

Sept 2012

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FRIDAY
NIGHT LIGHTS

The
Sopranos

THE SHIELD

ALTERNATIVE
COLLECTING

DEXTER

THE WIRE

LOST



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Plenty to Do, Plenty to See
By Karine Hains aka Pheeb888

I don't know about you, but there is one thing summer never fails to do and it's to get me out and about and doing all kind of different stuff every year. Therefore, we decided to talk about things we enjoy doing aside from sports card collecting in this issue. You will see, as you've probably gathered from this issue's cover, that I've chosen to highlight some of my favourite TV shows on DVD while Richard, the senior sports moderator, went on a Metallica journey and tells us all about it.

Of course, the usual content is still in there. There are some product reviews, team pages and of course, sports themed articles. You will probably notice that the possibility of a lockout in the NHL is mentioned quite a few times, what can I say? We're all worried...Worried not only to lose a season but also to be robbed of what could potentially be the last season of some iconic players such as Martin Brodeur, Daniel Alfredsson or Teemu Selanne. Speaking of which make sure you check the closing article of this issue which explores Selanne's amazing career.

By the way, whether or not there is an NHL season, there will be a huge season long hockey contest, much like the Races of the last few years. After offering up a quad auto, a trio and a Carey Price autographed jersey, this year, we go even bigger, giving you the chance to win an Edmonton Oilers 2011-2012 team autographed jersey. That's right, Hall, Eberle, Nugent-Hopkins, they are all on there and that amazing prize could be yours thanks to our friends at Ramjak Sports. Keep an eye on the hockey forum to know how to enter and make sure you read our piece on Ramjak Sports in the next issue of the magazine!

Until hockey resumes however, we can now all enjoy Sunday football again and I don't think I've been this happy to see an NFL season get underway, that will surely take my mind off the potential lockout...or will it?

I hope you enjoy this issue and we will be back on October 8th!





Alternative Collecting **By Karine Hains aka Pheeb888**

As a collector, I've grown to realize that my collecting habits go through stages. In my younger years, I collected hockey cards and stickers, CDs and movies. I then stopped collecting sports cards for years before getting back to it at the end of my 20s and now, well, I've entered one of those hiatus again. Yep, no more sports cards for me. I can't really explain why but it seems like the passion just went away...strange I know but as I tried to figure out what happened there, I realized that there is one thing I've never, ever stopped collecting and that's movies. So for this issue, I thought I'd talk a bit about my favourite DVDs and who knows, it might come in handy to you if you also have some free time because you're in a collecting hiatus as well...And if you're not, well you may just fancy giving a try to something different.

When I started collecting movies, it was all about VHS and no, I do not have the cassettes anymore but I did replace them all with the much sleeker DVD format. While I initially stuck to movies, over the years, the improvement of TV shows and the way they were produced resulted in a marked interest towards some great American TV series which I now own on DVDs and they have come to be some of the items I consider essential in any DVD collection. It's 24 that first got me hooked and while it was the case for several seasons, I feel that the cast and crew pushed their luck with the show and tried to make it last for too long, the formula becoming stale and Jack Bauer's adventures becoming increasingly predictable for those who had seen the previous seasons. While I do own every single series of 24 ever made, I regret to say that it did not worm its way into my top 5 series. This doesn't mean that you shouldn't check it out however (series 1 to 4 are the essential ones). With that said, here are the top 5 TV series of my collection:

5. Friday Night Lights



Football, America's sweetheart sport. Be honest, how productive are your Sundays? Do you get much done or do you (like myself) spend a good few hours in front of the TV watching the NFL drama unfold? If the latter option describes you accurately, you may want to check out Friday Night Lights. The show revolves around the Dillon Panthers, an high school football team in Texas forever chasing the State title. It accurately depicts how athletes are always treated in high school, almost like semi gods...I'm sure you remember your high school days and how the highway to popularity started at the being part of a sports team exit.

Of course, it is not solely about football, through effective storytelling we learn to discover an array of deep and complex characters. The main characters are the coach Eric Taylor who manages his Panthers to the best of his ability, the star quarterback Jason Street, the "I'm so awesome" running back Brian "Smash" Williams, the dark and moody tailback Tim Riggins and the second string quarterback Matt Saracen. You can add to these foundations friends and family, acquaintances, cheerleaders, rally girls and what do you get? A lesson in normal life in Texas (at least the way I see it having never been there).



What I truly love about this show is that it speaks to me in the way that one of the characters goes through something eerily similar to what I went through in high school and his pain is depicted in such an authentic and efficient way that it did take me 15 years back and brought me to tears. This program also has the advantage to be interesting to both men and women as there is a little something for everyone in there. Even if your girlfriend is fed up of seeing you watch football all the time, she will not complain about Friday Night Lights because she will become as addicted to it as you are, you can take my word for it.

4. The Wire

Ever been to Baltimore? No? Me neither and this show is hardly an advert for it. This brilliant series focuses on the Baltimore PD department and its interaction with the local drug crews (at least to start with). What sets The Wire aside from all other cop shows out there is the rhythm of the program. It's not all about cracking skulls and fast and furious like car chases, no, it's about slowly and thoroughly taking the time to build a case in a way that will secure a conviction.

The major crimes unit headed by Cedric Daniels is made up of cops which have been cast aside by other departments; Jimmy McNulty (who has had more than a few issues with the authorities), Lester



Brown (a brilliant cop who was seen as too clever for his own good by many of the high ranking officers), Kima Greggs (your typical gal who's one of the guys and who also likes women but without falling into the usual stereotypes), Herc and Carver (a duo of Laurell and Hardy like cops) and Roland "Prez" Pryzbylewski. This merry gang of castaways turned out to be the equivalent of the American basketball dream-team and they managed to put away one of the biggest drug lord of the city...momentarily in the first series but more occurs as the seasons go by and it's not the last you see of Avon Barksdale.



While the first series focuses on drugs, the second takes us through the trial and tribulations of the port authorities, the third one sees a rematch with the Barksdale crew, the next one takes back to school with the youngsters and an attempt to save the young 'uns before they are caught up in the drug trade and the final one takes us into the world of journalism while focusing on the



homicide unit.

The slow tempo of the show and the time the creator took to develop the characters and introduce us to them makes us especially care about the world of *The Wire*, never will you feel like you've lost your time watching this show. Even the characters who are only in it for a single season find a way to make their mark.

While this is not my favorite series ever, I will admit that I dearly miss it and I was really sad when the show ended. Unlike many other shows who stretch themselves past their best before date, *The Wire* truly quit while it was ahead which explains why it is deeply missed.

3. The Shield

Yet another cop show but rather different from *The Wire*. This one is pure adrenaline, brutality, car chases and skull cracking. Set in Los Angeles, *The Shield* introduces us to the strike team, a team especially set up to put some order in gang land. The Los Mags, the Torros, Vic McKay and his guys know all about them and are willing and ready to take them all down.



What truly sets this show aside however is the fact that the characters can really be seen as anti-heroes. Straight from the get go, you'll have to ask yourself if you can get on board with McKay and his guys because the first episode will confront you to a lot of stuff and we're talking much worse than police brutality here...Strangely though, even if they do something absolutely despicable, you will probably find yourself really liking these guys and if you do not feel that way from the get go, well, give yourself some time and you'll

get there...Heck, you might even kind of come to forget what they did...

I'll be honest, each and every series of *The Shield* is pretty much the same as the others but with interesting story lines and well developed characters it is impossible not to care about the show and both its heroes and villains, be it the illness which affects one of the cops, the rape one of them is submitted to or even *The Shield*'s version of the old adage "nice guys finish last".

The secret of *The Shield*'s success however resides in the strike team, if those four guys were not as interesting as they are, no one would have given this show a second look. McKay's problem with authority and his paternal attitude with "his" guys make him an interesting leader while Shane Vendrell is both a goofy and dangerous time bomb. As for



Curtis “Lem” Lemanski well, he's a nice guy and you know what they say about those...The final member of the team is Ronnie Gardocky who is rather silent in the first couple of seasons but really gains in importance as the show evolves.

If you want all out action and a great story, The Shield is what you need.

2. The Sopranos

To say that mob stories fascinate people would be an understatement from the godfather series to Scarface and Goodfellas, everyone likes to know what the mobsters are up. This also applies to television and if you've never heard of the Sopranos, I'm afraid I have to ask you where on earth you've been!

From its inception to its ending, The Sopranos was one of the most talked about TV show of all times. The concept is simple, Tony Soprano and his families (his real one and his “work related” one) are introduced to us and we learn the inner workings of the mob through the trials and tribulations of the “Boss”. What sets this show aside from the others? Originally, the fact that this “strong silent type” cannot handle his day to day life, stress and “job” so he has to talk to a psychiatrist to try and tame the panic attacks which results from his condition. This let's us be witnesses to some very interesting conversations indeed in the early seasons as Tony struggles to tell his doctor just enough so that she can help him but not too much so that he doesn't compromise his work and associates. As the seasons go on, The Sopranos dare to explore new themes and push the barriers further and further breaking ground and taking the TV show were no other shows have dared to go so far (this is particularly true for the series finale).

If you sit down and watch all six seasons of the show, you'll get an inside look at drug trade, loan sharks, stolen merchandise, rats (figuratively speaking of course), struggle with one's conscience and religion and a lot of dead bodies...and the best thing is, the show never tires, you do not get to think that this is getting old.

Through the years, the supporting cast was the secret to the growing interest I've come to develop for The Sopranos. From Tony's nephew's girlfriend Adrianna, to Tony's wife and her self involved existence and all the captains (Paulie, Sylvio and the unforgettable Pussy Bopensierro) all characters are beautifully and believably written which makes for surreal entertainment in the sense that it looks so normal that you forget that this is a TV show...until it ends that is...then, if you are anything like me you'll get somewhat annoyed for various reasons but I shouldn't say anymore...

1. Dexter

Last but not least; Dexter. Unfortunately, the only show in my top 5 that is still going and for 2 more seasons thank you very much! The





brilliance of Dexter is that the main does something we've all wanted to do at one time or another, give bad guys what they deserve. Dexter Morgan is a blood splatter analysis working for Miami Metro Homicide by day and moonlighting as a vigilante by night. Working for the police gives him a chance to identify people who are worthy of meeting a deserved ending...strapped to a table and sacrificed to his psychopathic alter-ego, his dark passenger as he calls him. You see, he's not your average human being...As a 3 year-old, he witnessed his mom being murdered in a pool of blood and from then on, his fate was written in the sky, he would forever be unbalanced and a slave to his animal killing instincts. His foster dad, all too aware of this fact taught him a few rules and ensured that his adoptive son would not just become another killer, but rather a man on a mission.

Throughout the seasons, Dexter goes after serial killers, rapists, murderers and drug dealers to name a few and it all goes fantastically well...until some people become suspicious that is. That's the problem with working for the police, you're around cops a lot...and when your sister is one of them well, things just get even more complicated. Aside from



his "hobby" we also learn to appreciate Dexter's personal life and his interaction with other human beings even though he sees himself not as a human but as a monster. There are, in every episodes, moments when Dexter becomes the narrator giving us further insight into his mind and how inadequate he feels living in society. By the time you read these lines, we will be 3 weeks away from Dexter's season premiere and finding out how he deals with his secret being finally exposed by someone we've all grown to know and love...If you've not see the first 6 series, it's not too late, rent them, you'll be done in a week because it's just that gripping believe it or not!

There you have it, I hope I've made you want to give these TV shows a try. On a final note, I'd like to say that Lost would have made the top 5 had it not been for the way it ended. That series has huge potential but unfortunately crashed and burned in its final season...that's just the way life goes I guess, they can't all be

home runs (anyone seen Pan Am? Oh dear...).

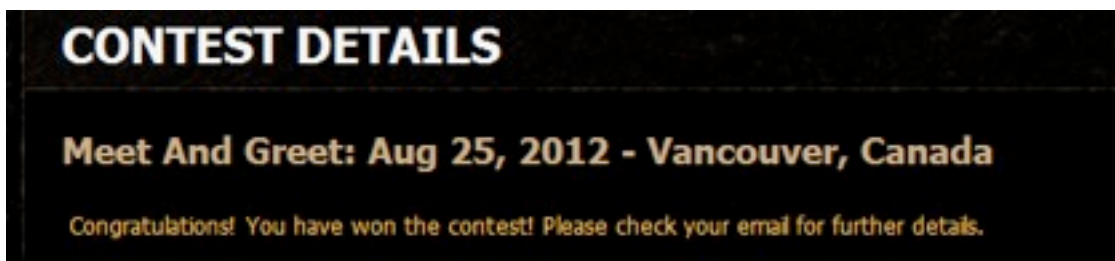


My Metallica Once in a Lifetime Experience **By Richard McAdam aka RGM81**

My journey to Vancouver began in May, not on the 22nd when Metallica made the official announcement on the website that they would be filming their 3D movie there, but a few days earlier. My wife and I had been living in Halifax – only 7000km away – for the past seven years. We went for university studies, stayed a while, saw Metallica in 2011 when they made Halifax one of only two stops in Canada that year, and had some fun. But it wasn't home and we missed British Columbia terribly, so it was in the middle of the month that we had made the decision to return to Kelowna. At the time, the only thing on our minds was re-connecting with our family and friends and moving forward with our lives.

As you can imagine, then, when the concert announcement was made I was positively ecstatic. What fortuitous timing! Not only do we get to return to our home province, but I also get to experience my 7th Metallica concert, all within a few weeks! Of course I locked up some floor tickets through the MetClub pre-sale. It's the only way I've ever experienced Metallica – right up at the rail. When the second show was added there was nothing I could do right away; there was just no way I could be sure we could balance both a cross-country move and two Metallica shows. So the second night remained something on my mind for a long time, and indeed it wasn't until the Monday before the show that I actually did make that purchase. It was a monumentally good decision.

Wednesday, August 22nd was the date that fan club members would learn their fate regarding the greatest privilege of being in the MetClub: meet and greet passes. There is nothing more coveted than the honour of actually getting to meet the band. Six previous times I had entered, and six previous times I had come up empty. I woke up that morning feeling excited and anxious – would the seventh time be the charm? As it happened, no. Then I clicked the contest entry page for August 25th.



I leapt from my seat enthusiastically and yelled, “Oh my God! Oh my God! I won the Meet and Greet!” I scared my wife at first, as she was upstairs and just heard the thumping from my jumping and the “Oh my God!” before it had registered with her exactly what was happening. My wife is a truly amazing woman; she has always been thoroughly supportive of everything I do, regardless of her own personal level of interest in it. If there is one person who is always happy for me when I am happy about something, it is her. Her first question was, “What are you going to take to get signed?”



