

# ShowCircuit

## Tristar has success in first of two KC shows

BY ROSS FORMAN

**F**or an event to be successful it never hurts to have nice weather. Sometimes the weather can be too nice. That was the case for Tristar Productions' Kansas City Collectors Show, held May 14-16 at the Overland Park International Trade Center.

It was just too nice outside Saturday and Sunday. Sun, sun and more sun both days.

But Friday was incredible — for sales, not necessarily weather-wise.

"It was my best Friday at a Kansas City show ever," said Rich Gove of Rich Gove Collectibles (Deer Park, Texas). "Friday was nice, not overwhelming. Most important, the customers came with money, and were spending."

Added Paul Cardile of Paul's Cards & Collectibles (Thornton, Colo.), "Friday was excellent, phenomenal. The people who came to the show on Friday were very interested in buying. I sold an awful lot of *Sports Illustrated* magazines for the guests who were signing. Super Bowl programs also were hot."

Day One of the weekend extravaganza featured three autograph guests: Ell Roberson, Hank Bauer and Nick Collison. Each signed free autographs.

"Kansas City is always a good market. It's not quite as good as Chicago, but it's still a good market nonetheless. We always do well here," said Jack Hegwood of J&J Sports Cards (Rock Spring, Ga.). "They love their football here, that's for sure. It was the No. 1 seller, and that somewhat surprised me since this is the middle of the baseball season."

Hegwood, who sells unopened boxes, said the weekend's best football sellers were: SAGE Hit (\$99), Press Pass 2004 (\$89), Playoff Contenders 2003 (\$129) and Upper Deck SP Authentic 2003 (\$99).

"I was really surprised how well SAGE sold. Same for Press Pass football; I didn't bring as much of that as I should have. I could have sold a lot more of that, if I had it with me," Hegwood said.

Baseball products were Hegwood's second-best seller, such as: Donruss Timeless Treasures (\$90), Topps Finest (\$85), Fleer Classic Clippings (\$85) and Donruss Classics (\$88).

Mike Philpott of Home Run Sports Inc. (Burbank, Calif.) noted strong sales in Kansas City for Donruss Diamond Kings (\$80), Upper Deck Sweet Spot Classics (\$115) and Topps Heritage (\$59).

"I'm disappointed in baseball sales as a whole," Hegwood said. "The sales just haven't been there this year. Sure, there have been one or two successful baseball releases, but, as a whole, it really hasn't

done too much. Baseball just hasn't set the world on fire."

Ironically, though, it was basketball that was Hegwood's No. 3 seller in Kansas City, despite an incredible run over the past year-plus, thanks to LeBron James and Carmelo Anthony, among others.

"Sales of basketball products have been dwindling, although LeBron James and Carmelo Anthony really brought basketball back," Hegwood said.

Philpott noted strong Kansas City sales of Upper Deck Signature Series tins (\$55).

"Kansas City is one of my favorite show markets all year," said Bill Goodwin of Goodwin & Co. (St. Louis). "I look forward to coming back here in October."

Tristar's spring trip to Kansas City marked a return to its twice-a-year trips to Kansas City, as the Houston-based company is booked for its next Kansas City show Oct. 15-17. The fall lineup already has Bart Starr, Phil Niekro, Harmon Killebrew, Don Sutton,

Fergie Jenkins, Fred Lynn, Maury Wills, George Foster and Jim Rice confirmed.

More than 3,500 collectors attended the May show, which featured 23 autograph guests.

Former San Francisco teammates Joe Montana, Ronnie Lott, Roger Craig, Dwight Clark and Jerry Rice headlined the show on Saturday, which also featured autograph appearances by Bobby Crosby, Jimmy Gobble, Angel Berroa, Rich Harden, Ken Harvey, Jose Canseco and Jackie Smith.

The show's Sunday lineup included Johnny Bench, Steve Largent, Bob Hamelin, Bret Saberhagen, Troy Aikman, Mickey Lolich, Dante Hall and Steve Garvey.

The top autograph signers from a ticket sales perspective were Bench, Aikman, Berroa, Hall, Saberhagen, Montana and Rice.

"Kansas City is a strong collectors market," said Tristar's Mandy Fuerst. "With the Royals being such an improved team, along with the recent success of the Chiefs and positive feedback about the Kansas City market from dealers, we felt that there was an opportunity to produce a second strong show in this market in 2004. The autograph lineup was very well received, with both national and local stars headlining the lineup."

"The Tristar Hidden Treasures autograph redemption program continues to be a positive one, giving dealers the opportunity to move product and customers receive a valued product to take home in addition to the autographs that they redeem the product wrappers for."

The most popular Hidden Treasures wrapper-redemption program guest was Ken Harvey.

Gove said the KC show featured strong sales of 1954 Bowman, "and for me that is very unusual because that's sort of a dead set. Anytime I can sell my '54 Bowmans, I'm happy," said Gove, who also had strong sales of '64 coins.

"I sold a lot more Global graded cards," Gove said. "I think one of the reasons for that is, Global is becoming more and more comfortable in the customer's eyes. They are now accepted more than in the past. People are so afraid of the 'fly-by-night graders.' However, the customers are aware of the people behind Global, so they are more accepting."

"There are an awful lot of high-end cards nowadays graded by Global."

Matt Doyle of MC Doyle (Columbus, Ohio) had more than 40,000 high-end inserts for sale in

Kansas City, with a combined estimated value of \$500,000 or more.

Doyle offered autographed cards from Harry Caray to Joe DiMaggio. He also had patch, bat and jersey cards among his incredible display of cards.

"The card companies have to produce new, amazing products each and every year, that's their job. But, at the same time, that somewhat devalues the items that are two, three and four years-old," said Doyle, who, on Saturday of the show, spotted a Ty Cobb cut-signature card, numbered 1-of-3. "That's an amazing card, probably worth \$3,000."

Doyle's collection hails from hours of opening wax boxes. He also has bought many collections from smaller dealers.

"It's sort of surprising that cards with just an autograph need something else, that just an autograph isn't really enough," Doyle said. "Nowadays, the cards need the autograph plus a piece of a bat or something like that. Plus, the numbering on these inserts is amazing. There was a Michael Jordan card here at the show this weekend, and it was a 2-of-2."

"I like the cut signatures," Doyle said. "Those are very popular and it's a very cool concept."

Tristar's next show is June 18-20 at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston. Baseball Hall of Famers Brooks Robinson, Jim Bunning, Bobby Doerr and Phil Niekro headline the annual extravaganza that also features autograph sessions with Ryne Sandberg, George Foster, Maury Wills, Bobby Richardson, Tommy Tresh, Craig Biggio, Doug Drabek, Jimmy Wynn, Joe Niekro, John David Crow and Drew Hanson. There also will be several members of the NFL's Class of 2004 in attendance, such as Dunta Robinson, Vontez Duff and B.J. Symons, among others.

### REVIEW



Angel Berroa



Dante Hall



Bret Saberhagen