

# **Title: The Sports Card Collectors Guide to Trading on the Internet**

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*A word of caution: Trading sports cards over the Internet involves providing your personal information to those you do not know. Parents and guardians of minors should be aware of all Internet activities of minors for whom they are responsible. Children should NEVER meet anyone they get to know on the Internet unless accompanied by their parents or guardians. Everyone should use caution when giving out personal information to people that they encounter online.*

## **NOW THAT'S PROGRESS – CHAPTER 1**

It wasn't long ago that people wanting to trade sports cards really had their work cut out for them. First they had to wait for the weekend to roll around. Then they had to get into their cars and drive (sometimes several hours) to get to a card show. Finally, they had to haul their boxes of cards around at the show in order to *hopefully* do some trading!

Although it was fun to trade with fellow collectors face to face, the process was very time consuming and the results were of course not guaranteed.

Fast forward a few years and along comes the Internet, a literal electronic trading pipeline with the ability to hook up collectors from around the world and facilitate non-stop trading day and night; all of this in the comforts of their own homes, now that's progress!

The Internet provides many amazing resources for sports card collectors. When I first considered putting this book together several years ago, the Internet was still somewhat mysterious to most of us and it was hard to sort out fact from fiction with regard to exactly how this tool could actually be used to the benefit of sports card collectors. It has now been 10 years that I have been teaching and assisting collectors to trade on line. Although the Internet continues to evolve, I think that we can all agree that for those of us who use it, it is proven worthy of the title I have given it "Most amazing sports card resource ever". If you are a sports card fan and you find yourself sitting on the sidelines not using the Internet to enhance your collection, it is time for you to jump in with both feet!

When I first got on-line I was only interested in purchasing sports cards from people. Thankfully it occurred to me that as a father with two young kids I needed to find a way to save a few bucks, so I started searching for people to trade with. I searched in the various online newsgroups and web sites and quickly found out how time consuming and unorganized the world of Internet sports card trading was. As a way to remedy the problem that I was encountering I decided to create my own web site where collectors

could hook-up with other sports cards enthusiasts just to trade, hence the creation of SportsCardFun.com.

Ten years later, I have taught literally thousands of collectors how to use the Internet to trade safely, some of them have even gone on to create trading sites of their own. I want to help you learn, as well. I have invested countless hours of research, development time, and hard earned money to create an Internet tool specifically for sports card traders. I know how to use the Internet effectively for sports card trading. I have written countless memos, trading tips and press releases; and I have attended card shows far from home. I have personally read and approved, or rejected by hand, hundreds of thousands of trade messages. I have helped thousands of traders resolve trade problems, communication problems and even technical problems. I have served as a “trader go between” when traders could not reach each other for one technical reason or another. I have even helped track down stolen cards and returned them to their rightful owners. ALL TO PROMOTE THE FUN AND EFFECTIVENESS OF TRADING SPORTS CARDS ON THE INTERNET!



The Internet provides sports card collectors the best tool available to share their passion for this wonderful hobby; it provides the “link” for collectors around the world to unite in comradery, friendship, and collecting FUN! Yet, the on-line world of sports cards is not without risks! I want to help you avoid these inherent risks and reap the bountiful rewards available to you and your collection online. Would you like to learn how to reduce the chances of being stolen from? How to communicate using email effectively? Learn the art of sports card trading negotiation? Knowing how to package sports cards properly to reduce the chances of damage is critical. We will cover these topics and a great deal more

### **Why Trade?**

Online trading is a great addition to the long revered hobby of collecting sports cards. Through time, the trading aspect by which to increase a card collection has been lost. Buying new cards has been the normally accepted way to add on to one's set. Now, with the advent of the computer age, trading cards has once again become a way to increase the number and value of a card collection. That, along with the opportunity, to meet and become friends with a new world of like minded people has caused online trading to entice millions of previously uninterested collectors to the hobby

