



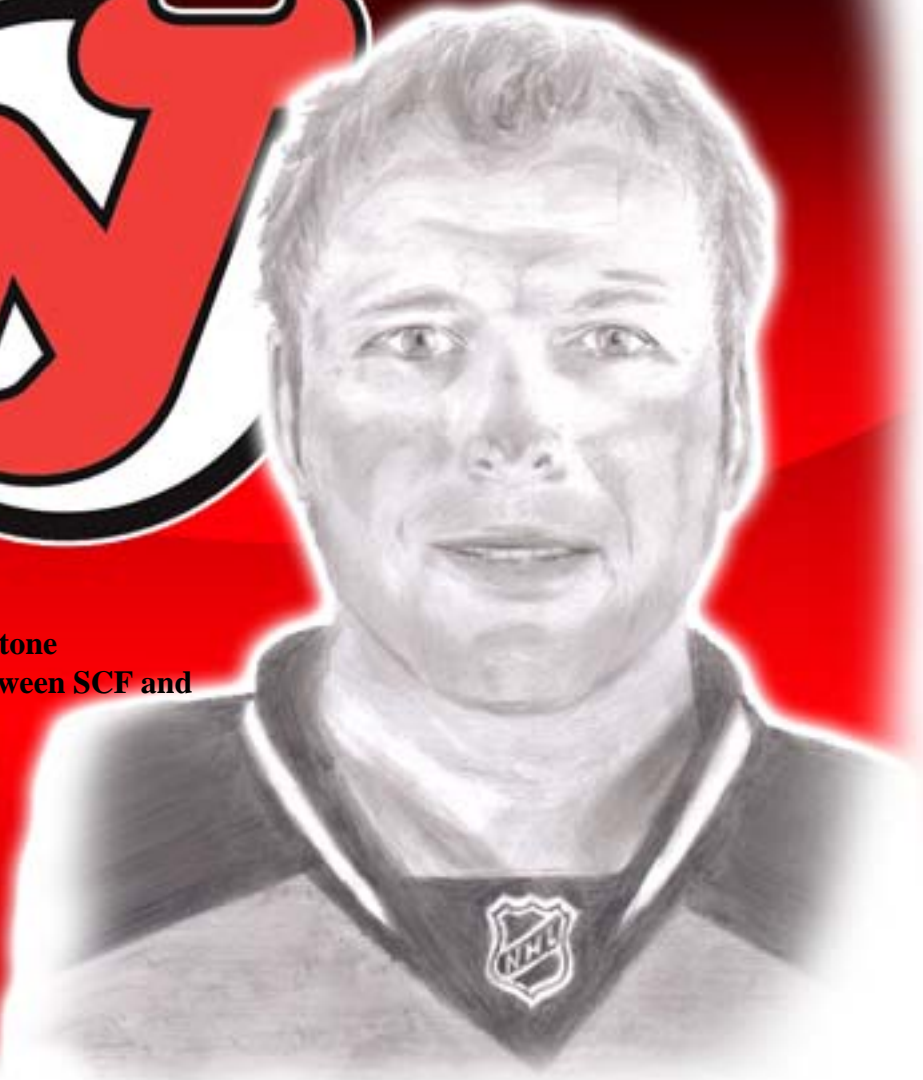
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552



INSIDE

- Brodeur's milestone
 - Partnership between SCF and Upper Deck
 - Reviews
- AND MORE...**



ISSUE 6 - APRIL 2009

CardsByTheBox.com

For all of your hobby boxes needs!

**We offer a selection of Hockey, Baseball, Basketball, Football and Racing boxes.
This month's featured products (hobby boxes)**



2009 Topps Finest Baseball \$92.99

- 2 Mini Boxes of 6 Packs each
- Each Mini Box Contains 1 Numbered Rookie signed Patch Card - signed On Patch Directly!!!
- Each Box Contains one 2009 Rookie Redemption Card.



2008/09 Upper Deck NBA Lineage Basketball \$114.99

- First chance to collect Michael Jordan Legacy Cards! Falling 12 per box, on average
- Eight rookie cards in every box on average
- Look for the return of classic inserts that are now signed, including Flight Team and 15,000 Point Club



2009 Press Pass Football \$84.99

- Press pass Signings - the first autographs from the newest rookie class.
- At least 5 on-card autos each box!
- Five levels of Autographs to collect, including randomly inserted
- Red Ink and Nickname Signatures!
- Gridiron Gamers - rare game-worn college jersey cards from the top 2009 rookies!



2008/09 Upper Deck SP Authentic Hockey \$107.99

- Look for (3) Autographed cards per box on average!
- At least 1 will be an Autographed Future Watch Rookie Card!
- Signed rookie patch cards - a must have - average 1 per case!
- Find Holograms - averaging 2 per box, with die-cut versions hitting 1 per case!
- Penned Perfection & Marks of Distinction equal great autographs all #d to 50 or less!
- Look for Sign of the Times Duals, averaging 1 per case!
- Triples, Quads & more give multi-signature card seekers some great chase!
- SP Limited parallels (all #d to 100) of the entire regular set offer up valuable hits!



2009 Press Pass Premium Racing \$89.99

- ONE AUTOGRAPH & RACE-USED FIRE SUIT PER HOBBY BOX!
- HOT THREADS – Race-used firesuits...
- ALL NEW PROGRAM FOR 2009!...
- 20 PACKS PER Box 5 Cards per Pack



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COLLECTOR'S CORNER TEAM

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This month we
say goodbye to
Brad Guyton
our publisher

Thanks and
Good Luck
Brad!



A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

A New Partnership

By Karine Hains aka Pheeb888

On SCF we have various partnerships deals with card companies who provide us with product to break and review before giving the cards away to our members or using them as contest prize. However, one company had forever been our white whale so to speak: Upper Deck (UD). Try as we may, we had always been unable to establish a partnership with them. This all changed in February though. Our Hockey Team manager Quiet-things (Houng) contacted Chris Carlin at Upper Deck and started talks that ended with a rather positive outcome. Following Houng's initiative, we received a box of Ultimate Collection and SP Authentic in football, SP Authentic and Skybox in basketball, SP Authentic and Series 1 baseball and finally Series 1 hockey. This was groundbreaking for SCF, as we had never received any hockey product to review to date. As a result of this deal you will notice that most of our reviews this month focus on UD's products. As a member and a staff member, this truly was thrilling news. As a writer, it was even better because UD saw an article a member of the Writing Team had written about their latest product Champs and even though the article was less than favourable to them, they still accepted to sponsor SCF. It was amazingly refreshing to see a company willing to accept that our members and writers are entitled to their opinions and not shut down the idea of a partnership based on individual members' view.



On the hockey front, the centennial year for the Montreal Canadiens saw In The Game (ITG) release Superlative Bleu, Blanc et Rouge (BBR). The product was rather well received and we can announce that ITG is getting ready to rock the hobby world once more by launching Superlative Franchise on the 1st May 2009. This product will focus solely on another great hockey institution: the Toronto Maple Leafs. Fans of the Leafs nation can rightly get excited about this because if BBR was anything to go by, this will be a truly magical product. Speaking of BBR, turn to page nine to see UD's answer to it; Montreal Canadiens Centennial. Upper Deck chose to go for a less high-end option but comes out on top in my view.

You might have noticed a new forum in the General Sports, Sports Cards and Memorabilia talk section called Article Submissions. If you would like to write for our magazine or our article site, please try your hand at writing an article (500 words and over) and post it as a new thread in that forum. We are always looking for new writers and you never know, your article could even be published in Tuff Stuff magazine as we have an article in there every month...

Finally, on a personal note, my plane ticket to the National Sports Collectors Convention in Cleveland and I am getting incredibly excited about attending my first card show. Especially as it is a show of that magnitude! Expect our August issue to focus heavily on the Nationals. If you have questions or particular aspects of the event you would like to read about, please feel free to send me a private message or post it on my blog here: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/blog.php?b=213> All ideas and suggestions are welcome!



Back in the Days

By Nathan Loewy

Our Basketball Collection of the Month is featuring jeebus86's collection of 1998-99 Upper Deck Series 1 Game-Used Jersey cards. If you wish to comment on his collection, please PM him. Without further ado, here is his collection, in his own words:



I am collecting the 1998-99 Upper Deck Series 1 Game-Used Jersey cards set. As the name implies, there are two series that make up the entire jersey set, both of which contain very distinguishable features. For example, the series 1 set has gold lettering, and is the only one of the two set which features the Michael Jordan jersey card. Series 2 has silver lettering and features all the premier rookies of that year, such as Vince Carter, Antawn Jamison, Mike Bibby, and Jason

Williams (unfortunately, Paul Pierce and Dirk Nowitzki were omitted. I guess Upper Deck felt that Michael Doleac and Corey Benjamin would be better prospects). The stated odds were 1:288 packs for the series 1 set and 1:2,500 packs for the series 2 set, with 48 cards total (19 for series 1, 29 for series 2). Although I primarily focused on the series 1 set, I have been able to snag the series 2 version of the Kobe Bryant jersey card, one of my main PC players.

I decided to complete this set mainly for nostalgic reasons. It's the one set that reminds me of the joy I had of collecting basketball cards as a child. I guess you could say it really started roughly 10 years ago, when in my very first pack of the 98-99 Upper Deck, I pulled a Stephon Marbury jersey card. I initially thought that it was some kind of promotional card or redemption card. I mean, at the time, jersey cards were still very new and unknown. I naturally knew of them,



but at the time, I thought that they made jersey cards only of Michael Jordan, and no one else. It wasn't until the card shop owner saw it and told me how rare this jersey card actually was that I realized how great a pull it was.

Fast forward 8 years - I decided to get back into the hobby mainly to add more cards to my Kobe Bryant collection, and at the time, the 98-99 Kobe jersey card was one of my "holy grail" cards that I desperately wanted to get. Afterwards, the set began very gradually, like every other set I assume. It wasn't my inten-

tion to complete the whole set at first - I mainly looked for the players I liked, and tried to get them at good prices. However, once I got the Michael Jordan jersey card, I went full force on completing it. Right now, I'm still looking for the 98-99 GJ17 John Stockton jersey card to finish the entire series 1 set.

The most unique thing about this set is that it is the second year of Upper Deck jersey cards. When I got back into the hobby, I was disappointed to see how flooded the market was with jersey cards. This is a huge reason why I decided to pursue this set, to highlight the purity of 90s jersey cards. Also, this is the very first set that features a Kobe jersey card, which was a big deal for me.



From One Goaltender to Another

By Karine Hains aka Pheeb888



They say records are made to be broken...It was true for Patrick Roy when he won his 448th game to overtake Terry Sawchuk in the all-time wins category and it is still true today, after Martin Brodeur signed his 552nd win to become the winningest goaltender in the history of the NHL. Yes, last night on the 17th March 2009 Brodeur managed yet another great win and just like that he marked history forever. Fans in New Jersey aptly renamed St. Patrick's day St. Marty's day as they celebrated late into the night the pride of New Jersey.

Native of Montreal in Québec, he grew up watching and idolizing Roy as he had already started racking up the wins for the Canadiens by the time Brodeur turned 15. A Montreal Canadiens fan, Brodeur appreciated Roy's play but as a goaltender he never adopted Roy's trademark butterfly style. Even when he attended the hockey school of Francois Allaire (Roy's goaltending coach for many years) he refused to become a butterfly goalie. While he was rooting for the Habs, the young Brodeur was also admiring other goalies one of which had a particular influence on his career. Have you ever noticed how much Brodeur likes to handle the puck? Well the root of this habit comes from years of watching Ron Hextall in the Philadelphia net acting like a third defenseman for his team. This was an aspect of his game that Brodeur decided to adopt quite early on and no one can say it didn't serve him well. As for his style in between the pipes, well he can only be qualified as a "hybrid" goaltender; he relies heavily on his lightning fast reaction to make saves and does not feel the need to go down in the butterfly that often.