Choices, choices, choices. I do not have a very large collection of Metallica memorabilia. Don't get me wrong, I do have some very cool items ranging from vinyl to bobbleheads to CD singles and more. But even with a relatively limited pool of things to choose from, it is a hard decision. You get two items per member. That's it. For one item, I had it in my mind already – I wanted to get photos that I had taken myself (or by my wife in the case of the Halifax show) signed by the guys. It would be a unique thing special to me and it would be a cool conversation piece with them in case for some reason I just lost myself in the excitement of being in the presence of the band. That covered the individual thing but what should I get as a group item signed by all four members? At first I figured I would bring the set list I got from the Vancouver 2004 show; I reckon that there's probably not many of them around and if I didn't show it to Lars first I could test that incredible memory of his by asking what they closed with at that show. He'd answer it for sure, but hey when you only get one opportunity to talk to Lars why not try to stump him, right? But then I started to think more and more and I changed my mind. I wanted to get something related to the 30th anniversary of Metallica signed, and so instead of the set list I brought with me So What! 19.1, the anniversary special of the MetClub magazine. And so with those items in hand, my wife and I hit the road to Vancouver on Friday morning.

Night One

An hour before heading to GM Place (yes, I know it's called Rogers Arena now – it's still GM Place to me) there was a big gathering of fan club members from all over the world. It was put on by my local chapter Nothing Else in BC Matters and also included members from chapters Seattletarium and Damaged Switzerland, as well as others. I had the chance to meet and catch up with some old friends like Marilyn, Kevin, Erik, and Keith from NEBCM as well to meet Andy from Switzerland (who hooked me up with my Saturday ticket) and re-connect with Ivan whom I first met in Halifax earlier this year. Good times and good memories being shared among friends before we all got to add to our own Metallica stories. Many people were understandably asking me what I would ask the band and talk to them about on Saturday, and I still had very few answers. Someone had brought up that Saturday was the 24th "birthday" of And Justice For All and I briefly wished I had brought the One LP I had at home. But Friday was all about the concert experience for me as I was psyched up to see The Full Arsenal.



Show time. Is there any cooler feeling than when you're in your "spot" at the concert, just ready to go and have an awesome two hours? Well, how about running into an old friend you haven't seen in 7 years? There we were, my wife and I, on the rail on the long side just left of the middle, when I look over to my right and see Danica. Eyes popped, big smiles, she runs over and we do the rapid catching-up thing. We did two shows together on the rail in 2004 and have on-and-off kept in touch over the



years, so it was a cool pre-show moment. In between our respective spots was a group with some signs – I didn't learn/confirm until after the show that the young lady in the group was Trinnyallica, whose name I recognized from the boards. Between their group, Danica, and myself, there was one hell of a lot of awesome people in that particular section!

Finally, the lights dimmed a little and the familiar strains of "It's A Long Way To The Top" came pumping through the arena. The adrenaline starts flowing pretty solidly there but it really is nothing compared to what happens next. I recently described my reaction to The Ecstasy of Gold as "Pavlovian" – the song for me means that Metallica is coming and the energy that flows through my veins at that time is off the charts. Seriously, put a light bulb in my hand and it would light up, I bet you. On the subject of energy and electricity, I did notice that the camera crew for filming the movie was just off to our immediate left and the thing was on wheels. When they tested their range of motion they ended up being right in front of us at the end of their line, and we couldn't see the stage past them. While this would provide some frustrations throughout the evening, the memory of that infernal thing is already fading compared to what remains firmly entrenched in my mind.

If there is a better opening song for Metallica than "Creeping Death," I do not know what it is. I realize that it has solidly been in the #1 slot on the set list for much of the past two-plus years, and so for some it may be getting old, but to me it is absolutely perfect right there. It demonstrates the power of the band, it is one of their truly all-time great songs, and it gets the crowd instantly involved. The awe-inspiring sight of thousands of people pumping their fists in unison screaming, "Die! Die! Die!" is nothing short of remarkable. The band delivered an exhilarating performance of Creep, something that would be a feature of these three nights: stellar performances primed for perfection so that the world can see just what we true fans already know: there is no better live band than Metallica.

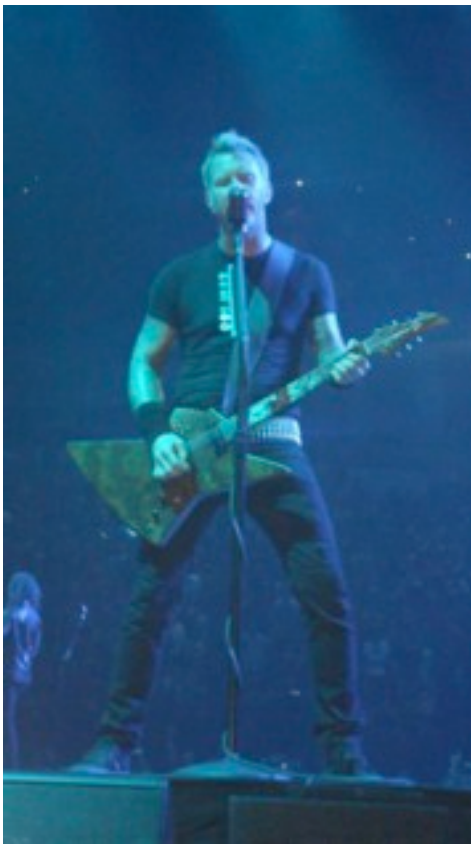
What I have always loved about being on the rail is the closeness of the band to the crowd. Particularly with this in-the-round format, they are literally "right there" in front of you (foreshadowing: this night was just the tip of the iceberg of that statement) just playing their hardest mere feet in front of you. Throughout the night, we had very regular appearances by Kirk and James. Whenever I get my spot on the rail I cross my fingers that the crew lays down a mic stand in my general direction, and tonight was one of those many lucky nights where not only was there one close by, it was in fact directly in front of me. Right beside that mic stand was a wah pedal, ensuring that there would be a full night of James signing and Kirk solo'ing in our immediate vicinity. This placement was of course done for the benefit of the camera crew but I prefer to think that the metal gods decided to smile that night.

The announcement of The Full Arsenal Tour promised that the shows would be over the top, gigantic, and massive, a true spectacle for the senses. There is no single song where that statement rings more true than One. Yes, the Tesla coils of Ride The Lightning are fantastic. Yes, Fuel uses more pyro than a 4th of July celebration. Yes, there are other grandiose parts of the show. But One is truly in a class all by itself...in so many ways. As a song One is fantastic. If the band played it live exactly the way they did in the music video, it would still be immense. When you add two minutes of pyro, concussions, and sound effects before it even starts, add in laser lighting, the video screens with the soldiers on their death march, and throw it all together it is the most powerful ten minutes of the night...every time. Words cannot truly express what an assault on the senses this song is in the live environment. Every Metallica fan should see this song in person at least once in their lifetime. I have (at this stage of the story) seen it seven times and every time it feels "bigger" than the time before it.



If One is the gold standard of Metallica's live excellence, then its upstart counterpart is Cyanide. It is not my favourite song on Death Magnetic but I am amazed at just how well it translates into the concert setting. Maybe it's all the coffins with the people trapped inside or the thunderous double bass coming from Lars, but I came away from the night with a greater appreciation for Cyanide. It's too bad that it's the only tool in the Full Arsenal from Death Magnetic being played, but it certainly does the album proud.

The only song on the set list that I had never seen live before this night was And Justice For All, and I was really looking forward to hearing and seeing it. The re-emergence of Doris for this special run of shows added an extra level of excitement. From the early construction during a blistering performance of Sanitarium, the anticipation of the culmination of Justice was building. James playing the last half of the song right in front of me only heightened the experience. I could see him looking over towards Doris a couple times as though he wasn't entirely sure when the big girl would come down, such was the element of danger presented throughout the show. My wife happened to perfectly film James and swing the camera over to capture the moment where Doris crumbled apart. It was over in an instant. Justice is done! Hearing Kirk do a solo from Eye of the Beholder was the final icing on the cake for this introduction for me to a great song that was mothballed for far too many years.



Following Justice came five of the biggest Metallica songs in their catalogue. There is simply no denying the run of songs in that portion of the set from Fade To Black until Enter Sandman. These are the songs that people expect to deliver, and Metallica never fail. It makes for an incredible climax to the show to play these songs together in this fashion. The added dimension of the crosses rising from the stage makes Master of Puppets even more incredible. The pyro during Battery makes the ultimate head-banging song even more ferocious. The simplicity of Nothing Else Matters and its placement is the only moment where Metallica lets you up off the mat for the entire show. Then there is the final climax of Sandman and the redux of the Load-era stage destruction. I deliberately avoided watching any videos of the carnage before the show. I had peaked at Fuel, Lightning, and others from Mexico and Edmonton, but I wanted to keep the destruction scene a true surprise (my memory of Cunning Stunts aside) and just enjoy the danger. I was not at all disappointed. The man on fire ignited right in front of our eyes. The lighting beams were mere feet away. The corner light rig plunged down and blocked out the final moments of the anarchy. It was beautiful.

The destruction scene, however, meant that the camera crew had to move their operation further to the right than they had been previously. For that reason, I missed virtually all of Hit The Lights. Heard it just fine, of course, and banged the head appropriately, but all I saw of it was the occasional peak over the cameraman's shoulder or through his view finder. It looked pretty cool with the band all jamming together. Fortunately they dispersed across the stage for Seek and Destroy, and the volley of beach balls from the ceiling as always made the song a blast to close out the night. My wife was lucky enough to



catch a ball, so now we have the super-sized one we came home with from Halifax last year and a nice medium-sized one. The picks and sticks at the very end resulted in a total of seven new picks for us. A very cool and diverse haul, the highlight of which was definitely the Canada 2012 pick. A friend nabbed one in Edmonton and I made it a goal to bring one of them home myself, so that was a nice little mission accomplished.

And so ended an awesome first of three nights. Sleep was not forthcoming for obvious reasons...

Night Two

Did you ever have a day where you knew something so special was going to happen that you just couldn't stop smiling about it all day long? From the moment I woke up on Saturday the primary thought going through my head was, "I am going to meet Metallica today." My mind did stray to thoughts of the Snake Pit and that inside-the-stage perspective of the concert that would follow, but no matter what my mind was fixated on the simple fact that I would be face-to-face with James, Kirk, Lars, and Rob in just a few hours. I've seen the MetOnTour videos and read other people's stories but none of that can truly prepare you for what is YOUR MOMENT. I am usually pretty good around celebrities; I've met politicians and hockey stars galore over the years and rarely do I get star struck in the presence of famous people. But there is something different about the way I view Metallica and how I respect them for what they do and how big an impact their music has had on my life. I was doing the mock shaking hands with my wife while we were outside waiting for me to be taken into the inner sanctum, but there was a genuine

nervousness underneath it. Because she is spectacular and wonderful and awesome, she said that she really wished she could be backstage too, not so much to meet the band but just to see my reaction to it all. She's amazing that way.



After getting the Snake Pit waiver dropped off (they actually paid us ten bucks to be in it! Can you believe that?) and receiving our instructions from the thoroughly awesome MetClub staff, we were led inside. I was glad that I was near the end of the line – hearing and seeing the other people around me getting their time helped calm my nerves – and during the wait I got to talk to the guys beside me a bit. One of them was a really nice guy named Nigel, who I would end up having a couple drinks with later that night after the show. Never pass up the opportunity to make a new friend, I say! As we were waiting for the individual band members to arrive, various familiar faces from the inner circle passed by. I remember seeing Zach Harmon chatting with Steffan

Chirazi, Jim Breuer walked by and said hi a couple times, and various Metallikids zipped around on scooters and skateboards. It all helped relax the environment a bunch to see everybody else so casual.



The first Metallica member to come out was Rob. We talked for a good couple minutes about various stuff - for some reason I was really nervous about meeting Rob before going in because I just couldn't think of what to say to him. It sounds so stupid because he's been part of Metallica for almost 10 years now but I still had to scramble to think. But it was all good. I said that we didn't get to see much of him the night before because he was on the other end of the stage for most of the show, so he said he would make sure to check out the other side more this night. As luck would have it, I ended up being on the other end of the stage during the show but I definitely still got to see a lot of him during the night. We talked a bit more, he signed my stuff, and then we did the picture thing. One down, and it went really well. He's a very laid back personality but there is definitely an aura of cool surrounding him.

After Rob finished the line, the next person to come out was James. As soon as he entered the hallway it was like this incredible presence. I was near the end of the line and the whole time as he was getting closer I just got more excited for it. I said to the guy standing beside me, "Dude, it's James Hetfield!!!!" Then came my turn. My moment with James. Actually, a lot of moments. I'm pretty sure I had him for a good five minutes. He was engaging and asked me probably as many questions as I asked him. The chat ranged from what shows I'd seen—he actually asked me to list them all—to the All Nightmare Long video (dancing steak!) to doing three shows in four nights to my own recent move across the country. He told me to get in touch with them in case I move again so that they can schedule the tour accordingly. Huge laugh from that! The whole time with him was just awesome. I think it really shows in my picture with him just how much I enjoyed it.

I didn't get much of a break in the action as Kirk was next. I had noticed actually that while I was talking with James, The Ripper was catching up pretty quickly. He also had on these very cool snake-skin cowboy boots. Very cool. I asked him about the challenge of doing a concert with that much film crew around and he said that it is a bit distracting but that, in a humorous way, "I'm a professional." That got a big laugh. When I pulled out my photo of him from last year's show he seemed really impressed with it. It was a great shot with him in the classic Kirk pose with the arm straight up in the air, and Rob was in the background. He really liked it and thought it was cool that I'd seen them in two very different locations. He even signed it "GREAT SHOT!" so that was very special – my wife took the photo and I hope that she knows I gave her full credit for it with Kirk.

Finally, out came Lars. He was super cool, he just has a way of making you feel like the most important person in the room when he's talking to you - hell, they all did really. When he was talking to the guy beside me he was looking at the wall behind us; it has all the awards that the Vancouver Canucks have won over the years, and in that precise spot was the Ted Lindsay Award (given to the NHL's most outstanding player as voted by the other players) – he asked, "Who is Ted Lindsay?" The guy didn't know so I kinda jumped in and told him the story. He thought it was interesting; being the encyclopedia of information that he is, I hope it comes in handy at some point for him. When it got to be my proper turn, he asked most of the questions, which was really neat and goes back to that bit I mentioned earlier. He genuinely wanted to know my story. He also told me to let them know if I move again – the Halifax show came up again in the discussion – which I thought really shows the synergy that Lars and James have, even when they're not in the same room. I can only imagine how helpful that is when they are deciding on how to arrange the new album or some new Metallica venture. I was so engrossed in our chat that when he was signing I totally forgot to ask him to personalize the photo as I'd done with the other guys. In the end it's still a fantastic signed photo of Lars, and I also now have his thumbprint on my So What magazine as there's a small smudge on the 2012 part from when he handed it back to me. I am not complaining!



And that was the Meet & Greet experience. It was phenomenal. Whoever it was that said you should never meet your heroes clearly never won a meet and greet with Metallica. They are fantastic people. Other people can talk about what fame and fortune did to them, but I think that real fans know the truth. They're just four regular guys that truly care about their fans.

