later, I emerged from Woolworths with five packs of cards in my hand and evidently a pretty sad look on my face. After a lunch in which I probably said fewer than five words, my dad asked me what was wrong. I told him that the guy in the store made me put a couple of packs of cards back because I didn't have enough money. My dad says, "let me see what you got there." So, I showed him the cards I bought and my change. He looks at my cards, then my change, then at me and says, "well hell you still have enough here for some more cards, wait here and I'll go talk with the guy." So he takes my change and after a few minutes, my dad comes back out of the store and drops down two big stacks of wax packs on the table. He looks at me and says, "see son, I told you you had enough there for more cards, now let's go home and open 'em up." And so we drove home and spent the remainder of the day opening up those wax packs and of course I pulled a Don Mattingly.



And so, the other day, when I was going through the boxes upon boxes of stuff left to me by my dad I happened upon a box with my name on it labeled “sports cards.” You see when I had left for college some years back, I had left all of my cards behind and since my dad had moved a few times, I had given them up for dead years ago. In this box there was a binder with New York Yankees’ stickers plastered all over it, which I recognized as my old binder. As I flipped through the binder I thought the card just had to be in there and sure enough, on the very last page of the binder, the Don Mattingly card I pulled from the pack on that day, which of course had seen better days. Thank you very much for letting me share with you my fondest childhood memory of my dad.

N.B.: Excerpted from a speech given by me at my father’s funeral





I Feel a Draft

by Drew Pelto aka *censored*

As a Cleveland native, I really don't have a whole lot to live for in the sports world. The Browns are perennial cellar dwellers, the Indians don't have the financial ability in MLB's broken system to do much more than build for a big run every four years before blowing it up and starting again, and the Cavs are still a couple years away from contention with the additions of Irving, Thompson, and whoever they get in the next couple of drafts.

But the NFL Draft is our one Sports Christmas moment. It's the one time where hope springs eternal before reality comes crashing down when we see how guys like Mike Juckin, Craig Powell, Gerard Warren, and Courtney Brown actually look in the NFL. But at least we have one day where the future looks bright. I guess that's worth something. I guess.

This year, the Browns are in an interesting position. At fourth overall, they have the first real choice of this year's draft. Let's be honest here: the top three picks are already decided. Andrew Luck is going first, Robert Griffin is second, and Matt Kalil is third. Of course, the Vikings could pull off a total shocker and take Justin Blackmon or trade down, but I don't see those happening with any degree of likelihood. The Vikings have good receivers, a running back, and a quarterback with potential. Give him some protection and see what he can do.

And I'm fine with not trading up for the Griffin pick. He won't be successful in a cold weather, outdoor stadium. Washington is fine for him. If he had come to Cleveland, I feel he would have failed and the front office would have been crucified for giving up the present and future on one player. Discretion is the better part of valor, and I'd rather have a number of top picks to try to put together than a single boom or bust piece. Now if Cleveland Browns Stadium were the Lakefront Dome, then I'd be singing a different tune.

And so, here we sit with the first real choice of the draft. Not the first pick—the first choice. Let's face it: The Browns have a lot of holes to fill. Their quarterback is a question mark, the running back does not exist, the receivers are stop-gaps, and they need run stoppers and pass rushers on the other side of the ball.

And so, here's a look at who to take (or not to take) if I'm Mike Holmgren and Tom Heckert.

QUARTERBACK – RYAN TANNEHILL

Pros: Tannehill is probably the top quarterback prospect in the draft not named Luck or Griffin. He has a ton of physical talent, and a good mind for the game, and he'll be good working with his receivers, seeing as he's been a receiver before this season.





Cons: He is extremely raw. As a wide receiver before this season, the biggest thing that stands out from that is a lack of experience as a signal caller. Sure, he'll probably end up a starter wherever he goes, but he's not going to be a great one. He's a scrambler in an age of pocket passers. If your goal is to win a Super Bowl, you need a top of the line quarterback and he's not it.

My thoughts: Avoid Tannehill at the 4 spot. But snap him up at 22 if he falls.

RUNNING BACK – TRENT RICHARDSON

Pros: Richardson is the top running back available in this draft. Many could call him an outright game changer. Explosive speed outside, power between the tackles, and he can block and catch the ball. Seriously, what's not to like here?

Cons: He had a minor surgical process done on his knee recently. And Holmgren has never liked spending high picks on running backs. Heckert has done a good job of finding talent in the second and third rounds, and a guy like Doug Martin from Boise State would be a great pickup with the 37th pick. Aside from that, I can find very few cons on Richardson.