Now in the 15th year of his NHL career, Martin Brodeur is truly rewriting the record book. Not only is he now the winningest goaltender in NHL history but he is also only 3 shutouts away from joining Mr. Zero Terry Sawchuk for the most shutouts in regular season games. He also has the record for the most consecutive seasons with 30+ wins (12), the most wins in a season (48), most minutes played in a season (4,697) and the most shutouts in a single playoff year (7) to name a few. Without a doubt quite a resume! What's next for Brodeur? I personally wouldn't bet against him catching up to Sawchuk before the end of the season and considering that he is very well rested this year, I would say the Devils are strong cup contenders. A fourth career cup would truly be the icing on the cake for "Marty" in this very special year.

From a hobby standpoint, his new title as NHL winningest goaltender might very well have an influence on the value of his cards and on their selling price. Bad news you say? Not really, I personally think he is worth it. But definite good news is the announcement by In The Game that they will be launching the "Martin Brodeur Record Breaking Super Box". This is not a product solely dedicated to Brodeur however but a box which will include: 30 packs in total (10 from each of the last three years edition of their popular Between the Pipes product) and more importantly, a 1/1 special insert card. Most of the



COVER STORY



special inserts cards are cards which have been previously released by ITG but this reissue includes a gold stamp commemorating Brodeur's record breaking night. ITG also created 40 1/1 Milestones Game-

Used Memorabilia cards which also feature the same gold stamp. Each of those boxes will be sold for \$159.95 and

you can buy them directly from the ITG store which is found here: <http://itgestore.com/catalog/index.php>. Hurry up though as a limited number of boxes will be produced, this makes sense considering the low numbering of the special insert cards. For the full checklist of insert cards, consult ITG's product information: http://www.itgtradingcards.com/products/0809_brodeur/0809_brodeur_info.html.



Will his record ever be broken? Never say never, after all, as I said earlier records are made to be broken... But for now, we can all marvel at Brodeur's incredible accomplishment. As I watched the closing moment of his record breaking game, I couldn't help but think how lucky the hockey world is that when a 7 year old kid from Montreal was asked if he wanted to play forward or in net, he opted for the later option. Thankfully, Brodeur still has another three years to run on his contract so the sky is the limit right now for Marty. Even though Roy will always be my favourite goaltender, I'm glad that Brodeur was the goaltender to take the record away from him. He is without a doubt, another goaltending king from Québec and right now, the whole province is rejoicing.



COMING UP!

In each issue, we will include a release calendar for the upcoming month. At the time of publication, all dates were accurate but as you no doubt know, product releases do tend to be pushed back from time to time.

April's releases

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
6	7	8  - Football	9	10
13	14  - Hockey O-Pee-Chee Update	15  - Basketball Signatures	16	17
20  - Baseball Piece of History	21	22  - Baseball Topps Finest	23  - Football High Series	24
27	28  - Baseball Goudey	29  - Hockey Ultimate Collection  - Racing	30	



Montreal Canadiens Centennial Product Review

By Karine Hains aka Pheeb888

After In The Game's (ITG) Bleu, Blanc et Rouge release, it's Upper Deck's turn to launch a product dedicated to the most storied franchise in hockey history; the Montreal Canadiens. From a fan standpoint, this release is an absolute dream; the line-up, the different inserts, the hard signed autographs and the once again rare game-used card everything is in place to please the Habs following. The biggest advantage of this product over ITG's is of course the pricing. While Dr. Price chose to go for a high-end release, UD preferred to make theirs more accessible with a much lower pricing point.

Description

The base set offers great photography and it is interesting to note that the older players are depicted in black and white. On each card, the UD logo is in the top left corner of the card while the Habs centennial logo is situated in the middle of the bottom of the card. Under it, you can find the name of the player and on each side of the centennial logo is the position of the player, in French on the left and in English on the right. I especially appreciate this touch from UD as it shows their awareness of the bilingual aspect of the Canadiens franchise.

Box Details

Packs per box: 24

Cards per pack: 8

Base set: 200 cards

Short printed inserts: 100 cards

Price: \$105 to \$125

Checklist

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| -Base | - Les Capitaines |
| -Habs Inks | - Arenas |
| -Le Blue Blanc Rouge - Jersey | - Career Leaders |
| -AKA Signings | - Record Holders |
| -HOF Induction Inks | - Canadiens Trophy Winners |
| -Dual Signatures | - Retired Jerseys |
| -Triple Signatures | - Memorable Moments |
| -Quad Signatures | - Redeemed Prize Cards |
| -Immortal Cuts | |

The Breaks

All of the cards below were pulled during our break of two hobby boxes. As well as those hits, we received a complete base set (1-200) and 48 of the 100 short printed inserts (number 201 to 300 of the set).



THE RUNDOWN ON...

Habs Ink

Guy Carbonneau



Chris Higgins



Eric Desjardins



Pierre Mondoux



AKA Signings

Richard "Dick" Duff 15/25



HOF Induction Inks

Bert Olmstead 62/85



Comments

As a Canadiens fan, I thought this break was absolutely delightful. Two boxes full of my favourite players and at the back of each card, the statistics with the Habs of the player depicted are indicated as well as a short bit of information in both French and English. I never took such a long time to break two boxes but I just couldn't help myself; I had to read the back of each and every single card. I must compliment Upper Deck on the very appropriate choices of inserts, particularly when it comes to the memorable moment series. I stared for a couple of minutes at the "Koivu's return" one and I'm not ashamed to admit that it brought back all of the emotions.

Having broken both this release and ITG's Superlative Bleu Blanc et Rouge (BBR), I must say that my heart lies with UD's effort. Why? Well, of course the price is a factor but the fact is that it is much easier to get a complete set of this product than of BBR. This is a rather important factor considering the commemorative character of this release and the fact that it is a must have for Habs fan. As I said before, I am also very pleased with the use of both languages on the cards; it might be seen as a detail to some but not to me. Thumbs up also for making the game-used jersey cards rare once again, too many releases guarantee you to pull at least two game-used card which has unfortunately led to a certain market saturation. If I had one negative comment however it would be that Patrick Roy is not included in the "Retired Jersey" set but to be fair, his raised to the rafter ceremony happened after the set checklist was finalized.



THE RUNDOWN ON...

Final Ratings

Overall Design: 5/5

Value: 5/5

Fun: 5/5

Rebuy: 4.5/5

Variety: 5/5

Final Grade: 98%

It was pretty hard to find something bad to say about this release, of course this is more than likely down to the fact that it is entirely devoted to my favourite team. I doubt that a Bruins or Leafs fan would love this product as much as I do but I bet you knew that already. If you are interested in this product, you better move fast as it is selling out rapidly and the prices are certainly rocketing on eBay. I am personally amazed that I resisted the urge to buy more boxes but in all honesty, it might just be because I made a conscious effort to avoid eBay.





2008 Upper Deck SP Authentic Football Product Review

By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

First and foremost, I'd like to thank the wonderful people at Upper Deck for providing us with this product.

Product Description

24 packs per box

5 cards per pack

SRP: \$114.99 - \$124.99

CONTENT HIGHLIGHTS

- One (1) Autographed Memorabilia card in EVERY box, on average! - Including an unprecedented eight (8) Rookie Autographed Patch Cards in EVERY case, on average!
- Two (2) additional Autographs in EVERY Box, on average! - Look for Multi-signed cards falling two (2) per case, on average
- Look for 1-of-1 Autographed Rookie Logo Patches!
- All autographs are signed on the card!

PRODUCT BREAKDOWN:

Autographed Memorabilia Cards (1 per box, on average):

- Rookie Authentics Autographed Patch Cards and Parallels (# to 999 or less)
- Rookie Authentics Autographed Logo Patch Cards (# to 1)
- By the Letter Signatures (Varied #'ing)
- Retro Rookie Signature Jerseys (# to 75)
- Rookie Leather Heads Signatures (# up to 150)
- Numbers Piece Signatures (Varied #'ing)

Autograph Cards (2 per box, on average):

- Rookie Authentics Signatures (# to 1199 or less)
- SP Authentic Autographs
- SP Authentic Autographs Parallel (# to 25)
- Chirography Autographs
- Chirography Autographs Parallel (# to 25)
- Sign of the Times Signatures
- Sign of the Times Signatures Parallel (# to 25)
- Sign of the Times Dual Autographs (Varied #'ing)
- Sign of the Times Triple Autographs (Varied #'ing)
- Sign of the Times Quad Autographs (# to 10)
- Chirography Dual Autographs (# to 50)



THE RUNDOWN ON...

- Chirography Triple Autographs (# to 25)
- Chirography Quad Autographs (# to 10)
- Immortal Signatures (Varied #'ing)
- Immortal Dual Signatures (# to 20)
- Immortal Triple Signatures (# to 10)
- Immortal Quad Signatures (# to 5)

Regular Set:

- Regular Cards - 100 cards
- Rookie Authentics - Level 2 (# to 1399)
- Rookie Authentics - Level 1 (# to 999)

VIDEO BREAK

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iY4fF8GQ5rc>

WHAT WE PULLED

Base - 87/100 (87%)

Dupes - 24

The base cards feature photos of the player in poses or action. The background has a small excerpt from a field complete with yard markers and the color matches the main color of the team. There are two Rookie card levels with cards numbering either to 999 or 1399. There are numerous autograph sets in this release. Of those sets, six are memorabilia autographs. On average, 2 out of 3 boxes will yield a rookie patch auto. Here is what we pulled out of our box.





THE RUNDOWN ON...

Redemption is a Jordy Nelson Patch/Auto /999

Final Ratings (Out of 5):

Base set: 3/5

Fun: 4.5/5

Overall design: 3.5/5

Value: 4/5

Re-buy: 4.5/5

Overall: 19.5/25 (78%)

Final Comments

SP Authentic is one of the most highly anticipated releases in football every year and this year was no different. With that anticipation comes expectations, in which some were met and others were not.

I cannot stress this enough, if you release a set that has enough base cards in a box, allow the buyer to complete the set. We were 13 cards short of a complete set and we received 24 dupes. How hard would it have been to complete the set and make the duplicate count less? Consumers are going to buy multiple boxes of this product, so at least reward them with that.

Avoiding inserts and sticking with rookies, relics and autos is a plus. It keeps the excitement of the break going, especially when you get a hot box. Speaking of hot boxes, believe me when I saw I was ecstatic to see we were fortunate to get one. However, I've also seen others get box with less than the average amount of hits and it's disturbing.

All in all, this is a great set and highly collectible. The different levels for the rookie patch autos, rookie autos and the rookies makes it a fun task to put together. The multi-colored patches look amazing. Also, there's a nice mix of veteran and retired autos to appeal to all collectors.

Once again, I'd like to thank our sponsor, Upper Deck, for providing us with this box and the opportunity to review it.





2009 Upper Deck Spectrum Review

By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

First and foremost, I'd like to thank the wonderful people at Upper Deck for providing us with this box/packs.

Product Description

14 packs per box
5 cards per pack
SRP: \$79.99 - \$89.99

CONTENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Two Autograph cards per box, one of which will be a Spectrum of Stars celebrity autograph card, on average!
- 20th Anniversary Memorabilia cards one (1) per hobby case, on average!
- One memorabilia card per box, on average!
- Two autographed cards per box, on average!
- Press Plates, one per case on average!
- 20th Anniversary cards randomly inserted!
- Look for three (3) random Hot Boxes in each hobby case containing three (3) memorabilia cards and three (3) autographed cards!
- Look for celebrity cut-signature cards!
- One (1) autographed buyback card per case, on average!

PRODUCT BREAKDOWN:

Regular Cards and Rookies

- 100 Regular Cards

Inserts and Parallel Cards

- Red Base set Parallel (#'ed to 399)
- Orange Base set Parallel (#'ed to 299)
- Green Base set Parallel (#'ed to 99)
- Black Base set Parallel (#'ed to 50)
- Gold Base set Parallel (#'ed to 25)

Autograph Cards (2 per box, on average)

Spectrum Rookie Signatures

Spectrum of Stars Autographs

Spectrum of Stars Die-Cut Autographs (#'ed up to 50)

Spectrum of Swatches Dark gray Autographs (#'ed up to 99)

Memorabilia Cards (1 per box, on average!)

