

February 2010 "COLLECTING WITH JEFF"
by **JEFF FIGLER**

Jeff is a very entertaining speaker and writer. He is available to talk to your group on collecting, as well as write for your magazine or newsletter.

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Here are a couple of Jeff's articles from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch:

FERNANDO TATIS

It is not uncommon for sports collectors to try to collect as many items as possible of a particular event or game. For example, a friend of mine, Andy Strasburg, caught the first homerun ball that Roger Maris hit in the National League. So what did Andy do? He was able to get a program from the game, newspaper clippings, ticket stubs from the game, as well as Maris' signature on the ball. It also paved the way for a lifelong friendship between Andy and Roger Maris.

Some collectors will try to acquire as many items as they can from, we'll say, their first game ever, or the first game that they took their son or daughter. That is what I did. The first football game that I went to, with my Dad, was a Big Red shellacking by none other than the Los Angeles Rams. But I still own a program, stubs, and clippings of the game. You betcha. The same holds true with the first NCAA Final Four I went to at the St. Louis Arena in 1972. Obviously, I was able to acquire a few more items from that event. The value of those items are priceless...to me. However, I must admit that I have collected as many items as I can from the April 23, 1999 baseball game, between the Redbirds and the Los Angeles Dodgers at Chavez Ravine. For all of you baseball historians, that is the game that Fernando Tatis hit two grand slam home runs off of Dodger pitcher Chan Ho Park in the third inning. Other players have hit two grand slams in one game, but not in the same inning.

From that game I own Tatis' signed jersey, the bat he used to hit the grand slams, the ticket stubs, and newspaper clippings. By the way, Tatis played last year with the New York Mets.

Trivia time. In the same inning as Tatis' heroics, which Cardinal made two of the three outs? Toughie. It was outfielder J.D. Drew. Remember him?

SIGNED BASEBALLS

Youngsters in particular treasure a signed baseball by their favorite player. Of course, sports cards are always valued, but not like a ball signed by an Albert Pujols or a Yadier Molina.

It always angers me that some athletes will go to great lengths to sign legibly, and others will scribble their name, and be done with it. Personally, I think it is a travesty for an athlete to sign his name in such a way that you cannot decipher what it says. Now I realize that players sign so much that it is ridiculous, and naturally some players sign more than others, but you can't tell me that a player can't at least write

two or three letters that can be read by the average person. But sadly that is the case. Give me back those days when players took pride in their penmanship. Not today.

I should be the last to hark about good penmanship. When I was in grade school at Delmar-Harvard, guess how many times I made the Good Writers Club? Once. Exactly one time out of six years. Uno. That's right. At least I wasn't shut out, like little David Jefferson was. However, most of my letters could still be made out if you gave it a little bit of thought and concentration.

It is a sad state of events when a father brings home a baseball to his daughter or son of their favorite player and they have to ask who the signature is of. A neighbor told me once that his son was a Rusty Greer fan. Greer had some good years with the Texas Rangers, but was far from a remarkable player. Well anyway, my neighbor brought home a ball signed by Greg Maddux. Keep in mind that Maddux, one of the best pitchers in baseball history, does not have a signature that can be read. My neighbor convinced his son that the signature was of Rusty Greer, and the youngster was ecstatic. A few years later he was told the truth.

Athletes of the world, make kids, and collectors, happy. Write a little neater. Please.

EMAILS:

QUESTION #1: I have a team signed Cardinals baseball. It looks like its early 70's, maybe from either the 1974 or 75 team. It is an official MLB baseball, with Red Schoendienst signed on the sweet spot (he was the coach at the time). It also has Lou Brock, Bob Gibson, and Joe Torre signatures (along with the rest of the team). I believe '74 and '75 were the only years these 3 all played with Red as the coach. Baseball is yellowing, and signatures are fading some.

Was wondering a rough value? Of course the most faded area is where Brock and Gibson signed, but can still make them out fairly well. Torre and Red sigs are still very recognizable. Also is there any way or anybody that can restore balls like this at all? Thanks for your help.

ANSWER: The ball is worth approximately \$800, and would be worth more if the Brock and Gibson signatures were in better condition.

People can take off autographs but they cannot restore baseballs. Keep the balls out of sunlight, and if possible, in cubes.

QUESTION #2: I have a red, white and blue basketball signed by the entire "Spirits of 76" St. Louis basketball team (not sure of the exact year but it was while they were active as a team here in STL).

This includes Fly Williams and Marvin Barnes.

The basketball itself is not regulation as it is a bit smaller and made of a harder material than rubber...although you can air it up (maybe a promotional type ball?)

The signatures are faded but you can make them out.

Any idea of the value on this? And the demand?

ANSWER: There is very little demand for the ball except to St. Louis fans. The ball is worth around

\$200.

TRIVIA QUESTIONS:

Easy: In 1969, the Milwaukee Bucks won a coin toss to pick the first player in that year's NBA draft. They selected Lew Alcindor (he later changed his name to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar). Which team lost the coin toss?

Moderate: Who is the only player in Major League baseball history to have hit a home run for his 3000th hit?

Difficult: Which uniform number has the New York Yankees retired twice?

TRIVIA QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM THE JANUARY NEWSLETTER:

Easy: Who holds the MLB record for most RBIs in a season?

Hack Wilson of the Chicago Cubs had 191 RBIs in 1930

Moderate: Who scored the most NFL touchdowns in the 2000-2009 decade?

LaDainian Tomlinson

Difficult: Who was the second MLB player to get 3000 hits in a career?

Honus Wagner