

# ShowCircuit

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## Tristar's New England boasts Patriots, Red Sox, Celtics

BY ROSS FORMAN

In Boston, they love their New England Patriots, winners of two of the last three Super Bowls. They also really love their Boston Red Sox, the 2004 World Series Champions.

So, it was no surprise Tristar's New England Collectors Show – held Dec. 17-19 at the Royal Plaza Trade Center in Marlborough, Mass. – was a smashing success, arguably Tristar's best show of 2004.

More than 4,500 collectors attended the three-day show, which featured 11 Patriots signing on Friday, and 11 Red Sox signing Saturday and Sunday. The show also featured Bob Cousy, Bill Sharman and Baseball Hall of Famers Whitey Ford, Robin Roberts, Jim Palmer, Bobby Doerr, Don Sutton, Rollie Fingers and Tony Perez, among other guests.

"You can't beat the size of the crowd," said Lisa Stellato of Never Enough Cards Inc. of Mt. Sinai, N.Y.

"This show was awesome, definitely my best Tristar show in two years," said Marty Teddleton of MB Sports of Farmington, Ark. "The autograph lineup really brought in a huge crowd and I was able to sell a lot of big-ticket items, such as signed full-size football helmets. This was just a real good show."

The extravaganza also featured autograph signing appearances by Jim Bouton, Bill Lee, Bob Stanley, Reggie Smith, Bill Monbouquette, Dick Radatz, Rich Gedman, Dave "Boo" Ferriss, Rico Petrocelli, Luis Tiant, Frank Malzone, Rick Burleson, Jason Bay, Don Schwall, Wilbur Wood, Steve Grogan and Mike Rozier.

Plus, pro wrestler Greg "The Hammer" Valentine signed autographs and posed for pictures.

"This is a 27-hour trip over 1,700-miles. This was my 30th and final show of the year," said Teddleton, who has logged more than 106,000 miles on the show circuit this year. "It was either going to be a success or, if not, my last trip here for a while. Well, I definitely will be coming back. The show was a total success."

Ramirez was the top signer, penning his name more than 450 times for the public. He also posed for countless pictures.

"Manny puts on a great show. He inscribed a lot of the autographs and posed for tons of pictures with



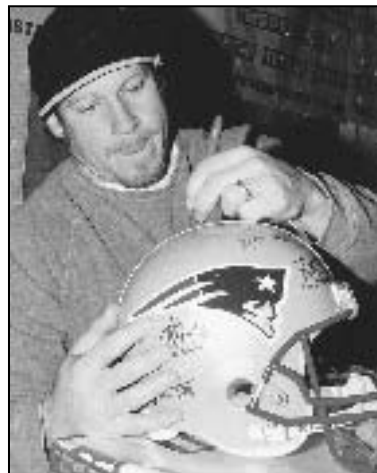
Rico Petrocelli



Bill Sharman



Luis Tiant



Larry Izzo

collectors. Plus, he shook hands with anyone who stuck their hand out to shake his," said Tristar President Jeff Rosenberg.

"Sure, he was the highest-priced autograph ticket (\$180-\$200), but we sold the most of his. People want to get the best, and they're willing to pay it – if the price is fair. I think that's what this show was all about: great players at relatively fair prices, in comparison to the marketplace."

Seymour Bernzweig of A&S Sports of Westbury, N.Y., said the autograph crowd was huge, which might have helped him sell almost all of his 200 Red Sox commemorative sets (\$15) from Donruss and all 50 Topps sets (\$14).

"I'm very tired, and after a show that's a very good sign," Rosenberg said. "The feedback we received from this show was as positive as any show we've produced in some time. I didn't hear one complaint all week-end – and constructive criticism is what we're looking for

to improve our shows. This really was a spectacular show.

"The dealers who I spoke with each said this was, at the very least, a good show for them. One dealer even told me it was the second-best show he's ever had."

Jack Hegwood of J&J Sports Cards said the Boston memorabilia party was a "very good show with a great crowd." He noted strong sales of Prime Signatures Football (\$75 per box) and Upper Deck SPX Football (\$110).

"The Red Sox fans are nice, patient and very enthusiastic –

and that makes good collectors and a good show experience. I can't say enough good things about them," Hegwood said.

Stellato noted strong sales of Donruss baseball cards and Ben Roethlisberger cards. Carl Gerjes of T&C Investments of Alvin, Texas, said high-end wax packs sold exceptionally well. Teddleton sold full-size autographed helmets of Troy Aikman, Peyton Manning and John Elway, among others. He also nearly sold out of his 18 Manning-signed mini helmets (\$125-\$175 apiece).

Meanwhile, Teddleton's Pittsburgh mini-helmet, signed by Roethlisberger, sold for \$120. Teddleton's

### Ortiz, Damon, Ramirez pace BoSox show in Rhode Island

Reverse the Curse 2004 held a sports memorabilia and collectibles show in mid-December at the Rhode Island Convention Center.

The three-day event featured members of the 2004 World Champion Boston Red Sox, including Johnny Damon, Manny Ramirez, David Ortiz, Terry Francona, Tim Wakefield, Kevin Millar, Doug Mientkiewicz, Dave Roberts, Curt Leskanic, Bronson Arroyo, Mike Myers and other players and coaches.

Notable quotes from the show:

**Jeff Slinn, a collector from Warwick, R.I.:**

"The Red Sox made history this season, not only with the best comeback in baseball history but by breaking the curse that has plagued fans for decades. Paying a few hundred dollars was well worth it to get an autograph and shake the hand of players that made this happen."

**Robert Raju, president of Reverse the Curse 2004:** "The Rhode Island Convention Center was the perfect choice for this show. It is in the heart of New England and is easily accessible for fans throughout the region."

biggest weekend surprise was selling Clinton Portis signed Denver items.

"I expected to sell more mini helmets than I did, but overall I sold a little bit of everything," he said.

"There are a lot of pros, but also a lot of cons, about doing a show right before Christmas," Rosenberg said. "We didn't know if we'd be able to convert holiday shoppers into collectors. But I think we did. I don't think this was just your normal collector-base."

The New England show featured one of the most unique collectibles: wooden pieces of the visitor's bench from Busch Stadium in St. Louis, where the Red Sox won the World Series. Tristar sold pieces in two different sizes, priced at \$69 and \$99, and limited to 2,004 and 304, respectively.

The show also featured more than 5,000 free autographs. "It would be hard to match the excitement level we had at this show at any show we produced this year," Rosenberg said.

Tristar's next show is Jan. 21-23 at the George R. Brown Convention Center. The 19th-annual Houston Collectors Show features Joe Montana, Dick Butkus, Lawrence Taylor, Julius Erving, Ozzie Smith, Steve Carlton, Harmon Killebrew, Joe Morgan, Earl Campbell, Robin Roberts and others. ♦



Manny Ramirez