- Spectrum Patches Maroon (#'ed up to 99)
- Gold Base Set Jersey Parallel (#'ed up to 99)
- Spectrum Swatches Light Blue (#'ed up to 99)



THE RUNDOWN ON...

VIDEO BREAK

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8KrS9tTZow>

WHAT WE PULLED

Base - 57/100 (57%)

Dupes - 0

The base cards from Spectrum use a foil board card stock. The background is done primarily in purple with the player featured in the middle. There are not any regular set inserts this year, only parallel versions of the base cards. Five levels of parallels are numbered between 25 and 399. The parallel is denoted by the change in background color on the card as it matches the parallel color.



The 20th Anniversary cards can be found in Spectrum. They are a part of a year-long set from Upper Deck that will be found in baseball releases throughout the year. It is a 2,500 card set.

There are a limited amount of Game Used and Autograph series in Spectrum. However, the Spectrum of Stars series has returned. Below is what we pulled.





THE RUNDOWN ON...

Final Ratings (Out of 5):

Base set: 4/5

Fun: 4.5/5

Overall design: 4.5/5

Value: 3/5

Re-buy: 3.5/5

Overall: 19.5/25 (78%)

As a huge fan of foil board cards, I like the design of Spectrum. The purple background in conjunction with the foil board creates an appealing card.

Accordingly, the parallels are just as spectacular when viewing them. The colors jump off the card. Player collectors should be excited as they can create a "rainbow" of their player.

Another nice feature is with the addition of the 20th Anniversary cards, you get one bonus card per pack. Most release cannot claim this and it adds to the enjoyability of opening the packs.

However, I do foresee drawbacks with this release. The Spectrum of Stars series is played out. When autos of entertainers first came out a couple of years ago, it seemed to be people that were easily recognized and autos that were sought after. Now, it seems more or less to be an excuse to put another auto in a box and used as a selling point.

No offense against the actor that we pulled, but who does that appeal to? I would venture to say young teenagers. But the truth is, I don't see many teenagers shelling out the money to buy a box of this release. Leave the entertainers out of a sports release. It would be better served in a release solely devoted to that particular media.

So taking the Spectrum of Stars auto out, you lose the bang for the buck. Not to mention, do we really need this huge box that has more styrofoam than packs?

I'd like to thank Upper Deck for providing Sports Card Forum with this box/packs and the opportunity to review it.





THE RUNDOWN ON...

2008/2009 UD Skybox Basketball Product Review

By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

First and foremost, I'd like to thank the wonderful people at Upper Deck for providing us with this box to review.

Product Description

12 packs per box

10 cards per pack

SRP: \$88.99 - \$99.99

CONTENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Three (3) memorabilia cards per box including at least one (1) dual swatch! (on average)
- One (1) autograph per box! (on average)
- Look for Precious Metal Parallels!
- Find Hobby-exclusive Autographs and Base Set Parallels!
- Each box contains a variety of box-break inserts, including Metal Universe, Metal Universe Rookie, Precious Metal Gems, and Precious Metal Gems Parallels numbered to 50 or less!

PRODUCT BREAKDOWN:

Autographed Cards

- Rookie Parallels
- Sig Set Duals (#'d to 50)
- Future Signs (#'d to 10)
- Paraph Signatures
- Fresh Ink

Inserts and Parallels

- Base Set Ruby Parallel
- Close Ups Ruby Parallel
- Rookie Cards Ruby Parallel
- Metal Universe
- Metal Universe Rookie
- Precious Metal Gems Green (#'d to 50)
- Precious Metal Gems Green Rookie (#'d to 50)
- Precious Metal Gems Red (#'d to 10)
- Precious Metal Gems Red Rookie (#'d to 10)

Memorabilia Cards

- Larger Than Life
- Standouts
- Rookie Prevue
- One on One Dual
- Larger Than Life Patch (#'d to 25)
- Standouts Patch (#'d to 25)
- Rookie Prevue Patch (#'d to 10)

Regular Cards, Subsets and Rookies

- Base Set- 170 Cards
- Close Ups- 30 Cards
- Rookie- 30 Cards

WHAT WE PULLED

Base - 107/200 (53.5%)
Dupes - 0
Rookies - 4/30 (13.3%)
Dupes - 0

VIDEO BREAK

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAW1hF16TpI>



THE RUNDOWN ON...

Skybox utilizes a grayscale type background with the player in color and in action for the most part. Players who were with new teams from the previous season are shown in a color photo posing in their new uniforms. Card information is done in gold across the top and bottom.

There is a 30-card subset called Close Up. The card features the player in a color, action photo with a black and white version of the photo next to it.

There are 30 rookies in the set. below on the left are two that we pulled.

The lone insert set is called Metal Universe. It comprises of current players as well as rookies. The cards feature the players like they are stars in space. The base set has a Ruby Parallel. It stands out as the letters on the card are in red as is the serial number on the back of the card. The Metal Universe set has two parallels, Metal Gems Green and Red. The background is shown in green or red and the serial numbers matches in color. There are numerous Game Used and Autograph sets in Skybox and our pulls are below on the right.

Final Ratings (Out of 5):

Base set: 4/5

Fun: 4/5

Overall design: 4.5/5

Value: 5/5

Re-buy: 5/5

Overall: 22.5/25 (90%)

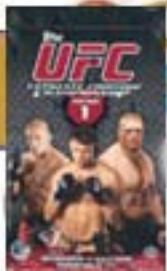


When opening the box, I had a flashback to 1993 when I was opening packs of Skybox left and right because I loved the design. It was basic back then with some attempts at a revolutionary design. Today's version is quite eye pleasing. I like the focus of the card being on the player that is featured with the player in color and the background shaded out.

The base set is easily collectible as the set could be completed with the purchase of two boxes. The rookies seems to fall at a rate of 1 in 3 packs. This gives some value to the cards as well as makes them worthwhile to chase to complete a full set.

The limited amount of inserts and parallel is a nice change of pace. Player collectors will appreciate this as it will be easier to acquire all the cards of a player from this release.

A big value is the addition of four "hits" in the box. Too often, releases in this price range do not offer as much to consumers. With this amount of chase cards, it makes buyers feel comfortable in acquiring more boxes as the excitement and thrill is there in each break. Once again, I'd like to thank our sponsor, Upper Deck, for providing us at Sports Card Forum with this box and the opportunity to review it.



Topps UFC Round 1 Product Review

By Mike Silvia aka mikesilvia

Product Description

Topps commemorates all of the greatest moments of UFC history - from the very first UFC 1 event to the upcoming events. Legends of the sport such as Dan Severn, Royce Gracie, Tank Abbott, Ken Shamrock, Don Frye, Kevin Randleman, Jens Pulver, are also recognized and featured by Topps. The set also includes fighters from UFC's hit show, "The Ultimate Fighter."

Product Highlight

Every 16-Pack Box Contains:

- 3 Autographed Cards
- 3 Relic Cards
- 20 Parallel Cards
- 8 Insert Cards

Content Breakdown

AUTOGRAPHED CARDS: 3 PER BOX! UFC FIGHTERS: 50 UFC stars appear with their signatures.

- UFC FIGHTERS RED VERSION: 40 of the subjects above autograph cards in red ink numbered to 25.
- DUAL AUTOGRAPHED FIGHT MAT RELIC: 10 cards highlight 2 players and signatures AND a piece of the mat from their debut Octagon match numbered to 25.
- AUTOGRAPHED ULTIMATE GEAR RELIC: 20 UFC Fighters with an autograph AND fighter-used glove, shirt or shorts relic numbered to 25.

RELIC CARDS: 3 PER BOX! FIGHT MAT: All 50 Fight Mat subjects are paralleled: 50 warriors from the base set with an actual piece of the mat from their debut contest.

- RED: ONE OF ONE!
- GOLD: Numbered to 88
- ULTIMATE GEAR: 20 UFC pros will appear on cards with fighter-worn relic pieces such as gloves, shorts or shirts.

INSERT CARDS: 8 PER BOX! TOP 10 FIGHTS OF '08: The 10 most thrilling clashes from 2008

- 4 Per Box!
- VICTORIOUS DEBUTS: These 20 challengers were each triumphant in his debut bout! 4 Per Box! All 60 Insert card subjects are Paralleled: RED: ONE OF ONE!
- GOLD: Numbered to 88

ULTIMATE PROMOTION INSTANT WIN CARD: Randomly inserted, offering fans a chance to win a pair of tickets to an upcoming UFC event.



THE RUNDOWN ON...

What We Pulled

Base Cards

The base set comprises 100 cards. The front of each card has a glossy finish with a foil UFC seal at the top and a foil print that details the UFC debut date and event of the card with the fighters' names at the bottom of each card. The back of each base card provides a side by side vital statistics comparison of each fighter. In the center you will find interesting facts about the pugilist.

I pulled 94 out of the 100 base cards with six duplicates. The images are action packed and show some of the best moments in the UFC.



Parallels

We fell short on the parallel cards with a total of 14. The first level is not numbered, but thicker than the base cards. I pulled six parallel cards all numbered to 288.

Inserts

I pulled nine inserts, one more than expected. The inserts are gorgeous and the best part of the set. I liked the "Top 10 Fight" cards the best.

Top 10 Fights



Victorious Debuts





THE RUNDOWN ON...

The Victorious Debut cards show the first win of some of the best fighters in the UFC today. Each card shows the date of the fight and event and pictures the fighter after his victory.



Relic Cards

I pulled only two relic cards. The first was Mauricio Rua/Forrest Griffin three color mat relic cards. The other was a Rory Markham/Brodie Farber mat relic card. The cards are great looking and were not numbered.



Autographed Cards

I pulled three autograph cards with the most notable autos being Michael Bisping and Sean Sherk. They were all blue autos. It looks like all autos are clear sticker autos. Each auto details the event during which the picture was taken and the date.



Final Ratings (Out of 5):

Base set: 5/5

Fun: 4.5/5

Overall design: 5/5

Value: 3.5/5

Re-buy: 4/5

Overall: 22/25 (88%)

Topps did an excellent job with their first UFC card set. The base set features all of the stars of the UFC both past and present and the people that make it happen (the ring girls, commentators/announcer, referees and of course Dana White). It was a fun box to open with a nice mix of relic and autographed cards and some very attractive inserts. The photography is outstanding and each card is chocked with facts that even the most avid fans will learn from.

While mix martial art fans will be happy with this set and likely to buy many boxes, there may not be a lot of value to justify UFC fans spending \$90-\$120 a box. While you do get a lot of auto/relic cards, there are only a few that will have some real value to them (i.e. Royce Gracie, Georges St-Pierre, Randy Couture and Anderson Silva).

Overall, Topps did a great job of producing an excellent base set with some beautiful inserts that are just as nice to collect as the auto and relic cards. I'm looking forward to getting a few boxes for myself and collecting UFC cards each year!

The Adventures of Austin By Barrie Grice aka Prime B



We all want happiness in our lives. It is something we all try to find within our lives and everyday existence. To achieve happiness, it may be a tough decision, such as choosing that special person to marry or something as simple as finding a great book to read on the beach while vacationing. We all have other things essential to our positive demeanors and one is near and dear to all of you reading this: sports!

We all love sports in some shape or form. I grew up with a love of all sports, especially baseball and hockey. It was instilled in me at a young age by my family and grew with

me into adulthood. Growing up in the South Bay area of Los Angeles, I attended a lot of Dodgers, Kings and Lakers games that fueled my passion even more.

Fast forward 25 years from those simple beginnings to the current year of 2009. I am now a father and raising a son of my own. Part of that rearing process has been my sharing the wonderful world of sports with him. From watching the games on television or in person, to collecting sports-themed items, to wearing the jersey of our favorite player or team, he is getting the full gamut of sports.

When we found out we were having a boy my wife said my eyes lit up like she'd never seen. While all we truly want for our children is good health and happiness, deep inside each dad yearns for a son, the kid to throw the ball with and talk sports, while mom wants her little princess to go to the mall and shop the sales.

