

ShowCircuit

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San Francisco remains a winning choice

BY ROSS FORMAN

Shortly before Tristar Productions' annual San Francisco Collectors Show was about to close, Al Ross made one of his biggest sales to one of the weekend's biggest stars.

Reggie Jackson, one of the hobby's most knowledgeable collectors, purchased more than \$600 worth of publications, including numerous *Sports Illustrated's* with Jackson on the cover, from Big Al's, a San Mateo-based company that boasts more than 125,000 issues in its inventory.

Jackson was one of the top autograph draws at the Feb. 18-20 show, held at the Cow Palace.

Also appearing were: Steve Young, Jerry Rice, Jim Brown, Tom Seaver, Y.A. Tittle and Ronnie Lott. In addition, Ricky Watters, Pete Rose, Alvin Harper, Ken Norton Jr., Merton Hanks, Don Schwall, Charles Woodson, Jesse Sapolu and Chuck Muncie, who signed autographs on Saturday.

"This was the ninth straight February that Tristar has produced a Cow Palace show, and it definitely has become a can't-miss show on the calendars of exhibitors and collectors," said Tristar's Mandy Fuerst. "Exhibit space sold out, as it continues to do each year, as exhibitors renew their spots a year in advance. The collectors at this show definitely came out to see their favorite stars of yesterday. From the Jim Brown fans to the baseball fans who came to see Pete Rose, Reggie Jackson and Tom Seaver, to the fanatical 49ers fans, there was a lot of excitement in the hall throughout the weekend."

More than 4,000 collectors attended. "This was a very good show, extremely well attended," said Kyle Boetel of Kyle's SportsCards of Aurora, Colo.

"It definitely met my expectations." Boetel's best weekend sale was a 1954 Bowman Ted Williams for \$3,000. He also sold a 1951 Bowman Roy Campanella for \$300.

Boetel purchased a complete set of 1968 Dexter Press premium cards for \$300 for his personal collection.

"I've seen a few of these 4-by-6 cards over the past 25 years, but I've never seen a complete set, especially not one in near-mint condition, as this is," Boetel said. "This is a pretty rare item."

Paul Sjolín, a vintage dealer from Spring, Texas, said 1953 and 1955 Topps baseball cards were the most popular in San Francisco. His best sellers, in order, were Willie McCovey, Willie Mays, Gale Sayers and Al Kaline.

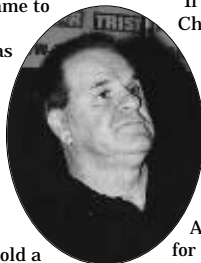
"This was a good show, but San Francisco is always a good show market," Sjolín said. Brad Engelhardt, a dealer from West Palm Beach, Fla., who specializes in current graded and insert cards, agreed with the strength of the San Francisco card market.

Collectors continue to find Tristar's Bay-area event to their liking



2005 Pro Football Hall of Fame inductee Steve Young was one of the most popular signers in an impressive autograph lineup at the Tristar show in San Francisco.

REVIEW



Pete Rose



Ronnie Lott



Ricky Watters

"If all shows were like San Francisco and Chicago, it'd be a dream," he said.

Engelhardt noted strong sales of Barry Bonds, LeBron James, Dwyane Wade, Rice, Joe Montana and, surprisingly, Michael Jordan, "who has not been hot in six months or more," he said. "But, I had a ton of questions about Jordan cards this weekend."

Engelhardt sold a 1998 SkyBox Autographics card of Vince Carter for \$150.

Carl Gerjes of T&C Investments in Alvin, Texas, noted strong weekend sales of high-end wax packs, such as 2004 Ultimate Collection Baseball at \$90 per pack and 2004 Leaf Limited for \$55 per pack and 2004 Leaf Century Baseball at \$11.

All new football releases sold well, Gerjes said, especially Upper Deck SP Authenticated.

"It was a good crowd this weekend, especially Saturday, and it was a spending crowd," said Gerjes, who also had strong sales of Tristar Hidden Treasures mini football helmets.

One of the weekend's highlights was Tristar's Catch-A-Pass promotion with Steve Young.

Prior to the start of Young's public autograph appearance on Saturday, eight lucky fans had the opportunity to catch a pass from Young after winning "the pass" through Bay Area media outlets.

"Any time we can add an interactive element to a show guest's appearance, we like to do so," Fuerst said. "For a person to have the opportunity to take a photo with, or get an autograph from Steve Young is great, but, to be able to catch a pass from a Hall of Fame quarterback is definitely an experience that none of these people will ever forget."

Plans are in the works for similar Catch-A-Pass promotions at future Tristar shows, including another with Young later this year, Fuerst confirmed.

"The response to Steve Young was incredible," Fuerst said. "It was obvious that while the 49ers had a down year in 2004, their fans are diehards, and they definitely came out to relive the glory days of the team's Super Bowl teams with Young, Rice, Jesse Sapolu, Merton Hanks, Watters and Ken Norton Jr."

Young reportedly signed more than 600 autographs for the public.

"This was a very good show, a very successful show. I definitely was very happy," said Chuck Juliana of Major League Sports Cards of Rochester, N.Y. "I sold a wide variety of merchandise, from low-numbered insert cards to rookie cards to autographed cards to game-used memorabilia cards."

Juliana's sales included a Babe Ruth memorabilia card from Leaf Century (\$350) and a Roberto Clemente patch card from Leaf Certified (\$400). He also had success with Barry Bonds memorabilia cards, "probably more than I expected."

"I brought some very nice Bonds cards with me, and I sold all of them. There definitely is still an interest in Bonds cards," he said.

Juliana said sales of stars such as Ken Griffey Jr., Sammy Sosa, Nomar Garciaparra and Derek Jeter have been "so-so" of late, while strong sales continued for Hall of Famers such as Harmon Killebrew, Stan Musial, Mickey Mantle, Joe DiMaggio, Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig. "There's always interest in those guys."

Juliana's game-used memorabilia and autographed cards started at \$2.

"Numbered cards to 25 and 50 used to be very valuable, but because so many sets are coming out with low-numbered cards, cards numbered to 25 and 50 aren't that rare anymore," Juliana said.

Juliana praised the new Leaf Century, saying sales have been strong due to the combination of autographs, game-used memorabilia and baseball-related postage stamps.

Tristar returns to St. Louis April 22-24, featuring autograph appearances by Kurt Warner, Bo Jackson, Bart Starr, Pete Rose, Mike Schmidt, Gale Sayers and others. The show will be held at the St. Charles Convention Center. ♦

Ross Forman is a freelance contributor to *Sports Collectors Digest*. Contact him via e-mail at: rossco814@aol.com.