

COLLECTORS CORNER

JULY 2013

THE FUTURE IN SPORTS



FIND OUT ABOUT

THE TOP DRAFT PICKS

A white Edmonton Oilers hockey jersey is shown from the front. The central feature is the large circular Oilers logo, which includes a stylized oil drop above the word "OILERS" in bold, blue, block letters. Above the V-neck collar is the NHL shield logo. The entire surface of the jersey is covered with handwritten signatures in blue ink, including names like "Rafic", "Cullen", "Sullivan", "Gardner", "Hart", "Lemieux", "Macgregor", "Nolan", "Petersen", "Regehr", "Roberts", "Stastny", "Tavares", "Wagner", "Zetterstrom", and others. Some dates are also written, such as "9/27/91", "8/26", "10/14", "10/15", "10/16", "10/17", "10/18", "10/19", "10/20", "10/21", "10/22", "10/23", "10/24", "10/25", "10/26", "10/27", "10/28", "10/29", "10/30", "10/31".

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Looking Ahead By Karine Hains aka Pheeb888

With the NHL and NBA drafts which were held lately, the writers of Collectors Corner couldn't help but think about the future in sports. So, as you will see, this whole issue is about what's ahead both in the hobby and in sports. As for me, considering the "Free Agency Frenzy" which happened last Friday in the NHL I cannot help but think that part of hockey's future is not so bright. Why? Well, hockey lost half a season this year due to a lockout for the second time in 10 years. How did that happen? It was all about the money of course...Owners thinking that players had unreasonably big contracts, too many years, too much money...After all the arguing, a deal was finally reached but it meant that contracts could not be any longer than 7 years from then on and that each team was allowed to buy out 2 contracts. Surely the general managers would take notice and sign more "reasonable" contracts going forward right? Wrong...On Friday plenty of players blew the bank once more. Nathan Horton signed a 7 year contract with Columbus for a whopping 37.1 million dollars. If you're good at maths, you know that 5.3 million a year. More examples? Clarkson 7 years / 36.75 million, Weiss 5 years / 24.5 million, Ribeiro 4 years / 22 million and Lecavalier 5 years / 22.5 million. Some of those figures are just wrong considering the kind of stats these players can put up. Heck, after Friday, Marc Bergevin looks like a genius for managing to sign Danny Briere for only 2 years at 8 million. I'm afraid we will run into another lockout sooner rather than later....



As a Patriots fan, I also cannot help but discuss the predicament my team finds itself into. As you most probably know, Welker signed with Denver, Gronkowski had numerous surgeries to the forearm and to the back.... And worst still, Aaron Hernandez was arrested on suspicion of being involved with 2 murders. Immediately after the arrest, the Pats did the right thing and ended their association with him. I know you are meant to be innocent until proven guilty but from what we've all heard, it's looking rather grim for Hernandez. I don't know about you but I really have trouble understanding how a professional athlete can go down that road...I mean, you made it, you are being paid to play the sport you love and in an instant, you just throw it all away...It's nothing short of mind-boggling. Let's just hope that justice is done and

send our thoughts and prayers to Odin Lloyd's family and friends.

Finally, the future is looking a little uncertain in Ottawa as well. After 17 years of loyal services, Mr. Senator himself, Daniel Alfredson has not only tested the waters of free agency but he also signed a contract with the Detroit Red Wings. He will no longer play for the Sens but will rather don the Wings' bright red along with plenty of fellow Swedes; Zetterberg and Holmstrom amongst others. I always find it sad to see a player quit on a team he's been with forever but on the other hand, you can see why aging players want to have one last shot at finally winning it all...Bourque did it...Iginla tried to do it and Alfie certainly won't be the last one to try it. Best of luck to him, he is one of the classiest players ever to play the game.



That's all for now folks! I hope you'll enjoy reading this issue!



Hockey's Bright Future by RGM81 aka Richard McAdam

It is amazing how quickly things can turn around in terms of the perception of a sport. Six months ago, hockey fans were in the depths of another protracted lockout. Instead of attending games, cheering on their favourite players, and enjoying the greatest sport on earth, fans were stuck listening to Gary Bettman, Bill Daly, and Donald Fehr arguing about what hills they were going to die upon and threatening to deprive everybody of another season, the second in the last ten years. How long ago those days feel now!



As the NHL's 2013 Free Agency period gets underway, supporters of the game have just been through a fantastic (albeit shortened) season that included some of the absolute best hockey we have seen in many years. There was high drama throughout the regular season, with stunning comebacks like the Canadiens-Bruins game in late March that was capped off by a thrilling shootout winner by Calder Trophy runner-up Brendan Gallagher. There was a resurgence of very popular franchises that had been in the dumps only a season before, as the Maple Leafs returned to the playoffs for the first time in nearly a decade. There was sheer dominance by the

Pittsburgh Penguins and the Chicago Blackhawks that led many to believe these two clubs were destined to be on a collision course in the Stanley Cup Finals. Popular underdogs like the Winnipeg Jets and Columbus Jackets staged late-season rallies in a desperate attempt to reach the playoffs, only just coming short. And the remarkable strength and united front of fans in Boston to make their city proud in the face of unimaginable horror served as a reminder of how healing and inspiring professional sports can be.



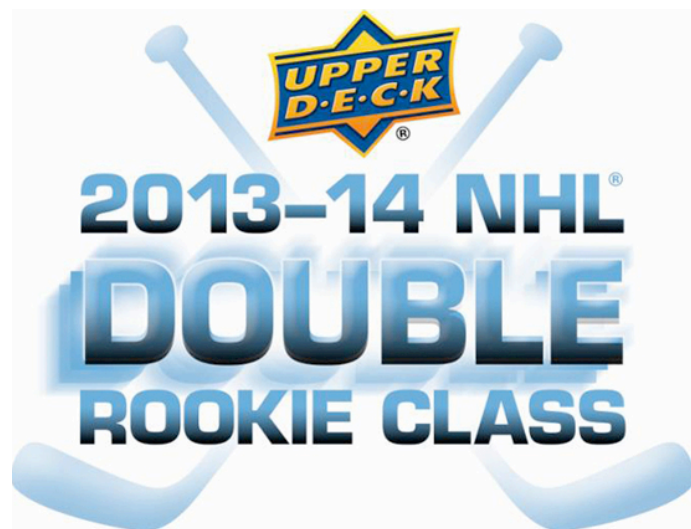
Wow, all that and I haven't even yet mentioned the playoffs. Let's see: a shocking sweep by the San Jose Sharks of a Vancouver Canucks team that only deepened its goaltending controversy; those aforementioned Maple Leafs taking the heavily-favoured Bruins to a 7th game and actually being just minutes away from victory before a remarkable comeback that stunned Leafs Nation; fans in both Conferences enjoying spectacular Original Six series that featured great hockey from start to finish; the Los Angeles Kings playing at a high level once again to defend their championship, only to fall short against the Blackhawks; the utter dominance of the Bruins over the Penguins, sweeping them aside and limiting them to a mere two goals thanks to a stellar

goaltending display by Tuukka Rask; and finally, after three overtime games (including triple OT in Game 1) and some amazing hockey, the Blackhawks stunning the Bruins with 2 goals in 17 seconds late in Game 6 of the Cup Finals to seal their second championship in the past four seasons.



Yes, the abridged 2013 season gave hockey fans an awful lot of fond memories to reflect upon. But it has also given us a glimpse of the future, and there is much to be hopeful about in the years to come for supporters of this great game. The winners of several major awards, including the Norris Trophy, the Vezina Trophy, and the Conn Smythe Trophy are all under the age of 25. These players will continue to grow and excel, and will remain dominant in their position. Teams who have been in the doldrums in recent years are showing signs of life and the potential is there for them to become true contenders. All the while, card collectors will have an opportunity not enjoyed since 2005-06 to reap the fruits of a rookie class that will inject significant interest into the hobby.

Many collectors were initially dismayed to learn about the delay by Upper Deck and Panini to insert rookie cards of the players who debuted in the lockout-shortened 2013 season. With only holdovers who debuted late in the 2011-12 season, and no big stars included in that group, it made for a moribund few months for those who chase down the hottest new stars on cardboard. True, the lack of a strong rookie class for 2012-13 hockey card products did compel the card makers to put more focus and attention to producing hot cards of established players and veterans, and this resulted in products like SP Game Used enjoying more success than they have in many years. But ultimately it is the rookies that drive the hobby, and names like Jaden Schwartz and Chris Kreider did little to satiate the appetites of those fans who strongly wanted cards of Alex Galchenyuk, Nail Yakupov, and Jonathan Huberdeau.



Fortunately for collectors, they will be enjoying a double whammy in the forthcoming products lined up for the 2013-14 release calendar. Finally, those numerous stars who debuted last season will be getting their NHL licensed debuts. Panini and UD have been in promotional overload hyping the vaunted Double Rookie Class that awaits collectors, and with good reason. It has been many years since so many young players have had such a profound and immediate impact with their teams. For the hobby's hottest town, Montreal, two young players propelled the Canadiens back to prominence after a disastrous 11-12 season; the cards of Alex Galchenyuk and Brendan Gallagher

promise to be among the most desirable and valuable cards to hit the market in the early months of the schedule. Bolstering the first half of the DRC are Yakupov and Justin Schultz in Edmonton, Huberdeau in Florida, Jean-Gabriel Pageau and Cory Conacher in Ottawa, and Viktor Fasth in Anaheim—these are not just players that made the team, but played a major role in their success.

The other half of the Double Rookie Class will be comprised of those players who debut early in the 2013-14 season, many of whom were





selected by NHL clubs at the Entry Draft held on June 30th. The level of excitement generated by collectors for some of these young men ensures that they will be hot collectibles when their first cards hit the market. We are all truly fortunate to have such a talented crop of players arrive on the scene simultaneously, the fruits of one of the deepest draft classes in many years. Many of these players will eventually become household names among NHL fans, and some will immediately be joining the big leagues this fall.



Collectors can count on seeing Nathan MacKinnon, Jonathan Drouin, Seth Jones, and many others getting their first rookie cards in the 2013-14 season. Two-thirds of the “big three” that propelled the Halifax Mooseheads to the Memorial Cup this past spring in Saskatoon will be poised to debut with the Colorado Avalanche and Tampa Bay Lightning, respectively. The timing could not be better for these two young men to be part of a rebirth in these two hockey towns. The Avalanche have overhauled their front office,

turning to legends Joe Sakic and Patrick Roy to restore credibility and pride to the franchise; the arrival of a generational talent such as MacKinnon immediately improves that club. For another team, one that has just jettisoned the face of its franchise and its most popular player in history, the arrival of Drouin will be an injection of new blood into the Lightning organization. The immense talents of this young man make him an ideal partner for scoring sensation Steven Stamkos. Look out in Nashville, folks, because another elite defenceman has just arrived. Shea Weber will have a fantastic prodigy in Seth Jones, who arrives in the NHL with a bit of a chip on his shoulder after falling to fourth place in the draft.

I have had the opportunity to see all three of these young phenoms play at different stages of their development. I can say from first-hand experience that they are NHL ready and will be major parts of their teams right from the first shifts they take on the ice this fall. MacKinnon and Drouin I got to see in their first year in Halifax; even as 16- and 17-year olds, I could tell that these were special players. The skill, the speed, the natural talent for the game they both display has them ahead of their years. One of the strongest memories I have of MacKinnon is from the 2012 QMJHL playoffs when the Mooseheads were playing the Quebec Remparts. MacKinnon was in control of the puck when future Sabres draft pick Mikhail Grigorenko appeared to have Nate blocked out from gaining the slot; rather, MacKinnon spun right around Grigorenko and scored a highlight reel goal. The place erupted. Drouin’s most sensational moment occurred this past season, so I could only see the goal on the highlight reels; fans who have not seen this amazing goal owe it to themselves to check it out on YouTube. Halifax will miss those kids, but their loss is the NHL’s gain.



Seth Jones is an 18-year old with the vision and puck handling abilities of someone well into their twenties. He controls games. There were a pair of games that his Portland Winterhawks played in Kelowna this past season against the Rockets; at the time, the Rockets were in the midst of a 24-game home winning streak. Due to Jones and his control on the ice, the Winterhawks ended that streak and handily won both games. Over the two games, Jones registered one assist and was a +4. Anytime the Rockets tried to attack, Jones was there to stifle them; his skill took the crowd out of the game early, making a very talented club look disjointed and out of sync. That type of play will make him transition easily into a Predators system that is built from the net out, and will make fans soon forget all about the departed Ryan Suter.

There will of course be others from this year's draft class making an immediate impact. There is also a longer-term interest level created by the destinations of some prominent prospects. The #1 goalie available in the draft, the Mooseheads' Zachary Fucale, slipped all the way to the second round and landed with the Montreal Canadiens. A kid from Ile-Bizard, QC, is now the potential heir to Carey Price between the pipes for hockey's most storied franchise. Immediately the results of this selection have made an impact in the hobby. In the week before the draft, Fucale's on-card autographs in ITG's Draft Prospects set could sell anywhere from \$10-\$15 on eBay. Since draft day, copies are going for well more than \$30 on average. The "Montreal effect" strikes against, and should Fucale overtake Price in the future...

The future is very bright for hockey fans; though the latest lockout was an abominable experience and has turned some away, those who have returned have done so with a greater vigour and passion. The opportunities presented by the compliance buyouts have allowed teams to shed high-priced contracts that weighed heavily on the cap, and now they can bring in fresh faces and retain their younger talented players. We are going to see top names hit the free agent market for the first time; already, we have seen Vincent Lecavalier get snapped up mere days after being bought out by Tampa Bay, signing a lucrative long-term deal in Philadelphia. Other players are soon to hit the market as well, allowing for some major face changes to certain clubs. All this and a hot Double Rookie Class for collectors!

Look out, fans, the 2013-14 season is going to be one for the ages!





I'm a Little League Umpire **By G. Kerry Webster aka windmortal**

Last week, 9-year-old Dominick Havens was beaned in the forehead with a fastball. It hurt. I know it did. He cried.

I don't know Dominick. I never met his parents. But, I almost cried too. Seeing that little guy lying in the dirt near home plate, holding his head and sobbing made me feel helpless.

I never had children. I don't know what it would feel like to see something like that happen to my own son or daughter. But, for two hours, three or four nights a week, I do have kids. Usually about two dozen of them.

I'm a Little League umpire.

Little Dominick, like most children do, bounced right back up from the traumatic experience. He didn't stay in the game, however, electing to return to the home dugout with an ice pack from the concession stand firmly pressed against his head.

An inning later, to him, the incident never happened, although the bruised lump featuring the stitch markings of the fastball on his forehead told a different story. His head was back in the ball game, cheering on his JJ Powell teammates. Mine was not. I was still worried about him. Between every inning, I would make sure to walk by the home dugout and check in on him.

"You okay little man?" I'd say.

"Yep. It just hurts a little," he'd respond.

Earlier this week, I had the opportunity to work another JJ Powell game and got to see Dominick again.

"Feeling better?" I asked.

"Yep," he said as he pounded his fist into his tiny glove, signifying he was ready to play ball again.

Dominick had the opportunity to bat in the game, and although he didn't hit the ball. He didn't back off either. He stood in the batter's box as kids two and three years older than him whipped fastballs past. Incident forgotten. This kid is going to be a ballplayer.

And that's why I love being an umpire. It's not about the few bucks the league offers for the services. It's about being with the kids and watching how they interact with each other around the game I love most.

One of the first games I umpired this season, 12-year-old Trey Shaw's team was being pummeled by one of the best teams in the league.

"We're not going to win a single game all season," he said. "Wanna bet?" I asked.