So who is the guy in question? His name is Austin Grice and he loves hockey! That's all you need to know, the kid flat out loves hockey.

Over the first four plus years of his life I have tried introducing him to many things associated with sports, hockey in particular, to see what he likes and find a way for us to share our passion. He is really indifferent about the trading cards. He looks at them, and unless they are shiny, he couldn't care less. A 1/1 shield is as good as a base card to him most days. He recognizes some of the players on the card and that will garner a bit more of his interest, but overall he's not impressed with flat pieces of cardboard with tiny pictures. He likes watching the games on TV but because our team the Kings is on so late he often falls asleep before seeing the final outcome.

One day, on a whim, I thought about what I had done that always made me pumped about the game of hockey. There were many things but one stuck out: getting in-person autographs. I started collecting autographs in high school with my friends. We had a blast and I continued to do it after moving to Colorado. I eventually stopped about 2001 when I eventually acquired all the big names like Gretzky, Lemieux, etc. I felt once I had gotten a player's signature (unless you are a dealer making



profit) it became a bit monotonous to get them again.

Now I would get the chance to do it all over again, but with my son and the opportunity to make memories with him. The wheels were turning and I had a plan to formulate. What would we get signed? Would we try and obtain signatures from certain players or everyone? I wanted it to be cost effective as well. With today's economy so terrible, why spend \$400 on a card of a player when I can get his signature for free, personalized to boot and possibly a picture with my son? Going at our current rate, with gas, parking fees and the cost of the photos, the ENTIRE year of autograph adventures will set us back the cost of a 2005/

06 Cup rookie card of Ryan Getzlaf. Top that off with a lifetime of memories and it had all the makings of a wonderful adventure with no definitive end in site!

We started with getting the classic items like pucks and photos signed for Austin and whatever else I could find. This was not going to be the cost-effective hobby I had envisioned with pucks about \$3-4 a piece and photos \$5-6. Also, since this was all about my son, I wanted personalized autographs whenever possible. One of my initial rules was that none of the signatures would be for me, no matter how big the star. I had my time doing this and it was now all about him. My priority was to have fun and spend time with my son. I noticed a trend with a lot of creative people on the hobby boards doing custom work and decided to reach out. I figured maybe I could have someone develop custom photos for Austin to get signed and then in return I would get that person an auto or two for their help. Well, a great person stepped forward, Tricia Hall. (leafchik1967 on most message boards) Tricia happily made the images for each team and has even customized a few extra special requests I have had. Thanks to her tireless and amazing efforts over the past few years, Austin has over 200 different autographs on 5x7 photos with at least 95% of those personalized to him.

Besides the signatures, Austin has had a lot of terrific things happen. He has had his picture taken with many great NHL stars. He has had sticks given to him by various hockey players. He has received high fives galore; fist bumps, head pats and about every other congratulatory sign a kid could get from a pro athlete. But there is one more special thing that has come out of all this that warms my heart more than anything else.

My son Austin has a slight speech disability. He works on it very hard in school everyday and at home with his mom and dad. But nothing makes me smile more than when I tell him a player's last name, and, no matter how tough it is, he tries his hardest to say it and thank the player after getting an autograph. So, in a sense, these wonderful father/son outings have been therapeutic for him as well in his development. We will continue on until we have no one else we want to chase. We are actually considering trying baseball this summer. Thank you again for all the feedback we received from all over the world about our outings; we will continue to share them with you. I hope one day you all find your true happiness with sports or a hobby as Austin and I have!



ROOKIE DEBUT

New Member's Corner By Leo Zuperku aka Izuperku

Here are the links to our contests:

Football

<http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=695230>

Hockey

<http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=725088>



New Members !!!

If you have a question or problem, don't forget to "ASK LEO"
This is located in the sticky section of the MEET & GREET Forum

Congratulations to BIGTALKER007 & LITTLEKANE1088
They were the winners in our SCF 6th birthday giveaway

Congratulations also to NASCARDS our new New Member Team manager.

**I'm moving from Manager to Advisor for personal reasons but
I'll still be on site trading**

It's been GREAT being your New Member manager .

THANK YOU SCF!

As always if you wish to join our new member team, don't hesitate to PM Nascards



FANTASY STANDINGS

SCF's fantasy basketball league hasn't seen a change for first place since 2008! NBAFAN123 has led the entire year, and doesn't appear to be relinquishing his lead anytime soon. With only a few weeks left in the regular season, anything can happen still, but it appears that NBAFAN123 will finish in first. Second place isn't as easy to determine, as there are 5 members within 6 points of each other. It should be an exciting last few weeks!

Standings, as of 3/26/09, are:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. NBAFAN123 - 135 | 10. Anchorage Akitas - 95 |
| 2. garnett_21 - 128 | 11. Gimme Some MO! - 93 |
| 3. Texas Hellbillies - 127 | 12. Caf. Crusaders - 86.5 |
| 3. Court Vision - 127 | 13. Strange Brews - 82 |
| 5. kobe080 - 124 | 14. the_future - 64 |
| 6. demonpower55 - 122 | 15. CHillyDoggy - 62 |
| 7. Molly's Ballers - 112 | 16. ello's team - 51.5 |
| 8. D-III - 103 | 17. Michigan Man - 51 |
| 9. gladdyontherise - 97 | 18. trevor121 - 50 |

Now for the hockey regular season pool sponsored by NSCC, with less than two weeks to go, here is the top ten!

2008/09 Regular Season					
Through games of Apr 2 (pool runs Oct 4 to Apr 30) - www.officapools.com					
	Team	Day	Week	Month	Total
1st	Rogulon	7	17	15	1049
2nd	Tarnies	6	19	14	1042
3rd	Scottko20	8	22	17	1036
4th	Allenblack	5	18	13	1028
5th	Digitalmonkey	5	18	13	1008
6th	Devicage	7	10	12	1002
7th	Matssundin13...	6	16	14	1001
8th	Phaebs808	5	16	13	998
9th	Pantera04	8	20	15	992
10th	Nbcollector	8	22	15	982

In the SCF fantasy league contest, the playoffs are nearly over and only two teams are left standing; the Montreal Jaywalkers and the Toronto Tavares. Good luck to our two remaining contestant and thanks to Cardsbythebox for supplying a box as the prize!

TEAM	SKATERS								GOALIES				TOTAL
	G	A	+/-	PPH	PPG	SHG	GWG	HET	W	SO	GAA	SV%	
#1 Montreal Jaywalkers	12	14	13	31	2	0	5	31	2	0	3.84	.969	4-4-4
#2 Toronto Tavares	10	15	13	28	4	0	0	31	0	0	1.96	.982	4-4-4



Contest Galore

By Jason DiOrazio aka jdio13

Hello and thanks again for reading! In this issue, I am going to tell you about all the new and exciting things going on in the Football section of SCF. We currently have a few different contests running and I will explain them in further details. We also have the highlight of our first ever eBay Steal of the Month winner. Let's get started!!



eBay Steal of the Month

Lately, we had been running the eBay Steal of the Week contests, but every other team was doing eBay Steal of the Month contests, so we decided to join. Our very first winner from February was quite impressive I must say. Here is a picture of the winning card:

With the permission of the winner, kordaisdad, here is a link to the eBay auction:

<http://cgi.ebay.com/ws/ebayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&ssPageName=STRK:MEWNX:IT&item=330308325579>

That's right, your eyes aren't deceiving you, it was won for \$10 plus shipping. So, on behalf of all of the members on the football team, we would like to congratulate kordaisdad for this spectacular win. We will be running these contests every month, so if you think you got a great eBay steal, feel free to enter your win!!

The Football Team has also started a new contest; which is the SCF Football Pull of the Month. Basically, when you get a box, come on to the site and open it in the football forum, and if you get a great pull, scan it and post it in the thread for a chance to win a prize. Further rules are on the site, so come on in and check it out!!

We also are currently running our very own SCF Football Mock Draft. Members choose if they want to be the GM of their favorite team and day by day and members give their opinions on who they feel the team that is "On the Clock" should draft. Then at the end of the day, the member who is the GM gives their decision and a reason why. Although all the spots are taken up for this year, it is still a great way to give your input and get ready for the draft!!

The last thing I would like to hit on is the Chat Nights. Each team has one night dedicated to them in the new SCF Chat Room. Football Chat Night is every Monday from 7 PM EST-9 PM EST. It is a great opportunity to chat with other members who love the same sport and work out some trades. The staff also organizes trivia games. Come on in, join us and chat with members and staff alike.

On behalf of the entire Football Team, we would like to say thank you for reading this article. We hope to see you on the boards very soon!!!



What Does that Say?

By Jason Jones aka The Kraken

I was at my local shop a few weeks ago for a signing from NFL rookie Owen Schmitt from the Seattle Seahawks who also went to local college WVU. I purchased a football and an 8x10 to get signed and waited for my turn. It was a decent crowd but it only took me 20 minutes or so to reach the table. After a quick greeting, and a funny comparison of hairstyles (we both have Mohawks), I went to check out my autos. The signatures were great! Nice gold lettering, perfect signatures, and smudge free.

The signing was at the mall where my local shop just so happens to be as well and I wanted to scratch that itch we all have, busting some packs! Unlike the old days of collecting some of us went through you are pretty much guaranteed to get something in every box. Be it game used items, autographs, or serial numbered cards. I can remember opening boxes upon boxes of wax just to get a jersey card that were seeded an astronomical at the time 1 in 2500 packs! Now just about 90% of the cards on the market offer you a chance to get something other than base in every other pack.



I decided to start off with some Bowman Sterling Football. It's a fairly higher end brand that has a nice value for price ratio. I purchased my mini box and went on to open it. I got a nice Joe Flacco rookie jersey refractor and while not something I could retire on, it was a good start. Next up an autograph, getting better! That is to say until I saw what I could only guess was an autograph. The bottom of the card informed me that the player was Anthony Aldridge but the autograph left me wondering if my two year old daughter snuck her signature in there. It seems Mister Aldridge, in a feat of artful craftiness or sheer laziness, decided that two stars would suffice in letting me know who he was.

I thought to myself "wow, I'm glad I paid \$100 for that!" Upon looking in the showcase it seemed this was a sadly growing trend in today's sports card market. You know what I'm talking about. You plunk down your hard earned money to get the chance to get one of your favorite players' signature to add to your vast collection only to get something that looks like it may or may not be upside down. Having a wife and a mother in the medical field I know all about unreadable signatures, heck half the time I'm walking out of the doctors office I feel like I may need the help of a military code breaker to get a prescription filled! Be that as it may it just seems like some of the players today just aren't taking their time to do something as easy as signing their name.

I know I know I should be happy that they take the time at all to sign autographs for fans. Believe me I am. Getting lucky enough to get a signature from a player before or after the game is a highlight. What gets my goat is paying for something that amounts to a paw print from fluffy me neighbor's cat. It is my



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opinion that when a player signs a deal with a manufacturer to sign autographs he could take the time to make it as legible as he can. I mean, **THEY ARE PAYING YOU TO WRITE YOUR NAME!** What could be easier than that? Instead we get gems like these....

Come on man can I at least get a resemblance of a letter? I remarked recently that Arizona Cardinals quarterback Matt Leinart has a signature that looks like it was signed with his toes!



It could be the players have to sign so many signatures that they get tired and just go from a full name to just a scrawl like Verand Morency's above. My question to you is this... Is this something the player should take responsibility for or should the manufacturers who are paying them to do it? I posed this very question on SCF and I did get a few comments that stated they didn't care as it didn't affect the value of the card, but the majority agreed; it is something that should be addressed. Then as in most things in life there is a yin to the yang, a cold to the hot, and the light to the dark. For as many players that have unreadable signatures there are just as many that have superb ones. Players like the Manning brothers for instance, as well as Brett Favre, John Elway, and one of my all time favorites Jeff Blake.



It's hard to say what if anything could get this trend to stop. I mean, as long as we keep buying the card makers are not going to change a thing. Another poster stated "Don't even get me started on the Russian hockey players!" Whew, I'm glad I'm sticking to just football!