If you have collected for a while, you know that as cards become more and more premium so does the price. Even the less expensive cards can stress the piggy bank of young collectors. These are the people who represent the future of the trading card industry. Trading is an essential aspect of their hobby. The average adult collector is not wealthy and continually paying the higher price for products will lead to their inability to continue in the hobby. Out of necessity, some will quit buying cards. The solution to the problem, which allows the sports card Industry not only to survive, but to flourish and grow is by ...**TRADING!**

**Trading can significantly improve the entire sports card industry...**

**Trading actually entices a collector into purchasing more cards.** Some might think that trading reduces retail card sales, the rational being that if people are trading they are

not buying. The opposite has proven to be the case. Through trading, collectors are able to trade for the handful of sports cards that they need without breaking the bank. Once a set or player list is successfully completed (with relative ease) via trading, the collector is motivated to move on to the next set/list. The catalyst for more trading is in the purchasing of more cards at the local card shop. Trading is the positive reinforcement needed to keep a collector buying more cards. He consequently trades more cards, fills more sets/lists, and ultimately continues in the hobby for the long term.

### **Trading increases the value and usefulness of a trader's unneeded cards!**

The book value of a baseball card (or other sports cards) does not usually mean you will be able to sell your card to your local dealer or on ebay for that listed price. Unless you have an incredibly hot card, trying to sell your cards can often be a disappointing experience, since buyers will often only give you a small percentage of what the sports card price guides say a card is worth. With trading however, the value of your card is often the same as the listed book value since many traders trade "book value for book value". Now, this certainly is not always the case, and often you must trade in your trading partner's favor in order to negotiate a trade. When trading with fellow collectors, your unwanted cards become a form of currency that can produce fantastic results.

### **Trading keeps the accumulation of unwanted cards to a minimum.**

With trading, sports card collectors have a way to send back into circulation those boxes and boxes of cards taking-up closet space and extra bedrooms of their homes. Having a room full of extra cards that you do not want and do not know what to do with can be frustrating and can lead to a collector quitting the hobby. Trading away these nuisance cards stimulates renewed interest and motivation to continue collecting.



**Trading is fun and is a great way to make good friends who share a common interest!**

Start trading cards and make a friend. Maybe this is a little warm and fuzzy, but with our hectic lives, it is relaxing to connect with friends who share a common interest. Finding people with whom to trade provides even more feedback that is positive for collectors to keep buying and collecting. Plus, trading tends to be a bit more conducive to making friends since it takes finances out of the picture which normally goes along with buying and selling cards; It is sometimes easier to part with a card than it is to part with the all mighty dollar! Numerous long-term friendships develop simply because two people decided to trade sports cards. Often these friendships are purely via email and instant messaging, but I can assure you that they are deep friendships nonetheless.

So why trade? Remember the roots of collecting "trading cards". Some of us might remember what it was like to trade baseball cards with friends from our youth. Remember what it was like to get that card that meant more to you than anything, one that your trading partner happily traded away for a card he or she needed of their own. That is the experience we need to recall to keep our hobby flourishing. That is the joy of trading cards.

If you have not had the pleasure of trading and want to start, read on.

## **TOOLS REQUIRED - CHAPTER 2**

This is a book about sports cards so the technical jargon will be minimized. Since this is a book about trading sports cards online, it is likely you have access to a computer. You therefore have at least some basic computer skills, which are really all you will need to trade sports cards on line. A computer and software are all that you need to begin online baseball card trading.

### **Hardware**

#### **Get a good computer.**

Just as you would want a good car and service plan, you will want the same in a computer. Make the investment to get something reliable. There is nothing more frustrating than having productive trades going and your computer crashes in the midst of them all. Computers are not as expensive as they were, but you will have to spend at least a few hundred dollars to get started.

#### **Scanner**

A scanner will allow you to display the sports cards that you have for trade to the people who might be interested in them. Collectors will frequently not want to trade for a card that they can't see a picture of a head of time; this is especially true with the more expensive cards.