He did. He bet me \$10 that his team wouldn't win a single game this year. Well guess, what? They did. In fact, they have won more than one already. Does that mean you owe me more than one \$10 bill now Trey?



But, that's the kind of interaction with the kids that makes me want to be on those dusty fields night in and night out. If I could do it every day, I probably would. It's enjoyable getting to know the kids.

Kyle Taylor is a 12-year-old with Navasky's. Kyle and I have been chatting on the Little League baseball diamond for several years now. Unfortunately, Kyle is a fan of the Philadelphia Eagles. I'm a New York Giants fan, so there's a rub there.

And we have fun with it. Nearly every time we see each other, there's always a jab at the blue or green — and it's all in good fun.

In this politically correct world, I must choose my words wisely, especially in dealing with pre-teens. But sometimes, even if I'm thinking I'm asking an innocent question, it backfires on me.

For example, last week, during a pitching change, I walked over to little Zach Kolbe, a second basemen. "So, what did you learn in school today?" I asked him, while there was a break in the action.

"Coordinates," he responded, and began to tell me all about the lesson on coordinates of the day. From the corner of my eye, I see the first basemen walking towards us. We'll call him, "Carl," for the sake of anonymity.

"Carl, what did you learn in school today?" I said.

"We watched a video on puberty," he replied. I think my bottom lip hit the dirt. I didn't know what to say. You never know what's going to happen on a Little League baseball diamond.

Being a base umpire, and working in the league for several years, it was easy for me to get to know the older players. Twelve-year-olds like Carson Jones, Nick Johnston, Quinton Moslak, Zeke Granville, Keegan Perks, Zach Wagner, Noah Boast, Bubba Slogosky, Keegan Soltis, Micah Martin, Landon McDonald, Thomas Webster, Johnny Gonzalez, Isaiah Dixon and Ryan Kephart, to name just a few (those I missed have full permission to throw rocks at me on the field next week), seem to gravitate to the middle field positions and first base (skill positions), so there's plenty of opportunity to talk to them as an umpire.

These are the kids that are usually on base most too, so I get a chance to talk with them there, or maybe just slap their hands in congratulations after they slide into second after crushing a double.

But the younger kids, like Dominick, don't get to play too much. They get one at bat per game, and usually don't reach base. They get two innings in the field, but are usually too far away in the outfield for any kind of interaction.

When I have the opportunity to interact with these younger kids, I do. I know they are the future of P-O Little League baseball, and as an umpire, I want them to have the best experience they can while playing in the program.

Games are played at 6 p.m. nearly every night. Take a moment some evening to pack the family in the car and come out and meet my extended family. Play ball!





Back in my Day **By Rob Holt aka robholt91**

The ever changing phrase; “It was better in my day”... Are our views subjective or is there truth to that? You always hear older guys talk about the good old days in football, guys taking huge hits, no face masks, hardly any penalties, and let alone any rules. Yes, I’m sure that was great, a bar room brawl on the gridiron squaring up huge guys and smashing them together, but where is longevity in that? The commissioners of the NFL have gone to great lengths to protect their investments and their brand. With the amount of studies, lawsuits, and everything else, where is there room for the brutal game that used to exist? Well, in short, there is no room. The NFL is going to great lengths to avoid the bone crippling hits and career ending brutality of yesterday. Sure, it’s great to see the cringe worthy hits, but with the NFL’s growing fan base, there is no place for people destroying each other anymore. I know there are still career ending injuries/hits/etc, but taking the precautions the league has, it’s going to help prolong the careers, bodies, and minds of these young stars.

For better or worse, football has become a veritable showcase of talent and with that, the league has to protect those talents in order to keep the money flowing, in order to bring us all the broadcasts, gear, cards, and everything else we enjoy. It’s a double edged sword, because change the game and people will complain, but if you don’t set some restrictions, you run the risk of driving the whole franchise to the ground. Some of these rules are completely nonsensical, don’t get me wrong. I feel like I can say with good confidence that this will prolong the longevity of the game we love so much. Think of it like this; NASCAR and racing in general has certain restrictions in place, if they didn’t a lot of the invested money would be circling down the drain. I could almost guarantee that if they lifted all bumping/contact rules, there would be ten times more crashes. Their profit would go down and it would be over. No-one would want to drive in a demolition derby if they just enjoyed the thrill of the race. So, why can we expect NFL players to do the same? I mean, certainly the risks aren’t as high, but if someone takes the wrong hit they could be injured with life-threatening injuries or worse. Now, that normally doesn’t happen, but it can. It is a dangerous sport, even just cutting wrong can put you out for the season.

I trust that the league does right by its players and fans to help ensure that these players can keep playing. Sure, it waters it down a bit, but we still watch. I always hear that football is getting “closer and closer to flag football” but with all the injuries that happened last year, I don’t see the game getting any bit easier. I just don’t see that when a LOT of players got banged up last year, seriously banged up. It’s human nature to reject change and exile those who implement it, but I really hope some people will open their minds to accepting some of these implemented rules. I get legitimately concerned during some games, not seeing things called. It puts these players at risk when they shouldn’t be. I know this is an inherently dangerous sport, but I have no problem with these rules being put in place, because I don’t want to see anyone get injured when it could have been avoided. These athletes don’t need to be babied, that isn’t what I’m saying, but with all the technology we have today, the game SHOULD be safer. With hindsight being twenty/twenty, I’d like to look back on this era in twenty years and say: “This is when we got it right” and not worry about player health and safety. There’s no reason some of the most talented people in professional sports should have to go down on the account of some stupid play that could have been avoided with one single rule in place. I’m not for changing the game, but I’m about protecting the athletes that we admire so much.

- See more at: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/articles/2013/06/back-in-my-day/#sthash.5OLOok7z.dpuf>



The Top 5 Sports Movies of Generation Y By Gregory Sanchez aka Sugarpooper

Although I have not had the privilege to watch some of the cult classic sport films from the 1970s and 1980s, I do however know that some amazing sports movies have been produced in my generation's time. I personally feel that I would be doing a disservice to all those great movies from the past if I named this list the top five greatest sports movies of all time. So without further ado, here is my take on the top five greatest sports movies of Generation Y!

#5 – Love & Basketball

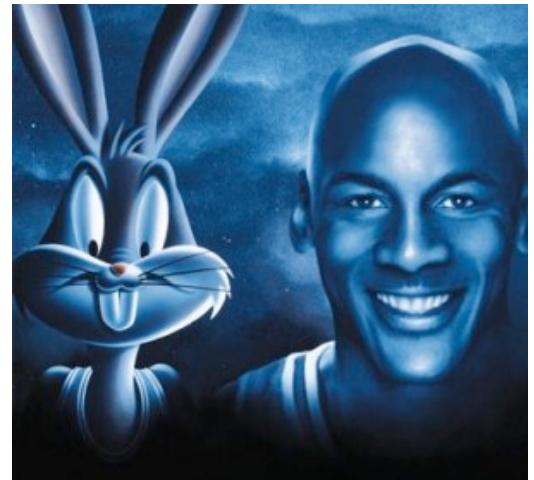


What better way to start the list off than with a movie that features all the good things in life? Love and Sports. This is one of those films where you meet the main characters from childhood, and watch their lives unfold right before your eyes, in a two hour span. Considering the fact that it was filmed in my hometown of Los Angeles, California this movie really hits home for me. A girl and a boy raised in Southern California and playing sports is something I can definitely relate to. Growing up, playing basketball, experiencing love & lust, these are all beautiful things in life and this film expresses that in a very eloquent way.

#4 – Space Jam

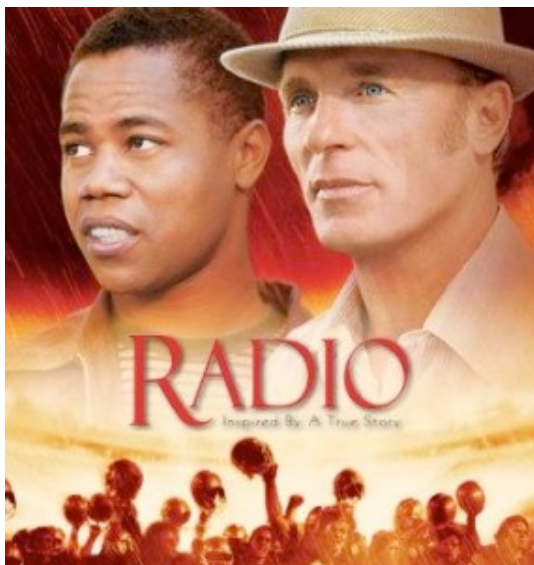
Much like my top pick on this list, the impact this film had on pop culture was unforgettable. A who's who list of actors like Danny DeVito. With tons of basketball stars in the film and wild Looney Tunes all over the place, This movie attracted plenty of viewers of all demographics. With Michael Jordan

playing the main character and the beginning of the story line basically being about his actual life, it was interesting to see it mixed in with funny cartoons. His struggles with his baseball career being shown in the film were also intriguing.



#3 – Radio

I could think of two words off the top of my head that would describe this film perfectly, truly captivating. It shows that sports bring people of all kinds together in unity and peace. It portrays the warmth and honesty in human beings, all the while showing you an awesome football story. With inhumane moments happening every day all over the world, I almost feel films like these are needed to humble people. I feel like they're needed to





teach children that the world can be a nice place, It's movies like these that keep my mind full of positive vibes and hope for humanity.

#2 – The Sandlot

An epic cult classic that most will never seem to forget. This memorable film brings nostalgic value that is simply irreplaceable. We can all relate to growing up with your neighborhood buddies, running a muck in your town. Summer night adventures, long games of baseball, these are all beautiful memories I'm sure every kid can relate to. This is one of those kid films I'm sure we can all still enjoy to this very day. One thing that stands out for me is the memorable movie scenes in this film such as the barf scene on the roller coaster, or the swimming pool scene. With the main character looking back on his childhood life through vivid memories, it makes for a really great sports film.



#1 – The Mighty Ducks 1, 2 & 3



I might be a little bias here given that I've been a die-hard Anaheim Ducks fan since I saw them on my television screen in 1996, But what other sports movie could say they actually inspired a multi-billion dollar company like the Walt Disney company to create and finance a National Hockey League team. To top it all off, the Walt Disney Company ended up owning the Mighty Ducks for an entire twelve years, even reaching the Stanley Cup finals in the 2002-2003 season. The movies are mediocre and a bit cheesy if you try to watch it and you're not a child anymore, but the impact it had in California and the entire world was most certainly a special one. The original Mighty Ducks logo is a pop culture classic that will be engraved inside of brains for decades to come.

So there you have it, my top five greatest sports movies of my generation! If you haven't had a chance to watch any of these awesome films, I strongly suggest you check them out!

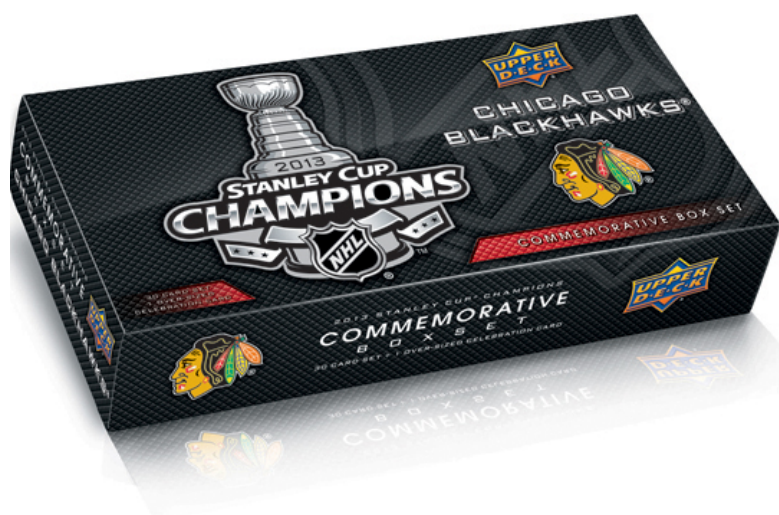
- See more at: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/articles/2013/06/the-top-5-sports-movies-of-generation-y/#sthash.CEXF6o3k.dpuf>



Around the Rink

By RGM81 aka Richard McAdam

First of all, congratulations to the 2013 Stanley Cup Champions, the Chicago Blackhawks! For the second time in the past four seasons, the Hawks are the NHL's best. They had a spectacular regular season, starting off undefeated in regulation play for their first 24 games, half the calendar of the lockout-shortened 2013 season. A tip of the hat to captain Jonathan Toews, goalie Corey Crawford, Conn Smythe winner Patrick Kane, clutch hero Bryan Bickell, and the rest of the team and support staff on a stellar campaign.



Within days of the Hawks win, Upper Deck announced that they would be producing a special commemorative boxed set for the Stanley Cup winners. Featuring great on-ice photography and a special blow-up box topper card, the set is a mere \$20 and a great addition to the collection of any Blackhawks fan.

With the conclusion of the 2013 season, fans and collectors are now eagerly anticipating the 2013-14 season; indeed, with the NHL Entry Draft already in the books and the Free Agent Frenzy just underway, one can argue that it's already up and running. The month of July will see lots of intriguing developments off the ice, and the free agent class is going to be enhanced by the

buyouts of several high-profile stars. While Vincent Lecavalier and Daniel Briere have already found new homes, big names like David Clarkson, Jarome Iginla, and many others remain available. Surely there will be some more surprises in the weeks ahead as general managers scramble to get their rosters compliant with the lowered \$64.3M salary cap set for the 2013-14 campaign.