Basketball Happenings

By Nathan Loewy

In January, the NBA announced that they had signed an exclusive deal with Panini, the Italian-based card company, to produce NBA cards starting in October 2009. Now, in mid-March, Panini has acquired American card company Donruss. Panini, who has been widely known for their non-sports cards, has now become the only licensed basketball card producer, and they have acquired one of the largest sports card companies, all in a short 6-week time period. While unknown at this point whether this is a move that will be appreciated by the majority of card collectors, it may open the door for more options for card collectors, considering Donruss has never produced basketball cards.

While Panini appears to be determined to overtake the basketball card hobby for the near future, Upper Deck isn't going away quietly. They have recently announced that they will produce a set for the 2009-10 season. The set will be called "Upper Deck Draft Edition" and will feature autographs from the top prospects of next season. There is no word yet as to whether or not Upper Deck exclusive-signers, such as LeBron James and Kobe Bryant, will sign for this product or not.

The NBA regular season is close to coming to an end. For the first time since 1997-98, we are on pace to see four teams finish with at least 60 wins. In 97-98, the Chicago Bulls, Utah Jazz, Seattle Supersonics and Los Angeles Lakers each finished with a minimum of 60 wins. This season, the Cleveland Cavaliers, Los Angeles Lakers, Boston Celtics and Orlando Magic are all on pace to reach or surpass the 60-win plateau. Along with the impressive win totals, the race for the MVP is very close. Kobe Bryant, LeBron James and Dwyane Wade all seem to be the front runners, but you can't count out Chris Paul or Dwight Howard for the award either. Whoever wins will deserve it, and they should all know that they played tremendously well this season.

The race for the playoffs is really heating up, especially in the Western Conference. Only four games separate second place from eighth place in the west, while only eight games separate sixth place from twelfth in the east. The eight teams going to the playoffs in the west seems all but set, with Phoenix holding the ninth seed, sitting three games behind Dallas, but a recent six game winning streak has put some life into a team that seemed sure to miss the playoffs. There are still seven teams fighting for the last three playoff spots in the east. The last few weeks of the regular season should be very entertaining, and the playoff matchups should be very competitive!

2009 Basketball Theme Weeks is underway! We have had four weeks of entries complete, and three rounds of voting complete. The first theme of the year was "Best Dunk Photo On A Card" in which lc_chatster and bob9826 each tied for the win with votes a piece! Week two was "Rookie Parallel Numbered to 50 or less", and Broy#7 won with a total of 12 votes. Week three was "Dual Autographs" in which TeamADG won with a total of 14 votes. Week four voting, for "Retired/HOFer Memorabilia"

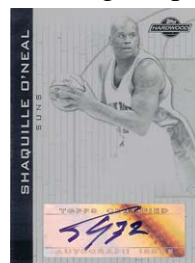


COURTSIDE

is in progress as of when this was written, and Week five, "Non-Jersey Memorabilia", is open to entries! Be sure to stop by the Basketball Show & Tell forum to cast your vote, and to enter your cards!

This month's Basketball Showcase was another tough one to choose. There were so many excellent pulls, and it was very hard to pick only a few. Congratulations to all the members with their great pulls!

Card: 2008-09 Topps Hardwood Black Printing Plate Auto 1/1
Member: djscrib
Pulled From: Box of 08-09 Topps Hardwood, first box since 1988



Card: 2008-09 Skybox Future Signs triple auto Rose/Beasley/Mayo #d/10
Member: Smashmouth20

Pulled From: First pack of box



Card: 2008-09 Topps Co-Signers Yellow Printing Plate OJ Mayo
Member: Rybowski
Pulled From: unknown

Card: 2008-09 Upper Deck Premier Attractions Michael Jordan triple GU/auto #d/50

Member: Rayzorsports

Pulled From: unknown



Card: 2008-09 Topps Murad Larry Bird auto #d/10

Member: r3mch3

Pulled From: 2 packs

The season-long basketball contests are still going strong! Winner for the month of February for Pick 'Em were Idiot83 (55), garnett_21 (53), kobe080 (52) and underdawg (51). For Top Performers, February winners were garnett_21 (21), key2win (21) and Showdown (19). So far, these members have qualified for the playoff portion of the contests:

Pick 'Em: PPPanthersGM; garnett_21; Showdown; key2win; adam334581; allstar; Christianfriend; trevor121; Hoopsman; mrnycegy168; nbafan123; Idiot83; kobe080; underdawg | Top Performers: kobe080; key2win; PPPanthersGM; allstar; Showdown; underdawg; garnett_21

Remember, it's never too late to start playing! You only need to finish in the top 3 for one month to play in the playoffs!



Exquisite? Not so Much... **By Juan Martinez aka illadef5**

Exquisite Collection is dead, long live Exquisite Collection. After this season, the days of \$500 for a pack of modern basketball cards will be a thing of the past. No really, \$500. In these tough economic times, I'd like to think Panini has better sense than to ask \$500 a pack for whatever super premium product they have in store next season. But in Upper Deck's case, what do you get for that \$500? You would half-expect Michael Jordan or LeBron James to come over to your house and dunk on you for that price. But nope, you might get Jordan or James, but chances are you might get Kelenna Azubuike or even Sebastian Telfair, and guess what? People still bought it and they've been buying for 5 years. So with Upper Deck and Exquisite finally reaching the home stretch of their run, let's take a look back and commemorate the most egregious inclusions during its run. As a ground rule, less than desirable players who make the Exquisite checklist in their second year are exempt because they still have potential (call it the "Shelden Williams" rule) to be good. Secondly, players included in dual, triple, quad, or more patch cards are also excused since they're just there to fill out the theme of the card (Luke Ridnour, you're safe). Pictures were taken from the Upper Deck website. Last thing I need is some random collector getting on me for stealing the picture for which they created a very unique watermark. So this is a call to Upper Deck, leave with a good impression and do the right thing by banning these players from your 2008-09 Exquisite checklist.

The List...

- J.R. Smith



Anybody else get duped by Smith after watching a documentary on him on TV a few years back? He comes from a pretty cool family that instilled a couple of desirable traits in J.R., like work ethic and humility. Nowadays, he's on pace to be the next Ricky Davis, but with none of the things that makes Ricky Davis likable and funny...

- Morris Peterson



In the same way that some players get voted into All-Star games as a sort of career achievement award (Antonio Davis, Chris Gatling, Vince Carter for the past 5 years), this must be the next best thing: good role player getting into the top basketball card release of the season. Not only is Mo Pete in Exquisite, but he's even featured in one of its more popular inserts, Scripted Swatches.

- Damon Stoudamire (2005-06 Exquisite)



How many people pulled this card and thought to themselves, "Wait; he's still in the league?" or "Wait; he's a legends pull now?" When this was released, Stoudamire was 10 years removed from his Rookie of the Year campaign and few moments of relevance. He did have some shine in Portland, but Lakers fans know all too well how that turned out...



AROUND THE BOARDS

- Sebastian Telfair (2006-07)

Yeah, turns out Bassy isn't the next James or Starbury or Omar Cook for that matter. Sonny Vaccaro must be rolling over his grave right now...

- Shaun Livingston (2006-07)

I just want to quote Bill Simmons when talking about Livingston: "If Shaun could just stay healthy, he was going to be special. Only Wade and James had higher ceilings. I really believed that. How could I walk away from someone with a slim chance to become the next Magic? Would any true basketball fan walk away from a prodigy?" Then the injury that makes Joe Theismann cringe happened.



- Glenn Robinson (2003-04)

While you could say Big Dog didn't live up to the hype of being a No. 1 overall pick in the same year as Jason Kidd and Grant Hill, he did have a solid career that produced a few All-Star game appearances and a career 20 PPG average (not to mention a ring with the San Antonio Spurs). That being said, by the time the 2003-04 season rolled around, he had already been bounced from the Bucks to the Hawks to Philly and was trying desperately to get shots alongside Allen Iverson. Yeah, that's not going to end well...

- Boris Diaw (2006-07)



The following statement was prepared by Boris Diaw: I'd like to take this time to thank Steve Nash. Just like Kenyon Martin and Richard Jefferson worship the ground Jason Kidd walks on, I would like to declare my undying support and loyalty to Nash.

I was part of a trade for Joe Johnson that was considered horribly lopsided. Running with Steve, coupled with it being my contract year, I was able to become the NBA's most improved player and made people forget about Amare Stoudamire for a good few minutes. Before I was traded to basketball purgatory (aka whatever team Larry Brown is coaching), I signed a new contract (thanks, Steve) and added on a few extra pounds, letting me take it easy playing alongside 3 All-Stars and a guy with one leg who plays my role better than I do. Even Upper Deck was drinking the Boris Kool-Aid, letting me sign an inordinate amount of cards, totally disproportionate to my value to the Suns. Good times...



- Andre Miller (2003-04)

Once upon a time, there was a team called the 2002-03 Los Angeles Clippers. A team oozing with talent and depth at every position, the Clippers were poised to make a run with this young and exciting group, so they took what they thought was another step in the right direction by trading away Darius Miles for Andre Miller. A border-



AROUND THE BOARDS

line All-Star at the time, Miller was supposed to bring stability and maturity to the Clips. Instead, he brought a terrible attitude that killed the Clippers' chemistry and led them out of playoff contention. Earning himself the disdain of his hometown L.A. (Miller is vilified every time he comes to Staples). One year later, his name was forever etched in trading card history by being undeservedly part of one of the most popular inserts sets of all-time: Limited Logos

. - Larry Hughes

Well, if you're like me and open packs so you see the card backs first, you'll know the agony of seeing a Cavs logo and the name isn't James. So you think that buying a pack of Exquisite is going to save you from that? Wrong. When there's a website called heylarryhughespleasestoptakingsomanybadshots.com, maybe you don't deserve to be in Exquisite.

- Desmond Mason

I find it hard to crack on Desmond Mason. He's one of the good guys of the league and he does a lot of charitable work in the community. But when your lasting legacy is winning the lamest Slam Dunk competition ever several years ago and you haven't done anything since, you're not Exquisite-level. I'd rather pull a Chris Andersen Scripted Swatches. At least that has irony...

- Eddy Curry



When you're called "Isiah Thomas' prize acquisition," you got problems. Has there ever been a bigger waste of talented big men than the front line that the Knicks put out last season with Curry and Zach Randolph? Both are capable of being 20-10 guys, yet they can't seem to drop the chalupa and not get outthustled by David "Good Things" Lee....

- T.J. Ford



Remember when people were comparing him to Allen Iverson? I do, and that didn't really work out, now did it. It's not really a good sign when the fan base is openly pining for you to get hurt after you had to take a year off for a spinal injury already so they can play Jose Calderon guilt free. Hope you're having fun in Indiana, T.J.

- Donyell Marshall

Taking the ceremonial "pull a Cavs logo card and hope its James and it turns out be Larry Hughes" award during 2007-08 Exquisite is Donyell Marshall. In the runner up spot is Boobie Gibson. I also



AROUND THE BOARDS

noticed that it's a Sonics logo on the card, so it's really a double whammy. You see the Cavs uniform, you think James. You see the Sonics logo, you hope for Durant or maybe Jeff Green. Oops...

- Stromile Swift

Upper Deck: Yes, we'd like to speak to Stromile Swift, please...

Stro: Hello?

UD: Yes, Mr. Swift, we'd like you to sign some cards for our top release of the year. There's still demand for a lottery pick bust from 2001 and Kwame Brown said no, so we're going with you...

Stro: Sure, why not? I'm guessing half the NBA population doesn't even know I'm still in the league.

This will be a great way for them to find out I still have a pulse.

UD: Great, we're going the schedule your signing right before Nikoloz Tskitishvili's...

This video more or less sums up what any of us would feel pulling Swift.

- Al Harrington



Missing from Exquisite inserts since its inaugural release, Harrington has been a key component of one of the most memorable teams in the recent memory, the formerly Baron Davis-led Golden State Warriors. He has all the skills to be an elite player, and he has had his moments in New York. Harrington is already a good scorer and rebounder, so he's definitely on his way. So why is he on the list? Because I'd rather

have Stephen "Captain Jack[son]" in Exquisite. Preferably an inscription where Jackson says he makes love to pressure.