At this point, I want to just say thank you to the MetClub staff for their work organizing these events and making sure that it goes off without a hitch. From the initial meeting point to the final drop-off at the Snake Pit, they could not have been more professional, courteous, and all-around amazing. I am sure I speak for everybody that has had the opportunity to meet their heavy metal heroes when I say that the MetClub staff are simply amazing. From the bottom of my heart I thank you

guys for a night that I will remember forever.

Right, there was a Metallica concert after all of that! After being let out of the backstage area we were released into the wild to do as we pleased until 7:45pm when we had to meet at the designated location to be escorted to the Snake Pit. After I came out of the tunnel I ran into my buddy Ivan and he said that the look on my face and the wideness of my eyes pretty much told him all he needed to know. Then I saw my old friend Renee and we got all caught up on things. Meanwhile, people were walking past noticing the bright blue badge on my shirt and I gotta say it felt pretty good to be at the centre of all that attention and positive vibes. Many of my buds have had the opportunity to meet the band before so they knew what I was going through. There was absolutely no way anything was going to make this night anything less than one of the best ever of my entire life. I mean, really, I'd already met the band and now I get to see them from the vaunted Snake Pit!



Off we went down the stairs, down to the floor, inside the barrier, people giving us high fives and everything as we went past. Many folks on the floor knew what we were going for, and they were all very happy for us. I ended up on the end that would be underneath / behind the big electric chair and Doris, and that was fantastic because it would be a totally unique view of the show from the previous night. Since the set list was going to be identical, at least the experience of it would be completely different from what I had seen before. I ended up getting a spot near the back on the left wall. I wanted to make sure I was on a wall spot in case a band member went by for maximum rocking out effect. That would come into play a couple times during the night.



The first thing I noticed from down in the Snake Pit is that the flames truly are everywhere on that stage. On the list of rules they handed to us outside they said to not lean on the rails as there were pyro cans literally feet away from us – that advice was rightly adhered to because it was incredibly close. I thought it was hot from the regular floor pit. It had nothing on these ones. Amazingly intense and a little scary, but totally awesome. The ongoing bursts throughout Fuel and the utter strafing of the stage during One was incredible. We could see a thoroughly drenched Kirk come to the tech area after Fuel and probably wipe off a litre or two of sweat. Which reminds me, it is amazing how much these guys are all over the place throughout the night. It would be very interesting to know how many miles each of them runs during an average show. They are very rarely in the same place for more than 30 seconds unless Kirk is on a wah pedal for a solo or James is singing an extended portion of the song. In Kirk's case we know how he seemingly sprints from location to location.

I have a confession to make. Many people that I have spoken to about the live show over the years know this already but I have often said that Sad But True should get a bit of a break from time to time. This weekend changed my opinion a little bit. It is great for engaging the crowd as we all know, and it is definitely heavy, but the performances of this Black Album classic on Friday and Saturday were incredible. It probably helped that James played a significant portion of the song right by the Snake Pit and much of it facing us directly. Two feet away just ripping it up the whole time. I liked it so much I even decided to wear my Sad But True shirt for Monday's show. So yes, yes I do want heavy, baby!

The destruction scene during Sandman was especially cool from the ground level. On this night the faulty tower was the one just to the left of our Snake Pit, so when the lights on it started going haywire I had a feeling that I had better brace myself for some craziness. Sure enough, the stage tech who had climbed the tower suddenly went swinging way out into the crowd behind us and the guy working on something on the stage only a few feet away suddenly caught fire! The stuff falling all over the place was intense, but it wasn't until I looked directly above my own head that I saw one of coffins coming down directly on top of us! It stopped maybe two feet above our heads. I'm sure that if anybody felt so inclined they could have jumped up and given it a good tap. While we all knew that it was a staged disaster, when you are right down in it without any measure of separation from the chaos that even the guard rail to the main floor pit provides, it can be a little bit scary, which of course makes it all the more exhilarating.

Without the camera crew in the way, I finally got to see Hit The Lights being performed. The guys looked like they were having a lot of fun with it, and everybody in the Pit was rocking pretty hard. Sadly, all good things must come to an end, and when the intro to the Kill 'Em All Metal Up Your Ass classic, Seek and Destroy, hit this was the beginning of that end. Due to the coffin over our heads acting as something of a protective barrier only one beach ball actually made its way to us; fortunately, it was grabbed by my friend Kevin to take home. Operating largely without the distraction of the balls, I got to enjoy Seek to the fullest extent I had since 2004. It gets a lot of heat for having been the closer for so many years now, but when you think of it just on its own it really is a killer song. The giant toilet came down but we only got to see the back of it from our vantage point. Upon the end of the song, the guys came around to do the usual picks & sticks routine. Andy, the fellow that got me my ticket and who I invited to be my +1 guest to the Snake Pit in return, ended up getting a stick from Lars. For myself, I got a couple more picks, one of which I mentally set aside for my youngest sister Alana. The Saturday show was her birthday and I promised her I would bring her home something from the show in addition to taking her to the Monday even for her



very first Metallica show. The biggest thrill of the post-show antics was getting a fist bump from James and a high-five from Rob. Yes, I realize that I just met them and talked with them only hours prior, but it is still awesome to get that little moment!

This night was all about meeting the band. To finally get that experience after being a fan for nearly half my life and a part of the Club for 8 shows over 8 years was nothing short of incredible. If it's a once in a lifetime experience for me, that will be enough and I hope that anybody else who is fortunate enough to win one takes a page from Motorbreath: you only live once so take hold of the chance!

Night Three

After the incredible weekend I had, a day off was much needed to wind down and start to process all the amazing things that had happened. Old friendships renewed, many great new memories, two fantastic shows, and oh yeah, I MET METALLICA!!! Granted, it wasn't much of a respite as we had to drive home on Sunday only to hit the road again the next morning with my sister and her special friend. It was the first Metallica show for both of them, and at that stage I was honestly more excited for that fact and for them than I was for my own upcoming experience. It was somewhat similar to when I took my wife to her first show in Halifax last year – obviously I'm excited for myself but when you reach a certain point you want to see how other people react to the thing that you love so much. Suffice to say I was not disappointed by them.

Our first surprise of the night was seeing a small group of people outside GM Place at Gate 10, all of whom appeared to have floor tickets. We were under the impression that there weren't going to be any floor tickets sold to this event, so I found that a bit weird, but didn't think much of it until we got inside. Thanks to the MetClub we had seats right in the middle in Section 106, but when it came time to head into our area it was blocked off and there was a large group of people behind us that all had gold wristbands. I'm not a judgmental person, I'm really not, but they all had a certain "look" to them: multiple piercings, torn up clothing, drop a nickel and everybody sees your business short skirts, that kind of thing. After running into Nigel (my M&G "neighbour" from Saturday) in the line we quickly surmised that the lot over yonder were actually extras brought in by the film crew. Now, I found this a bit strange. Was there really a need for plants after four nights of filming in Edmonton and Vancouver? Was there really a need to have a certain appearance to portray a certain image of what a Metallica fan looks like in the movie? It struck me as something backwards; if they wanted to get die-hard fans portraying authentic emotions at the right times during a Metallica show, why wouldn't they just put the word out to MetClubbers? We certainly aren't a lot that needs conditioning or canned behaviour or lines or any of that sort of thing. But hey, it's not my film production. I'm just there to see the band and if I should end up with my mug in the movie somehow, awesome.

Anyways, we got to our seats about halfway up the lower bowl. It was weird not being on the floor at a Metallica show. In my eight previous experiences I'd only known the floor and the rail, so it was to be a unique night on many levels. The first oddity of the night was no AC/DC tape. The second was seeing the extras all around me kinda looking at each other with perplexed looks during the "Die! Die! Die!" part of Creeping Death. I think the



real fans in the crowd scared them. And for that I am very glad. They eventually did start doing the appropriate fist-pumping but it was a little half-hearted. That's Hollywood for you.

After Creep ended they played the intro to Fuel...and then they stopped playing. That was really weird. We knew that this would be a regular occurrence on the night but I can only imagine that it would have difficult for the band. We know what kind of zone they get into when they're on stage, and with the raucous crowd ready to rock everybody was a bit thrown off. It would be a regular theme throughout the night to try extra hard to keep the energy levels high at all times that they were on stage. With a regular concert it's easy, relatively speaking. The energy is constant and eventually the adrenalin takes over. Starting and stopping isn't part of the routine. But with something much bigger than just a single show at stake, it's totally understandable that they would want everything to be perfect. Hence, no tesla coils firing during Ride The Lightning. Because they'd been on all the other nights, there wouldn't be a clean audio for the film. Especially from the Snake Pit, the sounds going into the electric chair were pretty audible, so it makes perfect sense that they would want at least one audio take without them.



Fortunately, One had no omissions...on either occasion that it was played. I think I made pretty clear earlier how I feel about that song live so getting to hear it twice was just incredible. I think I sang louder and rocked harder on the second go-around, to be honest. We knew it was the last song of the night at that point, so why leave anything behind? Seeing the whole stage experience for the first (and second) time of my life was just awe-inspiring. The lasers, the screens, the explosions, seeing all of that unfolding before my eyes almost made me wish that I'd had that perspective of it a couple more times. Almost.

After Memory played, there was an extended technical break. During these times whatever lighting was in place at the time of the cutoff more or less stayed that way so it

was really difficult to tell when exactly things would be starting up again. If you remember your set list for this tour, you know what came next. It was completely out of the blue that the intro gong went off and it scared the living crap out of a lot of people. It was good to see some emotion out of those extras. Following a blistering version of Sanitarium it was another short break and then time for Justice. During the song came the only "accident" of the whole three days that left me wondering as to whether or not it was part of the show. Right in the middle of Justice the big roaming camera just DROPPED almost right on the people on the rail. I had seen a lot of things drop to the ground over these nights but this was still creepy. When the director confirmed after the song that this particular event wasn't planned it was scary. By this time, the extras had been moved down to the floor and it was just sad to see the lack of activity and not doing anything in terms of y'know, normal behaviour from fans when Kirk and Rob are right in front of you and Lars' kit is facing you. Oh well....

The loss of the camera meant a lengthy delay as they pulled it out of the pit and took down the wiring. During this time the band started to mess around a little bit with some jamming. I got pretty amped up when they did the main riff from Call of Ktulu. I had just finished reading an H.P. Lovecraft collection a week or two earlier so the story of



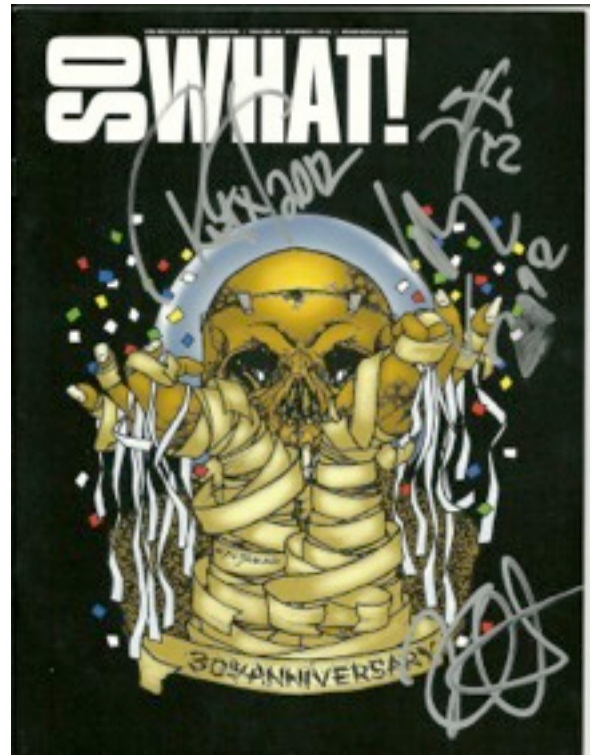
the great ancient monster was fresh in my mind as they jammed away on it. That was a highlight of the night candidate for sure.

It was strange with some songs being left out of the set list on the night. Battery was the most surprising because of the pyro used during the song. The others are relatively straight-forward in terms of production but lots of stuff happens during Battery so an extra take of it would have been extra cool. I say this in large part because of all the songs I've seen live there is not one that gets my head banging harder. Fade to Black, Nothing Else Matters, and Hit The Lights are all great songs but without much extra happening during their performances I guess the film crew had more than enough footage from the first few shows.

Fortunately, they decided that they needed just one more run through of Fuel and One. It was a great way to send the crowd home and burn off whatever extra pyro stuff they still had after all these incredible performances. It was just the latter half of Fuel but the bonus performance of One was so fitting a way to end the three incredible nights in Vancouver. They did the traditional bows and then that was it. Show's over, time to go home.

Aftermath

It is now Wednesday night as I finish typing this incredible series of events from Vancouver. Everything is still so fresh and vivid in my mind, and the memories of this magical weekend will remain with me for a very long time to come. Saturday was such a special night for me. There is no greater honour and privilege for any Metallica fan to get to meet the band, and I have had that moment now. I still marvel at the synergy between James and Lars about the next tour planning, and I think it is just so cool that Kirk liked that photo of him so much. There is so much made of "the Metallica family" and I felt absolutely engrossed in all of that this weekend. Not only the band but my fellow fans, it really is a larger community where so many people will go out of their way to make things extra special for each other. Whether it was Trinnyallica making signs so that other people would get their cool moment, or NEBCM putting on an awesome party at the Shark Club complete with prizes, or my own helping hand to help a guy from Switzerland attending his 61st Metallica show get a drumstick – the Metallica family stepped up big time in Vancouver! To borrow Kirk's famous closing line, yeah Vancouver you





Seven Years Later, It's Clear that the 2004-2005 Season Was Truly Wasted By Sean McCafferty aka 30ranfordfan

My, how time flies! It seems like just a couple of years ago that the 2005-06 NHL season started. The long awaited end to a yearlong lockout had come, and the NHL was ushering in a new era. One with rules that would promote a better, faster, more exciting game. One with a new breed of superstar unlike any we had seen in a generation.