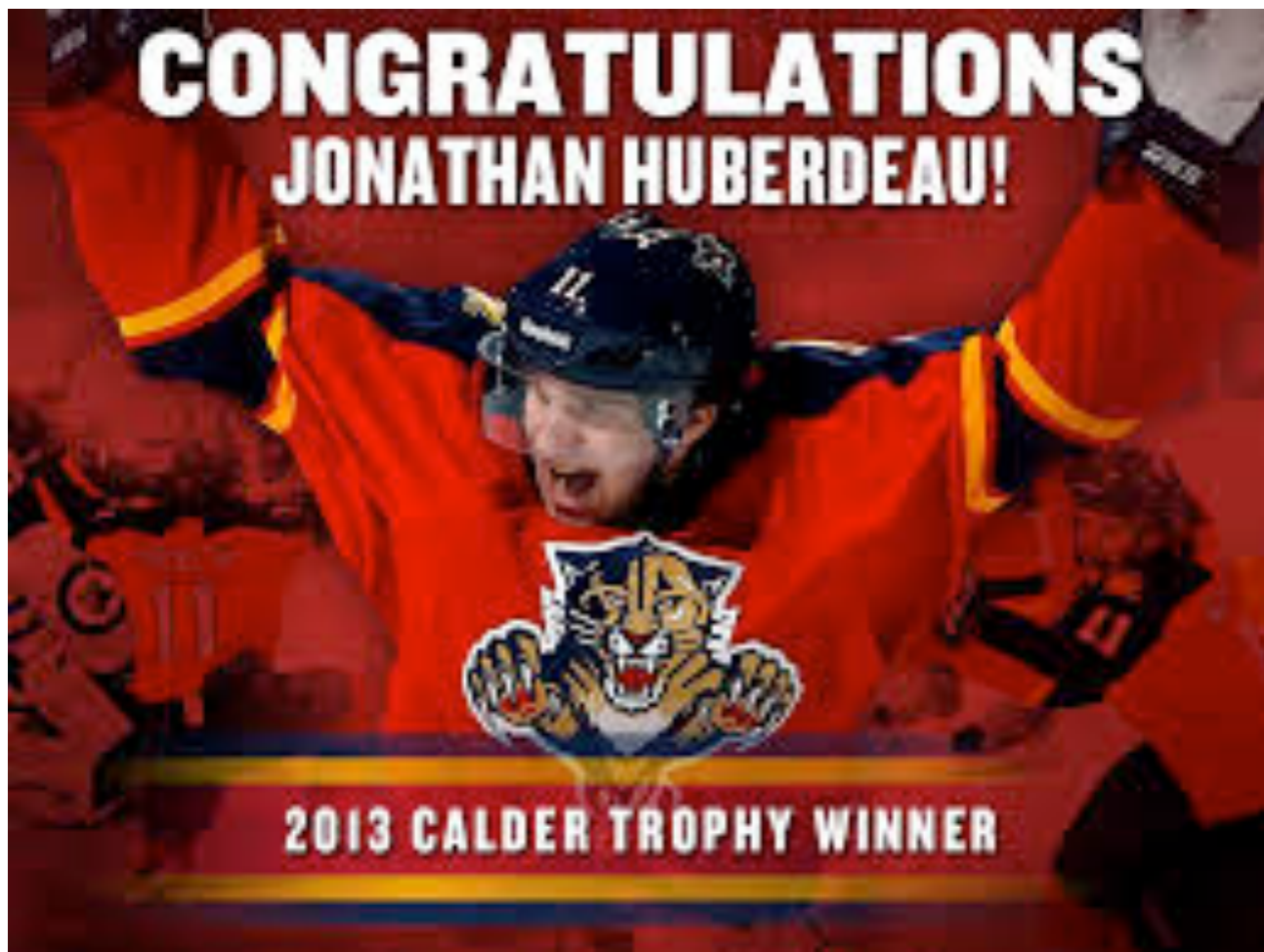
The cap crunch faced by many teams has already forced several big trades, and there will no doubt be more to come during the summer months. The Canucks seem to have finally resolved their goaltending problem, having shocked the hockey world at the Draft by sending Corey Schneider to New Jersey in exchange for a first round selection. We will see how much the trade really fixes things, as the club has spent the last fourteen months trying to trade Roberto Luongo with no success, while also hurting his pride by turning back to Schneider during the playoffs after Luongo played very well in two losses while Schneider was injured. Luongo seems to have taken it all in stride, and displayed his usual humour on Twitter after the Schneider trade, posting simply "#NOtradeclause" on his @strombone1 account. The simple message has over 4,600 retweets and 2,300+ favourites.

The other big trade to take place already has been the Bruins and Stars connecting to swap former #2 overall pick Tyler Seguin and Loui Eriksson, as well as other players & prospects. The Bruins' management had been critical of Seguin's play during the playoffs, but few expected them to part with their young star after signing him to a lucrative contract not all that long ago. He will now get the chance to play his natural centre position alongside Jamie Benn in Dallas, while Eriksson—a vastly underrated player—now gets to play in a hot market and a legitimate contender. Who knows what other big trades are on the horizon?



As the month of July hits, so too will the first products of the 2013-14 hobby season. Finally, after months of waiting, collectors will be able to “score” the first rookie cards of the players that debuted in the lockout season. These players were all ordered to be held over by the NHLPA, preventing Upper Deck and Panini from releasing cards of Montreal’s “Gallys” (Gallagher and Galchenyuk), Edmonton’s Yakupov and Schultz, Florida’s Huberdeau, and other stellar freshmen. Upper Deck will be first out of the gate with the return of Trilogy on the 16th, featuring three tiers of RC’s, a stunning hard-signed autograph Signature Pucks set, the popular acetate Ice Scripts autographs, and multi-player memorabilia cards sure to attract interest. Panini will soon after follow up with the overhauled Score, which has new parallels, autographs, and 8-player memorabilia cards guaranteed in every box. The new configuration will allow collectors to snap up these cards at a greater rate than in years past, and the still-affordable cost will attract collectors from every demographic. After a bit of a lull for much of early 2013, the hobby is definitely on the comeback trail, having seen several successful products in the past couple months and now ready to turn the page over to a brand new hobby season.

That’s all for this month! Enjoy the summer!





Nascar's Next Generation **By Stephen Taylor aka race crazy**

Racing is its own entity. Drivers are independent contractors. They are not drafted into a ride or chosen in a format of the worst teams get to pick the best drivers. Drivers are chosen by people who have an eye for talent. The driver in order to be successful in today's racing world usually must have one of three things: money, a famous racing last name, or talent. Unfortunately in our modern economic times talent wins out the least of these three but it does still exist. Money drivers are the drivers most fans know are only there because of their funding. Most of them have never amounted to much more than just 1 to 2 race career winners. Talent always wins and it should continue that way. Most of the top Nascar drivers today came from nothing and earned their way to the top. Five-time Cup champ Jimmie Johnson lived in a trailer park in California, Carl Edwards handed out business cards just begging for a chance to race anything while he held a part time job substitute teaching school. Brad Keselowski and Denny Hamlin basically broke their families' bank accounts with their family's consent trying to achieve their dreams of getting to the top level and fortunately they succeeded. So the question arises in the 2013 model of auto racing does talent still win over money? Here are three cases of this being true and also three drivers to watch very carefully in the future.

Kyle Larson

Ask people who follow local dirt track racing every week who the next up and coming driver is and this is their answer.



Ask Tony Stewart or Jeff Gordon what they think of this kid (who looks about twelve and weighs no more than Danica Patrick does) and they'll tell you he is better than they ever were at his age. To most Nascar fans and common viewers their introduction to Larson was him in the 2013 Daytona Nationwide race flying into the catch fence, his car disintegrating into pieces while the engine and tires blasted through the fencing injuring fans. This image or memory of Larson is not the one people should pay attention to. Signed under contract to Chip Ganassi Racing in a development deal Larson had never even driven a pavement car until 2012. He promptly went out and won the Nascar K & N series championship shocking everyone. Late in 2012 he also showed plenty of speed in just a few short starts in the Camping World Truck series.

He won his first race in Nascar's top three series at Rockingham in a truck earlier this year. Driving for Turner Motorsports in the Nascar Nationwide Series Larson has dominated the rookie battle and been a perennial front runner among Nationwide regular drivers, finishing 2nd twice and outrunning his more experienced teammates. For a rookie this is outstanding. Larson is also a driver who will race anything with wheels on it. I personally have witnessed his talent and passion for racing having been in North Carolina less than a month and having run into him at 3 different racetracks. If they are racing anything he is usually there and usually fast. Watching from the stands at the Dirt Track at Charlotte last May Larson drove his 410 winged sprint car to a 3rd place finish blowing past 3 time Cup champ Tony Stewart and the best outlaw driver of all-time Steve Kinser in a daring high side pass in the final corner. The crowd was not talking about who won they were talking about the kid and that pass. The next day Larson would do much the same



in the Nationwide race at Charlotte Motor Speedway across the street from the dirt track. Kyle Busch dominated and won as expected but the crowd was buzzing about Larson driving his car all the way up to the high side of the track and whizzing by experienced drivers like they had an anchor behind them. The kid is not only a nice guy who you will find at any racetrack he is also a stud with anything that has 4 wheels. He has been labeled as the next Jeff Gordon and he potentially might be. Nascar nation is well aware but the rest of you should be prepared to hear his name a lot in the future.

Chase Elliott

Chase Elliott is a case of all three things a driver must encompass to make it in modern day Nascar. He is the son of former Cup champion Bill Elliott so the famous name and the funding are there. However if talent does not exist he would not get much further than his current state (see Steve Wallace for a good example of when money and a famous last name do not win out over pure speed and talent). Elliott is young and remarkably fast. A winner in Nascar's K & N division multiple times last year and a recent winner in his very first start at Pocono in an ARCA event, Elliott has unlimited potential and another important aspect of racing success-a large fan following due to who his dad is. This attracts sponsors. Sponsors attract owners. Enter one Rick Hendrick, the most successful car owner in the Nascar world today. Elliott is under contract with Hendrick Motorsports. He still has time to develop and Hendrick would like to see the younger Elliott run full time in the Nationwide Series (one step below the Cup level) next year. If he meets expectations as he has in all his other forms of racing expect Elliott to become a popular and successful Sprint Cup driver in the future, and maybe...just maybe the heir to the wheel of the famous 24 car and one Jeff Gordon if and when the future Hall of Famer hangs up his helmet.



Darrell Wallace Jr.



Darrell Wallace Jr. (nicknamed Bubba) is another case of talent over money mixed in with an interesting aspect to his marketability. A driver with sheer speed he won countless Legends car races and was on the fast track but lacking an opportunity. As a young African American driver with happily married parents of mixed races Wallace is unique to the sport. Due to this along with his talent he was invited to Nascar's drive for diversity program and caught the eye of Nascar K & N Series powerhouse team Revolution Racing. Wallace quickly proved himself winning in the series multiple times. Due to this he not only caught the attention of team owner Joe Gibbs (who he has a development deal

with) but he also garnered some interest from one Kyle Busch, a Gibbs driver and one of the most talented drivers in the



sport who also came from a Legends car background. Wallace Jr. was hired this year to drive in the Camping World Truck Series full time for Kyle Busch Motorsports and has shown tons of potential by leading laps and running up front on numerous occasions. He won the pole at Dover over his car owner proving he is plenty quick enough to compete. His fun personality and unique hobbies also caught the attention of race fans. Wallace is a great follow on Twitter as you will find him tweeting out what he is listening to music-wise (him and fellow driver Mark Martin often talk over Twitter about their new favorite songs since both share a common interest in rap and hip hop music) or posting amazing photographs he has taken. Go to a racetrack on an off day for the truck series or after his practice is concluded and you'll find Wallace Jr. in a photo vest with a camera in hand taking pictures. Wallace's love of photography and his skill at it is unique. He is likely to become the first African American winner in Nascar's top three series since Wendell Scott and also likely to be the first full-time African American driver in the Cup Series in more than 30 years. Not only is he bringing new fans from different backgrounds and races into the sport he is also appealing to the old guard because of his personality. Watch out for Bubba.





Courtside
By Jay Weger aka Jay520

Contests & Winners

There were 2 contests that wrapped up in June with the end of the season. The 2013 NBA Playoff contest saw roro17 and gladdyontherise tie for 1st place and each win 1000 CC for their efforts in trying to pick the NBA Playoffs. toddsr came in 3rd and won 500 CC. The 2nd contest that came to a close was the 12-13 NBA Top Performers which lasted all season long with a close finish. Each participant came with-in 1 point of the next person. missnesmith managed to secure the 1st place spot and win with 57 points and was awarded a 11-12 Panini Preferred Slam Dunk Booklet of [Kobe Bryant/Vince Carter/David Robinson/Tracy McGrady/Chris Webber/Kevin Garnett/Grant Hill/125](#). 2nd place was Thrillseeker who had 56 points and won a [2012-13 Totally Certified Totally Blue Mark Price Prime 3-clr patch /25](#). 3rd place was Christianfriend with 55 points earned a [2012-13 Threads Signage Ben Gordon auto and 4th was tjvisco with 54 points and earned 1500 CC for his participation](#). So with the end of the season in the books there will be some Guess the Serial # contests and others in the basketball contest forum for you to enjoy throughout the summer till next years contests return.

Box/Pack Breaks

To get this started theguru opened a case of SPA to get rc autos of Quincy Acy, Justin Hamilton, Bernard James, William Buford, Jae Crowder/30 and Tyler Zeller, Jordan Brand Classic gu of JaMychal Green and William Buford, By The Letter autos of Michael Ray Richardson/100, Sean Elliot/100, Spencer Haywood/100, Mark West/50, Glen Rice/50 and Connie Hawkins/50, Sign Of The Times auto of Bill Walton, Final Floor Auto of Glen Rice, Home Court Signatures Bernard King, Michael Jordan Canvas Gold and a sweet College Patch Pride Patch auto of LeBron James/23!! duke74 got a box to hit a LeBron James Home Court Signatures/23. iMacreative pulled a Michael Jordan By The Letter auto/23 from 1 box of SPA. The best was from TheCaptain who only got 4 packs to hit a LeBron James/Julius Erving/Magic Johnson triple auto 3/5!!!

12-13 Panini Crusade was another product opened with theguru opening 4 boxes to pull an rc of Anthony Davis, Quest RC autos of Tristan Thompson, Jimmy Butler, Isaiah Thomas, Chris Copeland and Festus Ezeli, Quest gu of Enes Kanter, Nicholas Batum, Kemba Walker and Chris Copeland, Majestic gu of Earl Monroe, Rudy Gay, Sean Elliot, Jamal Crawford and Robert Parish, Majestic autos of Fat Lever and Alonzo Mourning, Crusade inserts of Chris Bosh/99, Alonzo Mourning/99, Willis Reed/49, Austin Rivers/99,/25, Damian Lillard/49 and a A.C. Green Black 1/1. rymflaherty opened a box to get a Anthony Davis rc along with Quest RC autos of Terrence Ross and Doron Lamb, Quest gu of Thomas Robinson, Brandon Jennings and Kyrie Irving, Majestic auto of Marcin Gortat, Crusade Inserts of Nene/99 and a sick Larry Bird Gold/10. bizzzydesigner opened a few fresh pack to get a Quest gu of Shane Battier, Quest auto of Jordan Hamilton and DeQuan Jones, Crusade inserts of Wilson Chandler and a sweet Carmelo Anthony Gold/10.

bundrock opened 5 boxes of 12-13 Preferred to get Panini Choice autos of Draymond Green/99 and Brandon Knight/25, Crown Royal autos of Brandon Knight/99, Tristan Thompson/99 and Marcus Morris/25, Silhouettes gu autos of Kawhi



Leonard/99 and Nick Van Exel 2/5 with Rookies Booklet of Marshall/Barnes/Henson/ Irving/ Rivers/Plumlee/249 and 50Greats Booklet of Drexler/M.Malone/Parish/Gervin/ Olajuwon/Shaq/D.Robinson/Ewing patches/25. skeen opened a box of 12-13 Elite to get RC Inscriptions of Mile Plumlee and Isaiah Thomas, Turn of the Century auto Ronnie Price, Throwbacks gu of Kenny7 Anderson 4clr patch/25 with a sick LeBron James Magenta plate/5 from Fathers Day packs. Sac Kings opened 1 pack of 12-13 Select to hit an Anfernee Hardaway Gold/10. Raiders555 pulled a Kobe auto redemption out of a retail Target box. theguru opened 5 packs of Finals promo stuff to get a Anfernee Hardaway auto/10, 2 Bob Cousy autos/5 and a sick Kareem Abdul-Jabbar 1/1 auto!!!

Hobby News

By Taylor Treece AKA Lithium

The 2012/13 NBA season may be over, but the card collecting year is still coming to a close. With several mid to high-end products on the horizon, from the all-new Panini Innovation to the return of the popular National Treasures, there is surely something to excite every basketball collector.

Panini Elite Series Product Releases August 21st, 2013

Panini's Elite Series makes its debut, giving collectors 1 pack per hobby box, with 10 cards per pack. Each box will contain 4 autograph cards, and 1 elite glass card. With the 275-card base set, Passing the Torch insert set, and 100-card Autographed Court Kings set, this may be a box worth picking up.

Panini Gold Standard Product Releases July 3rd, 2013

Panini's Gold Standard is back, and loaded with even more high-end content. With 1 pack per box, 10 cards per pack, featuring 4 autographs and 1 memorabilia card per box, this product is sure to delight. Highlights include a 305-card base set, 80 different rookie autograph/jersey cards, 5 insert sets, 3 memorabilia insert sets, and 4 autograph insert sets. Also look for 50 authentic 1 of 1 cards, printed on real 14 karat gold!

