

**Re: This Week In Baseball**

**Air Date: August 13, 2011**

### **TWIB Show #1220 "Cardboard Treasure"**

**Act One "Topps":** Earlier this year MLB Network examined the evolution of baseball cards. For many young fans baseball cards are their first connection to their favorite players. They are as old as the game itself, dating back more than 100 years when they were used to sell bubble gum, candy, hot dogs, gasoline and originally cigarettes. In the early 1950s, The Topps Company, a small chewing gum enterprise in Brooklyn, gambled with what they considered a better quality card and bubble gum. In 1952, Topps produced their first set with significant innovations such as a color picture logo and signature on the front and player's statistics on the back. Since then many variations have evolved. Topps senior art director explained the technological production of current variations including large photos, bright colors, clarity, team logos, and most recently leather texture with imbedded pieces of bats or jerseys in the cards. Baseball cards have endured because people love the game and anything connected to it that bring back memories. Baseball cards are as important as television, radio and box scores to the fundamental baseball experience.

**Educational theme:** Collecting baseball cards is a way to honor the past so that one can see the future. History is a vital aspect of sport, providing standards of achievement and evaluation and year round fun and interest.

**Educational theme:** The decision to use images of ballplayers to sell tobacco over a century ago made sound business sense.

**Educational theme:** In business and economics, innovation is the catalyst to growth. The value in innovation isn't in the actual innovation itself, it's in the opportunities that are created because of the innovation.

**Educational theme:** As a youthful activity the hobby of collecting baseball cards provides many life lessons, as well as the collecting endeavor. The potential value of these lessons and their importance in character development encompasses a wide variety of skills and traits that will serve an individual for a lifetime.

**Act Two - "Players & Their Cards":** Many of today's MLB players cherish baseball cards as a reminder of their youth. Besides collecting them, baseball cards were used to simulate motorcycle sounds by placing them in the spokes of a bicycle and many players recall chewing the stale powdered gum. Once immortalized on a piece of cardboard the experience for the player can be surreal. The pictured player carefully analyzes every aspect of the card.

One of the greatest problems collectors face is their inability to acquire the one special card they covet, quite often that of a childhood idol. People who are serious collectors eventually secure those prized possessions. For former MLB two-time all-star Dmitri Young, card collecting is more than merely a hobby. The result of his passion is an exclusive collection of mint condition rookie cards including his own first card. His specialized collection also includes the rookie card of his younger brother Delmon, and the extremely valuable card of baseball's iconic Roberto Clemente. Dmitri's favorite card in his collection is that of the great Hank Aaron. Dmitri hopes that the National Baseball

Hall of Fame in Cooperstown will someday display his incredible collection.

MLB Network's Matt Yallof was asked the *TWIBIA* question. Who has the highest career batting average for a switch hitter? The answer is Hall of Fame member Frankie Frisch, who hit .316, the highest ever by a switch hitter.

*Winning Road Trips* celebrates the teams and players that know how to win away from home. The Philadelphia Phillies have won eight straight series on the road. They just went nine and one to complete their most successful 10-game road trip in franchise history.

**Educational theme:** Aficionados are enthusiastic devotees to a sport, team and/or player. Collecting baseball cards is an example of one's love of the game. Sports fans are often eager to explore every aspect of the game. Fun can simply be defined as the wise use of one's time.

**Educational theme:** Baseball players consider appearing on a baseball card an indicator of accomplishment. The player will never be forgotten; therefore, becoming immortal.

**Educational theme:** Memorabilia are various objects valued for their connection to historical events, cultures or people. Normally, memorabilia represents an event worthy of remembrance and collectability.

**Educational theme:** Trivia is a seemingly superfluous and insignificant event; however, it is an important component of baseball legend, lore and tradition. For both fans and players, trivia is a source of fun and interest in the American institution called baseball.

**Educational theme:** Winning isn't everything, but the will to win is everything. Winning is a habit, but unfortunately so is losing.

**Act Three - "Pepsi Max":** Once again from the high-tech, interactive, hardball haven called "The MLB Man Cave," TWIB and the two intrepid baseball fans have watched every MLB game this year. Currently, they have watched more than 1700 and counting. In addition more than 100 celebrities and big league players have visited the cave, including Miss USA. Phillies second baseman Chase Utley stopped by the Fan Cave and was asked to identify the things he likes "The Most..." That included his favorite food, his most memorable home run, his favorite song, and his favorite item to autograph.

CC Sabathia came by to fill out his ballot for the Pepsi Max Field of Dreams team contest. He is the spokesperson for the contest, where MLB legends will go to a home town to play a big game. CC and the two intrepid fans discussed shortstops -- Cal Ripken, Jr., Barry Larkin, and "The Wizard of Oz" a.k.a. Ozzie Smith.

Gillette presented *The Rookie of the Month*, which honors the league's top rookies throughout the season. Atlanta Braves closer Craig Kimbrel is closing in on the all-time rookie record of 40 saves. Kimbrel already set the Braves rookie record and it is early August. He has a dynamic fastball.