### **Software**

You will need a few key pieces of software most of which comes pre-loaded onto your computer.

#### **Email program**

There are several email programs available including Outlook and Eudora. Most of the big Internet service providers also have some form of email program for you as well.

Many email programs let you go to a web site to check your email when you are either away from your home computer or your main computer is broken. This feature comes in handy for sports card traders.

### **Junk email filter**

Unfortunately, with email comes unwanted email. If you do not have a good junk email filter, you will not have a lot of fun using email. Most service providers offer junk email filtering. The better junk filters get smarter the more you use them and become adept at learning what it is that you consider junk and what you do not. As of this writing, the Eudora Pro email program has a fantastic spam filter.

### **Tool Tip!**

As you are in the process of training your junk email filter, make sure you do not accidentally filter out email messages that you want. Junk email is usually put into a separate file. It will take you just a few seconds a day to scan junk messages to make sure that there is nothing there that you want, **like a message from a sports card trader!**

### **Email address Tip!**

Don't post your email address on message boards unless you want to get a substantial increase in junk email. Most good trading sites are built in such a way that you don't have to post your email address publicly, but can hook-up with your fellow collectors via an internal email system after you've posted your trade messages on the board.

### **Browser**

A browser is the software that lets you explore the Internet. Currently, the most common browsers available are Internet Explorer, AOL, Netscape, and FireFox. It is important to keep your browser updated to get the most out of your Internet surfing experience.

### **Instant Messengers (IM)**

Some sports card traders like to use instant messaging when negotiating a trade. An instant messenger is a small software program that allows people to communicate with

each other. If both parties have an instant messenger, they can type to each other in real time. These have quite become popular for trading, so don't be surprised when someone asks you to hook-up via "IM".

### **AntiVirus Software**

THIS IS CRITICAL! Unfortunately, there are nasty people who create computer viruses just to cause problems for computer users. You will eventually encounter a computer virus while you are happily trading your baseball cards. Spare no expense and get some good anti virus software for your computer. As of this writing, the two most popular anti-virus software programs are Norton and McAfee. Whichever one you get you should update it frequently. Most anti-virus software allows you to update them for a small subscription fee. You should subscribe to get the updates and do it weekly. Viruses are often sent via email messages. It is important for you to realize that **most people have no idea they are sending you a virus**. Viruses are tricky and attach themselves to email messages and web browsers. That is how they spread so quickly. If you are trading with someone who sets off your anti-virus software alert system, do not assume that he or she is trying to attack you. That is a great way to destroy a potentially good sports card trading relationship. Instead, do your good deed for the day and let them know that they need to scan their computer for a virus and/or update their anti-virus software.

### **Tool Tip!**

Many viruses will come to you in the form of an email attachment. Make it a rule to NEVER open any email attachments unless you are absolutely sure what it is that you are opening. When in doubt, contact the sender of the email message to confirm that you have been sent an attachment and what it contains.

### **Internet Connection**

Get the fastest connection that you can afford. There are several different types of connections available:

1. Dial-up connections. These use your telephone line. Dial up connections are usually the least expensive and generally work fairly well. They are the slowest of the

three connection types. Most tie up your telephone line while you are using them and can take a minute or so for them to connect to the Internet.

2. DSL connections. These also use your telephone line and are a lot faster than dial-up connections. DSL does not tie up your telephone line while you are using them. DSL lines are always connected to the Internet, so that as soon as you click you are on-line.

3. Cable connections. These do not use your telephone line. They are fast, reliable, and like DSL, are on all of the time.

Generally, the faster connections are more enjoyable.

### **Web page**

Although this is not a requirement when you are just starting out, eventually you are going to want to have your own web site to list the sports cards that you have for trade and the card that you want. It is common for sports card traders to send each other a link to their web site to make trading easier. Do not let this intimidate you if you do not already have one. Building a simple web site to list your cards on is very easy to do. Sportscardfun.com offers a free web site to all of its members as do other trading sites. These free web sites are simple to build and take mere seconds to update. You can also use a free web page service offered by sites such as Yahoo.com, MSN, or many Internet service providers.