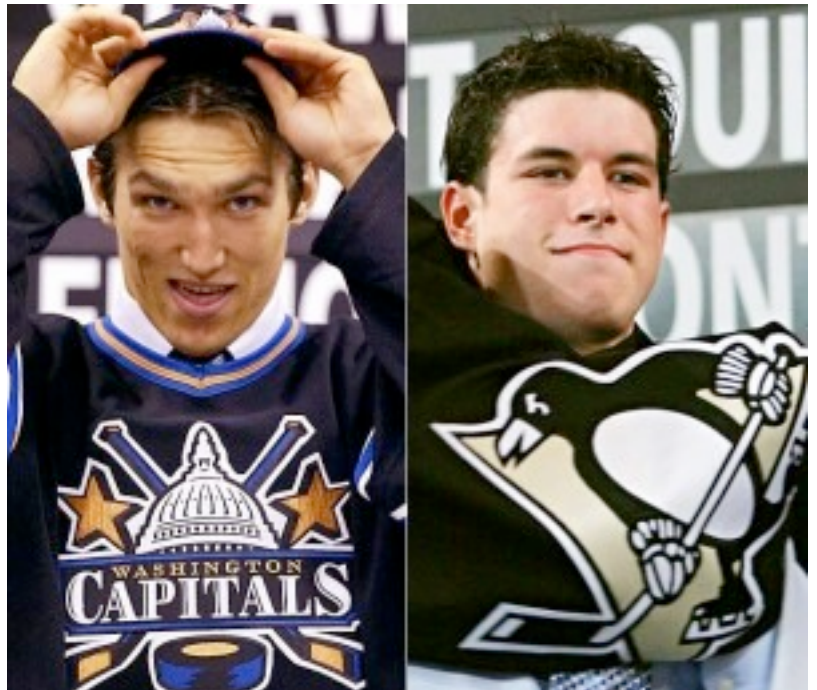
Gone would be the days that clutching and grabbing would impede the NHL's best players. With the likes of Sidney Crosby & Alexander Ovechkin now the poster boys for the 'New NHL', the league would be better poised to market itself than ever before. The battle that had cost us the entire 2004-05 NHL season was won by the owners, and a salary cap was now in place to give the league the cost certainty it needed to run a successful business going forward.

Unfortunately, only some of what the NHL promised us would actually come true.

The league has succeeded since that 2005-06 season. League wide revenues have climbed to a history high, of \$3.3 Billion. There are more people watching and following the NHL than there ever were. Crosby and Ovechkin have come exactly as advertised, and they've been followed by even more young superstars like Steven Stamkos, John Tavares, and Taylor Hall.

The games appear to be played at a faster tempo. The reworked rules added an element of speed that had been nullified by the lax calling of hooks & holds for too long. This didn't lead to the scoring increase we were promised, coaches devised new systems to counter those elite players, but the game

was certainly more exciting. Many fans like myself may never truly embrace the shootout, but as a spectacle designed to break ties, one has to admit that it entertaining.



What's most frustrating looking back on that lockout though, is that the year off didn't do a thing to stabilize the business model of owning a franchise. It did nothing to achieve the parity or cost certainty that the league insisted it would. The owners may have thought they won the battle, but the same problems have returned, and it looks more and more likely we're headed for another lockout.

The Owners got everything they wanted. A salary cap was brought in. One that guaranteed players 54% of Hockey Related Revenues (HRRs), but their share would climb if revenues rose enough. It was one which also meant other revenues the teams generated were sheltered from being shared in this agreement. It also meant an immediate



rollback of 24%, on all existing NHL contracts. It was the only way that salaries would be able to fit under the \$39 Million salary Cap, with a projected \$1.8 Billion in revues for the 2005-06 season.

Where the league anticipated would happen to revenues can only be speculated on, but one can only imagine that even they didn't think that they would be entering into an era of unprecedented growth. In the seven years since the lockout, revenues have nearly doubled from that \$1.8b, to \$3.3. Based on the soon to expire CBA, the salary cap is projected to be just a hair over \$70m in 2012-13, \$31m higher than when the deal started. The cap floor has risen just as dramatically, going from \$23m in 2005-06, to a small-market crippling \$54m this year. Yes. Teams must now spend a minimum of \$15m more now, than the maximum they could spend seven years ago.

The problem lies in the fact that not all teams have seen their revenues climb equally. For the rich teams, the ones in the big markets, the cap has worked wonders for their bottom lines. Teams like the Rangers, Maple Leafs, Flyers, etc – they were spending in excess of \$60m before the lockout started. The cap forced them to shed salary, but they were still able to offer annual increases in ticket prices. They were still bringing in big money for local TV deals, and they were still able to sell jerseys for hundreds of dollars. The new system just added to their bottom lines.



The smaller market teams (or more correctly, the “lower revenue” teams) didn't fair nearly as well. Their businesses were now much easier to run, and rich teams were no longer able to buy away their best players in unlimited fashion, but a yearlong work stoppage didn't help their already slugging ticket sales. It didn't make the game more popular in Columbus or Florida. It only reminded people that they could do without hockey altogether.

over the league are good for business, and the overall bottom line of the league shows this. The staggering jump in HRRs means that somebody is getting rich. It's just that it's still the same dozen, or so, teams that were doing so before 2004.

On one hand, the NHL does look brilliant in it all. The new era they ushered in has led to more fan interest across North America. The young stars that have taken

By neglecting to include any meaningful kind of revenue sharing in the last CBA, the rich owners essentially got everything they wanted while setting up their poorer partners for failure. Until the NHL learns to divide the teams' share of the money more equitably, it won't matter how good of a deal they think they can get from the players: half of the thirty teams will continue to bleed red ink.

This does not mean to suggest that the Toronto Maple Leafs should be forced to accept the same profit margins as the Phoenix Coyotes. That would be lunacy. But it is also equally laughable to suggest that teams with smaller fan



bases, and comparatively tiny revenue streams, will ever be able to compete financially when the league ties their expenses to the profits of the big market teams.

The current system will only work if one of three things becomes true:

The league contracts, dropping to the range of 16-20 teams “Low Revenue” teams are bought up by multi-billionaires who don’t care about losing money on their hockey teams. The league finds a way to shift a higher burden of player costs to those teams that can afford it, through better revenue sharing, a soft cap, creative contracts or some combination of the three using any sound sense of logic, it’s pretty plain to see that those first two will likely never happen. Reworking the system to help the teams that need it, therefore, is the only way to fix what really ails the league.

Based on the latest proposal from league Commissioner Gary Bettman, that doesn’t seem to be the case. Nope. The owners seem more focused on limiting contract lengths, curbing free agency rights, and extending entry level (i.e. cheap) contracts, while lowering the players’ share of HRRs (and likely re-defining HRRs, so there is a smaller pie for the players to draw from).

While it’s plain to see how any of these things would make ownership of an NHL team more viable, and a more affordable business to run, they will do little to curb the disparity amongst the NHL’s teams. They won’t spell an end to the massive losses incurred in cities where the current model doesn’t work.

The 2004-05 season was truly wasted. The league has not learned a thing from its mistakes seven years ago. I fear that that NHL is about to continue their cycle of stupidity, and cancel more games in the name of achieving a system that just doesn’t work.





SEPTEMBER 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12 - Leaf History of Baseball - Panini Momentum Football - Topps Heritage Minor League Baseball - Topps Platinum Football	13 - Press Pass Fanfare Racing	14 - Panini Prestige Basketball	15
16	17	18	19 - Panini Prominence Football - Topps Triple Thread Baseball	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27 - Panini Hockey sticker album	28	29
30						



SCF Official Review: 2012/13 Score

By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

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

Box detail

36 packs per box

7 cards per pack

Current Retail Price (online): \$30.00 - \$39.99

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

SCORE BASE CARD

The all new Score Signatures features autographs from your favorite NHL players.



GOLD RUSH

One per pack. Look for the more rare Hot Rookie versions falling one per box.

HOT ROOKIES

All new rookies for the 2012-13 Season!

CHECK-IT

The Check-It insert set makes its long awaited return to Score showcasing the hardest hitters of the NHL's past and present.

TEAM SCORE

Find all new Team Score inserts showcasing the best talent across the league.

FIRST GOAL

Re-live the season with the First Goal inserts, highlighting players netting their first NHL goal.

THE FRANCHISE RETRO SIGNATURES

Available only in retail, the Franchise Retro Autograph set includes the likes of Bobby Hull and Gordie Howe.

SCORE SIGNATURES

All new for 2012-13 Score, the Score Signature set features autographs from your favorite NHL players.



THE FRANCHISE RETRO

Retail Exclusive! The Franchise Retro set includes players from the NHL's Original Six teams. Some of the greatest players from the NHL's storied past.

WHAT WE PULLED

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HlmdSwg5tDw>

Base - 183/500 (36.6%)

Rookies - 18/48 (37.5%)

Goldrush (36)

Goldrush Rookies (1)



Check-It (1)
First Goal (3)
Franchise (1)

Franchise Original Six (4 - 1 Dupe)
Net Cam (3)
Team Score (2)



FINAL THOUGHTS

Base - 3.5/5

Design - 4.25/5

Fun - 3.5/5

Value - 3/5

Rebuy - 4/5

Overall - 18.25/25 (73%)

Pros:

Great for set builders and newcomers alike



The Rundown On



Great price for those wanting something to open
Nice to see player transactions notated as recently as a month ago

Cons:

Too many cards in the base set
Ratio of base to rookies (percentage wise) too even
A lot of packs to open
Not much to get you excited in the box

NPN Information:

NPN, 2012/12 Score Hockey
5325 FAA Blvd Suite 100A
Irving, TX 75061-3601

Postmarked: 10/24/12
Received By: 10/31/12

Limit 2 per household, mailed separately

Canada Skills: $664 + 756 / 189 \times 175 - 415 = ?$

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 of their products, visit them today at www.paniniamerica.net

All the cards from this break are available for request. Since the video is a recap, just PM me with the player or players of interest and I will let you know what we received. Cards are available for request for 30 days from the time this review is posted. As always, for the first 48 hours, only VIPs can make requests.





SCF Official Review: 2012 Topps Chrome

By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

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

Box detail

24 packs per box

4 cards per pack

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

PRODUCT HIGHLIGHTS

NEW! DUAL AUTOGRAPHS

Featuring at least 10 different combo Chrome refractors. #d to 10.



NEW! AUTOGRAPHED CHROME BUYBACKS

10 Autographed repurchased Chrome rookie cards of stars that never had a Chrome Autographed Rookie #d to 10.

NEW! CHROME ENCOUNTERS AUTOGRAPHS

#d to 10 or less. Hobby Only

NEW! DYNAMIC DIE CUT

Featuring 50 stars of the game on die-cut refractor technology (1:24)

Dynamic Die Cuts Autographs #d to 25 or less.

NEW! CUT FROM THE SAME CLOTH AUTOGRAPHS

Featuring autos on both sides #d to 5

Hobby Only

AUTOGRAPHED ROOKIE CARDS

(At least 25 subjects) Autographs will be signed on-card

- Refractor Parallel to 499

- Blue Refractor numbered to 199.

- Black Refractor numbered to 100.



The Rundown On



- Sepia Refractor numbered to 75.
- Gold Refractor numbered to 50.
- Red Refractor numbered to 25. Hobby Only
- Atomic Refractor numbered to 10. Hobby Only
- Super-Fractor numbered 1/1. Hobby Only
- Printing Plates will be numbered 1/1. Hobby Only

BASE CARDS

There will be 220 base cards featuring veterans and rookies, and look for limited variations!

AUTOGRAPHED PATCH VARIATIONS

Featuring an autographed patch #d to 10. Hobby Only

UNCUT SHEET REDEMPTIONS

Hobby Only

BASE CARD PARALLELS

- Refractor Parallel 1:3.
- X-fractor Parallel 1:6.
- Blue Refractor numbered to 199.
- Black Refractor numbered to 100.
- Sepia Refractor numbered to 75.
- Gold Refractor numbered to 50.
- Red Refractor numbered to 25. HOBBY ONLY
- Atomic Refractor numbered to 10. HOBBY ONLY
- Super-Fractor numbered 1/1. HOBBY ONLY
- Printing Plates numbered 1/1. HOBBY ONLY

HOT BOXES

Refractor Hot Box - 1 in 3 cases

Hobby Only

WHAT WE PULLED

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sachjTy4BTE>



Base - 0 (**REFRACTOR HOT BOX**)

Refractors - 87

Xfractors (4)

Black Refractor /100 (1) - Michael Bourn



Blue Refractor /199 (1) - Ricky Romero



Dynamic Die-Cuts (1)



Drew Smyly Autograph





Drew Hutchinson Autograph

FINAL THOUGHTS

Base - N/A (5/5 for Hot Box but won't count towards score)

Design - 4/5

Fun - 4.5/5

Value - 4/5

Rebuy - 5/5

Overall - 17.5/20 (87.5%)

Pros:

On Card Rookie Autographs

No hidden fluff (not a lot of extra insert sets to deal with)

Solid Rookie Auto lineup

Cards look great, though it is typical with Chrome

Cons:

Non-hot boxes don't carry the same value

NPN Information:

NPN 2012 Topps Chrome BB

PO Box 764

Pittstown PA 18640

Postmarked By: 11/14/12

Received By: 11/21/12

Limit 1 Request Per Household

Canada Skills: $5 \times 2 + 6 - 3 = ?$

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

Cards are available for request. If interested in any of the cards in this break, PM me with your choice (1 per member since everything is either a refractor or insert). Cards will be available for 30 days for the time this review is posted. As always, for the first 48 hours, only VIPs can make requests.





SCF Official Review: 2012 Topps Finest

By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

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

Box detail

2 mini boxes per master box

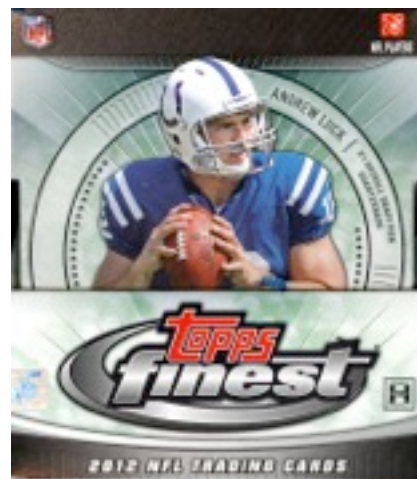
6 packs per mini box

5 cards per pack

Current Retail Price (online): \$104.99 - \$119.99

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

AUTOGRAPH PATCH CARDS - 1 PER MASTER BOX!



Rookie Refractor Autographed Patch Cards: Up to 40 NFL Rookies featured with a multi-color patch and a signature on chrome refractor technology. Each card will be numbered.

- Blue Refractor Parallel Numbered to 99
- GOLD Refractor Parallel Numbered to 75
- RED Refractor Parallel Numbered to 50
- PULSAR Refractor Parallel Numbered to 25
- PRISM Refractor Parallel Numbered to 10
- Black Refractor Pigskin NFL Shield Parallel
- Featuring the NFL shield from NFL PLAYERS
- Rookie Premiere footballs. Numbered 1/1
- SuperRfractor Parallel Numbered 1/1

Rookie Autographed JUMBO Patch Cards - Up to 20 players featuring a jumbo-sized multi-color patch and a player autograph. Numbered to 5

Autographed Jumbo Relic Refractor Cards - Up to 55 Rookie and Veteran NFL players featuring an autograph with a jumbo jersey relic swatch. Each card will be numbered.