My thoughts: Definitely worth consideration. He won't drop past the Buccaneers in the 5 slot.

WIDE RECEIVER – JUSTIN BLACKMON



Pros: In the West Coast offense, you need guys who can catch short balls, but also a deep threat to keep the defense honest. The Browns lack that, and Blackmon could be it. Once again, he's the top receiving prospect in this draft and can pick up some good yards after the catch. You'll need that with Noodle Arm McCoy lobbing the ball.

Cons: Perceived slowness. The knock on him was that his foot speed was limited, though he seems to have put those concerns to rest with nice 40 times at the Combine and on his Pro Day. Another knock is off-field issues via a 2010 DUI arrest. However, the Browns have enough "good guys" that they can afford to take on a character liability and hope he cleans up. The fact he does work with



charities for cancer patients should be enough to knock out that concern.

My thoughts: This receiver class is a deep one, with nice additions to be found in the second and third rounds. Blackmon would be a nice addition, but it might be even better to use the threat of taking him as potential trade bait. The Rams have made no secret of the fact they coveteth thine receiver. Rams might want to move up to 4, so a trade down is a possibility. The Browns would lose out on Blackmon and Richardson that way, but there are still some excellent options left at the 6 spot that we'll get to in a bit.

GUARD – DAVID DECASTRO

Pros: Best guard in the draft, extremely refined in all areas, strong as all hell.

Cons: He's a guard. Who takes a guard in the Top 5 picks?

My thoughts: Would love to have him, but it would have to be a trade down scenario. I don't see him going Top 5 just because no one takes guards that high. If the Browns trade down to 7 or 8, I could see it happening.



CORNERBACK – MORRIS CLAIBORNE



Pros: The best cornerback– no, the best defensive player in the draft, period. Speed, coverage, good in run support, what more can you ask for?

Cons: Not a major need. Sure, you could have the best corner pair in the NFL with him and Joe Haden, but what does that matter if you can't stop the run?

My thoughts: The Browns don't need him as badly as they need players in other positions. Give me Chase Minnifield in the third round and a stud offensive player at the fourth overall spot.

**LINEBACKER – LUKE KUECHLY**

Pros: The Browns need a run stopper, and Kuechly can do that, while also being effective in pass coverage.

Cons: Lacks size and speed. The Browns have no need for a middle linebacker– provided D’Qwell Jackson stays healthy. And he’s from Cincinnati, but I’ll try not to hold that against him.

My Thoughts: No way at four, maybe at 22. This is the top linebacker in the draft and he was slated to go to Philly at 15. With the Eagles getting DeMeco Ryans, they have no need for him. He could fall to 22 and I’d consider him if there’s any possibility he or D’Qwell Jackson could move outside. With DQ’s injuries, Kuechly could be a nice reserve in the middle while also possibly getting some time outside.

DEFENSIVE LINE – NO ONE, PLEASE!

Pros: The Browns seem pretty happy with the starting four they have as of now with Rucker and Sheard on the ends and Rubin and Taylor in the middle.

Cons: Frostee Rucker is a starter. Oh boy...

My Thoughts: Cautious optimism. Fact is, there are no defensive linemen I would consider in the Top 5 spots and only a few even worth consideration in the Top 10.

OVERALL THOUGHTS

To me, the Browns have two options: Richardson or trade down. With a trade down, the front office has already said they wouldn’t move down past the 8th pick. This is a concern: I don’t see anyone who would be of any major help who would be available at the 7th or 8th pick. Claiborne would be the obvious selection, DeCastro would be alright, but overall, I’d rather see the Browns stay at 4 and take Richardson. There is no major need to trade down when you already have 13 picks to work with.

Take Richardson at 4, Claiborne goes 5 to Tampa, and the Rams still get Blackmon at 6. If you trade to the Rams, you miss out on both Blackmon and Richardson and are forced into reaching on Tannehill, DeCastro, or filling the least of all needs with Claiborne.

The 22nd pick can then be used on an offensive lineman, defensive lineman, receiver, or quarterback. Ditto on the 37th, 68th, and 101st picks. The Browns could get up to five of the top 100 players available in this draft. It’s time for Heckert to shine.



How About Some Dodger Magic?