And my Co-Workers Are Still not Impressed

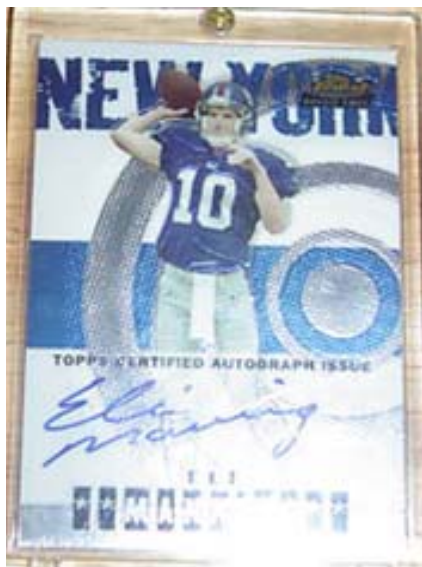
By Stephen Duell aka Spuds1961



O.K you my fellow card collectors will understand and sympathize. We all treasure our cards and expect others to do the same. Well don't expect any oohs and aahs when you show your co-workers your latest addition to your collection. To a fellow collector your Albert Pujols Game-Used jersey card is a great thing to have to a co-worker they will ask why did they cut up the jersey? When you show them an autograph on a little sticker for Derek Jeter they instinctively ask how do you know it's really his autograph.

Now is where I figured I could educate them and get them to understand it is not just a stupid hobby but sometimes you can make money off of these little pieces of cardboard. I brought my price guide and about fifty of my high priced GU and autograph cards to work one day. You would be amazed at how sceptical people who don't collect are when it comes to the value of your cards in a price guide. Most ask how do they know it's worth that much, which is where further education begins...

I took a co-worker to a card store near where we work with some of my untouchable cards, for non-collectors these are cards I would never trade or sell, But I was using them to prove a point. I brought my Eli Manning Topps Finest RC auto which has a high book value of 200 dollars. The fact that I live in Mississippi didn't hurt either. When the shop owner offered me 3 boxes of Topps Chrome 2008 football I think my co-worker was starting to understand.



As a collector that knows of only 2 other co-workers out of maybe 300 people who collect cards it is pretty hard to prove that card collecting is not a waste of time. But my goal of educating at least one or two co-workers a week is starting to work. Just the other day one of my co-workers who I thought didn't even know I collected asked if I pulled any good cards lately. I not only gave him the answer of yes I was able to go to my car and show him The best thing we as collectors can hope for is to meet a fellow collector, which equals a future trading partner. The worst that can happen by educating co-workers is they don't really care for cards but they have some sort of understanding why we do.

I hope this was a little enlightening and remember a co-worker is just an uneducated collector waiting to happen. Happy collecting everyone take care!



An Alternative Take on Parallels **By Aik Sheng Tan aka madyankees**



Parallels. While there is no denying the popularity of this concept among collectors today it is hard not to be reminded of the saying “too much of anything is bad” when you look at many of the products in the market. Personally I have a love-hate relationship with these multi-colored parallels especially in recent years. Few would argue against the aesthetic appeal of a rainbow although their sheer number per set can be downright frustrating at times. These days we got, the typical gold, black, red, blue and a whole lot of other color names that you and I did not learn about when we were getting our basic color education in kindergarten. For those of you who are unfamiliar with what in the world I’m blabbering about, I suggest taking a break from reading this article and checking out 2008 UD Heroes for an extreme example of this color induced insanity.

Back? Alright now we can move on to the non-colored parallel world. You didn’t really think that color thingy was all that it is did you? For starters we have chrome then we have the “regular” refractor, X-refractor, super refractor and printing plates. Did I mention printing plates have different colors too? If I missed out anything, I’m truly sorry but I already find differentiating your everyday “run of the mill” chrome from a refractor a real test for my untrained eyes. Then of course most of these parallels are serial numbered which make them harder to find and more collectible. I’m still wondering if I will ever pull a 1/1 in my lifetime.

Parallels have also transcended beyond the base cards as we now have a nice variety of inserts to choose from such as the regular non game-used (GU) serial numbered insert, the GU insert, a GU colored parallel numbered insert, a GU colored parallel plus autographed colored and numbered insert and so on. If that sounds confusing to you, well that’s because it is! Once again to quote an example, I recommend downloading the full checklist of 2008 UD Piece of History from the Upper Deck website. For those of you who did not try that...good for you because my laptop hanged on me while trying to open the spreadsheet file. Alternatively, some sets have chosen to abandon the color concept altogether and instead utilize dual, triple and quads for their memorabilia cards to achieve pretty much the same effect.

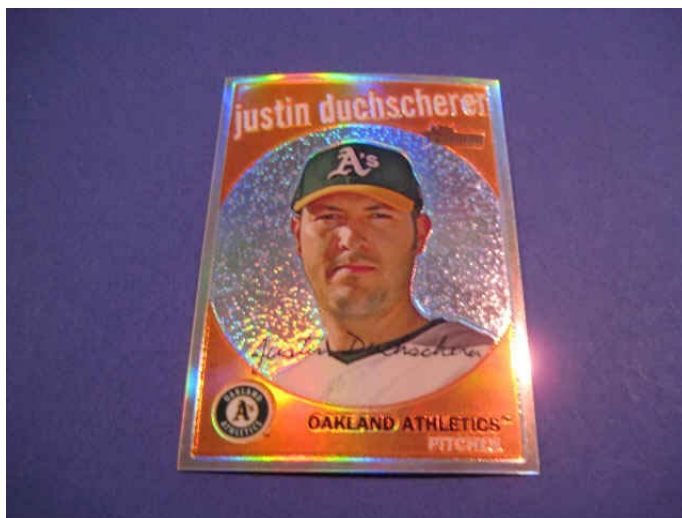
While this could be a hint for me to reduce my card-buying budget and put aside some money to upgrade my personal computer, I believe it also demonstrates just how extensive the presence of parallels is in the hobby today. Most of us are not going to try for every single card in the market simply because we are not that greedy or more likely our pockets are not that deep. However what I’ve been trying to prove to you for the past four to five hundred words is that the hobby is choking so badly with parallels that these cards are on the verge of becoming extremely boring. No doubt these parallels do have their trade value and demand but as a collector, I also value the design and photography of cards. How many versions of the same designed card with the same picture do we really need? Are we collect



RANDOM RANT

ing picture cards of our favorite players or colored borders of the same picture? Do we really need

to have all the different parallel versions for every single base card in the set? More recently, Topps gave us a glimpse of the next generation of “parallels” by giving fans a chance to plunge into the dark side with their 2009 Topps Baseball Series 1 Walmart exclusive blasters which delivers “blackened versions” of the base set. Exclusive throwback versions of the exact same set would be rolling into a Target store near you soon. Oh joy.



Personally I am of the opinion that parallels are nice but there is a serious need to limit their production. My take on this would be to just have 3 parallels for the base cards; a color themed chrome parallel, silk and paint/sketch. By now I'm sure I have dropped more than a few clues along the way of my not-so-positive opinion towards color parallels but I concede that there exist a strong following for certain colored parallels such as gold. My suggestion is to infuse chrome technology into the selected color themed parallel so that for example your gold parallel will actually have a shiny gold feel to it. I mean seriously, if you're going to call it the gold parallel then it should look like gold, not gold foil and certainly not the commonly used dull yellowish brown colored border. Whatever the case, just one color would suffice, one parallel to feed the collector's craving for an alternate color card, that very same one parallel that will also have chrome/refractor technology. Think of that famous line from Lord of the Rings, “one ring to...” and transfer that mentality to the color parallel card. Once you're done, we can shuffle on to parallel recommendation number two; the silk version. I have never ever pulled one before but from what I see on the internet, they are ridiculously nice and classy looking. Neither have I ever heard anyone complain about these so give yourself a pat on the back Topps because you guys did good on this one. Last and certainly not least, I think we should have a painting or sketch parallel of the base card. Over the past few years, sets like Topps Allen & Ginter and Upper Deck Masterpieces have proven their popularity among collectors with their sketch themed sets. I personally think one of the reasons why we love these sets is because somewhere along the way while growing up a large majority of us figured we are not going to get an “A” grade in art class so we do the next best thing and embrace these cards. Photoshop has a function that can give a picture an “artist painting like” look. This I believe would be a much better way of fulfilling some of the capabilities of this wonderful software instead of just using it to change the colors of borders.

With that I hope that I have managed to bring to attention how outrageously overused parallels have become and I honestly hope that some day some card company might actually get to read this, realize the madness and cease their senseless flooding of rainbows into the hobby. Wishful thinking huh? Yeah I thought so too.



Hockey Happenings

By Duff E. McFadden aka comatoad

Staff changes

While those changes keep a coming, our educated, dynamic Hockey staff just continues to get better and better – all the better to serve you, our loyal members. Richard (RGM81) and Chris (Hossa18sens) are our newest Canadian prodigies in training. It's just a matter of time before they earn their wings as moderators.

Tuesday nights Hockey chat nights

Don't forget, Tuesday night – that third day of the week named after the Latin God of War – is reserved for Hockey Forum chats, beginning at 7 p.m. (EST). Just click on the "live chat" link, and you're well on your way to some of the most intelligent discussion on this planet, including everything you always wanted to know about hockey card collecting – answered by your knowledgeable hockey moderators and other members just like you. Just remember to keep your dance card open on Tuesdays. See you there!

Welcome to our newest members

The Hockey Forum continues to grow by leaps and bounds as we continue to draw new members into "the coolest game on earth," including (but not limited to) – BCEaglesFan82; bizz; cassijon; cassu; DzEjDy; enforcersonly; Freezang; FuriousD82; Gagner4God; habsmtl09; ilovethelakings; Jshopay; michiganice91; nebbboy; nevchewy; PJJ; pmlebel; Redman08; sacrebleu; Smalls007; SqueezyCrusty; t_beliveau; teepee80; theupperpat; and wwwwj10. Be sure to give a rousing welcome to these new members.

Calling all "Super Collectors"

Whew! Can you believe it? A whole month has gone by without any of our fantastic members submitting their collections for perusal and certification as "Hockey Super Collector" status. Not only will you be the envy of other hockey collector, but you get to display a shiny new badge, as well. For information on how you can qualify to be a Super Collector, check out <http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=558419>.

SCF's Hockey Playoffs Pool

The NHL playoffs are almost upon us, and what better way to demonstrate your hockey knowledge, than by entering the Hockey Playoffs Pool. It's surprisingly simple to enter and all details can be found here: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=745604>. What can you win? –1st, 2nd and 3rd place finishers will win a prize of their choice between an autographed puck, an Iggy auto and an In The Game Redemption Heroes and Prospect card. We will be using www.officepools.com for the pool. All data will be entered once the deadline to enter your picks has passed. Send all picks to Houg (Quiet-Things) and contact her with any questions.



Interview with Dr. Price
By Jeremy Wall aka jwall22



Before I get into the interview, I'd like to hear a bit about your personal collecting history. When did you first start collecting cards? What did you collect? What initially brought you into the industry as a manufacturer?

I started collecting cards at the age of 6 in 1953. I collected Parkhurst Hockey Card cards. I bought packs of cards at Lover's Variety Store in Downsview, Ontario. I found empty soda bottles at construction sites, washed off the mud bottles in my parent's garage and took the bottles to Lovers where I got two cents per bottle. With the money, I bought packs of cards for five cents each.

I would take my traders to school and put complete sets together. I was lucky, my mother did not through out my cards when I left home, and I still have my original sets to this day. Most of my extra cards were traded years ago to start my game-used jersey collection.

Bleu Blanc et Rouge was released on January 23rd. When was the idea for this set first discussed at ITG? Is the final product close to the initial ideas for this set?