- Blue Refractor Parallel Numbered to 99
- GOLD Refractor Parallel Numbered to 75
- RED Refractor Parallel Numbered to 25
- PRISM Refractor Parallel Numbered to 10
- Black Refractor LOGO Parallel Numbered 1/1
- SuperFractor (Patch) Parallel Numbered 1/1



The Rundown On



Dual Autograph Dual Relic Cards

Up to 20 cards featuring two collectible players with a jersey relic swatch and an autograph from each. Numbered to 10

Dual Autograph Dual Patch Superfractor - Numbered 1/1

Triple Autograph Triple Relic Cards - Up to 10 cards featuring three collectible players with a jersey relic swatch and an autograph from each. Numbered to 10

Triple Autograph Triple Patch Superfractor - Numbered 1/1

Rookie Refractor Quad Autograph Patch Book Cards - Up to 5 cards featuring four rookie autographs and a multi-color patch swatch from each on a chrome refractor book card. Numbered 1/1

AUTOGRAPH CARDS - AT LEAST 1 PER CASE! - 1 ON-CARD Rookie Autograph Per Hobby Case!

Finest Moments Autograph Cards - Up to 25 veteran and top rookie players featuring an autograph with a highlighted performance.

- PULSAR Refractor Parallel Numbered to 10
- SuperFractor Parallel Numbered 1/1

Rookie Refractor Autograph Variation Cards - On-Card autograph variations of base rookie cards. Each card will be numbered.

- Red Refractor Parallel Numbered to 15
- PULSAR Refractor Numbered to 10
- SuperFractor Parallel Numbered 1/1

Finest Atomic Refractor Rookie Cards - Up to 25 rookies featuring a perimeter die cut and refractor technology. 1 per Mini Box.

- Finest Atomic Rookies AUTOGRAPHED GOLD Refractor ON-CARD autograph. Numbered to 25.
- Finest Atomic Rookies AUTOGRAPHED RED Refractor ON-CARD autograph. Numbered to 10.
- Finest Atomic Rookies AUTOGRAPHED SuperFractor ON-CARD autograph. Numbered 1/1.

ANDREW LUCK EXCLUSIVE

Lucky Cuts Cards

A Die Cut card featuring quarterback sensation Andrew Luck.



Lucky Cuts Autograph Cards

An autograph parallel featuring an ON-CARD autograph. Numbered to 10.

Lucky Cuts Patch Relic Cards

A relic parallel featuring a multi-colored patch. Numbered to 25.

BASE CARDS - 5 PER PACK!

Featuring 50 of the most anticipated NFL rookies and 100 exceptional NFL veterans

PARALLEL CARDS

- Refractor Parallel Inserted 1:3
- PRISM Refractor Parallel Inserted 1:6
- BLUE Refractor Parallel Numbered to 99
- Gold Refractor Parallel Numbered to 50
- RED Refractor Parallel Numbered to 25
- PULSAR Refractor Parallel Numbered to 10
- SuperFractor Parallel Numbered 1/1
- PRINTING PLATES Numbered 1/1

INSERTS - 4 PER MASTER BOX!

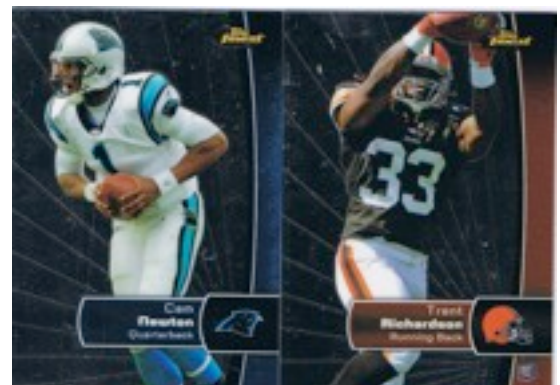
Finest Moments Cards - Up to 25 NFL Veteran and Rookie players highlighting a defining career moment. 1 per mini box

Finest Moments Refractor Parallel

WHAT WE PULLED

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yj0A0jihbK4>

Base - 48/150 (32%)





Refractors (4)

Xfractors (2)



Atomic Rookies (2)

Finest Moments (2)



Ronnie Hilman Jumbo Relic/Autograph /1368



Ryan Broyles 1-color Patch/Autograph /50



FINAL THOUGHTS

Base - 4/5

Design - 4.25/5

Fun - 2/5 (Due to powder and foreign blue material on many cards)

Value - 3/5

Rebuy - 3/5



Overall - 16.25/25 (65%)

Pros:

Nice look to the cards

Huge fan of the Atomic Rookie Die Cuts

Cons:

Rookie Jersey/Autographs numbered in the 1300s (What's the point)

Lower numbered patch cards are 1-color

Sticker Autographs

No Quality Control with foreign substances on cards

Boxes without a single numbered parallel

Very hard to tell difference between a refractor and xfractor unless closeup

Too many refractor levels

NPN Information:

NPN 2012 Topps Finest Football

PO Box 766

Pittston, PA 18640

Postmarked By: 11/21/12

Received By: 11/28/12

Limit 1 Request Per Household

Canada Skills: $16 + 14 \times 4 - 4 = ?$

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

All cards (minus the hits) are available from this break for request. Please PM me with the card or cards of interest. Cards are available for 30 days from the time this review is posted. As always, for the first 48 hours, only VIPs can make requests.



SCF Official Review: 2012/13 Panini NBA Hoops

By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

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

Box detail

36 packs per box

8 cards per pack

Current Retail Price (online): \$68.00 - \$79.99

PRODUCT HIGHLIGHTS

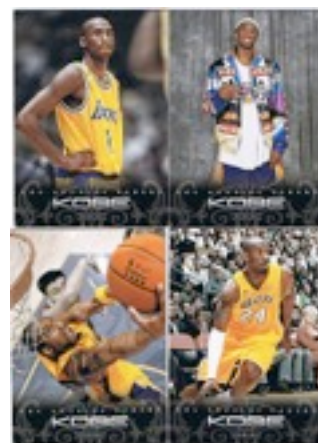
- 300 card base set which contains 72 rookies
- Huge autograph checklist
- Durantula cards featuring Kevin Durant - building on the popularity of the Black Mamba and Blake Superior cards from 2011-12
- First live rookie cards for the 2011-12 and 2012-13 rookie classes
- Two autographs per hobby box!
- Debut inserts include Draft Night Signatures, Kobe's All-Rookie Team, Rookie Impact and Spark Plugs!
- Look for the short-printed Champions card again this year to complete your set!
- One of One Artist's Proof Black parallels return!
- Your first chance to pull live autographs of rookies from the 2011-12 and 2012-13 draft classes!
- Look for autographs of the NBA's top players!
- The 2011-12 and 2012-13 rookie classes make their debut in a special Kobe set going back to the roots of the Hoops brand!
- Last year it was Kobe Black Mamba and Blake Superior; this year it's DURANTULA!
- Look for original 1989-90 Hoops cards with autographs and an embossed Recollection Collection stamp!



WHAT WE PULLED

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k09iGDGm1Ck>

Box Topper: Kobe Anthology Pack - 5 cards (1 not scanned)





Base - 252/300 (84%)

Artist's Proof (1)

Glossy (6)



Action Photos (4)
Board Members (5)
Courtside (3)



Draft Night (5)

Rookie Impact (5)

Spark Plugs (5)



Isaiah Thomas Autograph



Bernard James Autograph





FINAL THOUGHTS

Base - 4.5/5

Design - 4/5

Fun - 3/5

Value - 3/5

Rebuy - 3/5

Overall - 17.5/25 (70%)

Pros:

Almost a complete base set in a box

Great as an introductory product in the hobby

Buyback Autographs

Cons:

Sticker Autographs

Not a lot of value unless you hit a rare card versus price paid

While a box topper is nice, it is really just a huge chase set that is not worth buying multiple boxes to work on

Nothing numbered (insert/parallels) unless it is a 1/1

NPN Information:

NPN, 2012-13 Panini Hoops Basketball

5325 FAA Blvd. Suite 100A

Irving, TX 75061-3601

Postmarked By: 10/24/12

Received By: 10/31/12

Limit 2 Requests Per Household

Canada Skills: $977 + 980 / 245 \times 143 - 371 = ?$

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 of their products, visit them today at www.paniniamerica.net.

All of the base and inserts are available for request. Since the video is a recap, just PM me with the player or players of interest and I will let you know what we received. Cards are available for request for 30 days for the time this review is posted. As always, for the first 48 hours, only VIPs can make requests.



Around the Rink
By RGM81 aka Richard McAdam

September is usually a very exciting month for hockey fans – players begin to return to their NHL homes, training camp opens, and we get to see a couple of exhibition games. But this September brings with it only a sense of foreboding and despair with regards to the 2012-13 NHL season. We are mere days away from seeing the third lockout in the past 20 years, and unlike the previous one that wiped out the 2004-05 season, there is a lack of a compelling reason to lose any time. I am not saying that I supported the position of the owners eight years ago to enough of an extent that we should have lost the entire season, but they felt that the game was in jeopardy and that teams would be lost if there was no “cost certainty” with regards to player contracts. The owners imposed a salary cap on the players that restricted how much players could earn, along with a stiff 24% rollback on existing contracts. By any standard of , the owners got their way in 2004-05 and instituted a system that they wanted.

All of the above is what makes the current round of collective bargaining negotiations so frustrating as a fan. The owners got the system they wanted yet they are now trying to tell the players (and fans) that the system doesn’t work. We have seen NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman come out at the end of every season with statements like, “The game has never been stronger,” and make proclamations of ever-greater levels of record revenue. Remember that the “cost certainty” built into the “partnership” of the last CBA capped player compensation at 57% of all hockey related revenue, a term which has become increasingly contentious as the League has sought to re-define the concept to remove certain figures from the calculations. This would further reduce the amount of the pie that the players receive. The players are the ones largely responsible for that growth, delivering an exciting product that makes us go to the games, buy the 10 dollar hot dogs, and devour NHL merchandise at an all-time high rate. Recall that we as hockey card collectors are contributing to the growth of the game through our purchase of Upper Deck and Panini NHL/NHLPA-licensed products as well. I do not see any Jeremy Jacobs or Ed Snider personal collections being displayed in our Show & Tell Forums.

Some people like to typecast this latest row between the League and the Players as a struggle between billionaires and millionaires fighting over who gets the most money. This is a disingenuous and naive perspective to say the least. Professional athletes generate immense amounts of revenue both on and off the ice. The summer season sees many charity golf tournaments that generate considerable dollars for very worthy causes. People pay good money to have the chance to see their sports heroes. One can debate the merits of a child (or an adult) holding a guy whose job is to skate around and put a little piece of vulcanized rubber into a net – that’s an entirely separate discussion – but it is absolutely undeniable that that kid (or his parent) will want his favourite player’s jersey or a stick with his name on it or his rookie card for Christmas. And they will definitely want to see that player and his team take to the ice long before then.

If I sound very pro-player to this point, it is because I am largely supportive of their right to get paid as much as possible under the system in which they operate. In any walk of life, I support anybody’s effort to get compensated as much as they can for their work that they perform. It seems odd to hold a grudge against someone who asks for a \$5 million contract and gets it from a very wealthy owner who will reap considerable profits from that very



signing. I do not necessarily subscribe to the idea that hockey players are “overpaid spoiled athletes” - they make very good money, absolutely, to play a game that they love. So far in this round of CBA talks, they are the only side that has stepped up and made concessions in order to ensure that a season exists. All we have seen from the League is demands to take more and get a higher share for the ownership side, followed up with snide commentary from Gary Bettman regarding any counteroffers made by the Players Association. Meanwhile, the clock is ticking.

To change direction and get the discussion going about more positive subjects, September will also see the conclusion of the 2011-12 hockey card season. It has been a long year replete with numerous product delays. It has not always been fun for collectors this past year. But things certainly seem set to close with a bang. The summer brought great products in Titanium, Ultimate Collection, SP Authentic, and most recently, Prime. These four releases have had collectors salivating, and when The Cup and Dominion are released in the coming days it will bring a strong conclusion to the year. There seems to be great momentum heading into the next season of hockey cards, regardless of whether or not there is a full or even partial NHL season. In The Game has already announced much of its product line-up for 2012-13 and it will be absolutely stellar. Due to the uncertainty of the NHL labour situation, we do not yet truly know whether or how the licensees will proceed this year. The 2004-05 card season featured very different products from what we usually see, and it is possible that UD and Panini will have to re-orient their product lines to cater to more veteran-driven releases. We may be waiting a while to chase the RC's of the 2012 draft class, which will be painful for many fans. Names like Nail Yakupov and Alex Galchenyuk will hopefully be leading the rookie class when the season begins, whenever that may be.





Rookies Help Teams Push for Playoff Berths

By J.R. Lebert aka jrlebert

OK, so this just in... Mike Trout is pretty good. You have also probably heard an awful lot about that Bryce Harper kid in Washington. If you collect cards, and you probably do, because you are reading this magazine, you know that Yoenis Cespedes Yu Darvish are kind of a big deal. But while those four rookies are getting most of the spotlight, this season's pennant races are going to be chock full of rookies who have been providing a much needed lift to their teams for most of the season.



Looking at each division race, it's easy to see how rookies stand to impact each one. We will examine each race, and the rookies that should be on your radar this September.

N.L. West:

In what is most likely a three team race, between the Dodgers, Giants, and slightly further back, the Diamondbacks, this is probably the divisional race that will be least affect by rookies. The Giants have had almost no meaningful contributions from rookies this year, with only one rookie each in the top 20 for games pitched, innings pitched, or at bats. While they may look for some help from the September call-ups, fixing Tim Lincecum and filling Melky Cabrera's roster spot look to be the biggest priorities. The Dodgers are not much better, which is surprising from a team that once boasted 5 straight rookie of the year. Their biggest impact by a rookie came via a trade, as they sent first year hurler Nathan Eovaldi to the Marlins in return for Hanley Ramirez. The Diamondbacks, however, boast one of the bona fide front runners for this year's ROY award, in SP Wade Miley. All he has done in his maiden season is lead all qualified NL rookie pitchers in wins (14), strikeouts (117), ERA (2.90) and WAR (4.0) en route to an All-Star selection. He looks to be a staple in the rotation at Chase for years to come.

N.L. Central:

In the NL Central, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and Pittsburgh have proved themselves to be the classiest of the division, with the Reds taking a strong grip on the top spot. Cincy has used two rookies to man half the infield this season, with SS Zack Cozart and 1B/3B Todd Frazier. Cozart leads all rookies, not just his league, in ABs, and all NL rookies in hits (127), to go with his 70 runs scored, 32 doubles, and 2.2 WAR. All Frazier has done is lead all NL rookies in RBI (62) and triples (6), while smashing 18 HRs and slugging a full 101 points HIGHER than Bryce Harper. While relying mostly on veterans, the Cardinals have had key contributions from utility-man Matt Carpenter, lacing 5 triples and batting an even .300 in over 220 ABs. Pittsburgh is also quite content to go with vets, but have had one notable exception in the bullpen. Reliever Jared Hughes is tied for the NL rookie lead in games pitched (55), and has had a sparkling 2.73 ERA.



N.L. East:

With Washington and Atlanta battling it out in a two team race, both teams look to their rookies to solidify their rosters for the pennant chase. Obviously, Bryce Harper is at the top of the list, with his cannon arm and blazing speed in the outfield just as impressive as his ability at the plate. The 19-year old phenom is heating up as the season comes to a close, posting more HRs and RBIs in August than in any other month. He leads NL rookies in runs scored (75) and WAR (3.1), to go with his 15 HRs and 13 SBs.