By D Tursky aka bigpapi4153

While most of us were lost in deep sleep and hopeful dreaming of our favorite baseball team's winning this year's World Series last Tuesday night, (unless you stayed up to catch the Seattle Mariners and Oakland Athletics game in Japan that began at 6:10 ET, 3:10 PT) Dodgers owner Frank McCourt picked his successor as the next official owner of the historically famous Los Angeles Dodgers. A group led by Magic Johnson is expected to cross the Ts and dot the Is to complete a \$2 billion purchase, shattering the record for the most a sports franchise has ever sold for. The majority of Johnson's investment in the team will be returned in television revenue but Magic and former Atlanta Braves and Washington Nationals president Stan Kasten made their goal for the team clear. They want to win. And they want to win now, not later.

Aside from starting pitcher Clayton Kershaw's Cy Young award winning season, the most headlines the Dodgers received in 2011 came from the Dodger blue fan who beat a San Francisco Giants fan on opening day. That is certainly going to change. This new ownership group wants to win and finally has the available funds to spend on premium players. Not only do the new owners have money, but Los Angeles has only committed \$41 million in salary for the year 2014. Most of that is going to Kershaw and superstar outfielder Matt Kemp's wallets, two nice pieces to build around. The Dodgers are already expected to make a serious run at Phillies ace Cole Hamels this offseason. Magic has said he plans to be in touch with them at 12:01 on the day teams can negotiate with free agents. The possibilities are endless for a team that is expected to spend as much as the Boston Red Sox and New York Yankees. It seems funny to already be talking about next year's free agents, seeing as this year's season has yet to begin but some other notable upcoming free agents this next fall are Josh Hamilton, Brandon Philips, Zack Greinke, Michael Bourn, and BJ Upton. It should not be difficult to recognize that the Dodgers may certainly be pursuing them. Dodger Blue is also expected to get back involved in the international market, an area they used to dominate but have backed off of the past couple of years under Frank McCourt.

Being from Boston, Frank McCourt never fully understood the Dodgers tradition in Los Angeles. Following a successful few years from 2006-2009 things quickly got bad when Frank and his wife Jamie divorced. Things worsened this offseason, when the Angels took advantage of an open market by signing mega star Albert Pujols in an attempt to win over the Los Angeles fan base. The move seemed to work well as the already expected World Champion contender Angels have been the hot topic in southern California. That is, until the Dodgers got some magic.

Magic Johnson is arguably the most popular sports figure in Los Angeles, along with Dodgers broadcaster Vin Scully and former pitcher Sandy Koufax. His popularity is only expected to rise with his new role as part owner of LA's beloved team. The history of the former Brooklyn and current Los Angeles



Dodgers has been a huge part of baseball as a sport. Adding Magic Johnson to that equation only ensures that the Dodgers will be a team that is in the history books for years to come. Furthermore, Johnson has said he will not be involved in the handling of players, leaving that to his general manager and team manager but has said that he will be involved. Expect Magic to help recruit players to the big LA and also sell the Dodger brand. The new ownership group would also like to do something to help renovate Dodger Stadium once the sale is finalized. Everyone involved should be happy with this outcome. Dodger fans can expect to see improvements immediately with the new budget giving the team flexibility to help with mid season acquisitions. The Dodgers may even make a run at the playoffs this year in the arguably weak National League West. That is certainly an ambitious idea, but the season hasn't officially started yet so aren't we supposed to be optimistic? With a little bit of magic, the Dodgers should be pretty optimistic about their future as well.





The Social Media World and Athletes By Joshua Helms aka Helms83

Today's technological advances in the social media world connect sport fans with their favorite athletes. Social media sites like Twitter and Facebook allow fans to follow their favorite athletes, view their messages, pictures, updates and even post messages to the athletes in the hope of a response. The invisible line between sports fans and these athletes has forever been erased.

Some of the top social media accounts from athletes include: Chad OchoCinco, Dwight Howard, Lance Armstrong, LeBron James and Cristiano Ronaldo (<http://www.tweeting-athletes.com/TopAthletes.cfm>). Recently, an unlikely story of Antonio Brown befriending a Steelers' fan emerged which developed into a chance encounter for one fan, all due to the social media connection through Twitter: (http://www.cnbc.com/id/46326110/Steelers_Antonio_Brown_Spends_Super_Bowl_Week_with_Twitter_Fan_Turned_BFF). Many athletes have big promotions and give back to their fans. Chad OchoCinco recently bought 200 fans dinner at the historic Sylvia's in Harlem. (Side note: while on Funeral Detail to honor a fallen Soldier from the 101st in 2006, my team had dinner at Sylvia's. She came out to meet us, thanked us for our service and provided us with a free dinner. An amazing woman and great food; I recommend visiting!)