The initial concept was conceived as a boxed set. As we developed the idea we realized that there was just too much content for a boxed set. We spoke to a number of our high-end collectors to determine if the Superlative concept would work and they said yes. Most of the autograph and insert ideas were the same as originally planned.

ITG's web site is featuring a poll for collectors to vote for the most significant year in hockey history. Based on how the poll is described at the site, it seems like ITG planning a product release themed around a specific year. What kind of details are you able to give about this concept?

None. We must wait until February 15th when the survey is over and collectors determine the most significant year in hockey. Then we will sit down and discuss what can be done to create the best product for that year.

I have some ideas for the different years nominated but it is too soon to formalize anything concrete as of this time. Any of the eight years nominated would make for a great product; I look forward to the results.

ITG seems to focus on niche themes in the hockey market, examples being a product that is entirely goalie-themed or themed around women's hockey. Upper Deck, however, focuses more on brands without a specific theme, examples being Ultra or MVP



, but have arguably more brand name recognition because of how long some of these brands have been produced by UD and other companies. Has focusing on niche products been beneficial for ITG? Is it difficult coming up with new ideas for themed products?

What does Ultra mean to hockey? What is the difference between the checklists in Ultra vs. MVP vs. SP vs. Collectors' Choice? In The Game will only do projects with a theme, That's what we do. Sure it is difficult to come up with new ideas, that's why I am asking collectors to help me by voting in our survey. I don't want to do a product this is just a regurgitation of other products.

One of the problems with card manufacturers such as Upper Deck and Topps is that they rely heavily on memorabilia and autographed cards and little on theming particular sets. Often collectors complain of repetition among the various sets released by these companies. How important do you think it is to differentiate one set brand from another? How difficult is it to accomplish this?

It is extremely difficult but extremely important. We rely on authentic game-used memorabilia not game-issued, or photo shoot or old-timers. We rely on no redemptions and inserting into our products only the autographs we have on pack-out date. That too is extremely difficult but extremely important. It is difficult to differentiate one set from another, very difficult but in my opinion it is paramount to success.

With only two major hockey cards manufacturers and with only one being licensed by the NHL, there are still complaints from some collectors that there are too many sets released. Do you agree with this complaint? Do you see it as being more of an issue of many sets being too similar rather than there being too many sets altogether?

Sure I do. Most of the Upper Deck products are un-themed. Why release products for the sake of releasing products, that's what I say. Give us our license back. Let each manufacturer make eight to ten products per year and In The Game will take its chances on being #1 in the market. Just give us a chance.

Some card manufacturers without MLBPA licenses have been successful producing unlicensed baseball products. Donruss is an example. How has not having an NHL license affected ITG sales in the past few years? Do you suspect the NHL will issue a license to ITG at any point in the future? For the sake of argument, if the NHL licensed ITG for next year, would you expect that to cause an increase in ITG's sales?

The lack of a license is devastating. We would love to have our cards called rookie cards again, we would love to use full body images again, we would love to have access to photos again. Sometimes I feel that we are producing cards with both our hands tied behind our backs. But we will continue to play



A WORD WITH...

the hand we are dealt in the best way we can.

Only the NHL and NHLPA know what they will do with the licensing situation. We certainly are hopeful but we are not counting on it. Naturally, getting a license would increase sales. I would love to go head to head with Upper Deck again on a level playing field. We are quite confident that we could prevail.

Many collectors are finding themselves priced out of purchasing packs and instead resort to EBay and other avenues to purchase the specific cards they want. An example of this would be instead of buying a box of Bleu Blanc et Rouge, someone who collects Saku Koivu would probably be better served just buying Koivu singles from that product on EBay, thus making their dollar stretch further. Is this impacting sales of unopened product? If this trend were to continue and people were to buy fewer and fewer packs, would this cause a shift in how cards are distributed and sold?

No not really. It expands the market for the dealers that break our products. Just as long as we make cards that the end user wants, we are pleased with whatever method they use to acquire them. If people buy fewer and fewer packs and it does affect our business, we will have to consider making changes.



The decision to cut up Georges Vezina's only remaining goalie pads and insert them into ITG cards was controversial. It's something that people in and outside the hobby still discuss years later. Personally, I think a relic of this nature belongs in a museum, if not the Hockey Hall of Fame, then a public Canadian museum since a sports rarity like this goes beyond hockey and into the realm of Canadian cultural heritage. What's your response to this? Someone could criticize this as memorabilia cards taken to a radical extreme and bringing negative attention from the mainstream on the industry. Do you agree with that? Looking back on the decision to use Vezina's pads, would you have done anything different?

The cutting of the Vezina pads is an old story. Close to eight years old. The pads were available in the marketplace for many months if not years. Anyone could have acquired them. The Hall of Fame, a museum or the government agency for that matter could have purchased them. They didn't, so I did. Once I acquired them after the others did not want to pay the asking price for them, I felt that they were mine to do with whatever I want to.

If someone wants to criticize me for doing it, ok criticize me. I'm ok with that. However, the cutting of the pads brought much positive attention to the trading card industry; Full page stories in USA Today, LA Time, Toronto Star, Financial Post and many others were very favorable to our industry.



A WORD WITH...

Looking back I would have done nothing different, nothing at all.

If you enjoyed reading the interview, please check out my blog at <http://www.thehockeycardsblog.com>. My goal is to provide unique and interesting reading material for hockey cards collectors, so I plan on having more stuff like this on the blog in the near future.





Racing Contest Updates (As of Race 5)

By Darin Heitzer aka JKC

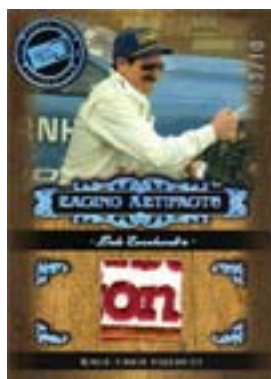
SCF Chase For the Cup - Going into race 6 (the last race in segment 1), skippy has a 10 point lead. Will he hold onto the lead and win, or will the competition put on the pressure and take it away? Check the racing contest forum to find the answer!

SCF NASCAR Survivor - The first segment of the year went down to a head to head battle between the Racing Manager Lesracing and one of the Racing Assistant Managers skippy. Congrats to skippy for winning the first segment!

SCF Racing Team Challenge - Currently in segment 1 of the inaugural year long version of this new contest, bigdawg315 has a 2 point lead in both the segment and overall standings. The standings though for each the segment and overall are different cause of the first of two bonus races. Congrats to each race winner: skippy, JUQ1115, bgxfan4God, Jr4thechamp, and toddsr. Each was awarded 100cc for having the best finishing team for that week.

Where will this driver finish? (VIP only contest; held in the VIP Lounge) - Each week, VIP members on the site have a chance to win 50cc simply by guessing where a certain driver will finish. So far after 5 races, the winners are: jeeprader (Mark Martin at Daytona), gladdyontherise (Jeff Gordon at Auto Club), the_future (Greg Biffle at Las Vegas), The Kraken (Bobby Labonte at Atlanta), and gladdyontherise (AJ Allmendinger at Bristol). Congrats to all the winners!

SCF RACING CARDS OF THE MONTH These are this month's top racing cards from the Racing Show and Tell forum as voted on by the SCF racing community.



1. 2008 Press Pass Legends Racing Artifacts Firesuit Patch DEF2 Dale Earnhardt (03/10) - (shown by leemozoid; 13 votes)



2. 2009 Press Pass Four Wide Firesuit FWTS Tony Stewart (20/50) - (shown by T_Terry; 8 votes)



3. 2000 SP Authentic Sign of the Times DE Dale Earnhardt - (shown by mishu2nite; 2 votes)



4. 1996 Viper Diamondback Authentic California DA7 Mark Martin - (shown by Krusin; 1 vote)



Set Collecting - My Story **By Kevin Petitpas aka Inferno**

As most of you know I started out here on Sports Card Forum as a player collector, with Marian Gaborik as my main focus. I was starting to gather up some really nice high-end pieces, but I found myself devoting too much time and energy to one player when deep down I wanted to collect all my favorite players. I made the decision to drop the Gaborik collection and take up autograph collecting.

I started picking up autographs for my collection, but in particular I was drawn to the 2007/08 Sweet Shot Puck Signings set. The cards feature bright colors and beautiful autographs signed in silver ink on top of a black puck surface. Some of the first cards I picked up from the set were big name players like Bobby Orr, Sidney Crosby, and Gordie Howe. After seeing how great these cards looked together and already having some of the bigger names I decided to attempt completing the huge 80+ card set.

At first the set looked very daunting, with a checklist weighing in at 82 cards from the Upper Deck website. I also took a look at a Beckett issue to get an idea of some of the card values, when I noticed some of them were not priced due to scarcity. Okay, I thought, some of these are going to be pretty tough.

I began hauling in cards at a hectic pace, at one point pulling in 23 cards in a two-week span. In the meantime I was routinely searching eBay for the "short-printed" cards and started to realize how scarce they really were. I already had the Marian Gaborik short-print card from my player collecting days so that was a bit of a head start, but I had a long way to go. It was also around this point I started to notice there were cards appearing that were not on the Upper Deck checklist. This made the task even tougher, because without a dependable list to go by how could I really know how many cards were out there?

What Upper Deck was doing was leaking out unlisted cards as redemption replacements, most likely because the players got their autographs in late and didn't make the pack-out deadline or final checklist. Normally these cards are packed out in the form of redemptions, but being as the only redemption card in the set was Sidney Crosby I began to suspect they seeded his redemptions out to help sell the product and left the other late arrivals out to be seeded out later. This product has been out for almost



a year, and to this day Upper Deck continues to release unlisted cards into the market.

To make matters worse this set is not serial-numbered, so there is no way of knowing exactly how many copies of a given card are out there. This puts a lot of pressure on set collectors; me included, to grab these rare cards while you can just in case you don't get the opportunity again down the road. Upper Deck is very tight-lipped about print run information sometimes, and I was not able to get any numbers out of them or even confirm if certain cards existed or not.

As if the short-print chase wasn't frustrating enough, the Upper Deck silence stressed me out even more. There are two cards rumored to exist, Dickie Moore and Jean Beliveau, and although I have never seen either of them I can not get anybody at Upper Deck to confirm their existence for me. This frustrates me to no end, a simple yes or no answer is all I need to determine whether or not I need to be chasing these cards or not and they won't even give me that much. I continued to steadily acquire more and more cards for my set, mostly common but a few tough ones here and there. I was lucky enough to track down and acquire short-printed or unlisted cards at opportune times and week by week my list kept getting shorter and shorter.

Out of the blue I was contacted by a member on another trading site who had the Wayne Gretzky autograph available and he offered me the chance to deal for it before it hit eBay. As is the case the majority of the time, Wayne Gretzky is usually the most expensive and one of the toughest cards to find in any set. When I was approached by this member I made the best of my opportunity and we were able to reach a part-trade/part-cash deal which saw me add a major addition to not only my set but my collection in general.

The closer you get to completing a set the more determined you should get. You need to keep pushing, keep searching, and take advantage of opportunities when they present themselves. But no matter how determined you are, sometimes you need help. I wouldn't have been able to come anywhere near as close to completing the set as I am without help from many great traders scattered all over the internet. A handful of my short-print acquisitions are the result of collectors opening up their personal collections and helping me out, for which I am very grateful.

Read Kevin's advice in the next issue...