Okay, enough about the technical aspect of online trading. If you would like to learn more about this topic, there are many resources available for you to learn more about it.

**Let's move on to trading baseball cards and other sports cards!**

### **Where to trade**

#### **Sportscardfun.com**

The best place for you to trade is Sportscardfun.com, of course, the site that I founded ten years ago. The site was custom built from the ground up to meet the needs of the online sports card trader.

Sportscardfun.com requires a small temporary membership fee. It lessens trading problems. It does seem that those who are willing to pay a fee for the quality service that we provide are for the most part a more reliable sports card trader.

Sportscardfun.com is purely for trading, there is no buying or selling allowed. We offer trading groups for all sports. To help foster trust in the Sportscardfun.com trading community members can reward each other for a trade well done. When two traders complete a trade they can exchange Sportscardfun.com Good Trader Points and add them to their total for other members to see. Traders can only leave one point for each person with whom they trade. Earn 10 points and your membership is Free For Life. Once you have earned 100 points you are listed in our “Hall Of Fame”.

Additional membership benefits include:

1. Round the clock access to other traders.
2. Educational resources for effective online trading
3. The ability to build your own web page to list cards available for trade.
4. The Sports Card Trade Tracker system (an online tool that helps each trader stay organized.)
5. Personal assistance with mediating and/or helping with trade problems.

**Other Trading Sites**

There is no shortage of sites on which to trade. Some of these sites are free, some offer various membership levels, and some are definitely better than others. Try a few different sites and then decide which of them works best for you. I hope that you will decide that Sportscardfun.com is where you would like to call “home” for all of your Internet trading. Check the sports card resources at the end of this guide for a list of some of the other trading sites.

## HOW TO TRADE SPORTS CARDS - CHAPTER 3

**A “smart trader” invests some time and energy into learning how to avoid trade problems before they happen. When the inevitable dilemma does arise, a smart trader knows how to manage them calmly and effectively. Reading this sports card guide is the best step you can take towards becoming a “Smart Trader”.** Trading on the Internet normally involves collectors hooking up via email. In a nutshell it goes something like this. You go to your preferred trading site and post a message on the message board. Traders will post messages for what they have for trade (WTT = want to trade) and what they want to obtain (WTTF=want to trade for). Likewise, you will be able to respond to the messages that other traders post. Depending on how the message board works, other traders will then be able to view what you have posted and respond to you. The ideal sports card message board will give you the option of viewing the messages in a variety of ways including via email, on the message board itself, or in a once daily email message called a daily digest.

### **"Trade Smart"**

“The Internet is an amazing tool that will help you immensely with your sports card collecting! It is also a handy tool that thieves use to steal from collectors who do not use common sense and Internet “street smarts”. There are several proven methods that I am going to teach you that will help you minimize your chances of being the victim of a true Internet crook. If you trade a lot online, it is inevitable that eventually you will encounter some type of trade problem. The distinction here is that a trade problem is usually the result of some type of miscommunication or accident and one that can be resolved. Whereas when you are the victim of a true sports card thief chances are you are in for an unhappy “learning experience”.

Each trader must take personal responsibility for his or her actions. All traders should spend the time to learn how to protect themselves to the best of their abilities and not rely on anyone else to do this for them. No site, no matter what the security measures that

they put in place, can ever eliminate 100% of trade problems or exposure to sports card thieves. However, you can reduce trade problems and thievery by practicing the smart trading recommendations presented in this guide. We discuss the topic of the true sports card thief throughout the course of this book. Fortunately, crooks are the exception and unfortunately just rare enough to allow traders to get lazy. The bad guys can easily take advantage of them so....DO NOT GET LAZY!