Panini Innovation Releases August 14th, 2013

All-new Panini Innovation looks to hit the market with a bang, delivering 1 pack per hobby box with 8 cards per pack. Look for the debut of Stained Glass, a 100-card checklist printed on colored, textured acetate. Another exciting feature is the Innovative Ink set, consisting of 60 rookies and 40 veterans, contains gold and silver autographs from the league's best players.

Panini Intrigue Releases August 28th, 2013

Each hobby box will contain two different packs: the first being a 5-card Intrigue pack, each card with 10 different



versions, featuring only the league's top 20 players. The other 6-card pack will have one base Intrigue card, one insert, and 4 hits, 3 of which will be Autographs. With a 100-card base set with several parallels to chase, this product could be a winner.

***Panini National Treasures* Releases July 31st, 2013**

The product by which all other high-end products are compared, National Treasures returns for the 2012/13 season featuring the Double Rookie class of 11/12 and 12/13. Each hobby box will contain 1 pack, with 10 cards per pack. That features 9 autographs, memorabilia cards, and/or printing plates per box. With content like 1 of 1 Logomen, Jumbo Prime Rookie Patch Autos, and other great cards, this box is a must-have for the high end collector.

***Panini Signatures* Releases July 17th, 2013**

Panini Signatures features a 200-card autograph checklist, so your favorite player is sure to be included! Each hobby box has 1 pack with 4 cards per pack. Look for 3 autographs per box, featuring legends, superstars, and rookies alike. A die cut version also exists for 150 of the players for added scarcity.

Milestone Collections

By Mike aka magic_bobcat

As the NBA season drew to a close almost inevitably card collecting slowed down a little. However, that doesn't mean casual and serious collectors alike weren't adding to their PCs. One of the most recent additions that have caught the attention of the basketball forum was gatorboymike's 2008-09 Topps Hardwood Marreese Speights autos. The six card rainbow was released on New Years Eve 2008 and within a year gatorboymike had collected the rookie's Hardwood (/69), Maple (/19), Mahogany (/9) and even Printing Plate (/1). It took a further 18 months to add the Redwood (/5). Unsurprisingly it was the 1/1 that was the hardest to find and it was only because a mutual collector introduced him to the previous owner in France. gatorboymike had to trade a 1996 Collector's Edge George Gervin auto and a 1997-98 Finest Kobe Bryant silver refractor in order to complete the rainbow four and a half years after getting the first card. While to most Speights may not be everyone's favourite player they must be impressed by such a low numbered auto'd rainbow including two 1/1s!

NBA News

By Bryce Doody aka bdoody42

The NBA Finals this year were one for the ages. The Miami Heat had a dog fight against the Pacers in the Eastern Conference Finals. They moved on after a Game 7 win in Miami. The Spurs on the other hand swept the Memphis Grizzlies to represent the Western Conference. The Spurs combined to lose only two games in the first three rounds of the playoffs.

Game 1 came down to the wire and Tony Parker hit an amazing jumper to ice the game for the Spurs. The Spurs were



led by Parker and Duncan who scored 21 & 20. The Heat were led by LeBron James with his 18 points 18 rebounds and 10 assists. Game 2 was much less dramatic and the Heat won by 19 to get the series to 1-1. The Heat were led by Mario Chalmers and his 19 points. Game 3 was close the first half, but after that it became a blowout with the Spurs winning 113-77. The Spurs made a NBA Finals 16 three pointers. Danny Green made 7 threes and Gary Neal connected on 6 himself. Game 4 was all the Miami Heat's big three. Dwyane Wade looked like Wade from the 2006 finals and tallied 32 points, 6 rebounds, 6 steals, and 5 assists. Chris Bosh had 20 points and 13 rebounds. James

had a big game as well with 33 points and 11 rebounds. The series was tied at 2-2. Game 5 was a high scoring affair with the Spurs winning 114-104. The Spurs starters scored but 7 of their points. Green continued his hot 3 point shooting and set the Finals record for three pointers. Manu Ginobili has his best game of the series with 24 points and 10 assists. Game 6 was a game for the ages. With less than 30 seconds left the Heat were down five, but they didn't give up. First LeBron James made a three to cut the lead to 2. Kawai Leonard went to the free throw line and made 1 of 2. After an offensive rebound by Bosh he found Allen and he buried the three with 5.2 seconds remaining. Tony Parker has a chance to win it but missed a difficult shot. In overtime the Heat continued the comeback and won 103-100. The Heat were led by LeBron and yet another triple double with 32 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds. Game 7 was another hard fought battle, but once again Miami won 95-88 clinching their third title and second in a row. LeBron James led the way once again connecting on 5 three pointers on his way to 37 points and 12 rebounds.

NBA Offseason Activity

The summer moves have already begun and no team has changed more than the Celtics. Doc Rivers decided his time in Boston was up and was traded to the Los Angeles Clippers. The Celtics got a 2015 first round pick in return. With Rivers leaving the Celtics Danny Ainge decided to move Paul Pierce, Kevin Garnett, and Jason Terry to the Brooklyn Nets in exchange for Gerald Waller, Kris Humphries, MarShon Brooks Kris Joseph, and three first picks. The trade will be official on July 12th. The Nets now have a roster that can contend now, while the Celtics look to rebuild for the future.

2013 NBA Draft

The 2013 NBA Draft started off with confusion from draft analysts who thought Cleveland would take Nerlens Noel or possibly Alex Len at number 1. To much of a shock the Cavs selected Anthony Bennett No. 1 from UNLV. The Magic took Victor Oladipo from Indiana which prompted the Wizards to take Otto Porter 3rd. With the bobcats up they made a surprise pick in Cody Zeller from Indiana over Noel. Suns were up to pick next and took Alex Len a C from Maryland who they had been hoping would fall to them. The wait was finally over for Noel who was selected # 6 by the New Orleans Pelicans but was then soon





dealt to Philadelphia on a draft night trade involving Jrue Holiday. The T-Wolves selected Trey Burke PG from Michigan but swapped the pick with the Jazz at 15 for Shabazz Muhammad. There was several draft night trades in which saw 4 picks get traded twice before the night was over. The crowd in Brooklyn had a great time booing NBA commissioner David Stern. He played to the audience a lot and even went as far to say “All the booing is a sign of respect for the European viewership”. This stopped some of the booing but at the last pick in the 1st round he was cheered as it will be his last pick as NBA Commissioner. Hakeem Olajuwon came out to complete Stern’s 30 yr anniversary because he was the 1st pick in the 1984 NBA draft.

No. Team Player Pos.

1. [Cavaliers](#) - [Anthony Bennett](#) - PF
2. [Magic](#) - [Victor Oladipo](#) - SG
3. [Wizards](#) - [Otto Porter](#) – SF
4. [Bobcats](#) - [Cody Zeller](#) – PF
5. [Suns](#) - [Alex Len](#) – C
6. [Pelicans](#) - [Nerlens Noel](#) – C
7. [Kings](#) - [Ben McLemore](#) – SG
8. [Pistons](#) - [Kentavious Caldwell-Pope](#) – SG
9. [Timberwolves](#) - [Trey Burke](#) – PG
10. [Trail Blazers](#) - [C.J. McCollum](#) – PG
11. [76ers](#) - [Michael Carter-Williams](#) – PG
12. [Thunder](#) - [Steven Adams](#) – C
13. [Mavericks](#) - [Kelly Olynyk](#) – PF
14. [Jazz](#) - [Shabazz Muhammad](#) – SF
15. [Bucks](#) - [Giannis Antetokounmpo](#) – SF
16. [Celtics](#) - [Lucas Nogueira](#) – C
17. [Hawks](#) - [Dennis Schroeder](#) – PG
18. [Hawks](#) - [Shane Larkin](#) – PG
19. [Cavaliers](#) - [Sergey Karasev](#) – SG
20. [Bulls](#) - [Tony Snell](#) – SF
21. [Jazz](#) - [Gorgui Dieng](#) – C
22. [Nets](#) - [Mason Plumlee](#) – C
23. [Pacers](#) - [Solomon Hill](#) – SF
24. [Knicks](#) - [Tim Hardaway Jr.](#) – SG
25. [Clippers](#) - [Reggie Bullock](#) – SG
26. [Timberwolves](#) - [Andre Roberson](#) – SF
27. [Nuggets](#) - [Rudy Gobert](#) – C
28. [Spurs](#) - [Livio Jean-Charles](#) – PF
29. [Thunder](#) - [Archie Goodwin](#) – SG
30. [Suns](#) - [Nemanja Nedovic](#) - SG

The NBA & Appeal to the UK audience

If you were to walk through any city in the UK you would be forgiven for thinking that American sports were more popular than any domestic one. However, this is just due to the Americanization of our high street fashion, primarily led by Air Jordans and MLB snapbacks, rather than the popularity of the sports themselves.

There are three main problems stunting the widespread popularity of American sports. The first is the media. The British media just doesn't give the NBA, NFL, NHL or MLB the time of day. Although when national treasure David Beckham signed for the LA Galaxy there was a little boost. Even the 24 hour sports news channels would prefer to spend 23 hours on football (soccer) than provide equal coverage. This, understandably, is a self-propitiating cycle because they only report on sports the general public are interested in but without exposure the public might not realize their interest. The media were also responsible for the common myths that American football is rugby for wimps and baseball is basically rounders (a child's sport).



The second problem stems from the nature of American sports. Apart from baseball they all require specialist equipment that most British children don't have access too while they're growing up. There was nothing better on a Saturday when you're about 10 than meeting up with your friends in the park for a kickabout. All you needed was a ball and four jumpers (for goal posts) and boom you can have hours of fun. You can't make a basketball hoop out of jumpers.

The main problem though, and one that even effects the die-hard fans, is simply the time difference between our two countries. Apart from on weekends the earliest NBA games start at 7pm ET, which is midnight in the UK. Meaning that most games won't finish until around 3am and when you need to be up around 6-7am for work it is virtually impossible to watch a substantial amount of the season. Television coverage also makes it impossible to be a fan of a particular team rather than the league. Even the elite teams will only be broadcast once a month. Sundays are the exception to every rule. When the NFL season is over, the main sport subscription channel broadcasts the 1pm ET game, which is on at an extremely reasonable 6pm.

The past few years have shown a rise in the popularity in American sports though. London 2012 did a lot for basketball in the UK. Fronted by Luol Deng and Britain actually having a national team again, people started to care. Funding for local councils increased and, in conjunction with Adidas, courts began appearing or where cleaned up. The star studded teams of the USA and Spain gave an extremely entertaining final that attracted a lot of casual fans. While the current exhibition games of the NFL and NBA both sell out every season, fans from across the country travel hours and make it a special occasion to attend. However, if either league set up a residency I highly doubt the current popularity levels would be sustained.



The Future is Now in Major League Baseball By J.R. Lebert aka jrlebert



Baseball should be quite worried, right? Perennial All-Stars are turning in to has-beens fast, and I mean FAST. Here is a quick look at some of the top 30 wage earners in MLB for 2013: Alex Rodriguez, Johan Santana, Vernon Wells, C.C. Sabathia, Mark Teixeira, Tim Lincecum, Carl Crawford, Cole Hamels, Roy Halladay, Ryan Howard, Barry Zito, Alfonso Soriano, Josh Hamilton, Josh Beckett, Derek Jeter, Jayson Werth, Bronson Arroyo. Also highly paid, but not on that list: Curtis Granderson and Albert Pujols.

OK, how many of those names made you excited? If you're a Yankees fan, odds are that list just made you throw up. After all, you have

the #1, #4, #5, #6, and #27 highest paid players, along with the Grandy Man. Exactly none of them should receive a berth in the All-Star game this year, and further, many may not start many more games for the Yankees this year.

Just to reiterate, that list consists of 99 All-Star appearances, 3 Rookies of the Year, 8 MVPs and 8 more Cy Young Winners. They may have had stellar careers, some even Hall of Fame worthy, but unfortunately, on the 2013 MLB radar, they have barely registered a blip. Why?

To use the parlance of Yankees GM Brian Cashman, Generation Next has become Generation Right Bleeping Now. Here is a list of the best young players in baseball, set to not only make their first All-Star appearance this season, but to take the mantle as true superstars. Obviously, because they all made the All-Star team last year, Craig Kimbrel, Yu Darvish, Bryce Harper, Mike Trout, and Stephen Strasburg are off this list, but certainly part of the new generation of stars.

Any conversation of the best young stars in MLB must now start with Yasiel Puig, and Dodgers' 22-year old 5-tool stud. Despite missing the first two days of the month of June, all Puig has done has hit .436 with an incredible 44 hits in his first month of baseball. To put that in perspective, only Joe DiMaggio's 48 hits is a better first-month total in the history of Major League Baseball. He has done it all, including spectacular throws, blazing speed on the bases, and prodigious moon shots to all parts of the ballpark.





The Orioles' future looks bright in the hands of Manny Machado, Baltimore's do-everything 3rd baseman. Through June, Machado leads baseball with 38 doubles, and has 115 hits and 53 runs scored to go with his .321 average. His defense at 3rd and his poise at the plate makes him one to watch for the AL MVP.

Losing Justin Upton has not been a problem for the Arizona Diamondbacks, thanks in large part to the emergence of 1B Paul Goldschmidt, not only as a force at first, but as a bona-fide NL MVP candidate. His slash line of .306-19-67 puts him at or near the top of the NL in all 3 categories, and Arizona sits atop the NL

West.

In his first full season in the bigs, Domonic Brown has helped bolster an aging All-Star roster in Philadelphia. Despite having Ryan Howard, Jimmy Rollins, Chase Utley, and Michael Young, it is Brown who has anchored the lineup, with 21 HRs and 57 RBIs.

Shortstop Jean Segura has adjusted quite well in his first full year in the bigs, becoming a force near the top of the order with the Brewers. He is absolutely raking, hitting .327 with 8 triples, 11 HRs, 24 stolen bases, and 105 hits through June.

On the mound, Matt Harvey has taken Gotham by storm in his first full season. Despite a team that is currently 11 games under .500, Harvey sports a 7-1 record, with an unreal 2.00 ERA, 132 strikeouts, and an MLB-best .885 WHIP. He looks to represent the home town team in this year's All-Star game.



Despite an almost-full season in 2012, Arizona's Patrick Corbin looks like a new pitcher in 2013. Yet to lose a game, at 9-0, Corbin has a razor thin 2.22 ERA and is averaging about 7 K's per 9 innings. If only the Angels would have held on to him, they may not be as far down in the standings.



The Cardinals have long been great at developing talent, and the next in line appears to be SP Shelby Miller. He has already notched 8 wins, an ERA under three, and 101 strikeouts through June. Add him to Lance Lynn and Adam Wainwright, and the Cards' rotation is as good as it gets.

Finally, there is Gerrit Cole, the #1 overall pick from just two years ago. He has won his first four starts with the Pirates in 2013, his first four games of his career. Adding Cole to a team that is now 21 games over .500 and the first to 50 wins in 2013 may be all it takes to get the Pirates back to the playoffs.



Next Big Thing in NFL is... Well... Big!

By J.R. Lebert aka jrlebert

The 2013 NFL Draft was touted as one without a major star. The TV people struggled to promote the draft, not knowing where skill position guys would fall. The draft seemed to lack a transcendent talent, a Cam Newton, Andrew Luck, or Robert Griffin III at QB, an Adrian Peterson or Reggie Bush skilled type RB, or another highly touted WR like a Megatron or a Larry Fitzgerald.