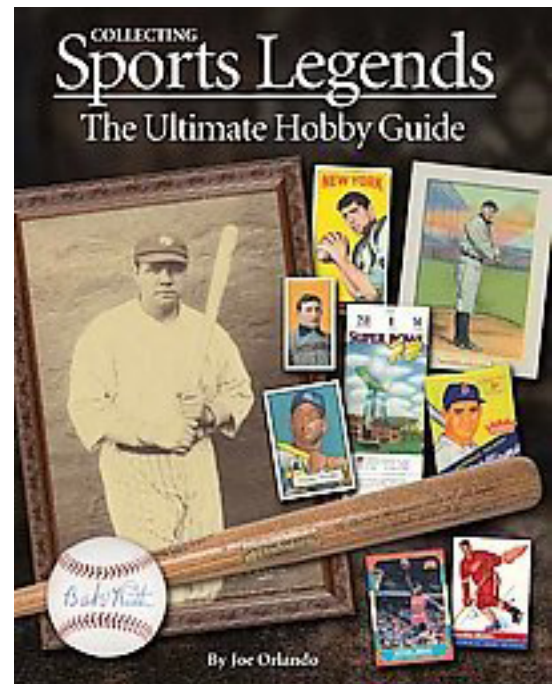


Collecting Sports Legends - The Ultimate Hobby Guide Book Review

By Mike Silvia aka mikesilvia

Collecting Sports Legends – The Ultimate Hobby Guide
– A Must Read for All Sports Card and Memorabilia Collectors

Collecting Sports Legends – The Ultimate Hobby Guide is an outstanding resource for any sports card and memorabilia collector. The book was written by the President of Professional Sports Authenticator (PSA) Joe Orlando, one of the foremost experts in the hobby today. Additionally, experts like Brian Bigelow (set collecting), Steve Grad (autographs) and several other hobby legends provided useful insight. The book is easy to read and chocked full of detailed information and pictures of some of the rarest cards and memorabilia in the hobby today. This book is the resource for individual trading cards, complete sets, autographs, game-used bats, tickets and unopened packs. It was extremely enjoyable to read and will be used as one of my primary sports card references.



One of the most useful chapters for new collectors is the “Ten Tips for Building a Collection.” These tips should be the ten commandments of collecting and read by all collectors. My favorite tip was to keep collecting fun. Today, too many collectors lose sight of how fun the hobby can be and treat it like a business or only buy boxes of cards hoping to make it rich on a big pull. Keep collecting fun and the hobby will always be enjoyable!

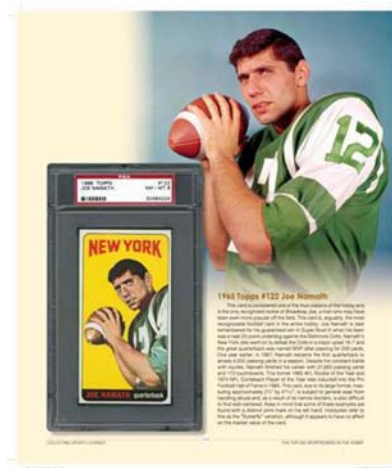
The meat of the book presents the top 250 sports cards and the top 30 complete sets in the hobby. It is a fascinating look at the best cards in the hobby based on popularity, scarcity and historical importance and covers cards from the 1800s to today.

While baseball does monopolize the list, there are plenty of cards from basketball, football, hockey, boxing and golf to make the read enjoyable for all. Every card on the top 250 sports card list has a few paragraphs about its history and some interesting facts on why it is so sought after. Also, there are high grade pictures of each card to give the reader an authentic look at some of the rarest cards in the world.



Building a Dream – A Look at Collecting the Top 30 Complete Sets in the Hobby written by Brian Bigelow is a set collector's dream. The chapter takes an in depth look at 30 of the greatest sports cards sets. Brian dedicates several pages to each set and images of the best cards in each set truly making it a set collector's encyclopedia.

While sports cards are the most covered part of the hobby in Collecting Sports Legends – The Ultimate Hobby, the authors do a great job at covering the top 100 autographs in all the major sports, the top 40 game-used bats, collecting sports tickets and the top 25 unopened packs of sports cards. From Babe Ruth to Tiger Woods, you will learn some interesting facts about some of the most prolific signers from the past 100+ years. I don't collect much outside of sports cards, but it was fascinating to learn about some of the most sought after game-used bats and ticket stubs.



In the final chapter, Tempting Treasures – A Look at Collecting Unopened Packs, Joe goes through a brief history of collecting packs and runs through the top 25 unopened packs in the hobby. It takes a different collector to seal a 1952 Topps Baseball pack of cards into a PSA casing instead of opening it! From the 1933 Goudey Sport Kings pack to the 1964 Topps Football pack you will learn why some collectors choose to seal their packs into a time capsule versus opening them.

As a sports card collector, Collecting Sports Legends – The Ultimate Hobby Guide was a joy to read. Joe Orlando pooled together some of the best minds in the sports card and memorabilia hobby and produced a must read resource for the sports collecting world. I learned a lot of sports card history and enjoyed seeing some of the mint condition gems in all sports. I might not be able to hold the most sought after cards and memorabilia in the world, but with the Collecting Sports Legends book I got to see the cards that drive collecting today and learned some interesting hobby facts.





Bubble Mailers Across the Sea **By Tan Aik Sheng aka madyankees**

It is way past 2am in the morning on a humid night in Singapore, the to-and-fro private messages (PM) have unknowingly trickled into its third hour. Moments later, the negotiations finally bear fruition when I agree to send around a hundred doubles to a fellow collector in the States to help him with his set. Finally my doubles had found a new owner and were on their way out of their miserable lonely 400 count box or so I thought. Ripping into a new bag of supplies which are insanely rare not to mention overpriced in this part of the world, I proceed to pack the cards for delivery. Midway through the task, I received a PM that causes me to delve into one of those frustrating moods as I question myself why do I even bother trying to trade in the first place. It turns out my fellow trading partner has a problem dealing with overseas collectors and has decided to call off the deal. Follow-up offers from me to send first were of course ignored and I knew there was no point in desperately trying to salvage 3 hours of effort in front of the computer screen; it was time to call it a day...or night.



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It's tough being an international collector; for starters, buying boxes is going to mean paying exorbitantly for shipping (try \$25 to \$30 for one hobby box). So next time you grab a blaster at Walmart or Target and complain about having wasted your \$20 on retail, remember that is barely enough to cover shipping for us. Yep, life is good. The effect of such insane shipping prices places budget constraints on the number of boxes as well as the range of products bought. This restriction of course eventually leads to the variety of cards you get, think a small handful of memorabilia, like really small. Buying boxes when you're overseas also means any doubles you get are likely to be stuck with you for good because in the "hits-oriented state of the hobby" today, those base cards are not going to get you much enthusiasm. The next major stumbling block is postage as not too many people are willing to assume the relatively higher shipping costs. For a bunch of commons and an insert or two, some collectors not even going to bother because I paraphrase "...the book value is just too small to justify an overseas trade..." This roughly translates to "the trade is too small for the extra postage cost and hassle involved" I respect their decision and even agree to a certain extent. However, there is a need to highlight that in any trade, both parties are paying the shipping charges and if it's slightly higher than domestic mail for one side and its going to take a bit longer to arrive then it's going to be the same for the other party. In summary, with a lack of highly desirable "mojo" trade bait coupled with the relatively higher postage involved to the mix and you got yourself a real trading challenge. The use of the word "challenge" here is part of my



feeble attempt to keep the mood positive, personally I would have preferred “problem” instead.

So are international collectors destined to turn to emptying their PayPal accounts for their card addiction solution? Are they fated to be left out of the trading scene in the hobby of trading cards? If at this point of time, you the reader find this article is disintegrating into a depressing piece of work that threatens to add to your economic-induced gloom, brace yourself for one last mini rant before we move into greener pastures. Trading is really just one of the few nagging problems faced by collectors residing on foreign soil... Wait till you hear the part on exchange rates and prices of toploaders and nine pocket sheets after shipping. Alright, I shall try my best not to digress any further into the amount of cash that has parted from my wallet or my issues with postage costs for that matter and trudge on to the “greener pasture” as promised earlier.

It would be a good one month later before another potential deal surfaced and found its way into my inbox; a small one but nonetheless still a trade. The guy was interested in

a couple of my inserts and a game-used and was offering me a bunch of Griffey Jr base/inserts to add to my personal collection. Skeptical at first I PM back to clarify that I was not from the United States and if he was sure about this. The reply on the screen was music to my ears; or eye candy to my eyeballs, which ever you prefer - “No problem sending overseas”. Success at last! Over the next few weeks, I manage to make a couple more trades; nothing high-end, a handful of inserts here with some of base thrown in, a GU there, one bubble mailer at a time. Of course it’s not like everything has been smooth sailing but rather than plunge myself into another miserable rant, I wish instead to take this opportunity to thank every single one of you who have traded with overseas collectors like me or even those who have attempted to trade or negotiate a deal. Thank you for sharing the joy of collecting and trading and giving a “foreign budget collector” a chance to experience the fun side of the hobby.





Know your Stadium

By Mike Green aka

Your best bet for having a successful autograph trip is to go prepared. My favourite place for autographs is the minor league baseball parks. Players sign well and there is easy access at most venues. It is important to know where and when you can have contact with the players. While it is obvious to have your cards, photos, balls, pens and sharpies organized, I am always shocked at those autograph hounds who hit the ballpark with little or no idea of where to get autographs.

One first needs to find out when is the best time to get an autograph. When you purchase your tickets be sure to find out when the gates open. Prior to the game is a wonderful autograph time. The hometown players are not very good before a game, but the visiting teams are good going out for batting practice or coming back from it. You can even get a third shot as a player returns to the field prior to the start of the game. Know the park rules as to when to stop asking for autographs. Many of the stadiums will either stop autographs when the umpires come to the field or fifteen minutes prior to game time. Most baseball stadiums will have you stand beside the dugout or along the railing on the visitors' side of the field for autographs. Find out when getting your tickets if the visitors' dugout is on the first or third base side of the ballpark.

Talk with the other autograph hounds that you see before the game. Key information can be gathered about where the players exit after the game and swap some good autographing stories. Some autograph seekers will swap cards with you for players that you did not have a card of or whom you did not realize was there. I also always try to bring some extra autographed cards, if I am doing a league that I have not done very often. Yes, I have actually set in the stands and traded autographed cards during the game. I also have traded address and phone numbers with people and set up later 50/50 transactions and trades. You noticed that the great starting pitching prospect that you wanted never did make it on the field? This happens all the time as teams have one or two starting pitchers chart pitches for the game. Do not fret! The starting pitcher for that day's game will not sign prior to the game, but that prospect you are looking for will still be a possibility. Pitchers who are charting will position themselves behind home plate in the stands before the game starts. One of the guys usually has a radar gun and the other a chart. I try to get their autographs before the National Anthem. I would not disturb them until after the game, if you did not catch them prior to the National Anthem. Look around a little in that section before you get settled in for scouts. You may actually see a scout that you recognize as a former player and may want to attempt to get his autograph at the end of the game or before the National Anthem.

I always try to get to the stadium team shop at some point during the game. I have seen game used jerseys, game used hats, game used bats, autographed jerseys, autographed balls and even autographed bats in the team shops! Those items are always fun to look at or even purchase, but do not forget to look for things you might want to get signed for your collection. I love when the team baseball card sets for the current year comes in or even better the top prospect set for that league. Team mini batting helmets and league baseballs are in the shop as well.

Post game is your next big time. This is the time to get the home team. You are loaded with information you obtained pre game as to the best place for autographs. It is usually outside of the locker room or



FROM THE MAILBOX

next to the team parking area. Realize that players will not be in uniform and that you must recognize them to be successful after the game. I also have had some great post game autographs and interactions with players after the game, as they seem more relaxed. I have a rule not to approach a player who is with his children after the game or on his phone. You can also get the away team after the game. I like to catch the away teams after the last game of a series. They are trying to catch a team bus at that point and you know all the players will eventually be getting on that bus!

Look for special promotions and autograph days at the baseball park. Special guests will sometimes have an autograph signing at the stadium. Baseball teams usually have autograph days where they will make players available before or after the game. The giveaways are sometimes great to be signed as well. Do not forget to get the mascots' autograph when he comes around during the game, if you are trying to complete your team set!

Do not forget your manners. Say please and thank you to the players. You also need to be kind do not push and shove others. Be sure that young collectors who are around you get an autograph first. Do not get upset, if the player does not sign for you. Remember their time is valuable and they are human beings also.





In the next Issue:

SCF Rules Update
The Verdict on Beetween the Pipes
News from the Hawaii Trade Show

New contest announcement!

Out 4th May 2009