**A well thought out “Smart trader” personal trading policy will help to keep you safe from sports card thieves and trade problems in general. Once you have read this guide, you should establish your own personal trading policy. It needs to be composed of the rules and standards that you require of both yourself and fellow traders. It is likely that this policy will evolve over time as you gain more experience and determine what works for you and what makes you feel secure.**

## **REPUTATION IS KING**

### **Good Traders**

When you are new to Internet baseball card trading you will have to earn your reputation as someone who can be trusted. One of the best ways for you to do this will be for you to trade with people who already have those good reputations. If you are familiar with eBay, you know that they have a ranking system, which helps people earn the trust of fellow eBay users. Sportscardfun.com also has a ranking system for the same reason. Some of the other trading web sites have followed our lead and created ranking systems as well. Being able to establish yourself as someone who can be trusted will be very important to your success or failure as an online sports card trader. Earn a solid positive reputation and you will reap the rewards and have a lot of fun trading on the Internet.

### **Bad Traders**

If you are irresponsible, careless, rude, etc, and do not do all that you can to be a “good trader”, you will likely have an unpleasant time in the world of online sports cards. You will quickly be labeled as someone to avoid. Most sites will post “bad traders” or the list

of traders who have been banished from trading with them. You will want to do all that you can to stay off of these lists since word tends to travel quickly across the Internet.

Let us say you come to a site like Sportscardfun.com and you have "0" Sportscardfun.com good trader points. On our site, you earn 1 point for each successful trade you make, and you can only get one point from each person with whom you successfully trade. As a trader with "0" good trader points, and no other reputation enhancer such as eBay feedback, do you think a trader who has 100 good trader points will feel comfortable making a high dollar trade with you? NO! Or at least I certainly hope not. It is not personal it is just plain smart. You have a couple of options in this situation. The trader with 100 points can go a head and make that expensive trade with you, but if they are on their toes, they are going to ask you to send your cards to them FIRST. And you, the trader with 0 points can certainly engage in this trade, BUT, you should protect yourself as well by shipping your cards with insurance or the most secure method, registered mail (more on this topic later). Perhaps you are wondering why you would need to use these special shipping methods. After all, the person you are trading with has 100 good trader points; surely they will not steal from you? Remember, you are getting "Internet street-smart" now. This is a high dollar trade and you do not want to risk this item being lost in the mail right? (Yes, things do get lost in the mail)! What if this good trader who you are trading with suddenly (and heaven forbid) dies, winds up in the hospital, or figures this might be a good time to become a crook? You will want to protect yourself from all of these rare but possible situations.

All of that being said, it is smarter for a new sports card trader such as yourself to **start with smaller, less valuable trades** prior to moving on to the "high-rolling" world of sports card trading. Earn your reputation, get the feel for it. Learn all of the ins and outs of negotiating, packaging and shipping your cards first.

As time moves on and you become a veteran of trading on the Internet, and as I mentioned above, DO NOT GET LAZY! Unfortunately, experienced traders do get lazy and it is at those times that they'd usually wind up getting burned. Let's say that you are

now the trader with 100 good trader points and you encounter a trader with substantially fewer points than you who wants to make a high dollar trade. You are the one who now needs to be cautious and request that the less experienced trader send to you first as outlined above. Or, being the experienced baseball card trader who you are, you tell the less experienced trader that you would like to trade with them but would prefer starting with a smaller trade.

### **Miscommunication And Poor Communication**

I have helped literally thousands of traders resolve problems with each other. Trade problems are usually a result of poor communication. Most baseball card traders have good intentions just as you do. Their objective is to have fun with this hobby. Unfortunately, email and message boards are far from perfect, and do not always convey the emotions that people are intending them to express. Keep this in mind while you are trying to communicate. Be as clear and polite as possible. Say please and thank you. Go out of your way to use common courtesy and you will minimize many unnecessary trade problems.

