

ShowCircuit

New England Tristar show had collectors in spending mood

BY ROSS FORMAN

Donruss/Playoff was the hot card-maker at Tristar Productions' New England Collectors Show, held May 28-30 at the Royal Plaza Trade Center in Marlborough, Mass.

The three-day show featured 32 autograph guests, and attracted about 3,500 collectors. The signing lineup included Ray Bourque, John Hannah, Lou Brock, Stan Musial, Jose Canseco, Fred Lynn, George Foster, Carlton Fisk and others.

"This was the best Boston show ever, with the best autograph lineup ever — and that lineup really helped bring in the bodies," Hegwood said. "The Boston area definitely will support a show of this size and magnitude."

"Tristar did it right at this show — they brought in the Red Sox and Patriots."

The show featured Super Bowl winners Jarvis Green, Antwan Harris, Tully Banta-Cain, Ty Warren, Bethel Johnson, Asante Samuel, Mike Cloud, Christian Fauria, Matt Chatham and Larry Izzo.

Also appearing: Mark Fidrych, Sergei Samsonov, Marty Barrett, Red Schoendienst, Jim Lonborg, Keith Foulke, Kevin Millar, David Ortiz, Bronson Arroyo, Harmon Killebrew, Jim Rice, Dwight Evans and Luis Tiant.

"The people were here to spend money. Friday and Saturday were great. In fact, it was quite a pleasant surprise — the amount of sales dollar-wise, that is," said Mike Williamson of Bryan's Collectibles (Raymore, Mo.). "There might have been less foot traffic this weekend versus past Boston shows, but this show really brought out the true collectors."

Williamson offers literally thousands of unopened boxes, sports and entertainment. Thus, he rarely notes strong sales of one particular item.

However, he did sell about 10 boxes of 2001 Upper Deck MVP Football (\$28), which features one of Pat

Tillman's two rookie cards.

Jack Hegwood of J&J Sports Cards (Rock Spring, Ga.) reported strong sales at the Memorial Day weekend show of Donruss Timeless Treasures (\$89/box), Donruss Elite (\$85) and Donruss Classic (\$89).

"Donruss/Playoff has been a solid seller because they consistently put out a good product," Hegwood said.

Fleer Ultra (\$55) also was a strong seller in the Boston area — and that caught Hegwood by surprise, albeit a pleasant surprise. "Fleer products have started to make a comeback," he said.

Football cards were also hot in Boston for dealer Paul Sjolín, although his were retro models. "I sold a lot of vintage football commons," he said. "This has always been a strong vintage football market."

Dwight Evans

Sjolín said Friday and Saturday sales were "awesome," though they tapered on Sunday. "This was my best Boston show ever," he said.

Sjolín also noted strong sales of 1950 baseball commons. "There were a lot of good collectors here with lists," he said.

Dealer Chad Smith of Cardboard AllStars (Indianapolis) said there were more collectors in Boston interested in selling insert cards to him than buying his. But, he was pleased with the show nonetheless. Smith, for instance, bought a Peyton Manning SP game-used patch card from the 2004 Hawaii Trade Conference, numbered 6-of-10. He paid \$250 and quickly sold it for \$500.

Ken Griffey Jr. was a strong seller in Boston, Smith said.

"This show was as good, or better, than we could have expected. We were very pleased," said Tristar president Jeff Rosenberg. "Before every show, we project the numbers that we expect to do, and that's the amount of people attending the show and how many autographs will be bought. We exceeded both numbers."

The Tristar show marked the first autograph session ever featuring Rice, Evans and Lynn.

Barrett donated his appearance fee to the Palo Verde High School Wrestling Team in Las Vegas, Nev.

"There was a strong autograph lineup, and that brought out a lot of collectors," Rosenberg said. "This was our biggest autograph show in Boston, meaning

REVIEW



Jim Rice



Fred Lynn



Jack and Jackie Hegwood of J&J Sports Cards from Rock Spring, Ga.

number of guests and number of autographs sold."

Tristar's next show is June 18-20 at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston. The Houston show features Brooks Robinson, Phil Niekro, Bobby Doerr, Jim Bunning, Ryne Sandberg, Maury Wills, Craig Biggio, Bobby Richardson, Tom Tresh, Drew Henson and others.

Tristar's next show in New England is Dec. 17-19, 2004.

"It was a great show for the autograph wrapper redemption program, with seven guests who were part of this at this show," said Tristar's Mandy Fuerst. "The wrapper-redemption program is a win-win situation for the exhibitors and the collectors. It helps the exhibitors sell product, and the collector gets to take home not only the autograph, but the contents inside the wrapper."

HIGHLIGHTED SHOWS

June 25-27 - Chicago SportsFest, Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, Rosemont, Ill.

July 9-11 - Collectors' Showcase of America, Show at Chantilly, Dulles Expo Center, Chantilly, N.C.

July 11 - Dedham Extravaganza SportsCard Show, Dedham Holiday Inn, Dedham, Mass.

July 11 - Mike Riccio Sports, LLC, Stratford Ramada Inn, Stratford, Conn.

July 18 - Cardshow Classics, Taunton Holiday Inn, Taunton, Mass.

July 21-25 - The National Sports Collectors Convention, International Exposition Center, Cleveland, Ohio

Aug. 1 - Mike Riccio Sports, LLC, Stratford Ramada Inn, Stratford, Conn.

Aug. 6-8 - Sports Collectibles of Houston show, The Live Oak Civic Center, San Antonio, Texas.

Aug. 8 - Dedham Extravaganza SportsCard Show, Dedham Holiday Inn, Dedham, Mass.