

ShowCircuit

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Tristar show a San Francisco treat in the heat

BY ROSS FORMAN

The 17th annual Labor Day Weekend Collectors Show in San Francisco was, arguably, the hottest ever which was both good and bad for the hobby.

You see, San Francisco endured one of the hottest Labor Day weekends in the city's history, with sunny skies and temperatures soaring into the 90s. Hence, the Concourse Exhibition Center was literally one hot venue.

But it was also a hot show in the sense of happenings and sales. Dealers bemoaned the temperatures, but smiled at the sales. And collectors came prepared for autographs of such local legends as Will Clark, Matt Williams, Juan Marichal, Orlando Cepeda, Dennis Eckersley and Carney Lansford, among others.

Tristar's San Francisco show also featured Jimmy Johnson, Willie Brown, Larry Sherry, Bob St. Clair, Rod Carew, Hugh McElhenny, Jim Maloney, Eric Johnson, Dave Parker, Brandon Lloyd, Jamie Winborn, Kevin Correia, Luis Gonzalez, Pedro Feliz, Jason Schmidt, Robin Roberts, Steve Garvey, Eric Chavez, Bobby Crosby, Rich Harden, Tim Hudson, Mark Mulder and Dave Stewart.

"I thought the show was a blockbuster, one that far exceeded our expectations," said Tristar vice president Bobby Mintz. "Based on conversations with dealers and collectors, it was a very good show that could have been a great show had it been a little cooler in the building.

"We've produced seven shows in this venue over Labor Day weekend. Five of those shows have been cool enough outside that dealers have worn jackets inside. One year it was average, thus no jackets required, and this year was consistently warmer than usual. Will we be back here next year? Without question."

About 5,000 collectors attended the four-day show.

"Autograph sales far exceeded our pre-show expectations," Mintz said. "The response we got for Jason Schmidt and Dennis Eckersley in particular was incredible. Their sales were way past our pre-show forecast."

Schmidt signed about 400 autographs for the public (\$40-\$70). Eckersley also signed about 400 for the public (\$60-\$100).

"Will Clark hadn't done a local autograph session in 12 years. And he hadn't done any formal show appearance in about 15 years. And the response for him was incredible," Mintz said. "Sure, collectors might snicker that Mark Mulder was doing another Tristar show in San Francisco. But he had another great show appearance, signing about 300 for the public. Mark Mulder only does our show, so the response to him was, again, incredible."

Mulder and his A's teammates appeared Monday at the show, while Schmidt and several Giants attended Saturday. Sunday was a vintage day delight, with appearances by Roberts, Marichal, Cepeda and Clark among others. Hall of Famers Johnson and Brown each signed on Friday.

"I had an excellent show selling and did some great buying too. This was one of the best shows of the year, definitely better than the National (Sports Collectors Convention)," said Kyle Boetel of Kyle's Sportscards (Aurora, Colo.). "There were a lot of serious collectors here, with large want lists.

And I just happen to have what they were looking for.

REVIEW



Clockwise from left: Recently inducted Hall of Famer Dennis Eckersley, Juan Marichal, Jason Schmidt and Rod Carew were among the autograph guests at the Labor Day Weekend Collectors Show in San Francisco.

"Traditionally, this show is better than Tristar's February show at the Cow Palace in San Francisco. And tradition held true this time.

"I think this show could have set records had it not been so hot."

Boetel said the attendance was solid and steady throughout, with Friday being the lone exception.

Boetel's vintage sales included: a 1953 Topps Mickey Mantle (\$2,900), a 1955 Bowman Mantle (\$500) and a 1938 Goudey Hank Greenberg (\$700). He also sold a framed, autographed Mel Ott piece with PSA/DNA authentication (\$1,000).

Roger Neufeldt of Sports Memories (Norman, Okla.) was ecstatic with one of his San Francisco purchases: an 1887 Old Judge card of \$10,000 (King) Kelly, which he bought for \$700 and was offering for \$750.

But Neufeldt doesn't really want to part with his latest acquisition.

"Unfortunately, I cannot put all of the stuff that I really enjoy and into the back room for my personal collection," Neufeldt said.

The Kelly card came to Neufeldt from a local collector who had been selling his wares to Neufeldt for the past five years.

Neufeldt noted strong San Francisco sales of vintage college programs and yearbooks, baseball and football cards from the early 1950s and almost every oddball Willie Mays-related item imaginable.

"I thought it was a great show, with a real diverse crowd of collectors," Neufeldt said.

Robin Lee of Girl-Jocks.com was thrilled with the San Francisco experience, as the four-day affair was her best show ever thanks to the strength and success of the U.S. Olympic teams. Mia Hamm was an exceptionally hot seller, along with Lisa Leslie jerseys, basketballs and photos.

"I'd say that 99 percent of my sales were women's items, and that's phenomenal," Lee said. "Friday was incredible here. I probably did \$400 in sales and normally, if I sell one item, I'm thrilled. I knew, after Friday, that the whole show would be great ... and it was!"

Lee said she took in about \$1,500 in memorabilia sales while at other shows she's happy with \$600.

"This was my best show, ever," Lee said.

Pepper Hastings of Beckett Card Grading said the San Francisco show "rocked," on par with the annual successful shows in Chicago. "Collectors really support this show," he said.

Beckett did Raw Card Reviews of literally thousands of cards on site, while thousands of others will be taken back to the company's headquarters in Texas for the full review.

There was a 1969 O-Pee-Chee Mickey Mantle card in San Francisco that Beckett gave a 9.5 raw grade, while a 1986-87 Fleer Michael Jordan received a 9.

Cindy Philpott of Home Runs Sports Inc. (Tujunga, Calif.) reported the biggest shocker of the weekend: their top seller was Upper Deck Legendary Signatures (\$119 per box).

She also noted strong sales of: Upper Deck Etchings baseball (\$83), Diamond Kings baseball (\$79) Topps football (\$55) and Donruss Elite football (\$85).

Philpott said the weekend's biggest disappointment was sales of new basketball releases or lack thereof.

"It was a great show, definitely the best regional show of the year," Philpott said.

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YOUR TURN

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