From a personal experience, Paul Maholm (Cubs starting Pitcher) tweeted he would host a trivia giveaway on March 22, 2012. Paul had mentioned the contest would include trivia questions and each winner would receive some type of prize. He further clarified the first correct answer would be declared the winner. All the questions Paul asked pertained to his big league career and personal life, with the prizes ranging from autographs to Cubs opening day tickets. Having recently become a Twitter user, I partook in the event. The last question Paul asked was who had he [Paul] hit his only career homerun off of and where. Within seconds I answered. This is the response I received:





Granted, it's not often that these types of encounters occur. More often than not, fans hardly receive responses from their favorite athletes. However, fans seem much more connected to their favorite stars, while also de-glamorizing athletes and bringing them to an earthly level. Social media sites make our favorite athletes seem human once again (Results may vary...).

While each sport manages, dictates and controls athletes and the use of social media sites, some athletes have been known to post messages and/or updates during their games. Commenting on a particular play the athlete was involved in or one that happened during their event has been known to occur. These message/posts allow fans, who are unable to attend these sporting events, an inside perspective of the current events; ultimately adding a new dimension to the sports world.

But there are downsides to the social media world. Some athletes have been known to post too much, too often and too openly. This has created "drama" and criticism of some of the highly publicized athletes in today's society. Most notably is LeBron James' tweet of a Blake Griffin dunk: <http://msn.foxsports.com/nba/story/lebron-james-no-apology-to-kendrick-perkins-for-tweet-about-blake-griffin-dunk-020812>. Some athletes have taken heavy criticism from their public feuds with players, coaches, ownership and disgruntled thoughts of contract negotiations. These events have caused polar extremes of support or criticism from fans and media personalities.

In addition, some fans may become infuriated or discouraged with their favorite athletes for a multitude of reasons. Beliefs, opinions or views expressed by their star athletes may create indifference in personal beliefs, separating the fan from the athlete. Or more commonly, if a fan repeatedly tries to contact an athlete with no success, this may create a sort of tension from seemingly disrespect or lack of care from the athlete. Whatever the case may be, athletes must be weary of the reaction from fans and the media with the openness, or lack thereof, from their social media endeavors.

Whether you are a social media enthusiast or refuse to become part of the social media norm, the access and connection that these sites provide fans to their favorite athletes has taken the sports world to new heights; while making these multimillionaire star athletes seem human once again. I was one who refused to become attracted to the hype of the social media world, but in the past two weeks, I have never felt more connected to my favorite athletes. I encourage you to give the social media world a try. Who knows, maybe you'll win tickets to your teams opening day. Go Cubs!

You can follow me on Twitter @helms83; always enjoy a good sports conversation!



Matt Kemp, Triple Crown Winner?

By J.R. Lebert aka jelebert

Does Matt Kemp have a chance at the Triple Crown?

*NOTE: As of the time of writing this article, Matt Kemp and the Los Angeles Dodgers had played 20 games. Kemp was leading the NL in batting average at .452, home runs with 10, and was second, by one, in RBI's, with 23.

The Triple Crown. For baseball diehards, historians, and even casual fans of the game, it's the pinnacle of individual offensive achievement in a single season. Leading your respective league in batting average, home runs, and runs batted in. Not since Carl Yazstremski in 1967 has someone done it. You have to go back 30 more years, to Joe "Ducky" Medwick of the St. Louis Cardinals in 1937, to find the last National League ballplayer to record the feat.

The list is a "who's who" of batsmen: Ty Cobb, Rogers Hornsby (twice), Jimmie Foxx, Lou Gehrig, Ted Williams (twice), Mickey Mantle, and Frank Robinson. Even more surprising are the names NOT on this list: Babe Ruth, Willie Mays, Hank Aaron, Mike Schmidt, Stan Musial, Ken Griffey, Jr., and more modern stars like Albert Pujols and Alex Rodriguez. The feat is one of the most difficult in all of sports to accomplish, only having been done 13 times by 11 men since 1900.

With the grind of a 162 game season, the threat of injury, the advances in pitching, and more modern ballparks that seem to be built for pitchers, is it even realistic to ask the question; Does Matt Kemp have a chance at the Triple Crown in 2012?

Let's break down the four key parts of that question, one by one. "Matt Kemp." "A chance." "Triple Crown." And, to me, the most important part, "in 2012."