Not to be outdone, however, is his teammate, 2B Stephen , batting .280 over 350 ABs and providing solid defense at a key spot, with only 1 error in over 200 chances at second. As for the Braves, they are eagerly anticipating the return of SS Andrelton Simmons. He went down in early July with a broken finger, but not before posting a .296 average, along with an incredible 2.4 WAR in only 33 games. He looks to be the shortstop of the future for the Braves.



A.L. West:

This division is chock full of big names when it comes to rookies in 2012. For the Angels, Mike Trout is having a season reminiscent of some of the best seasons of Willie Mays and Rickey Henderson. He leads all MLB rookies in almost every offensive category, and leads

allof baseball in WAR (9.1) and SBs (43). The division leading Rangers have had some huge contributions from first year players. While it remains to be seen what impact, if any, super-prospect Jurickson Profar will have with the club, two pitchers have already made their mark. Though done for the year due to injury, Robbie Ross looked fantastic out of the 'pen, sporting a 6W-0L record and a 1.78 ERA in 52 appearances. The big name, however, is the Japanese sensation Yu Darvish. He leads all AL rookie pitchers with 14 wins, and ranks 7th in all of baseball with 188 K's.

Perhaps no team in MLB has relied on rookies more that the Oakland Athletics, en route to an improbable season near the top of the A.L. West. Three pitchers have been regulars this year, but none more important than All-Star selection Ryan Cook. He is the stalwart of their relief staff, notching 6 wins, 13 saves, and a mind-blowing WHIP of 0.99. Couple this with his 2.35 ERA and 63 K's in only 57 IP, and some are calling for his name on the Cy Young Award ballot. Two of their starting five are also rookies. Tommy Milone has racked up 11 wins, 118 strikeouts, and a fantastic 3.94 ERA, while throwing the second most innings of any AL rookie (162 1/3). His teammate Jarrod Parker has also had a great first campaign, picking up 9 wins, 108 strikeouts, and a sharp 3.65 ERA. His 2.5 WAR is 3rd highest among rookie hurlers. Four, yes, FOUR rookie position players have racked



up over 150 ABs for the A's in 2012. Chris Carter has put up an excellent slash line of .277/14 HR/33 RBI in only 166 ABs, along with a stellar .378 OBP. The class of the four, however, has to be Cuban sensation Yoenis Cespedes. Ranking second to Trout in almost every statistic, he has hovered right around the .300 mark all season, while hitting 16 HRs, scoring 52 runs, and driving in 65 RBIs.

A.L. Central:

With the White Sox and Tigers battling it out, it's the Sox who would come out on top in a battle of rookies. For the Tigers, Quintin Berry has provided a much needed lift off the bench, with the second most triples (5) and stolen bases (18) of any AL rookie, in only 244 ABs. The Pale Hose, however, have had significant contributions from 3 members of their bullpen in 2012, all in their rookie year. Nate Jones has looked fantastic, with a 7W-0L record, an ERA of 2.91, and 51 strikeouts in 53 appearances. Jose Quintana leads all AL rookie pitchers in WAR (3.0), and has 5 wins on the season. Addison Reed has anchored the back of the bullpen, picking up 25 saves for Chicago.

A.L. East:

With the race atop the A.L. East getting closer by the game, the Yankees, Orioles, and Rays will all be turning to youngsters come September. The Yankees are filling some of the void left by the injury to Mariano Rivera with reliever Cody Eppley. He has made 48 appearances for the Bombers, sporting a 3.20 ERA. For the Rays, it has been starter Matt Moore, and he has been as good as advertised. He has fashioned a 10W-8L record to go with his 3.58 ERA and 152 K's, both good for second most among AL rookies. Baltimore, however, will lean on rookies more than both their division foes. The call up of Manny Machado has provided a lift for their offense. In only 88 ABs, he has already scored and driven in a dozen runs apiece. Miguel Gonzalez has sparkled as of late, as his 6W-3L record and 3.31 ERA show. Their best starter this year, however, has been Wei-Yin Chen. All he has done is led the team in wins (12), ERA (3.79), and strikeouts (134), while pacing all rookies in innings pitched with 163 2/3. It will definitely be fun to see how he does in Yankee Stadium during a pennant race!





Courtside By Jay Weger aka Jay520

Contests & Winners

Just 1 contest to talk about in August and that was the Team USA Top Performers 2012 Olympics Contest. Same as the regular season contest where you have to predict the top scorer, rebounder and assist man. Taking 1st place was dwighthoward with 12 points earning 600 CC. 2nd was mikepro44 with 10 points collecting 400 CC and 3rd was SDre31 with 9 points and winning 200 CC. Theme Week #12 winner was andreamjohnson for All-Star GU. Theme Week #13 was realreodeal for Non jersey memorabilia (ball, floor, net, towel). Theme Week #14 was a tie between andreamjohnson and So.Tex.Collector for Non gu/auto of Team USA/Olympic inserts/parallels. Theme Week #15 was andreamjohnson for Auto of retired and HOF's. With the NBA season on its way soon the usual season long contests will be back in full swing. That means NBA Top Performers, Guess the Score and NBA Player award contests for you seasonal participants and guess the card and guess the serial # for the quick CC.

Hobby News



Panini announced the next 2 12-13 products to hit collectors in November will be Totally Certified and Limited. **Totally Certified** returns with a completely new micro-etched pattern of base cards and parallel like red, blue, green/5 and black 1/1, Roll Call - autographed insert designed around the signature to enhance the set's unique foil etching for members of the 2011 and 2012 NBA Draft, Totally Signatures insert featuring autographs from the game's best players, Totally Memorabilia insert that includes prime memorabilia and multi-colored parallels. And not to forget the return of the HRX Video cards of the Elite players. **Limited** is back early off a hot 11-12 set with the regular insert and auto sets. New is the cutting-edge RC design that's printed on clear acetate stock, hard-signed and die-cut to mimic the shape of the NBA Rookie of the Year Award, debut of a Home & Away insert with a swatch of home game-worn jersey on one side and a swatch of road game-worn jersey on the other and lastly the debut of the Lights Out memorabilia insert focusing on the game's best scorers doing what they do best in Shooting the light Out!!!



In card news it seems that the collectors are shelling out the big bucks to get last years ROY Kyrie Irving autos. His Rookie Impact auto soared to \$379 and his base auto sold for \$365 out of Hoops so far. Even the hard to find Kobe All-Rookie Team insert of him sold for \$56. The 2012-13 no. 1 pick Anthony Davis isn't doing too shabby either commanding \$160-\$200 for his autos. I am sure those dollar signs will help the other rookies increase in value once they get on the court in October.





Milestone Collections

By Bryce Doody aka bdoody42

This month a very enthusiastic set collector named "gatorboymike" has completed a long and exhausting search. The set he has finished is the 1993-1994 Upper Deck SE Electric Court Gold. The set chase started originally when the first set came out and by 1998 he had 90/225 cards in hand, but in order to focus on collecting other things he sold all but five of what he had acquired.

In 2005 the itch to start the set got to him again and seven years later, he now has all 290 cards in hand. With only one of these parallels per box it was definitely not an easy search. Many people would think that the headway card to find would be Webber, Shaq, or Penny but that was not the case. Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf of all players was the hardest to get a hold of. He picked up this last card for \$20 which he considers a steal compared to the last one that went for \$51!!!

Congratulations to gatorboymike on his great accomplishment and hope to hear about many more soon.

NBA News & Olympics

To start out the month of August Team USA would beat Tunisia 110-63 and improve to 2-0 in the Olympic competition. 21-3 run blew the game open in the 3rd by the 2nd unit of Love, Iggoudala, Davis, Westbrook and Williams. The next game Carmelo and Team USA destroyed Nigeria 156-78. Anthony had 37 points(US single game record) on 10-12 from 3 as the rest of the team combined to shoot 29-46 at a 71% from beyond the arc. The 3 point percentage (71%), most field goals (59) and most points scored in a game (156) are new Olympic records while the 83 point difference is a US record. The next game was a lot closer as LeBron stepped up in the clutch to score 9 points in the final 4 minutes to hold off Lithuania 99-94. A game that proved the Olympic competition was going to be tough. Next up was Argentina who had Manu Ginobili and Luis Scola that Team USA had to defend. A 42 point explosion by USA in the 3rd quarter was more than enough to beat them 126-97. The win put them into the semi-finals against Australia. The Aussies went down 119-86 with Kobe scoring 20 points and LeBron racking up a triple double of 11 points, 14 rebounds and 11 assists. Next up was Argentina again in the 2nd semifinal game. Once again Team USA beat the Argentineans 109-83 to move on the Gold Medal game against Spain. Spain proved to be their toughest opponent yet with both the Gasol brothers and Serge Ibaka in the low post and Juan Carlos Navarro in the back court. The game would have several lead changes. USA managed a 1 point lead at the half 59-58. Pau Gasol would score several of Spain's points in the 3rd but could not keep up in the 4th. Durant would put in 30 with help from the rest of Team USA as they would pull away late to win 107-100 and capture the Gold. The Gold Medal win would put LeBron





James in the same category as Michael Jordan to win a NBA MVP, Finals MVP and Gold Medal in the Olympics for the year.

Stateside before the Gold Medal game went down there was a trade that finally happened involving Dwight Howard. The Lakers would get him in a 4 team trade involving several players moving to other teams. Here is how it shakes out:

Lakers get Dwight Howard, Chris Duhon and Earl Clark.

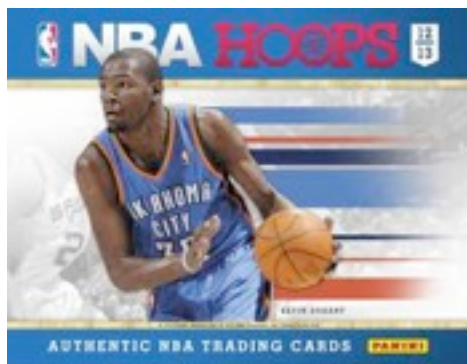
Sixers get Andrew Bynum and Jason Richardson.

Nuggets get Andre Iggoudala.

Magic gets Josh McRoberts, Christian Eyenga, 2017 first-round draft pick(LAL), Moe Harkless, Nikola Vucevic and an undisclosed first-round draft pick(Phi), Arron Afflalo, Al Harrington and the lower of its 2014 first-round draft picks(Den).

Several analysts now have the Lakers as the odds on favorite to be the top team in the west to try and take down the defending Champs the Heat over the Thunder.

Pack & Box Breaks



The first 12-13 product to hit collectors was 12-13 NBA Hoops. Kadamscards opened a box to pull autos of Chris Singleton and RC Jeremy Tyler, 12-13 rc's of Anthony Davis, Michael Kidd-Gilchrist, Austin Rivers and several more plus Kyrie Irving of the 2011 class. 44 magnum bought 2 boxes pulling autos of John Luer, Lester Hudson and Marshon Brooks with several RCs from both years. He also pulled an Artists Proof of Kyrie Irving to make up for his shorted auto hit. NoleinJax got just 12 packs getting several 11-12 and 12-13 rc's with an auto of Lavoy Allen Rookie

Impact. spoodini hit autos of Michael Kidd-Gilchrist and Kyrie Irving, Artists Proof Ben Gordon and several rc's from 11-12 and 12-13. herdsMan87 took a chance on 6 packs to pull a Kyrie Irving auto.

11-12 product opened was Limited by Qwasian who pulled a 2011 Draft Pick auto redemption, Limited Auto Marco Bellineli /99 and Team Trademarks gu Kobe Bryant /75. Jazzer540 got a 2011 Draft Pick auto redemption, Masterful Marks Monta Ellis auto /49, Shaq Glass Cleaners gu/99 and a Kevin Martin Black Spotlight 1/1 from 1 box of Limited!! at350zguyy bought a case getting big hits of Gold Spotlight /25 of Wilt Chamberlain, Russell Westbrook and Alonzo Mourning, Potential Auto of Eric Gordon, Masterful Marks auto/50 of Carlos Boozer, Glass Cleaners auto/25 of Blake Griffin, Trophy Case auto of Glen Rice/49, Team Trademarks Signature of Deron Williams gu/auto redemption, Limited Auto of John Wall/99, Limited Threads of Elton Brand /25(2) and Steve Nash /99, Jumbo Jersey /99 of Pau Gasol and Dwyane Wade, Trophy Case gu of Manu Ginobili/25 and Hakeem



Olajuwon/49, Decade of Dominance patch /25 of Allen Iverson along with 15 2011 Draft Pick auto redemptions and 2012 no. 17 Tyler Zeller redemption.

Other stuff opened was 11-12 Past & Present by ramenoodle pulling autos of Brian Grant and Scott Pollard, Gamers gu of Damion James and a 2011 Draft Pick auto redemption. Qwasain opened a box of 11-12 Preferred to pull a Panini Choice auto of Walt Frazier/75, Preferred auto of Luke Babbitt/99 and Kobe Bryant /49 then Rookies booklet of Brakins/Pittman/Neal/Lin/Cousins/Wall/99. McPUG got a box of 10-11 Black Box receiving a Gary Payton base parallel /5, Passing the Torch gu of Dumars/Monroe/99, Bill Walton Elite Series auto /10, Kris Humphries auto /99 and a James Harden auto /25. pietroskim got a box of 10-11 Playoff Contenders pulling RC autos of Damion James SP, Gordon Hayward, Grievis Vasquez and a sweet Jeremy Lin SP. Boinks pulled a Dwight Howard Statistical Standouts prime patch/49 from a 09-10 Rookies&Stars blaster. And finally rocketfan86 hit a Michael Jordan Legacy gu 18/23 from a box of 09-10 Upper Deck!!!





Cutdown Time in the NFL

By J.R. Lebert aka jrlebert

The beginning of the regular season is just around the corner, and with that comes the agonizing prospect of cutting down the roster to 53 players. Every team must make some tough calls, whether to go with the veteran or the young kid, six defensive backs or six wideouts, and who to hold the clipboard as the 2nd or 3rd string quarterback.

As teams make their cuts, there are plenty of moves that come as a surprise. Veterans, long with the team, now jettisoned for newer blood. Players who were thought to have roster spots wrapped up surprisingly let go. The undrafted rookie that comes from nowhere to make the rags to riches story come true. Panning the rosters, there were certainly plenty of eyebrow-raising moves.