However, this NFL Draft signaled a bit of a sea change. Big men, REALLY big men, dominated the 1st Round. The 2013 Draft may best be known for the men in the trenches, offensive lineman that may be the anchors of their teams for the next 8-10 seasons. Three of the first four, and six of the first 11 men drafted were offensive lineman, including four offensive tackles and two offensive guards.

In fact, those first three offensive linemen to come off the board are all slated to start the season as right tackles, protecting Alex Smith, Blaine Gabbert, and Mike Vick. One could argue that no three quarterbacks need more, and better, protection coming into the season than those three. Alex Smith will be acclimating to yet another head coach and offensive coordinator as the new starter in Kansas City. Blaine Gabbert has had nothing but problems in his first two seasons, having been sacked 62 times in 25 games, while winning just 5 games, losing 19, and completing less than 54% of his passes. Having a mobile big man wherever and whenever he tucks it and goes may be just what Vick needs in Philly while he tries to right his own ship after going just 3-7 last year.

So who are these three men who are set to embark on what could be long, productive, possibly even Pro Bowl-caliber careers?

With the first pick in the 2013 NFL Draft, the Kansas City Chiefs selected OT Eric Fisher out of Michigan University! No, no... Michigan State! Wait, what school is that? CMU? What the heck is a Chippewa? (For the record: Chippewa: A member of an Algonquian people who lived west of Lake Superior.) Eric Fisher became the first ever #1 pick not just from his college, Central Michigan University, but from his ENTIRE CONFERENCE, the MAC, or Mid-American Conference.



Going into the 2014 season, the Mid-American Conference consists of the following schools: Akron, Bowling Green, Buffalo, Kent State, Miami (Ohio), Ohio U., UMass, Ball State, Eastern Michigan, Northern Illinois, Toledo, Western Michigan, and the aforementioned CMU. Not quite your college football powerhouses, to be sure. It will certainly be quite the test for Eric Fisher, having played just one ranked team in his career, Michigan State, in four years, and with a bowl resume consisting of the GMAC Bowl and the Little Caesars Bowl. Is Fisher ready to take on



Von Miller, Mario Williams, Jason Pierre-Paul, Justin Tuck, DeMarcus Ware, Robert Mathis, Brian Orakpo, Ryan Kerrigan, Marcell Dareus, Trent Cole, Jason Babin, and reigning Defensive Player of the Year J.J. Watt, all of whom are on the schedule next year? It will definitely be a trial by fire.

Taken one selection after Fisher, the Jacksonville Jaguars are hoping they are drafting Tony Boselli 2.0, with a longer career, in Luke Joeckel. Boselli's five Pro Bowl and three All Pro nods are the most for any player drafted by Jaguars, which is pretty remarkable considering Boselli was the franchise's first ever draft pick. The comparisons don't stop there between Joeckel and Boselli. Both were chosen #2 overall, and both played in power conferences, at power schools, with Boselli hailing from USC while Joeckel played his college ball at Texas A&M. Joeckel was atop many teams draft boards, and the Jags have to feel fortunate he "fell" to them at #2.



The Philadelphia Eagles had their highest draft position since taking franchise great (yet majorly disrespected) Donovan McNabb with the #2 overall pick in 1999, so the pressure was on to get it right in 2013. They chose OL Lane Johnson of Oklahoma, the "smallest" of the three top OL at 303 pounds. Johnson was tested night in and night out at OU, as the Sooners played ranked opponents an incredible 15 times over the last three seasons. Having that kind of experience, and playing in the types of environments he has, could give Lane a leg up on his fellow draftees.



While O-linemen typically don't move a whole ton of cardboard, unless they are featured in a Disney movie, these three players may give collectors plenty of reasons to pick up cards of theirs in the near future. If any of these three can be the key to offensive stability, winning seasons, and playoff berths, they may find themselves not only in Hawaii or Canton, but in collector's PC boxes as well.



Autographs of all three can be had well under \$10 on eBay, and base rookies won't set you back much either. And heck, if you're a Chippewa fan, you've had just 5 players drafted since 2008, so grab all the Fishers you can!



SCF Official Review: 2012/13 ITG Draft Prospects By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

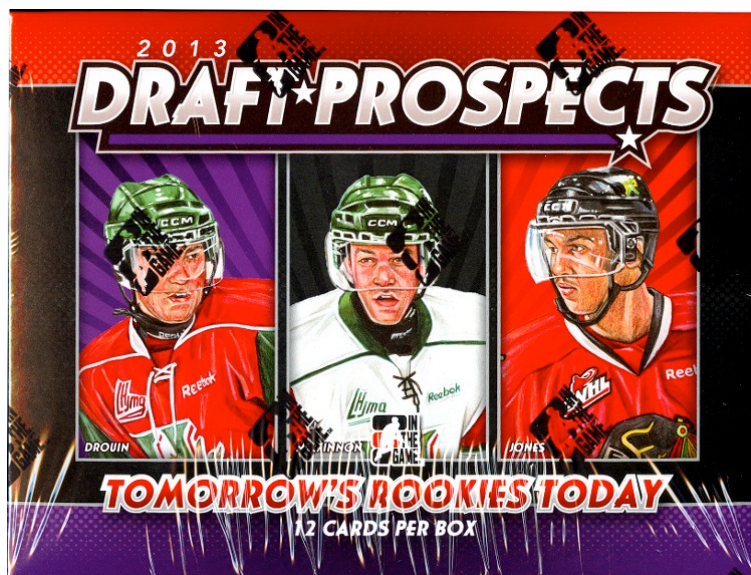
First and foremost, I'd like to thank our sponsors at In The Game for providing us with this box.

1 pack per box
12 cards per pack
Current Retail Price (online): \$84.99 - \$99.99

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

Autograph Cards

Always listening to collectors, we set out to get hard-signatures on our Autograph Cards for this product even if it meant sending cards to Russia, Sweden and Finland. The results are astonishing featuring almost all the 2013 Draft Prospects that are projected to be drafted in the first round. This includes the "big three" of Seth Jones, Nathan MacKinnon and Jonathan Drouin.



Some of the European prospects in this product also projected to be picked in the Draft are Aleksander Barkov, Rasmus Ristolainen, Alexander Wennberg, Robert Hagg, Jacob de-la Rose and Elias Lindholm.

Along with the great list of 2013 Draft Prospects in the Autograph Card checklist collectors will find several Future Draft Prospects including Team Canada Star, Connor McDavid.

Each player has two different Autograph Cards with both a silver and a more limited gold version of each card.

Authentic Game-Used Memorabilia Cards

The Authentic Game-Used Memorabilia in this product will be amazing. Insert sets include; Game-Used Jersey, Game-Used Patch, Future Prospect Game-Used Jersey, Future Prospect Game-Used Patch, Draft Year, Country of Origin, Past and Future, Present and Future, Past/Present and Future, Teammates, Top Prospect Game Complete Jersey. Some of the very limited Authentic Game-Used Memorabilia insert sets include; Auto/Memo, First Round Patch and First Round Pick Nameplate.

The First Round Nameplate insert set features nameplates from players selected in the First Round of the Draft in past years. The list is a who's who of the game's bright young stars including Perry, Nugent-Hopkins, Kane, Landeskog, Kadri, Courtnier, Myers, Little, Hodgson, Gudbranson, Boychuk and Alzner to mention a few.

Premium Base Cards



The extensive base card checklist will include the following subsets; 2013 Draft Prospects, First Round Picks, Future Draft Prospects and Draft Surprises.

All base cards will be premium foil cards and will have four parallels. This is ITG's product with parallels for those collectors who enjoy them.

There are seven Premium Base Cards in each pack.

WHAT WE PULLED

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

Base: 7/180 (3.9%)



Each box of Draft Prospects will contain 7 base cards. There are four subsets: 2013 Draft Prospects, Former First Round Picks, Draft Day Surprises and Future Prospects. Scans do not do these cards just as the foil just gets eaten up. The Prospects card design can be better seen within the autographs. The photos are vibrant along with the various colors, typically matching the player's uniform/team. The foil-based cards give a better look than the standard ITG cards such as H&P or BTP.

Draft Prospects Silver Frederik Gauthier Autograph (on-card)



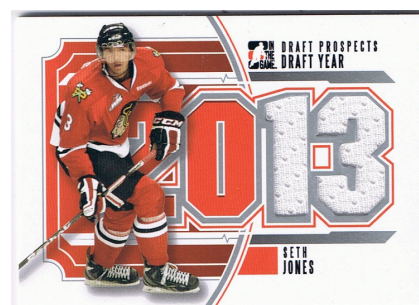
Draft Prospects Silver Sean Day Autograph (on-card)



Draft Prospects Gold Jacob De-La-Rose Autograph (on-card) /20



Draft Year Silver Seth Jones Jersey /100





Future Prospect Silver Storm Phaneuf Jersey /100



Each box will yield 3 autographs and 2 relics for a total of 5 hits. Most of the autographs will be the basic Draft Prospects variety. There is a gold version for each one with a print run of 20. There are also three super short prints in the silver version: Jonathan Drouin, Nathan MacKinnon and Seth Jones. With the relics, there are numerous sets, some of which will also contain an autograph. The print runs will range as high as 110 all the way down to 1, depending on the set and version.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Base - 3/5

Design - 4.5/5

Fun - 4.5/5

Value - 4/5

Rebuy - 4/5

Total - 20/25 (80%)

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





SCF Official Review: 2013 Topps Museum Collection By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

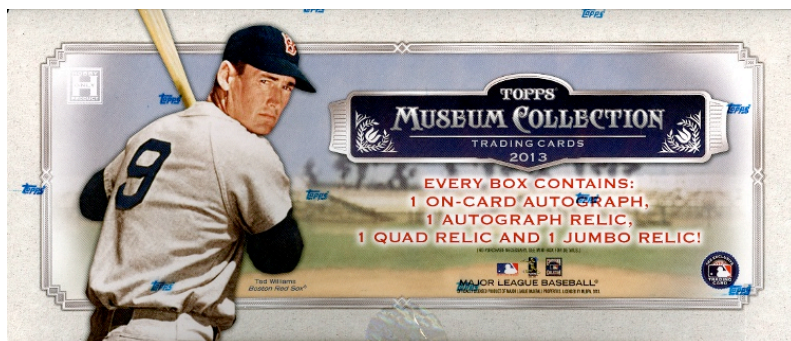
First and foremost, I'd like to thank our sponsors at Topps for providing us with this box.

4 packs (mini boxes) per box
5 cards per pack
Current Retail Price (online): \$199.99 - \$229.99

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

BASE CARDS

100 of the greatest players of all time, featured on premium stock in some of the most striking photography ever seen.



PARALLEL CARDS

All 100 subjects will be paralleled as follows

- Red Parallel Numbered 1/1.
- Blue Parallel Sequentially numbered to 99.
- Green Parallel Sequentially numbered to 199.
- Copper Parallel One per pack unless replaced by one of the above.

INSERT CARDS

Canvas Collection

50 of the most collectible players of all time will be featured on exquisite original paintings. Sequentially numbered to 10. All 50 subjects will also be featured on reproductions that will be inserted 1 per Box.

ON-CARD AUTOGRAPHS - 1 PER BOX!

Archival Autographs

Over 75 stars will sign directly on these striking cards. All cards are sequentially numbered, none higher than 399!

Archival Autographs Gold Parallel

- All subjects, numbered to 5.

New! Archival Autographs Sepia Parallel

- All subjects, numbered to 5.

Dual On-Card Autographs

25 cards will feature superstar pairings, with both stars signing on-card. Sequentially numbered to 15.



The Rundown On



New! Triple On-Card Autographs

5 cards will feature superstar combos, all signing on-card. Sequentially numbered to 5.

Cut Signatures

Cut signature cards of 20 of the greatest names from the history of the game. Each Is Numbered 1/1!

Museum Collection Framed On-Card Autographs

Over 50 superstars will sign directly on-card in metallic ink for these beautifully framed cards. 1 Per Case!

- Gold frame and foil sequentially numbered to 15.
- Silver frame and foil sequentially numbered to 10.
- Black frame and foil sequentially numbered to 5.

AUTOGRAPHED RELIC CARDS - 1 PER BOX!

Signature Swatches Single-Player Dual Relic Autographs

Over 65 subjects with an autograph and two game-used memorabilia pieces. Sequentially numbered.

Signature Swatches Single-Player Dual Relic Autographs Gold Parallel

All subjects paralleled with gold foil and sequentially numbered to 25.

Signature Swatches Single-Player Dual Relic Autographs Patch Parallel

All subjects paralleled with guaranteed patch pieces and sequentially numbered to 5.

Signature Swatches Single-Player Triple Relic Autographs

Over 35 subjects with an autograph and three game-used memorabilia pieces. Sequentially numbered.

Signature Swatches Single-Player Triple Relic Autographs Gold Parallel

All subjects paralleled with gold foil and sequentially numbered to 25.

Signature Swatches Single-Player Triple Relic Autographs Patch Parallel

All subjects paralleled with guaranteed patch pieces and sequentially numbered to 5.

Momentous Material Jumbo Relic Autographs

Over 100 players with a jumbo swatch of game-used memorabilia and an autograph. Sequentially numbered to 10. 1 Per Case!

Primary Pieces Single-Player Quad Relic Autographs

40 subjects featured on book cards with four game-used memorabilia pieces and an autograph. Sequentially numbered to 10.

JUMBO RELIC CARDS - 1 PER BOX!



The Rundown On



Momentous Material Jumbo Relics

Over 100 players with over-sized swatches of game-used memorabilia. Sequentially numbered to 50.

Momentous Material Jumbo Relics Gold Parallel

All 100+ subjects sequentially numbered to 35.

Momentous Material Jumbo Relics Silver Rainbow Parallel

All 100+ subjects sequentially numbered to 10.

Momentous Material Jumbo Relics Gold Rainbow Parallel

All 100+ subjects numbered 1 of 1.

Jumbo Lumber Relics

Over 50 subjects with a jumbo game-used bat piece, sequentially numbered to 30.

Jumbo Lumber Relics Gold Parallel

All subjects sequentially numbered to 20.

Jumbo Lumber Relics Silver Rainbow Parallel

All subjects sequentially numbered to 5.

Jumbo Lumber Relics Gold Rainbow Parallel

All subjects numbered 1 of 1.

New! Jumbo Lumber Bat Nameplate Relics

100 superstars with a one-of-a-kind bat nameplate relic. Numbered 1 of 1.

Momentous Material Laundry Tag Relics

100 cards feature the laundry tag from a game-worn jersey. Domestic Exclusive! Numbered 1 of 1.

Momentous Material Jumbo Patch Relics

Over 50 players with an over-sized patch piece from a game-worn item. Sequentially numbered to 5.

Museum Memorabilia

100 cards featuring a unique jersey swatch from the game's biggest stars. Numbered 1 of 1.

Momentous Material Dual Jumbo Relics

30 book cards featuring over-sized swatches of game-used memorabilia from two players. Sequentially numbered to 5.

Dual Jumbo Lumber Relics

30 book cards featuring over-sized slices of game-used bats from two players. Sequentially numbered to 5.

QUAD RELIC CARDS - 1 PER BOX!



The Rundown On



Primary Pieces Single-Player Quad Relics

Over 50 players featured with 4 pieces of game-used memorabilia. Sequentially numbered to 99.

Primary Pieces Single-Player Quad Patch Relics

50 subjects with guaranteed patch pieces. Sequentially numbered to 5.

Primary Pieces Single-Player Quad Patch Relics

50 subjects with guaranteed patch pieces. Sequentially numbered to 5.

Primary Pieces Single-Player Quad Relics Legends

20 of the all-time greats with 4 pieces of game-used memorabilia. Sequentially numbered to 25.