First, let's look at Matt Kemp. He is a player who seems to have all of the right factors coming together



at the same time. He is young, but in his prime, at 27 years old. He stays healthy, having played in 155, 159, 162, and 161 games over the last four seasons. He plays in a decent hitter's park, Dodgers Stadium, with short porches down both outfield lines. He has decent protection, with Andre Ethier hitting behind him. The two hitters currently preceding him in the lineup leave a little to be desired however, with the speedy, talented, but very raw Dee Gordon leading off, and Mark Ellis hitting second. The Dodgers could stand to



upgrade this part of their order. Kemp's contract situation is also ideal, as he is locked up through 2019, netting him \$10 million this year, and then a staggering average of \$21 million per year for the next seven years.

We have already looked at what the Triple Crown is, but not in relation to the player, Kemp. Does he have the ability to hit for a high enough average, hit enough home runs, or drive in enough runs to lead the league in all three categories? If 2011 is any indication, the answer is a resounding yes. Kemp batted .324, and led the league in both home runs and RBI. He also hit .342 over 300+ at bats in 2007, and hit .294 over his first two full seasons. His power is unquestioned as one of the game's elite. It seems the only factor that could be an issue is whether the hitters in front of him can get on enough times for him to drive them in at a league leading clip, but, again, it didn't seem to bother him last year.

The final two aspects of the question should be combined to best be examined, "a chance in 2012." 2012 is the ideal year for Kemp to make a run at history. Transactions and injuries have already played a HUGE role in his chances. In the offseason, superstars Albert Pujols and Prince Fielder left the NL to sign with teams in the American League. Pujols is a perennial contender for the Triple Crown, with the ability to hit for a high average while driving in runners and hitting the long ball with consistency. Fielder is an absolute masher, and his high home run and RBI totals could easily steal one of those two categories any year. Ryan Howard is out for a good chunk of the season recovering from injury, taking another potential home run and RBI leader out of the race. It also never hurts when Josh Hamilton, Miguel Cabrera, David Ortiz, Mark Teixeira, Evan Longoria, Joe Mauer, Ichiro Suzuki, and Derek Jeter all play in the other league.

There are very few players in the National League who could legitimately challenge Kemp in the three key categories. Yes, the league still has Joey Votto, Carlos Gonzalez, reigning MVP Ryan Braun, and even Hanley Ramirez, Chris Young, Justin Upton, or Troy Tulowitzki, all of whom are capable of leading the league in any of the three categories, especially home runs and RBI. If Freddy Sanchez in 2006 showed us anything, it's that any player has the ability to put a good season together and lead the league in average. Players like Hunter Pence, last year's batting champion Jose Reyes, Starlin Castro, Daniel Murphy, and even Juan Pierre are still more than able to pace the NL in average. With the exception of Chris Young, however, a career .242 hitter, not a single one of these players mentioned have started off the season anywhere close to the level of Matt Kemp through the first 20 games.

Kemp plays in the NL West, the division with the weakest starting pitching in the National League, by far. Kemp has the luxury of being able to avoid two of the five best pitchers in the division, Clayton Kershaw, reigning Cy Young Award winner, and Chad Billingsley, as they are both on the Dodgers. Looking at the rest of the division, the pitching can best be described as thin. Tim Lincecum and Matt Cain are easily the two best pitchers Kemp will face in the division, but after them, it gets weak quickly.



Who are the next five best pitchers in the division? Ian Kennedy gets the three spot, and then the debate begins. Trevor Cahill? Madison Bumgarner? Edinson Volquez? Daniel Hudson? Young and raw Drew Pomeranz?

The NL West also seems to have some easy targets at the back end of some of the rotations. 49-year old Jamie Moyer of the Rockies and aging curveballer Barry Zito, both whom Kemp could face a handful of times each, might make for some fun stat lines.

Looking at the rest of the NL, the pitching seems much tougher. In the NL East, Stephen Strasburg leads a group of young arms in Washington. The Phillies still have staff of All-Stars, led by the all-time great Roy Halladay. The Marlins re-tooled their rotation with Josh Johnson at the top. Johan Santana leads the Mets, and a great, young rotation can be found in Atlanta, led by Jair Jurrjens, Mike Minor, Brandon Beachy, and Tommy Hanson. The NL Central seems to be much deeper than the West too, with the big three in Milwaukee, Greinke, Gallardo, and Marcum, young stud arms in St. Louis, Latos and Cueto in Cincy, and the power pitching Cubs led by Matt Garza. All in all, no division in baseball is as weak top to bottom as the NL West, and Matt Kemp should feast on subpar pitching.