Quite a few names on the cut list are familiar to even the casual fan. Terrell Owens and Chad Johnson were probably the two biggest names cut this offseason. If this is the end for these two great WRs, who combined for



more than 1,800 grabs, 27,000 yards, and 223 TDs, one can certainly expect to still hear plenty from the two Twitter superstars. It may be “lights out” for 3-time Pro Bowler Shawne Merriman after he was cut from the Bills. Former Pro Bowl tight ends Chris Cooley, Kellen Winslow, and Zach Miller were all let go in the offseason. Former 1,000 yard rusher Steve Slaton, and last season’s starter in Washington, Tim Hightower, were both let go. Long time starter Dan Koppen, a 2-time Super Bowl champion for the Patriots, was cut. Ex-Pro-Bowl fullback Ovie Mughelli, 2-time kick

return yards leader Chris Carr, and veteran corner O.J. Atogwe are all also looking for work. Also, WR Jesse Holley, winner of the reality show 4th and Long, may have had his 15 minutes run out, as one of many receivers cut by the Patriots... but more on that below.

If this offseason was the year of the quarterback, with plenty of shuffling at the position, the preseason cutdown list was just as exciting. Veterans, in some cases long time back-ups with their teams, were cut in favor of younger, more athletic players. The Vince Young experiment in Buffalo lasted just a few preseason games, as the Bills traded for Tarvaris Jackson to back up Ryan Fitzpatrick. This may signal the end of the line for the former 3rd overall pick. Long time clipboard holders Sage Rosenfels, Chris Redman, Kellen Clemens, Josh McCown, and Seneca Wallace all may have to decide if this is it as well. Mike Kafka and Brian Hoyer were both let go, in



favor of the prospect of what might be with Nick Foles and Ryan Mallett. In what was a fairly mild surprise, both Clemens and Tom Brandstater were let go by the Rams in favor of UDFA rookie Austin Davis, backing up oft-injured Sam Bradford. Curtis Painter will have to look for another way to forget his awful 2011 season with the Colts. Young but unproven, Josh Johnson, Sean Canfield, Stephen McGee, and Kevin O'Connell will also have to hope they catch on somewhere else.

Along with 3rd overall pick Vince Young, there were plenty of first round busts cut by teams around the league. Former 6th overall pick Vernon Gholston was cut by the Rams, and after four lackluster seasons, this may be it in the NFL for him. The same may be said for former 8th overall selection Derrick Harvey, 10th overall Amobi Okoye, 18th selection Bobby Carpenter, and 19th pick Alex Barron, all who were let go by their respective teams. On the flipside, hard-nosed, team-first guys were also on the receiving end of pink slips. Joselio Hanson, veteran DB/S with the Eagles, TE Dan Gronkowski of the Flying Gronkowski brothers, and Rhodes Scholar and now former-Steeler Myron Rolle were all let go despite their fantastic character and work ethic.

Plenty of veteran wide receivers are also now out of an NFL job. Other than T.O. and Ocho, some big names were let go on cut day. The Patriots let go of three guys with a wealth of NFL experience, and receptions. Donte Stallworth, Jabar Gaffney, and long-time team favorite Deion Branch were all cut, as were their 1265 grabs and almost 17,000 yards and 100 scores. Lee Evans, the former two-time 1,000 yard receiver, is now out of work. Both Jordan Shipley and Roscoe Parrish were cut, picked up by a different team, and cut again by that second team. Other WRs who receive plenty of love on cardboard are no longer receiving paychecks by NFL teams. These include Derek Hagan, Marcus Easley, Maurice Stovall, Mardy Gilyard, Terrence Tolliver, Jarett Dillard, and Danario Alexander.

And of course, what cut list would be complete without kickers? Washington surprised a few when they cut Neil

Rackers in favor of Gano, but then surprised almost everyone by cutting him and signing Billy Cundiff (yes, the same Cundiff who missed that kick, I bet that still hurts for Ravens fans). Despite ranking 6th all-time in field goals made, John Kasay was let go, as well as former Pro Bowler Olindo Mare and long-time veteran Josh Brown. Rounding out the list is 8-year veteran and 2-time Pro Bowl punter Mat McBriar.



There is a good chance that many of these players will find homes at some point throughout the year, but for now, these guys are on the

outside looking in, and will be watching games on Sunday just like the rest of us.



There's No Grading System for a Memory

By Peter McCabe aka 74Razor

No matter how much I rubbed my forehead the headache just wasn't going away. I thought I read somewhere that if you rubbed hard enough your body would release a natural painkiller. Wasn't this supposed to get rid of headaches? Or was it a lime that you needed to rub against your forehead? Was that it? Wait, I don't have a lime, so does it matter? No.

'Iron Man has this face shield in his suit, which looks like a computer, that he uses when he flies.' I knew my son didn't lead me to the toy aisle only to amaze me with random Iron Man facts. I knew this song and dance. He was going to talk me into circles and then when my legs started to give he was going to take a shot with an over hand right like a prize fighter going for the knock out.

'Dad! I have all of them except for this one! Please? It is the only one I need! You promised.' And, there it was. He stood there with a package in his hand that contained an Iron Man figure that looked exactly like every other one he had at home. Boy was I wrong. He kindly informed me that this specific Iron Man had a grey suit which was special armour. Whatever he had at home, it paled in comparison to this Iron Man.

'Are you ok daddy?' I had just got done with a 10 hour shift. My body ached and I needed a shower. I needed to get a few things done before I returned home and there just wasn't enough time in the day.

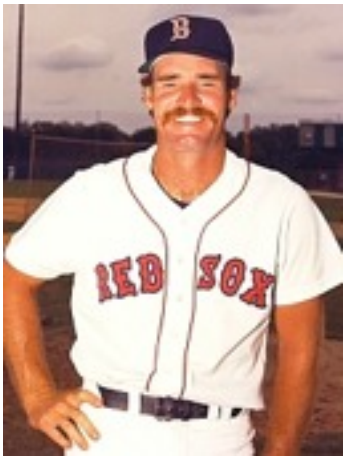
He looked at me, shrugged and said, 'I don't have to get it.' He took that one last step and put the Iron Man back on the shelf.

Suddenly, just like that, I was back in 1989. 'She Drives Me Crazy' was playing on the radio and I was telling my dad all about the Red Sox. Until that summer, I didn't care about the Red Sox. It wasn't until I played Little League for a team named the Red Sox that I felt it was my duty to support them. Besides, someday I would grow up and play for them so it was best to know the history of the team you were destined to play for! It all made sense to me. My dad's old Ford pickup loudly pulled into the parking lot of a local card shop as I was filling my dad in on Mike Greenwell and how Wade Boggs could quite possibly be the best hitter of all time. He only said something about the fixing the muffler but I didn't care. This was the most important day of my life. It was my birthday and my dad was bringing me to my favorite card shop to pick out any card I wanted! I was young and the fact that cards could be worth something wasn't important to me. I opened the door and slid out of the truck. My dad shut off the truck while muttering about the music of today and how it was nothing but noise. 'How could he possibly be thinking of anything besides what was happening right now' I thought to myself. Doesn't he see the importance of my journey? At home I had spent countless hours, days, months... years putting together my baseball card collection. My mother had brought home boxes from work so I had somewhere to store them. She even bought me a cork board that I used to pin my favorite Red Sox to. An entire wall of my room was filled with cards of Marty Barrett, Wade Boggs, Mike Greenwell, Dwight Evans, Ellis Burks, Roger Clemens and Oil Can Boyd. At the corner of the board was a picture my dad had taken of me during one of my games. I figured it wouldn't be too long before I had a card of my own up there, but until then this picture would have to do.



I had been in that card shop hundreds of times before but today was different. I had my dad with me! All those times I had returned home empty handed meant nothing because today I would get to pick a card. My dad laboured behind me in his soiled blue factory uniform. As soon as he pulled into the driveway I was out the door reminding him about the promise he made me about today. He gave my mom a kiss and got right back into the truck.

My face was pressed against the glass as I went from case to case trying to absorb it all in. The entire history of baseball was right here in this very room! Some cards were glossy, some dull and faded. Some were in plastic



holders or in sleeves, while others were leaning against a wall to remind customers of their heroic feats. No matter the position, you could almost feel as if you were part of the game somehow. It was there that I saw it. It was the card I knew I had to . I had told myself the night prior that I would spend hours at the store looking at every card until I found the perfect one. Well, 5 minutes for a kid like me felt like hours. In the far back left of the enclosure, held up by a plastic bracket stood Wade Boggs. It was his 1983 Topps card. The owner must've sensed what was going on because he asked me if I liked Wade Boggs. I wanted to answer by giving him his career batting average or the number of batting titles he had won but I simply nodded my head. He took the card out and slid it across the counter for my dad and I to look at. My dad asked if this was the one and I said it was. It was the first time since I got into the store that I actually looked at my dad. He seemed run down and tired. He even looked at the price tag a little too long for my liking. 'I don't have to get it.' He took one last

look at the card and back at me then smiled.

My son woke me from my dream by pulling on my shirt. 'We can go dad.'

You know people sometimes say the journey is the best part, and I agree with them. However, having someone to share it with makes it even better. To be honest, I can't tell you where that Wade Boggs card is now and I can't even tell you what condition it was in. What I can tell you is what that card shop smelt like. I could drive you down to the building it used to be at. I can tell you how much it meant to have my dad there and listen to all the stats I had memorized. The most important thing is I can tell you how much it meant to me, even to this day, to have my dad there and pat me on the head on the way home when I couldn't take my eyes off my dream card.

I took a long look at my son, smiled, and said, 'So tell me more about this Iron Man.' He excitedly took the box off the shelf and flipped it over to read to me, in detail, every feature the guy came with. I don't kid myself. I know that in days or months or even years that this Iron Man will be lost forever.

Here is to hoping that the memory of his dad taking an interest in him lasts a lifetime.



'Roid Rage

By David Rudick aka Rudickulous

Chalk up another career ruined by the phenomenon known as steroids. You heard correctly folks, the world of sports was shocked once again, disappointed from the news concerning Melky Cabrera. Cabrera, an outfielder for the San Francisco Giants was in the process of having a breakout season and preparing for a big payday due to becoming a free agent this offseason. Unfortunately though, not only did he test positive for testosterone, but he even attempted to cover his own tracks by creating a fake website in an effort to protect himself from embarrassment.



Now Cabrera is suspended for 50 games and possibly gone from the Giants for the rest of the season. What was once a heartwarming story of an overlooked player becoming a superstar, turned into a tale of a disgraced baseball player wondering now what his future holds for him.

It is no secret that sports have suffered a tremendous blow due to the controversy that is steroid use. In fact, it seems as though almost every single player who has accomplished any achievement nowadays has been seen with their hand in the metaphoric cookie jar. There was Ryan Braun, the reigning National League MVP, who was caught testing positive for abnormal amounts of testosterone, though later acquitted of punishment due to a technicality. Then there was Brian Cushing, the 2010 AP NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year who was banned 4 games the following season after testing positive in a randomized drug test. The list goes on and on as there have been dozens upon dozens of superstars who have all tested positive or admitted usage of steroids in one form or another. Names like Barry Bonds, Rafael Palmeiro, Marion Jones, Mark McGwire, Shawne Merriman, Alex Rodriguez, Jason Giambi, Gary Sheffield, and Floyd Landis are all now forever entangled in the discussion of PEDs (Performance enhancing drugs) and these names are just the tip of the iceberg. Players like Guillermo Mota and Manny Ramirez have gone from professional athletes, to professional steroid joke punch lines.

Cabrera's recent disappointment has opened up the hot topic question in sports once again: is the/have the (insert sport League/Association here) doing/done enough to prohibit the use of steroids in sports? It is an overstated question, but a legitimate one nonetheless. In a recent article published by *USA Today*, the co-founder of Blaco, Victor Conte stated that the current drug testing policy was simple to pass and that nearly all players today are using PEDs in one form or another. "To circumvent the test is like taking candy from a baby. It's so easy to circumvent. I call it the 'duck-and-dodge' system. The only people that get caught are the dumb and the dumber."^[1] These statements by Mr. Conte are taken very seriously by fans as the man is infamous for being the ringleader of the steroid controversy.

Sports reporters and analysts all have responded to the recent media attention that both Conte and Cabrera have garnered. Skip Bayless of ESPN, responded after hearing Conte's remarks by stating that sports are not doing



enough to keep the PEDs out, stating that punishment is too lenient. Yes Cabrera was suspended 50 games, but what is that in comparison to a 162 game season questions Bayless. “At the very minimum, the penalty should be, you’re gone for one full season...They have to crack down harder because it is a never ending battle.”^[2] Stephen A. Smith, in the same article disagreed with Bayless, stating that MLB has in fact worked hard towards preventing players from doping. Since the test was implemented back in 2006, as pointed out by Smith, MLB has created an effective steroid test procedure and has caught many superstars including Mike Cameron, Manny Ramirez, Jose Guillen, and other players resulting in a total of 13 suspensions. While Smith defends baseball and claims that they have made many steps towards preventing steroid usage, he agrees with Bayless by stating that the MLB needs to keep working in order to keep their sport clean.^[3]

Then there are people who question whether or not we should even care about steroids in sports. As we have seen, so many athletes use PEDs to become legends in their respective field. Perhaps comedian Daniel Tosh was correct when he joked that all athletes should take steroids. While a joke, it does bring up a different perspective to the argument. Almost everybody believes nowadays that athletes are taking something in order to achieve. In fact, any person can obtain these items and become great, be it an athlete or your average Joe. So what if people are taking drugs to increase their physique or ability; is that not what people watch sports for? Was it not long ago that the media was enthralled with Barry Bonds, Mark McGwire, and Sammy Sosa racing against each other for Roger Maris’ Home Run Record? Going one step further, was it not entertaining to see Barry Bonds try to catch Hank Aaron’s record (before the allegations started to appear)? Do steroids really matter in the game in the first place? There have been many who argue that even if somebody takes steroids, they still need skill and ability to hit a 100 mph fastball or break away from Offensive linemen, or whatever task a certain sport designates. Perhaps Americans should disregard the integrity of the sport?

As Mike Freeman of explains in his article, *Where’s the Outrage Over Steroids in Sports*, Freeman recalls, “... something a Hall of Fame coach once told me. For every one or two PED cheats the NFL catches, 10 go free. Maybe 20.”^[4] He goes onto explain that in the case of Brian Cushing, he should have received massive outcry from the public, blaming him for cheating, and have his award repealed due to his cheating. But yet, Freeman points out that as fans, “You still don’t care.” The fans just let Cushing slide and keep his title of Defensive Rookie of the year. Should we as fans just accept this? Have we just come to accept doping as a normal circumstance or should we rise in massive outcry?

It seems now that sports will always suffer from the blemish that is doping. Just like those old anti-drug commercials you use to see on television, it seems as though everybody else is doing it, so you should too. Many players will join in on the bandwagon and shoot up steroids, HGH, or whatever can make them bigger, faster, or stronger than their competition. Then there will be the athletes who we hope and pray to see. These are the current role models we pray for in professional sports. These people accomplish so much throughout their careers, clean and free of all accusations. Yet, it seems as though every time we see that player, it only leads to heartbreak, such as the case with Melky Cabrera. Until that day comes, one must hope for a solution to this ongoing problem. Then again, we could just all kick back and watch performance enhanced sports and bet on the ‘roided out freaks of nature.