Primary Pieces Single-Player Quad Relics Legends Gold Parallel

All 20 greats are paralleled. Sequentially numbered to 5.

Primary Pieces Four-Player Quad Relics

25 cards featuring 4 players and a piece of game-used memorabilia from each. Sequentially numbered to 99.

Primary Pieces Four-Player Quad Relics Copper Parallel

All 25 cards sequentially numbered to 75.

Primary Pieces Four-Player Quad Relics Gold Parallel

All 25 cards sequentially numbered to 25.

Primary Pieces Four-Player Quad Patch Relics

10 cards featuring 4 players and 4 pieces of guaranteed game-worn patch. Sequentially numbered to 5.

NEW! RANDOMLY INSERTED BOX LOADERS

FRAMED OVER-SIZED CANVAS COLLECTION

20 stunning reproductions of original art, printed over-sized and framed like the Museum Collection. numbered to 25.

Framed Over-Sized Canvas Collection Autographed Parallel

10 of the above will be signed by the player! numbered to 5.

FRAMED OVER-SIZED JERSEY NAMEPLATE CARDS

20 over-sized cards featuring full jersey nameplates, framed like the Museum Collection. Numbered 1 of 1.

WHAT WE PULLED

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KK6c3NFc7hc>



Base - 11/100 (11%)

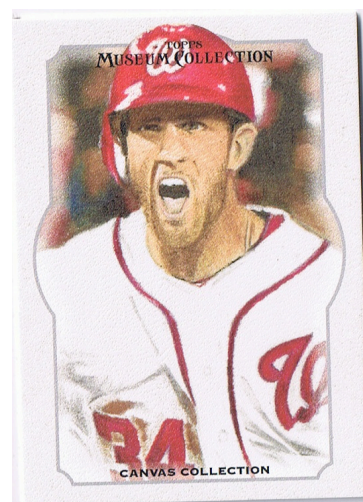
Copper /424 (3): Robin Yount, Buster Posey, Dylan Bundy

Green /199 (1): Andrew McCutchen



Each pack will typically yield three base cards. Museum Collection contains a mix of legends, veterans and rookies within the 100-card base set. Player photos are surrounded by a "frame" on a thicker card stock than a normal baseball card. Color parallel levels are easily determined as the "frame" will match the color. All the parallels are serial numbered.

Canvas Collection (1): Bryce Harper



On average, each box will contain a Canvas Collection card. Instead of photos, players are captured in artistic drawings. Unlike the gloss feel of the gloss feel of the base cards, these have a matte layer which makes the surface seems flat with ridges.

Todd Frazier Autograph /399 (on-card)

Momentous Material Jumbo Matt Cain Jersey /50





Primary Pieces Quad Dustin Ackley Four Jerseys /99



Signature Swatches Domonic Brown 2-color Patch/Jersey/



Each pack of Museum Collection will yield an autograph or relic. In fact, the box breaks down to 1 on-card autograph, 1 autograph relic, 1 quad relic and 1 jumbo relic. There are a multitude of relics to be found from regular jersey and bat swatches to jumbo pieces including oversized laundry tags. In a weird twist, on-card autographs are present, yet they are found on the high serial number cards. You would expect the sticker autos would go that way and the on-card would be reserve for low numbered cards.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Base - 4/5

Design - 4.25/5

Fun - 4.25/5

Value - 4/5

Rebuy - 3.5/5

Overall - 20/25 (80%)

NPN Information

NPN 2013 Topps Museum Collection Baseball
PO Box 2098
Duryea PA 18642

Limit 1 Request Per Household

Postmarked: 7/10/13

Received By: 7/17/13

Canada Skills: $111 \times 2 + 8 - 30 = ?$

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, you can visit them today at www.topps.com.



SCF Official Review: 2013 Bowman By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

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

10 packs per box

25 cards per pack

Current Retail Price (online): \$119.99 - \$149.99

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

AUTOGRAPH CARDS

Rookie Chrome Refractor Autograph Cards (Up to 80 subjects)

Featuring **HARD-SIGNED** autograph cards from the upcoming 2013 NFL Rookie Class on **CHROME REFRACTOR** technology!

- Blue Refractor #d to 99.
- Gold Refractor #d to 75.
- Orange Refractor #d to 50. Hobby Only!
- Red Refractor #d to 25. Hobby Only!
- X-Fractor Parallel #d to 10. Hobby Only!
- Prism Refractor Parallel #d to 5. Hobby Only!
- Superfractor Parallel #d 1/1. Hobby Only!
- Printing Plates #d 1/1. Hobby Only!

Bowman Autograph Mini Cards (Up to 80 subjects)

2013 NFL Rookie subjects **HARD-SIGNED** retro, mini-sized 1952 Bowman cards!!

Red Ink Parallels - Signed in **RED INK** Seq #d to 5.

Dual Rookie Chrome Refractor Autograph Cards (Up to 10 cards)

Featuring **HARD-SIGNED** autographs from the best rookie combos.

Bowman Black Autograph Cards (Up to 35 subjects)

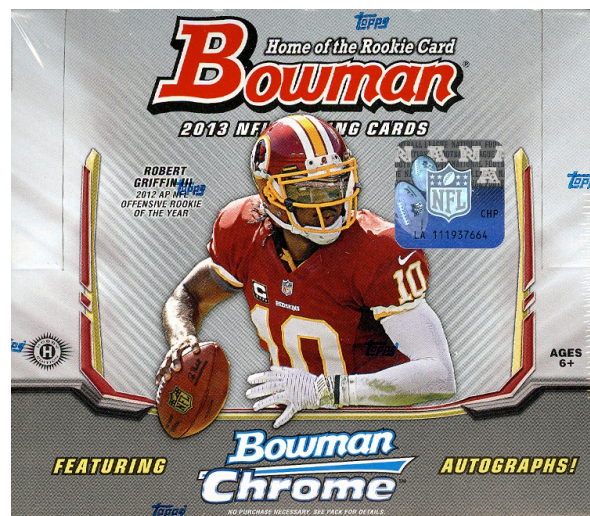
These redemption cards will feature **HARD-SIGNED** signatures in silver ink on beautifully designed black cards from elite rookies selected for the 2013 NFLPA Rookie Premiere.

These high-end cards will be 100-pt thick and feature players in their NFL uniforms. #d to 25.

BASE CARD PARALLELS

Rookie Rainbow Foil Base Card Parallels (Up to 110 subjects)

Featuring new Bowman design Black-Bordered - 1 Per Pack Hobby Only!





The Rundown On



- Blue-Bordered #'d to 499.
- Gold-Bordered #'d to 399.
- Orange-Bordered #'d to 299.
- Red-Bordered #'d to 199.
- Prism #'d to 99. Hobby Only!
- Printing Plates #'d 1/1. Hobby Only!

Rookie Paper Base Card Parallels (Up to 110 subjects)

- Black-Bordered - 4 Per Pack Hobby Only!
- Blue-Bordered #'d to 499.
- Gold-Bordered #'d to 399.
- Orange-Bordered #'d to 299.
- Red-Bordered #'d to 199.
- Green-Bordered #'d to 99.

Veteran Rainbow Foil Base Card Parallels (Up to 110 subjects)

Featuring a new Bowman design, different from the Rookie Base Cards.

- Black Bordered - 1 Per Pack Hobby Only!
- Blue-Bordered #'d to 99.
- Gold-Bordered #'d to 75.
- Orange-Bordered #'d to 50.
- Red-Bordered #'d to 25.
- Prism #'d 1/1. Hobby Only!
- Printing Plates #'d 1/1. Hobby Only!

Veteran Paper Base Card Parallels (Up to 110 subjects)

- Black-Bordered - 2 Per Pack Hobby Only!
- Blue-Bordered #'d to 99.
- Gold-Bordered #'d to 75.
- Orange-Bordered #'d to 50.
- Red Bordered #'d to 25.
- Green-Bordered #'d 1/1.

INSERT CARDS

Bowman Die-Cut Cards (Up to 50 subjects)

The best veterans featured on an all-new, perimeter die-cut foilboard design. 3 per Hobby Box!

- Die-Cut Prism Parallel #'d to 99.
- Die-Cut Blue Parallel #'d to 25.
- Die-Cut Red Parallel #'d 1/1.

Silver Ice Base Parallel (220 subjects)

Parallel of veteran and rookie subjects utilizing Silver Ice foilboard technology. 2 per Hobby box!



- Gridiron Ice #d to 50.
- Red Ice #d to 25.
- Purple Ice #d to 10.

Bowman Mini Cards (Up to 110 subjects)

Irregular sized rookie cards featured in the retro 1952 Bowman Football design. 1 per Hobby box!

WHAT WE PULLED

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUoSC0FFbAs>

Base: 148/220 (67.3%)

Black: 55/220 (25%)

Chrome: 14/220 (6.4%)

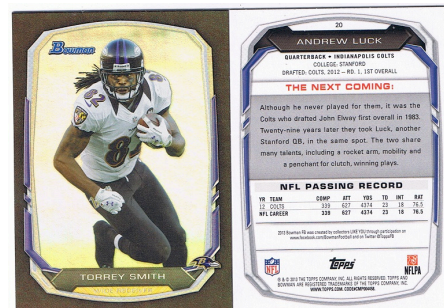
There are three separate base sets within Bowman this year. This is a lot like what Bowman does in their baseball releases. The standard base set is offset with a white border background. The second set is a black border background. And the final set is the ever-popular Bowman Chrome set. The veterans are featured in full-body action photos while the rookies suffer the airbrushed fate of missing college logos since Topps does not have a College Football License (CLC).

Bowman Blue /499 (2): John Simon, Giovani Bernard

Bowman Gold /399 (1): Aaron Dobson

Bowman Orange /299 (1): David Amerson

Bowman Red /199 (1): Jordan Poyer



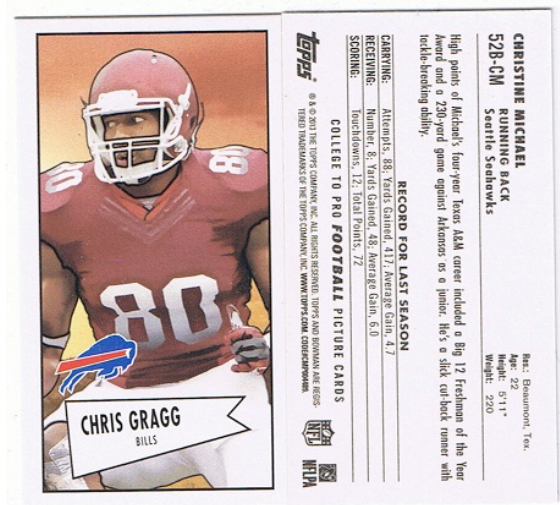


Chrome Blue /499 (2): Brandon Jenkins, John Jenkins
 Chrome Gold /399 (1): Ryan Swope
 Chrome Orange (2): Philip Lutzenkirchen /299, Peyton Manning /50
 Chrome Prism /99 (1): Denard Robinson



Much like its Baseball counterpart, Bowman Football contain many parallels. They stretch across both the regular and Chrome sets. However, the numbering is different for the veterans and the rookies. Rookies start as high as 499 whereas the veterans top out at 99. In typical Bowman fashion, the parallels are various color with a lone exception, Prism. The Prism cards are shown with a bluish stained-glass background.

Chrome Die-Cuts (3)
 Silver Ice (2)
 1952 Bowman Minis (10)



There are two unnumbered parallels in Bowman this year. Both are Chrome in nature. The Bowman Chrome Die-Cuts have a unique design. There are numbered parallel versions of the card to go along with the unnumbered regular version seen above. The other Chrome parallel is Silver Ice. There are numbered versions of these as well which will correspond



to different colors. The final insert set is dedicated to the 1952 Bowman Minis. Rookies are showcased using the retro look of the set. You can expect one in every pack.

Christine Michael Chrome Rookie Autograph (on card)



Matt Elam Rookie Chrome Autograph



Dennis Johnson Chrome X-Fractor Rookie Autograph /10 (on card)



Alex Okafor 1952 Bowman Mini Autograph (



Jeremy Coleman NFLPA Collegiate Autograph



Alfred Morris Gold Jersey /50





The Rundown On



Each box of Bowman will contain 4 autographs and 1 relic card on average. This box contain an extra auto. One huge bonus to notice right away is the use of on-card autographs. If only that could happen in every product. Five hits for the price paid on pre-sell was actually a solid return, but not so much with the current market price. The Chrome autographs looks great and there are various color/parallel levels to be found. The real standout though is the on-card autographs on the 52 Bowman Mini cards. They look magnificent.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Base - 3.5/5

Design - 4/5

Fun - 4.25/5

Value - 4.5/5

Rebuy - 4/5

Total - 20.25/25 (81%)

NPN Information

NPN 2013 Bowman Football

PO Box 765

Pittston PA 18640

Limit 1 Request Per Household

Postmarked By: 9/4/13

Received By: 9/11/13

Canada Skills: $21 + 9 \times 6 - 5 = ?$

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, you can visit them today at www.topps.com.



SCF Official Review: 2012/13 Panini Brilliance By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

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

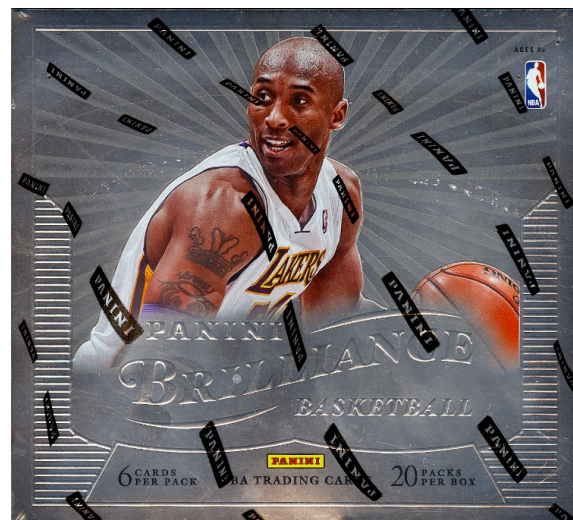
20 packs per box

6 cards per pack

Current Retail Price (online): \$79.99 - \$99.99

PRODUCT HIGHLIGHTS

- 300-card base set, a huge autograph checklist featuring
- 240 veterans and legends, and 60 rookies, plus brilliant inserts including blasts from the hobby's past!
- The legendary return of landmark inserts such as Starburst and Artists Proofs parallels.
- A bold addition to the Panini America NBA portfolio bolstered by special embossed inserts that are different to the touch.
- Large 240-card autograph checklist in Marks of Brilliance and the league's 60 hottest rookies in Brilliant Beginnings.
- City-to-City, a memorabilia card inspired by a Panini collector.



PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

BRILLIANT BEGINNINGS

Check out the Brilliant Beginnings autograph set featuring 60 rookies!

GAME TIME JERSEYS

Find jumbo jersey's from 80 of the league's most talented players!

MARKS OF BRILLIANCE

Huge autograph checklist with over 200 legends and stars!

COMMON STARBURST

Look for Starburst parallels of all 300 base cards - Two per box!

SPRINGFIELD

Look for this insert with a nod to the legends in the Basketball Hall of Fame!