**Educational theme:** In many ways athletes are normal people too. But one can't pretend that athletes are entirely normal people living normal people lives. Normal people aren't sometimes the face of a community or team with the opportunity to deal with the media.

**Educational theme:** Landmark performances are those that mark a turning point in history. An athletic accomplishment with historical significance is one that is marked for

preservation by aficionados, players and national governing bodies of sport.

**Educational theme:** Competitions are used to determine a winner. There is a psychological need to determine superiority. The most competitive people are drawn to such activities.

**Educational theme:** Rookies are first year players who are inexperienced at the Major League level of play. Recognition of one's talent is an important psychological need of all human beings. To attain self-actualization one must attain esteem to have self-respect and to achieve goals.

**Act Four - "Diamond Demos":** To play baseball one must execute the fundamentals of the game. Joe Magrane and Cameron Maybin shared their thoughts on stealing bases. Initially, the runner must get a comfortable lead while staying alert to pitchers that get tricky and try pick offs. Keep the right foot slightly open so the runner can be ready to steal. Left-handed pitchers are historically easier to steal off of because they typically rely on deception. Many lefties stay over the pitcher's rubber, therefore, one cue is that you can see the tension in the back leg. They have their mind made up to pitch rather than throw to first base. Instead of reading the pitcher's delivery, sometimes you run on the first move off those guys.

*Going All Out* is a segment that honors special players who continually show maximum effort. MLB Network's Greg Amsinger toured the Topps vault where priceless artifacts are stored. Industry specialist Mike Jasper explained the collection which included an original transparency of Nolan Ryan's 1968 Topps rookie card, Roberto Clemente's rookie card, thousands of uncut sheets of baseball cards and "Topps Archive Baseball." Baseball cards have historic and cultural significance. You can see players' haircuts and uniforms change, and a multitude of ways that baseball connects to American culture.

The National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown has one of the most impressive collections anywhere. The best example may be the 1948 Leaf card of Jackie Robinson. It is the first time an African American ever appeared on a MLB card. Another special card is the 1952 Topps Mickey Mantle, because it was in Topps first true card set. Recently collectors have pursued the most pristine examples of rare cards, such as the Gretzky Honus Wagner tobacco card valued at almost three million dollars.

*State Farm State of the Game* spotlights players and teams that have reached a better state. The Angels Ervin Santana was off to a dismal start with a 4 and 8 record in the first half of the season. But in the second half, Ervin threw a no-hitter against the Cleveland Indians. He is now 4-0 with a 1.12 ERA, since the break.

**Educational theme:** Sports pedagogy is an important aspect of the learning process. Demonstration and explanation are initial steps in the process. Children learn best by watching and mimicking athletic performance.

**Educational theme:** Baseball cards have value for different reasons to different people. The money factor is important to many collectors, but a baseball card is only worth what someone is willing to pay for it.

**Educational theme:** When grading of baseball cards, there is a very clear cut grading standard in the card collecting hobby. As with any valuable collectibles grading is extremely important when it comes to determining the price of the card.

**Educational theme:** Baseball is a metaphor, an implicit comparison, an analogy for nearly everything in American life. To understand Americans one must understand the game of baseball. Baseball in many ways defines the best philosophies of the American culture.

**Educational theme:** Baseball is a game filled with failure. The difference between a pro and an amateur is that a professional will demonstrate mental toughness after failing to perform successfully. They will continue to compete to the end of the event.

**Act Five - "How 'bout that!"**: The plays of the week were set to the song, "*Tonight Tonight*" by Hot Chelle Rae. This edition began with several fielding errors, misplays and bloopers. Next shown were a series of home runs. Seattle Mariners' left fielder Trayvon Robinson was shown diving into the stands to make an unbelievable catch. Many more sensational, diving and leaping defensive catches were shown including a perfectly executed play on a slow hit ground ball with a bare handed pick up and throw. Dan Uggla's 31 game hitting streak was noted, as was Michael Young's 2000th base hit. The segment concluded with several game winning walk off base hits and the ensuing celebration.

**Educational theme:** Baseball is considered to be the most difficult sport to master. It takes great skill and ability to play the game successfully. Failure is just an indicator of a small adjustment that needs to change.

**Educational theme:** This was a particularly outstanding example of the maximum effort and great skill needed to play one of the most difficult games -- baseball. Teachers and coaches could use these examples when teaching life lessons.

**Educational theme:** Recalling landmark events in a career are informal ways to evaluate performance, activity, and achievement. It is an account of athletic history collected, written and preserved for future generations.

**Educational theme:** The artistic value of sport can be found in the beauty, grace, and rhythmic movements of elite athletes. The aesthetic quality of a well-executed play enhances the appreciation of baseball.

**Educational theme:** Once the student-learner has carefully observed the required effort and the bio-mechanics of the premier athletes, then the movements can be more easily duplicated and performed by the learner. The student is then physically educated.