[1] <http://sports.mobile.msn.com/en-us/a...&acid=2&afid=0>

[2] <http://espn.go.com/video/clip?id=8274621>

[3] <http://espn.go.com/video/clip?id=8274621>

[4] http://www.cbsnews.com/2100-500290_162-6471057.html





The Finnish Flash, The Ageless Wonder By Jon Maxfield aka DnJcards

In sports, it seems that age is almost as powerful as on field/ice/court play, even more so in a physical contact sport like Football or Ice Hockey. Age determines your selling point on a free agency market/trading market, it determines when you're *supposed* to retire. Without exaggeration age is about as important to sports as your talent level. Whether it's "Completely full of potential" young age of 18-23 years old, the "They're at their potential, we know what to expect" age of 24-33 years old, the "past their prime, still able bodied" age of 34-36 years old, or the "Are you ready to retire yet?" age of 36 years old and on. The ages we view as our youth, the prime of our life, are viewed as over-the-hill in sports. Still, as important as age is in the sports world, there are the wonders of the sports world whom continue to surprise and outplay their "Potential" at the elder ages.



Whether we're talking about the 80 game, 41 point season shown by "Mr. Hockey" Gordie Howe at the age of 51 (51 in sports is the equivalent of having great-great grandchildren and having the majority of your food fed to you in liquid form) or the recently retired Niklas Lidstrom's Norris trophy winning season at the age of 40, there's some degree of respect you have to display for these men who are well past the age where being on the ice alone is encouraged, and they're making an impact. There's several players in the NHL who are at or nearing that point in their career but there's one who stands out to me as the definition of the cliché "Ageless wonder" and that is the Anaheim Ducks' right winger

Teemu Selanne who just recently signed on to play his 20th NHL season, and his 13th with the team with whom he finally won his first Stanley Cup (At the overdue age of 36). There are few players as well liked as Selanne and few who have the credentials the Finnish Flash boasts on his resume.

The former Kindergarten teacher burst onto the scene in Finland playing for the SM-liiga team Jokerit, where he won the A-Junior Level Finnish Championship at the age of 18, the same season he was drafted by the NHL's Winnipeg Jets, 10th overall in the 1988 NHL Entry Draft. During his first full season for Jokerit in 1989, Selanne managed to impress racking up over a point per game on pace to 58 points in 44 games. Two seasons later Selanne led his team to the SM-liiga championship along with winning the Honkavaara Trophy (the equivalent to the Maurice Richard Trophy in the NHL).

Prior to the 1992-93 NHL Season, Selanne was contacted and contracted to play for the Winnipeg Jets at the age of 22. The Finnish Flash came to the NHL and played like he had a chip on his shoulder, scoring his first goal early in October (October 8th vs the San Jose Sharks) and showed no signs of slowing down. He went on to have the single most impressive rookie campaign in NHL History as he shattered the record for goals scored by a rookie as



he scored 76 (Previously held by Mike Bossy with 53), and point record as he registered 132 points! Not only did he break that record, he went on to lead the league in scoring as a rookie, (becoming only the second European player to accomplish this feat, the first being Selanne's boyhood idol, Jari Kurri). Selanne (along with Alexander Mogilny who shared the scoring title with the rookie) are the last players to register 70 or more goals in one NHL Season). Needless to say Selanne walked away with the Calder Memorial Trophy as the league's best rookie.

Selanne's 1993-94 season was plagued with injury as he only played 51 games, still boasting over a point per game on pace to his 54 point season in 51 games. Following the 1993-94 season the NHL had a shortened season due to a lockout. During the lockout Selanne joined forces with his idol Jari Kurri on Jokerit where he played 20 games before returning to the NHL following the lockout. Upon his return Selanne picked up where he left off, putting up 48 points in 45 games as he kept his point-per-game percentage intact. The following season the Winnipeg Jets organization shocked the NHL as they traded away the star winger to the Mighty Ducks of Anaheim (Along with Marc Chouinard and a 4th rounder) to get Chad Kilger, Oleg Tverdovsky and a 3rd rounder. This move displeased Selanne greatly.

He didn't let his emotions get in way of his play and instead simply showed Winnipeg what they gave up as he led the NHL in goals 2 of the following 3 seasons, while playing alongside "Frick and Frack" linemate Paul Kariya. Unfortunately for the Finnish Flash the next 2 seasons were less than stellar as his point totals dropped, and in the 2000-2001 season, Selanne was traded to the Ducks neighbors, the San Jose Sharks for Jeff Friesen, Steve Shields and a second round pick, the change of scenery sparked Selanne for a short time and his point totals did increase, however this was the first season in Selanne's NHL career where he posted under a point per game (Scoring 72 points in 73 games).

Selanne spent the next two full seasons with the Sharks, posting extremely sub-par numbers for the former scoring champions (54 and 64 points, both in 82 game seasons) Once his contract expired, he signed with the Colorado Avalanche where he posted career lows in goals and assists as he recorded only 32 points in 78 games. (Reportedly due to a knee injury which he had surgery for in the off-season, causing him to miss the entire 2004-05 season, during which, while locked out by the NHL, he once again signed with Jokerit).

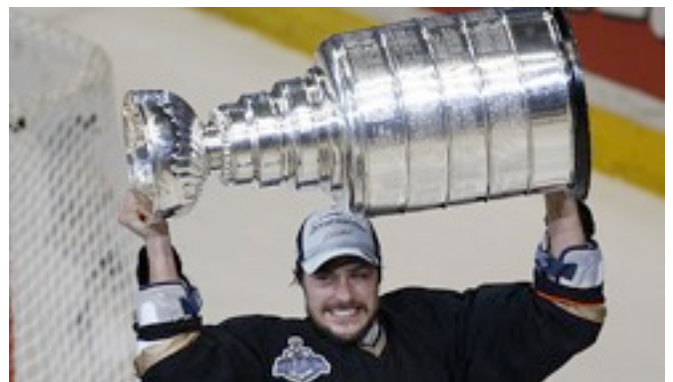
Selanne's contract was up following the 2004-05 season and Anaheim fans rejoiced as the fan favorite, Finnish Flash returned home, signing a one year contract in late August. Selanne looked just like his old self as he stepped onto the ice to the team that helped project him to stardom. Posting up 40 goals and 50 assists for 90 points in 80 games despite not having his long-time line-mate Paul Kariya. Selanne added a significant personal milestone that season as he became only the 7th European player, and 70th player in NHL history to score 1000 points. He



accomplished this feat on his second goal on January 30th playing against the Los Angeles Kings. Along with leading the Ducks in scoring he also earned the Bill Masterton trophy which recognized him as the comeback player of the year.

Selanne contemplated retirement that off-season as he was 35 years old (going on 36). He decided to give it another year signing a one-year extension with the Ducks with aspirations of finally winning his cup that season, on a star studded Ducks team that bolstered such talent of Scott Niedermayer, Chris Pronger, a healthy Jean-Sebastian Giguere, Ryan Getzlaf, Corey Perry, Dustin Penner along with a red-hot Andy McDonald and a lethal checking line. Selanne changed his number from 13 to 8 for this season and was ready to accomplish what every hockey player aspires to do once they touch ice. During the course of the season it appeared as though the Ducks were the team to beat, and despite Selanne being 36 years old, Selanne scored his 500th NHL goal against the Avalanche, becoming only the second Finnish born NHL player to accomplish the feat, joining his childhood idol Jari Kurri. Keeping up with his accomplishments that season, he also scored his 600th point as a Duck, played in his 1000th NHL game, scored his 535th goal to move ahead of Frank Mahovlich for sole possession of 26th place in all-time goal scoring in the NHL, along with a heart- warming story for the ages. On January 10th, Selanne heard news from a very ill friend who informed him that his cancer had spread to his brain, Selanne told his friend that he would go out and try to score a hat trick for him, keeping the puck if he accomplished it (the veteran had not scored a hat trick since 2001). Selanne stepped onto the ice that night and played his heart out, scoring his 19th career hat trick in a 5-1 win against the Dallas Stars. Selanne did keep the puck and gave it to his terminally ill friend. In quite possibly the most memorable season of his career Selanne passed former linemate Paul Kariya for the franchise record for goals (scoring his 301st against the Los Angeles Kings). The season winded down and Selanne finished it scoring 48 goals (good enough for 3rd in the league) along with becoming the first NHL player in history to record consecutive 40 goal seasons over the age of 35. The season would end on a high note for Selanne. The Ducks made quick work of the Minnesota Wild and Vancouver Canucks to move into the conference finals.

The Ducks would be facing former coach, Mike Babcock and his team of grizzled veterans on the Detroit Red Wings. Selanne led his team throughout the series, scoring my most memorable goal as an Anaheim fan, as he pick pocketed the Detroit defender, spun around and buried the puck top shelf over Dominik Hasek in overtime to give the Ducks the 3-2 series lead. The Ducks moved on to face the Ottawa Senators in the finals. The Ducks had little trouble disposing of the Ottawa Senators who collapsed in the finals. The 36 year old Finnish sensation finally achieved what he had aspired to do for so long as he hoisted the cup high above his head, tears streaming down his face in triumph.





Following the cup win, Selanne contemplated retirement yet again but came back with the urge to play, and proved why he is still as potent at the age of 36 as he was when he was 22 years old and stepped onto the NHL ice for the first time. During the 07-08 season Selanne surpassed Paul Kariya for all time franchise lead for points for the Anaheim Ducks, scoring his 670th point in an Anaheim jersey, one week later Selanne had one of his best games in recent memory, scoring a his 20th career hat trick against the Chicago Blackhawks, cementing his place in the record book passing Maurice “Rocket” Richard, scoring his 546th goal putting him 25th on the all time list. The same game where he recorded his 600th career assist.

In 2008 Selanne signed on for 2 more seasons. Early in the season, he scored his 21st career hat trick, making him the most decorated hat trick artist currently active in the NHL. The same season he scored his 560th goal, tying him with Guy Lafleur for 20th on the all time list (he would pass him soon after). In mid-December, tragedy struck as Selanne suffered a quad injury keeping him out for a month. He returned to strong play, leading an unlikely playoff push. Beating out the number one seeded Sharks in 6 games before being eliminated in 7 games by the Wings.

In 2009 Teemu Selanne announced that the 2009-10 season would be his last, he would play one more season alongside his best friend Saku Koivu who recently had signed with the Ducks. (although this would prove false), stating “A man my age does not belong in a league like the NHL”. Selanne would prove his own statement wrong, as he would go on to score his 600th career goal that season, becoming only the 18th player in NHL history to accomplish such a feat, and became only the 3rd Calder Trophy winner to accomplish such a feat (alongside legendary company named Mario Lemieux and Luc Robitaille). Late in the season Selanne would do something that every kid wants to grow up to do, he surpassed his idol, scoring his 602nd and 603rd goals on April 2nd, passing Jari Kurri for the most goals by a Finnish born player (Previously 601 by Kurri). Despite not putting up career numbers, Selanne did play extremely well, he had his feet under him and outskated a seriously underachieving Ducks team filled with youthful talent, night in and night out.

Selanne shocked everyone outside of Anaheim by returning for the 2010-11 season (I say this because anyone who watched him play late in the 2009-10 season saw the spark in his eyes, his desire to continue to play, there was no way he was hanging up the skates). He signed another one year contract with the Ducks and had one of his best seasons of the 2000s. He scored 80 points in 73 games putting him 8th in the entire NHL in scoring. During this season he would pass Joe Sakic for 14th all time in NHL scoring with his 626th goal, (would increase to 637 by the end of the season) along with scoring his 1300th career point. Selanne’s defying of logic continued as he became the oldest player to ever score on a penalty shot (at the age of 40) along with becoming the first 40 year old player to score 5 points, with a hat trick in a single game. Along with becoming the first NHL player in history to score 4 game-tying goals in the last three minutes of a game in one season. Doing so in only 40 days. The Ducks would have an extremely underwhelming Playoff experience as they were manhandled by a surprising performance from the Nashville Predators.



Surely following such a strong season, and a weak playoff push, Selanne would FINALLY hang up the skates right? WRONG! Selanne signed for yet another one year contract to play in the 2011-12 season at the age of 41. Early in the season, he scored 2 goals and 2 assists, Becoming the oldest player in NHL history to record 4 points in a single game (Previously held by Tim Horton). Selanne continued to show that age doesn't define play as he was easily the strongest skating Duck out there every game. He looked like a spring chicken as he astounded everyone who watched. Selanne returned to Winnipeg in December to play against the Winnipeg Jets, the first time he had been there since 1996... I remember this game like it was yesterday, I was on a plane watching the game. The sheer respect that arena displayed for Selanne. The standing ovation he received, the look in his eyes sent shivers up my spine, not to mention that applause resumed every single time he touched the puck (Despite him being on THE OTHER TEAM!) It was truly one of the most memorable memories I have as a hockey fan. Selanne showed why he is such a class act later on in the season, as he was elected to go to the All-Star game at the age of 41, he responded by saying he's had his time in the spotlight and instead convinced the NHL to elect his teammate Corey Perry to take his place. In late February Selanne scored his 20th of the season, becoming the oldest player to score 20 goals in one season since Johnny Bucyk during the 1976-77 season. Selanne finished the season with 66 points. While the Ducks missed the playoffs, Selanne still looked stupendous all season.

Selanne's current totals are astounding, he currently has 663 goals, only 2 behind Jaromir Jagr (the only other active player in the top 25 goal scorers of all time, Jarome Iginla is the next closest at 516 sitting in 35th place). Selanne should have no problem cracking the top 10 as he is only 5 goals behind Luc Robitaille who currently sits at 10. Even 7th overall is not out of reach as he is only 31 goals behind the 7th place goal scorer (Mark Messier at 694). He would also be passing 2 of the greatest to ever play the game in the meantime, Steve Yzerman at 692 and Mario Lemieux at 690. Additionally Selanne currently sits at 24th overall in regular season goals per game with a .494407 record, ahead of Jaromir Jagr, he also sits 4th overall in power play goals (and should move into 3rd passing Phil Esposito who is only one goal ahead of him). Selanne's record numbers continue as he is 5th all time in game winning goals with 106, only 4 behind number 3 (Brett Hull at 110), 42nd in all time assists and 19th in points with a staggering 1406 in 1341 games. With a good season from Selanne he should move into 15th overall, passing Adam Oates and Bryan Trottier, if he can put up a mediocre 19 points and if he can put up 61 points he could move into 14th overall and pass Stan Mikita. All of this while not even cracking the top 25 in most games played...

It's undeniable that Teemu Selanne is a future Hall of Famer, the question is how much more will this legend pile onto his legacy? He has already defied every critic saying he's too old or would eventually lose a step. While it may be true that the Flash may lose a step eventually, he has shown no signs whatsoever that, that time will be anytime soon! Selanne is still one of the league's top players and is the epitome of a class act. Teemu Selanne is one of the best to ever touch the ice and has another full season to show any nay' sayers (if there are any left). If there is one player in the league who can prove that age is only a number.... Look no further than number 8 of the Anaheim Ducks.