TEAM TOMORROW

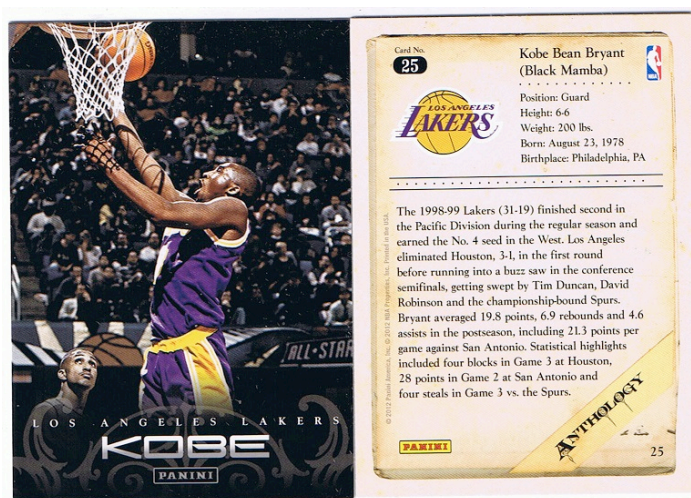
Check out Team Tomorrow, one of six inserts featuring blasts from the hobby's past!



WHAT WE PULLED

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OS1Ijj5hMLQ>

Kobe Anthology (5):



Base - 100/300 (33.3%)

Starburst (3)



Brilliance contains a 300-card base set. It comprises of 200 veterans and a mix of 100 retired players and rookies. The cards have a metallic look and the words "Panini Brilliance Basketball" are casted into the card meaning the letters are raised. There is a Starburst parallel. The top of the cards has raised lines to look light a star or light is shining in the background. Be on the lookout for Artist's Proof cards. There are the lone numbered parallel and will be numbered to 10 or less.



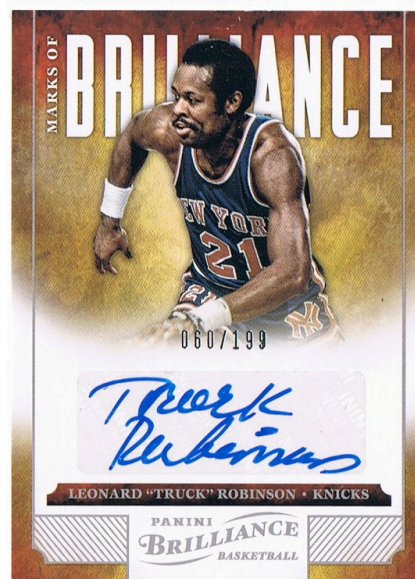
- Accolades (3)
- Magic Numbers (1)
- Scorers Inc (3)
- Spellbound (2)
- Springfield (3)
- Team Tomorrow (3)



For all the collector who complain that Panini has way too many parallels and numbered cards, here's another release with a lack of numbered cards. However, it is insert heavy. Team Tomorrow places together an "all-star" list of rookies over the last two years and use the Starburst design. Spellbound is the first time that I can recall a letterman set was done where manufactured or actual letters were not used. Not sure what the appeal will be in regular cards to spell out a person's last name. Springfield focuses on players in the Hall of Fame.

City To City Ray Allen Dual Jersey

Marks Of Brilliance Leonard "Truck" Robinson Autograph /199





Marks Of Brilliance Nick Anderson Autograph /199

Each box of Brilliance will yield 2 autographs and 1 relic on average. The Jersey sets have two versions, the regular and a Prime series. Autograph sets are limited as well. Marks of Brilliance Autographs are numbered to 199 or less. Nice white area for an on-card autograph and it gets spoiled by a sticker.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Base - 3.5/5

Design - 4.75/5

Fun - 4/5

Value - 3.5/5

Rebuy - 3.5/5

Overall - 19.25/25 (77%)

NPN Information

NPN, 2012-13 Panini Brilliance Basketball

5325 FAA Blvd, Suite 100A

Irving TX 75061-3601

Limit 2 Requests Per Household, 1 Per Envelope

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Canada Skills: $406 + 750 / 375 \times 329 - 153 = ?$

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





SCF Official Review: 2013 Press Pass Redline By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

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

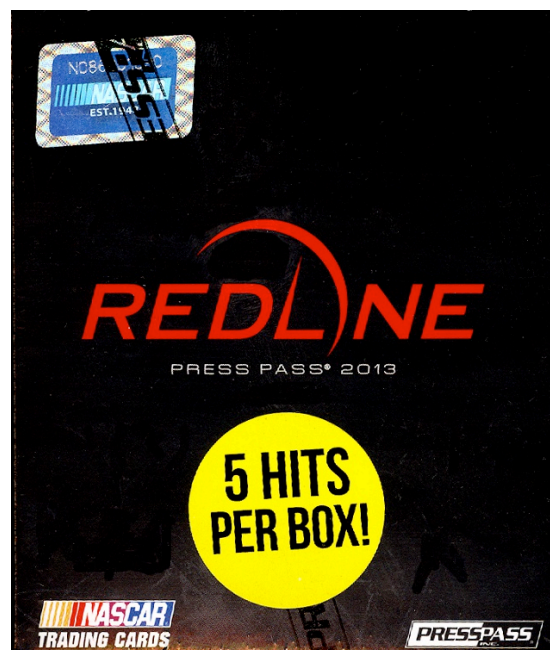
2 packs per box

10 cards per pack

Current Retail Price (online): \$119.99 - \$139.99

PRODUCT HIGHLIGHTS

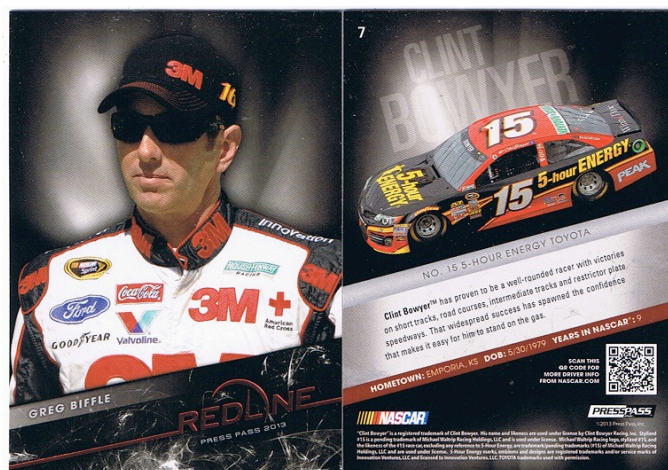
- Two Autographs and Two Race-Used Memorabilia Cards in Every Box!
- At least One Multi-Swatch Memorabilia Card per Box!
- Career Wins Autographed Dual Relic Cards Featuring a Die-Cut of each driver's Number of Career Wins!
- Remarkable Relics Featuring an Autograph and Three Swatches of Memorabilia From a Legendary NASCAR Driver!
- Look for Short-Printed Redline Signature Variation Autos Featuring Alternate Photos of Drivers!
- Six different Autograph Inserts!
- Nine different Memorabilia Card Inserts!
- Set includes the Biggest Names in NASCAR!
- Two 10-Card Packs Per Box!
- Look for boxes containing Power Packs which include exclusive Power Pick cards and bonus autograph and memorabilia cards!



WHAT WE PULLED

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-BKwCn1_a0

Base: 11/50 (22%)

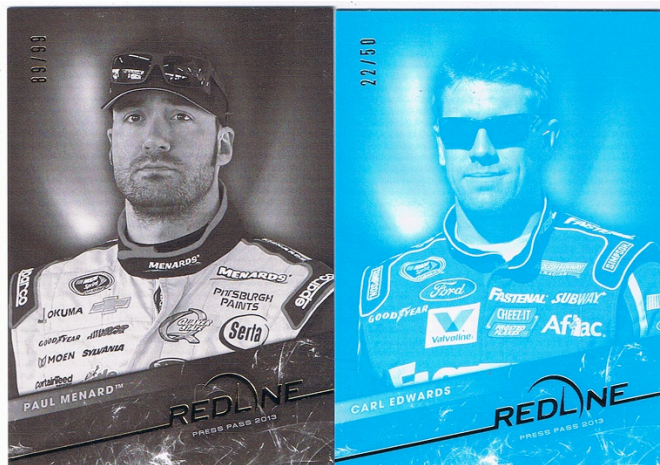




Redline debuted last year and came in a metal tin. This year, the box has been streamlined to a small cardboard box. The design of the base cards still have the black background and the slick feel across the front. However, Press Pass has moved forward with a rest of the design. There is a lighted area behind the driver and the bottom of the cards now has what appears to be either scratches or fireworks. Either way, much better than last year's effort.

Press Proofs Black /99 (1): Paul Menard

Press Proofs Cyan /50 (1): Carl Edwards

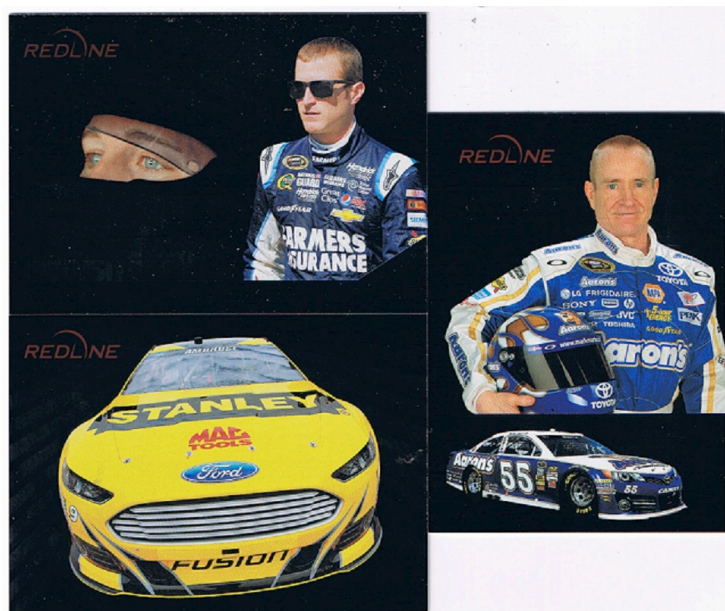


Like their other releases, Press Proofs matching the four colors used to produce the cards can be found in boxes. Typically, some colors are placed in the hobby boxes and the others in retail. In hobby, these generally appear one per box.

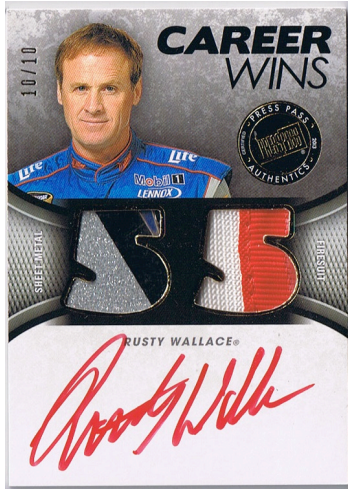
Intensity (1)

Racers (1)

RPM (1)

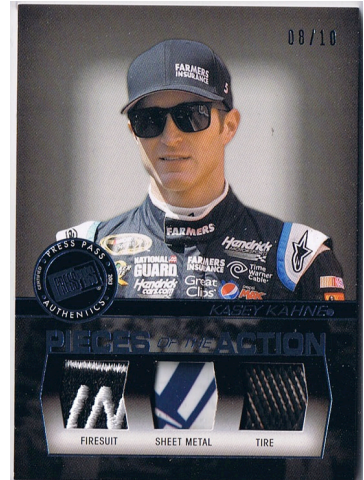


Redline has three insert sets. Intensity and Racers focus on the drivers while RPM is all about the racecar. RPM and Intensity are carry overs from last year. Be on the lookout for possible short prints in the various sets.



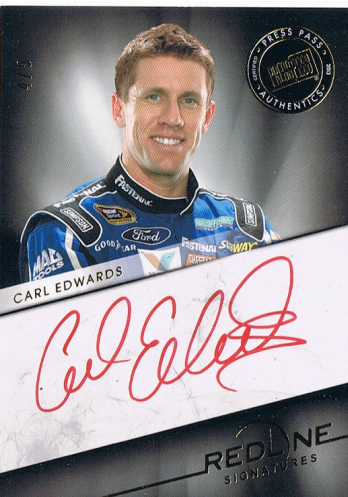
Career Wins Rusty Wallace 4-color Sheet Metal / 2-color Patch Firesuit / Autograph /10

Pieces Of The Action Kasey Kahne 2-color Patch Firesuit / 2-color Sheet Metal / 2-color Tire /10



Redline Relics Dale Earnhardt Jr. 1-color Glove /25

Redline Relics Regan Smith 2-color Firesuit /25



Redline Signatures Carl Edwards Autograph /5

Recently, Press Pass announced they were adding an additional hit to Redline Hobby Boxes, going from 4 to 5. Extra hits are always a plus. I think all collectors would trade a base card for a relic or auto anytime. There are a multitude of relics, autographs and relic/autos. These also have different parallel levels within each set. As a side note, having all five hits being numbered to 25 or less is really nice, especially with multiple patches and multicolor pieces.



FINAL THOUGHTS

Base - 4/5

Design - 4.25/5

Fun - 5/5

Value - 4.5/5

Rebuy - 4/5

Overall - 21.75/25 (87%)

NPN Information

NPN Press Pass Redline 2013

9805 Northcross Center Court. Suite H

Huntersville NC 28078

Limit 1 Request Per Household

Postmarked By: 9/5/13

Received By: 9/12/13

Canada Skills: $50 + (2 \times 4) - 10 = ?$

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





The ITG Cross Canada Tour Hits Player Choice Collectibles in Kelowna By RGM81 aka Richard McAdam

On Saturday, June 22nd, Players Choice Collectibles in beautiful Kelowna, British Columbia, hosted their second ITG Cross Canada Tour event. Having previously had a very successful event in 2010, owners Dean Draginda and Jason Wobshall were excited to deliver the goods again to collectors in the Okanagan.

As with all other stops on the Cross Canada Tour, the main highlight of the day would be the series of specially-produced 1/1 memorabilia cards that feature the store's logo on the front and back of the cards. Collectors who purchased a box of 2012-13 Between The Pipes would be entered into a random drawing for one of the forty cards made just for this event. Jason had posted some preview pictures on his Instagram during the week, and more than a couple of collectors in the area were highly interested in this Roberto Luongo card:



A very nice Luongo highlighted the 1/1 cards available at the Cross Canada Tour event in Kelowna.

Also included in the 1/1 binder were cards featuring Carey Price, Patrick Roy, Arturs Irbe, Jonathan Quick, and hometown Kelowna Rockets prospect Jordon Cooke. Nearly every card in the collection featured a multi-colour memorabilia piece, though none was more coveted than the Luongo pictured above. For all the slack he has been given by fans and media, Luongo remains a very popular figure for many fans and collectors.

The event kicked off at noon, as people who had been checking out the store's sidewalk sale for clearance item deals were enthusiastic to start ripping wax in the hopes of landing some great cards from one of ITG's signature releases. Though the 2013 Draft Prospects set had just been released, it was not eligible for the program, but that didn't stop more than a few folks from trying their hand at landing some great cards of future NHL superstars. I remember seeing somebody pull a Zachary Fucale autograph and being pretty happy with that result.

I was one of the first people to be inside at the opening of the event. In addition to my box of Between the Pipes, I also snagged a really cool retro mini Team Canada jersey for the low low price of five bucks. Can't go wrong! I had a pretty solid break, one that was greatly improved by a very nice PC pull of an Aspire dual memorabilia jersey featuring Carey



Price and Patrick Roy! I very rarely pull PC cards during my breaks, so to hit something as nice as this really made the break pretty special.



2012-13 Between The Pipes Aspire Carey Price / Patrick Roy – a great PC treat!

Other hits included: Oscar Dansk jersey card, Kirk McLean Decades 90's Autograph, Garth Snow Decades 90's Autograph, Matt Hewitt CHL Prospects Autograph, and Masked Men 5 inserts of Curtis Joseph and John Vanbiesbrouck. The McLean auto, as well as a Masked Men 5 Silver of 70's Penguins goalie Michel Dion and a Tyson Barrie H&P Number, were traded to Dean for a Shea Weber SP Game Used RC and a 2009 All-Star Game Saku Koivu McFarlane figure that I've wanted for a long time. All in all, I was thrilled with the box. Good names for many of the hits, and I just can't help but love that PC hit. What a beauty!