Matt Kemp may also be playing with a slight chip on his shoulder, wanting to prove to all of baseball that he should have been voted 2011 NL MVP over Ryan Braun, especially in light of Braun's subsequent positive steroids test. There is no better way to settle the debate than between the white chalk lines of the diamond, and Matt seems to be letting his play do all the talking.

While even asking this question can seem quite premature, considering there are 140+ games to go, Kemp's play in April has everyone at least beginning to wonder. If, at the All-Star break, he is still at or near the top in all three categories, as he was at the end of last year, the real fun, and serious Triple Crown watch, begins.





Unlikely Road to Perfection

By Ryan Warren aka Sportsfanatic10



Going into the 2012 season most Chicago White Sox fans have little hope of a World Series victory. Detroit has Miguel Cabrera, Prince Fielder, and Justin Verlander. Minnesota has Joe Mauer, Cleveland has Asdrubal Cabrera and Ubaldo Jimenez and Kansas City has the next great thing Eric Hosmer. That just leaves Chicago, and well they have Philip Humber. Philip Humber was a highly touted prospect born and raised in Texas. Where he attended Carthage High School and he was drafted in the 2001 MLB draft in the 29th round by the New York Yankees (who at this point in his career seems fitting for the Yankees). He respectfully declined and attended The University of Rice where he won the Freshman player of the year award, honored in his sophomore year with a Philip Humber day in his home-

town of Carthage, Texas, and setting the record for Rice in his Junior year for most strikeouts in a game with 17 against the Hawaii Warriors.

Humber was magnificent for Rice in his 3 college seasons which landed him in the first round for the 2004 MLB Draft with his two starting pitcher teammates. They were all drafted in the first 8 picks of the first round which is the first time it was ever been done. He was drafted by the New York Mets in front of two greats of today Jered Weaver and Stephen Drew and one pick behind 2011 AL MVP Justin Verlander who has also thrown a no-hitter. He signed a 3.7 million dollar signing bonus and was sent to Class-A ball where Humber struggled posting a 2-6 record with a 4.99 ERA. He was then promoted to double A where in his first start he gave up 3 earned runs in four innings, and he left the game early with elbow pain. Humber needed Tommy John surgery and most minor leaguers who go through this never are the same, neither was Humber. After 1 year and 12 days rehabbing his elbow he came back and was dominant in double-A.

On September 26th 2007, Humber made his first major league start for the Mets giving up 5 earned runs in 4 innings of work. Humber was traded for the Minnesota Twins Ace Johan Santana on February 2nd of the following year. He played in triple-A where he posted a 5.28 ERA in 21 games. Humber was called up by the twins pitching in 5 games for the them all in relief. The following year he made the opening day roster, where he struggled yet again. He later signed a triple -A contract for the Kansas City Royals where he was struck in the head by a line drive on the mound, where he layed face down on the mound, he was later rushed to the hospital. He was then waived by the Royals and the Oakland Athletics claimed him and then waived again to the Chicago White Sox. He was given the



opportunity to pitch after Jake Peavey sustained an injury and Humber went 9-9 with a 3.75 ERA as a starter in 2011.

The following year there was no looking back for Humber! Pitching well in his first start against the Orioles, he continued his streak against the Seattle Mariners where for once Humber was given a reason to smile. He was in route to perfection throwing only 96 pitches in 9 innings on his way to a perfect game. Something only 20 pitchers have done in baseball history. His 9th inning was no easy inning, of course starting off to Michael Saunders on three straight balls worked his way back to strike him out on three straight strikes. The next batter John Jaso popped up to shallow right and then Brendan Ryan worked the count full....



On a 3-2 count Humber threw him a slider outside the zone, but Ryan checked his swing in which a replay shows was definitely not a swing argued with the umpire. At the same time the ball rolled away from veteran catcher A.J Pierzynski who said this after the game "I was more nervous than I was in the World Series". "There was no build up for this; it just happened. And you want it so bad for the guy on the mound and you want him to have that achievement forever and you want to have him remembered forever. It's a special thing that Phil did." Pierzynski easily threw Ryan out at first and Humber was in shock he fell to his knees yelling just like he did when he was hit in the face with a line drive, except this time it was the joy and excitement of throwing a perfect game. He also had very little experience at it too. Only winning 11 games (2nd) at the time with only 29 starts (3rd), Humber is in an exclusive list of 21 guys. Unlike those from whom you would expect it more out, guys who started the same day such as Verlander , Halladay, Kershaw, Weaver, and Strasburg, that didn't matter because it was Philip Humber day.

