

ShowCircuit

49ers greats highlight Tristar SF show

BY ROSS FORMAN

There's something about a card show in San Francisco featuring Joe Montana and Jerry Rice. It just seems so logical, even though both spent time in other cities, with other teams during their illustrious careers.

And who cares if they've attended many other shows in the San Francisco area.

Montana and Rice draw crowds.

Case in point, Tristar Productions' annual San Francisco Collectors Show, held Feb. 20-22 at the Cow Palace (South Hall). Both appeared on Saturday, signing hundreds of autographs each.

"This place was rockin' on Saturday. Boy, was the noise level high," said Jeff Rosenberg, president of Tristar Productions.

Actually, the show was rockin' and rollin' all weekend, with more than 5,000 collectors attending the annual three-day show.

Also appearing: Mike McCormick, Keena Turner, Roger Craig, Ernie Banks, Bo Jackson, Dwight Clark, Charles Haley, Ronnie Lott, Willie McCovey, Steve Sax, John Taylor, Russ Francis, Freddie Solomon, Bob Feller, Don Sutton, Gene Tenace, Rollie Fingers, Jose Canseco, Eric Wright and Brent Jones.

"Having got all of these old 49ers appear was very positive. I heard nothing but positive comments from dealers and collectors," Rosenberg said. "This was a good show, a very exciting show. Many of the dealers asked me if this was the largest attendance we've ever had at a Cow Palace show. Well, it was the largest in five years. In 1999, we had Kurt Warner appear after winning the Super Bowl, along with Joe Montana, Jerry Rice and Terry Bradshaw. That was quite a show.

"We've got a great customer base in San Francisco. This is a great collector market, one of the best in the country. Joe Montana in San Francisco; I don't think he could ever sign enough autographs here."

Montana, Jackson and Clark were the show's top signers.

REVIEW

"My complaints about the Cow Palace are strictly physical," said Rich Gove of Rich Gove Collectibles (Deer Park, Texas). "The lighting is terrible. In the evening, if you're not under one of the heaters, it is colder than The National if it were held in an igloo in Anchorage. I'm not too fond of the San Francisco weather and sometimes we find drips in the ceiling. It's interesting to be walking on asphalt and looking at the latrine that the cows used to use.

"All that aside, this is my best San Francisco show every year. This is much better than Labor Day. The crowd showed up and they spent. Hats off to Tristar, the show was great. It sure seemed better attended than last year, and last February was a good show too. They had some great autograph guests this time and those guests really brought people in the door."

Gove said he had "more sales for less money" than at previous shows. "I've been busier this year than last year," he said. Gove said 1953 and 1956 Topps baseball cards were the most sought-after.

"This was a great show, definitely my best show in at least six months," said Robin Lee of Girl-Jocks.com, which specializes in women's sports memorabilia, collectibles and merchandise. "Saturday

was incredible. I made my table (fee) plus a bunch on Saturday alone."

Lee said the top female sellers were Lisa Leslie, Brandi Chastain, Sue Bird and Martina Navratlova. Lee said sales were strong for t-shirts, books, jerseys, photos and cards. "This is one show that I'm definitely happy with," she said.

Lisa Stellato of Never Enough Cards (Mt. Sinai, N.Y.) was just as pleased with the San Francisco experience. She said player collectors seemed to out number set builders. And there was no particular athlete who was most sought-after. There was, though, strong interest in the 1-of-1s from the 2004 Diamond Kings.

"There was a nice autograph lineup and it, consequently, brought in a lot of people," Stellato said.

"It's been a fabulous show," Rich Prioste said. "This was our best show here ever."

Al Ross, a San Mateo, Calif.-based dealer of sports magazines, said he sold "a ton" of publications. "I did as well here as at any show over the last five or six



Ernie Banks



Bob Feller

years, and that includes the Super Bowl shows, which attract more than 100,000 fans."

In addition to strong magazine sales, Ross said old AP Wirephotos sold well.

Ross said the most sought-after *Sports Illustrated's* feature Joe Namath. "They sell immediately," he said.

Carl Gerjes of T&C Investments (Alvin, Texas) sold "a lot of high-end products" at the San Francisco show, particularly Upper Deck Ultimate Collection Baseball (\$90/pack) and Donruss Timeline (\$45/pack).

Gerjes also noted strong sales of Upper Deck basketball products, such as SPx (\$7 pack) and Sweet Shot (\$11).

Mike Philpott of Home Runs Sports, Inc. (Tujunga, Calif.) noted strong sales of Topps Chrome basketball (\$68 per box).

"We had our best Friday for sales ever, and that says a lot," said Philpott.

HIGHLIGHTED SHOWS

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

Apr. 18 - Collectorsfest Sports Memorabilia Show, N.Y.S. Fairgrounds, Syracuse, N.Y.

Apr. 18 - Collectit Expo, Midwest Conference Center, Northlake, Ill.

Apr. 23-25 - Pittsburgh XXVI Spring Classic, Charles L. Sewall Center of Robert Morris College, Coraopolis, Pa.

Apr. 24-25 - Sports Collectibles of Houston show, The LaQuinta Hotel, Arlington, Texas.

Apr. 24-25 - Red Sox Heroes, Host Hotel and Conference Center, Sturbridge, Mass.

Apr. 30-May 2 - 87th Philadelphia Sports Card & Memorabilia Show, Fort Washington Expo Center, Fort Washington, Pa.

YOUR TURN

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