After I was done with my box, I had my chance to pull my ticket for the special 1/1 card. Obviously my first hope was for the Price, which had a pretty nice 2-colour seam on it to boot. But really, at this point I would have been happy with just about anything. So imagine my very pleasant surprise when I pulled out ticket #3 and that happened to be...the Luongo! Yes! In all likelihood I am going to trade or sell that card to one of the local collectors here in Kelowna because I know they will appreciate it more than me, but until such a time as it does go it will be a great reminder of a very enjoyable day at the card shop.

I stuck around for a while to check out other people's hits and hopefully even make a deal or two. There were also some great door prizes that ITG had provided: there were some of the Memorial Cup sets (which are pretty tough to find) as well as sealed boxes of various ITG products, including one box of the Draft Prospects set. Sadly I came up empty on those items, but it was really cool to see a youngster opening up boxes that her dad had won. That's the future right there.

To conclude, it was truly a fantastic day and a successful Cross Canada Tour event in Kelowna. Collectors here are happy to support a fantastic shop and keep the hobby motor running even though the vaunted Double Rookie Class is just around the corner. Thanks to Jason and Dean for putting on a great show, and thanks to ITG for coming up with this great way to get people out to support their local hobby shops!

- See more at: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/articles/2013/06/the-itg-cross-canada-tour-hits-players-choice-collectibles-in-kelowna/#sthash.R0d8jRv5.dpuf>

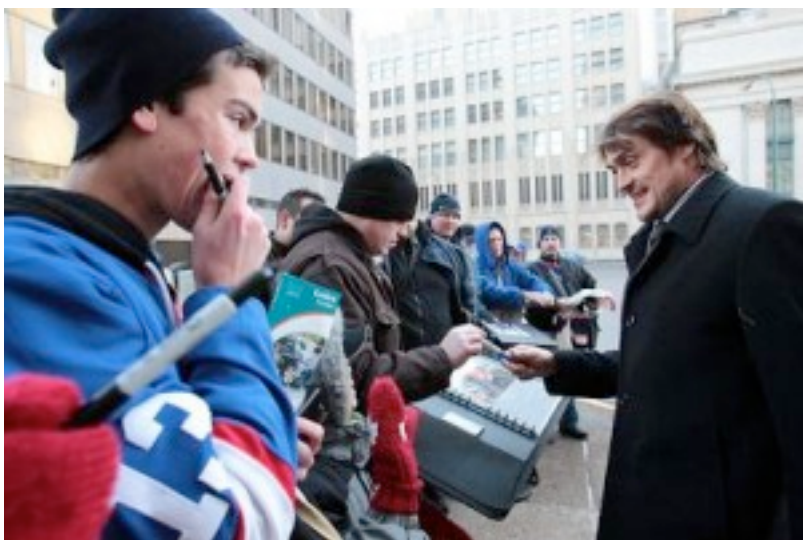


WANT TO GET SOME CARDS GRADED? KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THE NEXT BECKETT GROUP SUBMISSION! CHECK OUT SOME OF THE LATEST RESULTS!





Hockey's Worst Trade By Gregory Sanchez aka sugarpooper



On February 7, 1996, What is believed to be one of the worst trades in NHL history occurred. What seemed to be an already utterly gloomy year for Winnipeg Jets fans got even worse. After the rising NHL market in the United States forced small market teams like the Winnipeg Jets to sell their franchise to American businessmen Steven Gluckstern and Richard Burke, fans in Winnipeg were still shocked to hear their star player was traded for a couple of promising young players. The relocation of their team didn't seem to hurt as much as seeing the heart and soul of the team get traded away for some teens. It is hard to comprehend sometimes just how fortunate the Mighty Ducks of Anaheim were in this trade.

Teemu Selanne's 76 goals as a rookie is a baffling record. His 132 points that season were a franchise record. Despite these amazing statistics, He was dealt to the Mighty Ducks of Anaheim along with Marc

Chouinard for two first round draft picks, Chad Kilger and Oleg Tverdovsky. Winnipeg Jets fans were left in the dust, wondering what in the world happened. A very interesting part in one of the worst trades in sports history, is that Teemu Selanne still plays with the Anaheim Ducks. This was obviously his introduction to the brand new hockey club and perhaps this is where their long term partnership started. Selanne has been a future hall Of famer since his very first NHL season, and still continues to thrive at the highest levels of hockey. He is practically surpassing some of hockey's greatest in statistics anytime he gets a point, meanwhile Kilger and Tverdovsky ended up being underachieving first found draft picks, to say the least.

When the trade happened, what was at the time the head coach of the Winnipeg Jets Terry Simpson said it best: "I don't think it is realistic to expect two young players like this could come in and turn your team around, although I do think they will play hard, they're committed to winning." Even Chad Kilger, Anaheim's first pick in 1995 was selling himself short; "We're both 19 years old, this is my first year. I think we'll have our impact eventually." Trades like these are strictly for building a team's future, but with the Jets leaving Winnipeg for good next season, it was a complete nightmare for Manitoba hockey fans. Chad Kigler went on to play 714 NHL games and has 218 points. Oleg Tverdovsky, played 713 NHL games and registered





317 points, the majority of those coming from assists. For Anaheim, this trade turned out to be a true blessing in disguise.

An entire fifteen years later, the National Hockey League finally paid their dues to all Winnipeg hockey fans & fans throughout the province of Manitoba. In May 2011, Manitoba hockey fans finally got their hockey club back. The Atlanta Thrashers were sold and relocated to Winnipeg. Public demand immediately forced the new hockey club to change their name back to the Winnipeg Jets, but the old logo and all of its

assets remaining to the Phoenix Coyotes. The new Jets team is a thriving organization, and If there was ever any indication the fans of Winnipeg, Manitoba missed Teemu Selanne it was on December 17th of 2011. Much like Saku Koivu's return to Montreal, the standing ovation both men received before and during the game was truly one for the ages.

I suppose with Teemu Selanne spending most of his career with the Anaheim Ducks, perhaps this trade was meant to happen. Being only six years old at the time it took place, I don't think I'll ever fully understand the dynamics of this trade. Both the Jets and the Ducks will more than likely retire Teemu Selanne's jersey. The Finnish Flash remains to be an all star in the NHL, the same can't be said about Chad Kilger and Oleg Tverdovsky. The two first round draft picks had mediocre careers to say the least, and Selanne's rookie records with Winnipeg will remain in the record books forever. It is hard to imagine a rookie getting to the NHL and scoring 76 goals, along with 132 points...



- See more at: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/articles/2013/06/hockeys-worst-trade/#sthash.TRcEfAqk.dpuf>



Easier Said than Done – The Toronto Maple Leafs Story

By Ethan Shippen aka TheBoxBreaker

My alarm clock went off at exactly 1 AM. The day I had waited for had arrived, May 14th 2013. Game 7 of the Eastern Conference Quarterfinals between my beloved Toronto Maple Leafs and the Boston Bruins. To understand why this game was so important to me, let's back up a bit, shall we? The year was 2004 and I was a 9-year-old boy in Denmark who just realized that there was a sport out there greater than any other: hockey. I started playing hockey myself and loved to play NHL 2005 on the old PlayStation 2. My favorite team immediately became the Toronto Maple Leafs. Why? I guess I was drawn to the logo and uniforms. After that I was hooked.

As most hockey fans would be aware of, the Toronto Maple Leafs would be the only NHL team to not reach the playoffs between the two lockouts... until this year. This year was different. For the first time in 9 years the Maple Leafs had made the playoffs and I was ecstatic. I was going to watch every single Leafs playoff game despite the time difference. All games at 7 PM would be broadcast live in Denmark... at 1 AM. Although I had school every day I couldn't keep myself from watching every game. This was my first Maple Leafs playoff series, after all.

The previous night had been the best game of my life to date, game 6. The Leafs had won it and James Reimer, my favorite player, had been outstanding. And on top of that he had worn two different masks in the game. For those of you who know me, you'll know that I'm a huge fan of goalie masks. The Leafs had beaten all odds and won game 5 and game 6 to force the decisive game 7 in Boston. How could I be any happier?

I rubbed my eyes and turned on the TV. The national anthem was on and I proudly mouthed 'Oh Canada' and was trembling with excitement. The puck had been dropped. The game had started.

Matt Bartkowski scored early and gave the Bruins the 1-0 lead. "I've seen this before" I thought. "Here we go again..." But the Leafs were having none of that. Playing perhaps the best game of his career, Cody Franson scored to tie the game at 1 and then scored another one to give the Leafs the lead. Before you knew it, Kessel had made it 3-1 and Kadri had basically killed the Bruins with his 4-1 wrister. Or had he?

I literally danced around my room, jumping, (silently) screaming. I sat with my Maple Leafs apparel and celebrated like crazy. The adrenaline was pumping through my veins and I had never felt such an adrenaline rush before. But on top of all that, I still had a bad feeling. I went: "Come on, guys. The game isn't over... but look at the seconds ticking away."

At one point of the game all I did was watch the clock. Second after second ticked away and I got more and more excited. Could it really be? Were the Leafs really leading the Bruins 4-1 in Game 7 and about to advance, or was this all just a dream? Would I be woken up by my alarm clock in a minute only to find out that the game hadn't begun yet?

I didn't know it yet, but in just 10 minutes of play I'd actually have wished that the 4-1 Leafs lead (and therefore the whole game) had been a dream. If only I had known what was coming. Nathan Horton scored to reduce the Leafs' lead to only two goals. With less than two minutes to go, Milan Lucic scored to make it a one goal game. My jaw dropped as I watched in disbelief.

To make matters worst Patrice Bergeron scored while the Bruins were 6-on-5 and the Leafs had been shot down. Many Bruins fans had left the arena early because of the terrible play of the Bruins, but now they were all trying to claw their way back into the arena. The loud atmosphere at the TD Garden didn't mind that many had left; it seemed like the loudest Bruins fans had stayed.

Overtime was coming. The wait was probably the longest 15-minute wait of my life. Although it was now a tie game heading to OT, I felt like Boston had gained all the momentum. I felt like they had already won. It didn't seem fair anymore.

On the edge of my bed I saw Patrice Bergeron seal the deal as he scored for Boston. James Reimer was down. It was such an intense picture of the Leafs player that perhaps had been the toughest warrior in this series was just lying there... motionless. It was over. The Bruins advanced.



I just sat there. I didn't do anything, I just sat there. An empty stare glanced upon the television. My eyes were looking towards the TV, but it was as if my brain wasn't really paying attention to what was happening on the ice. Time had frozen.

During the handshakes I started to collect myself. I had no idea what I should do next. It was 4 AM which meant that I had to get up for school in 2 hours. Should I keep watching, should I do some homework, should I turn off the TV, and should I go to bed? Things had, just for a moment, lost their meaning.

I watched the rest of the broadcast and went to bed. Falling asleep wasn't easy. The first thing I saw after closing my eyes was the Bruins victory. And for the first time in my life, I cried over a hockey game. The old saying "It's just a game" seemed like a huge lie right now. It was so much more than just a game.

In the following days I started to return to my old self again. I suddenly wanted to hang out with my friends again and the world had started spinning again. Time was ticking. The world was evolving. I still had to endure the heartless mocking of every non-Leaf fan in the world, but the truth is that the Leafs gained more than they lost. They mocked the ones that had come far and fallen down, but at least the Leafs made it far enough to discover that they're human and make mistakes. Pity the ones that don't come far enough to fall short.

The Leafs used to be the laughing stock of the hockey world. You couldn't tell a hockey joke without the Leafs being on the receiving end of it. A team that ironically was considered to be one of the hockey capitals of the world with its loyal fan base, Hockey Hall of Fame and Toronto Card Expo, still featured a team that was failing miserably year-in and year-out.

What had been lost was a series. What had been won was the respect of the hockey world and the hearts of Leafs fans everywhere. With a young and improving Leafs team under head coach Randy Carlyle, it's very easy as a Leafs fan to be optimistic regarding the future.

One thing is for certain: The Leafs have learned that no lead is safe in hockey. But going deeper in the playoffs next year is easier said than done, but I'll be there. All of Leafs Nation will be there. And after a series like that against the heavily-favored Bruins, whom the Leafs (almost miraculously) pushed to OT in the decisive Game 7 after everyone expected the Bruins to sweep the series, you know that the rest of the world will be there as well.

- See more at: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/articles/2013/06/easier-said-than-done-the-toronto-maple-leafs-story/#sthash.r0919QO3.dpuf>



The Down and Distance **By Rob Holt aka robholt91**

It's fourth and inches, with the game clock winding down twenty to seventeen. Your team is up by three and every part of your body is screaming "Win!" and in that split second, the snap. It's a run, your team lined up for pass. He breaks one tackle, two, three, and the clock is running down. From ten to zero, from the fifteen to the goal line, your team's playoff hopes were crushed. The 16 games of blood, sweat, and tears all seemingly down the drain. Why? By one simple error in judgment, the game clock on your season is over, but what if one game during the season could have changed it, if a call had gone differently, if an injury could have been avoided. A roster change, a whistle blown, or a coaching mismatch. We don't ever seem to weigh every part of a season, but we always weigh it all on one game. One single call. One missed field goal. Why is that? We always love to put someone or something on the chopping block, but we never distinguish real fault. It's never a lapse in judgment, an error in execution, or just a bad season. It's the refs, the coaches, and whomever else we can point the finger at. Let's just be thankful that our teams can play and put out a

level of showmanship that is actually really remarkable. Let's be excited for the next season and hope that it turns out better.



It seems these days that there is a lot of negativity in football. Seemingly endless bad press days for every single player, the media either praises or exiles someone new every day. There is no fairness anymore and a huge lack of respect. I'm not going to put any names in this, but I've seen a number of "sports analyst" harping on about how this player is the worst player ever or that player is the next so and so. Let's appreciate these guys for who they are. There is no need to put someone in the dirt or the clouds, when most professional athletes (good or bad) are still more talented than your average Joe Schmo. We never fully take into account the athleticism that really makes the games we watch in ANY sport, not just football, a spectacle of human possibility. I think we forget how much time, determination, intelligence, and skill it takes to be a pro athlete. Learning complete playbooks, reading schemes, and just playing at a high level. There's a reason athletes get paid so much money. Next time someone gets injured, there's a bad call, or an error in play-calling, let's all remember that every team has those games that everything goes against them. Every team has the good, the bad, and the ugly. The star draft picks that blow up and the guys who never even get started. Let's stop slandering those who put their everything into becoming a pro athlete and fall just short of it.



Everyone out there is a human being, they want things to go their way, too. Everyone is pushing towards the same goal, but not everyone achieves it. There is so much based on who won this or that, but most personal feats are great as well. I don't mean we should give out ribbons to second place or a participation award, don't get me wrong. I do, however, think we need to acknowledge that pulling out a winning season after so many bad ones is winning, coming back from a really bad injury is winning, and overcoming any other obstacle is winning. Those may not mean much to spectators, but for those athletes, the mini milestones pave the way for the bigger milestones. It's always a sign of things to come. Be excited for the team becoming stronger and the victories ahead. Rome wasn't built in a day and neither was a good football team. The down and distance becomes a brighter goal once everyone is pulling together for a greater goal. We always mark those who didn't see the playoffs as losers, but I think the teams who are pulling together are the real winners in any sport.

- See more at: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/articles/2013/06/the-down-and-distance/#sthash.iOnJo7A3.dpuf>