If you plan to make trading baseball cards on-line part of your regular routine, you need to do what you can to create and preserve good trading relationships! Getting a reputation of being a difficult to negotiate with will not help you. Maybe you are not a jerk. Perhaps you are just a collector who is very passionate about your cards, but coming across as obnoxious in an email message is much the same as being one. Here are a few examples of how not to communicate.

Frank contacts Joe wanting to trade.

Frank: "Hi Joe. I'm Frank. I have a Derek Jeter rookie. Do you have an Alex Rodriguez rookie card to trade for it? "Thank you, I hope we can work out a trade".

Joe: "Not interested".

Now, perhaps Joe a busy person and had a tough day at work or school, but Frank has gone out of his way to communicate clearly and politely and all that Joe responded with was "not interested". A better way for Joe to respond to a message that he was not interested in would be more along these lines

Joe “Hey Frank thanks for contacting me. I am not interested in the cards you have offered but do you have anything else”.

(Or at bare minimum)

Joe: “Thanks, but I think I will pass for now.

Another, even worse example of being a poor communicator is for a sports card trader to contact you with some sort of trade proposal and you do not respond to them. **This is the #1 trade problem reported to me.** If a trader takes the time to contact you wanting to make a trade, be kind enough to respond to them. Do so even if your response is just a “no thanks” without any further explanation. Email is fast and easy to use, be sure to use it! Take the 5 or 10 seconds to respond to a fellow trader who is trying to make a trade with you. You might not want anything to do with the proposed offer. Perhaps the offer is unreasonable and offends you. At least send them a “no thank you”. Your good trader reputation will be damaged if you do not. **Moreover, both sports card traders should always respond to each other's successive offers. In other words, do not pull a disappearing act! When you are in the middle of exchanging trade offers and you are presented with an offer that you do not like, do not suddenly stop responding to the person. Keep communicating with the other person until you either decide to the make the trade or say that you do not want to continue negotiating. Do not leave someone waiting and wondering if the trade is going to happen!**

### **Posting a Trade Message**

It will be well worth your taking the time to learn how to post trade messages effectively. When you post trade messages you must be as clear as possible as to what you have to trade AND what you want in return. More information is usually much better than less. Include as many details as you can about the “who, what, and where” of a trade that you would like.

Knowing how not to post is a good first step toward learning how to do it correctly. For example, let us say you post the following message to the trading board:

**I want to trade cards!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

This is terrible. What do you have for trade? What do you want in return? Unless you have just pulled a Babe Ruth cut signature card ease up on the exclamation marks.

Let's try it again:

**WTT (remember that is short for "Want to trade")**

**WTT 2004 Reflections #2 Albert Pujols \$4.00**

Ok, this isn't bad. You have listed:

1. The card
2. The year
3. The book value

But, what do you want in return? Remember; specify as clearly as you can.

Let us try another example. This one will include a few more details that are important. It is a good idea to give people some idea of who they are trading with from the onset so we will add your name and any ranking you might have from eBay or other trading sites.

**WTT 2004 Reflections 2 Albert Pujols \$4.00**

**I want any Arod card in return.**

**Thanks,**

**John**

**eBay feedback 534**

**Sportscardfun.com points 2**

Now let us move on to an example of a more expensive post:

**WTT 2004 Fleer Genuine Insider Autograph-Bat AP Albert Pujols \$250.00**

**Thanks,**

**John**

**eBay feedback 534**

**Sportscardfun.com points 2**

This is a little better. All of the important details are listed in this example except for what you want in return. As the value of the card goes up, it becomes even more important to list specifically what you will take in return for it. With a more expensive card, you have more options as to what you will take in trade. Will you accept several lesser-valued cards, such as 15 inserts worth \$10? Perhaps you will take 2 cards worth \$75. Alternatively, will you only consider trading for one card of equal value? If you have a clear idea of what you would like, you need to **spell it out**. Not doing so will waste not only your time, but the time of your fellow traders. Perhaps you are not really sure what you want and that is okay as well, fishing for an offer is an acceptable thing to do. You are welcome to say, “Make offer”, but if you do, do not be offended by the offers that people make. A blanket “make offer” statement might result in someone offering you 250 \$1.00 cards!

Here is the same high dollar post with a bit more detail:

**WTT 2004 Fleer Genuine Insider Autograph-Bat AP Albert Pujols \$250.00**

**I only want 2 cards in return (maybe 3). I only collect Jeter.**

**Thanks,**

**John**

**eBay feedback 534**

## **Sportscardfun.com points 2**

Now, let us say you are the trader who sees this message posted by John. You decide to make him an offer of 10 inserts of Jeter and 20 inserts of Arod - 30 cards in all with a book value of \$260. It is likely that you will get a far from enthusiastic response from John. You are way off base! John stated that he only wants 2 cards (maybe 3) and that he only collects Derek Jeter. What will he do with the Arod card? **Keep your trade offers reasonable!** When a fellow trader takes the time to spell out what they want for a particular card, do not waste your time and theirs by coming up with something not even close to what he or she wants. On the other hand, if he or she does not say what specifically he or she wants, and presents you with a "make offer" situation, then you are free to present any offer that like.

### **How to handle unreasonable or ridiculous sports card trade offers.**

What if you receive a reply to one of your trade messages that contains an offer that is not even close to what you stated you would take. Here are a few suggestions for how to handle this situation:

1. Restate and clarify your request. Even though you have already taken the time to specify what baseball cards you want, sometimes people need a little reminder.
2. Take a few quick seconds to say a polite "no thanks"
3. If you feel tempted to respond with some rude or sarcastic message, this would be one time you need to delete his or her message and move on. There is no need to take offense, waste your time and his, and possibly create unnecessary work for the site manager. Most likely everyone will be better off if you just move on to the next sports card trade.

### **Message posting help for sports card set collectors**

Many people that you encounter on sports card trading sites will only be searching for cards that will help them finish their sets. It is not uncommon for these people to only have cards from that same set available for trade.

Here is an example of a set collectors posted trade message:

**Hello,**

**I need the following from the 2002 Topps base set. Have many base cards from the same set to trade in return:**

**223, 230, 289, 292, 299, 301, 303, 355, 360, 365, 377, 381, 384, 385, 406, 407, 409, 413,**

**Thanks for looking. Please see my trade page for everything else.**

**Steve**

**Sportscardfun.com points 87**

**eBay feedback 985**

It is not always necessary to post a separate message for everything that you are looking for. For example, if you are a set collector and you need help with many different sets, you can combine those sets into one message; simply list the sets in the subject of your message.

For example:

**Greetings,**

**I need help with the following sets and have cards available to trade from all of these sets in return. Here is what I need:**

**1990 Upper Deck:**

**7,19,29,30,33,35,36,40,41,54,58,59,60,64,78,89,93,101,131,133,134,135,136,156,158**

**1999 Fleer Tradition**

**13, 25, 45, 50, 53, 56, 64, 81, 122, 196, 197, 198, 201, 202, 225, 226, 235, 236, 239, 246, 250, 251, 257, 267, 268, 271, 277, 281, 285, 286, 288, 298, 311, 312, 317, 322, 333, 334**

**Thank you for looking,**

**Jim**

**5 Sportscardfun.com points**

**8 eBay positives**

### **Organize by Player Name**

Posting the player's name as well as the card number will be a bit more work, but also will help you make more trades. This will appeal to collectors that organize their cards by player name and not by number.

For example:

**WTT/WTTF 2003 LEAF LIMITED (in this case you can also use both WTT and WTTF)**

**I need to complete this set and I have extras to trade if needed.**

**I need these 2003 LEAF LIMITED**

**1 derek jeter**

**7 jim thome**

**13 chipper jones**

**18 josh beckett**

**Send me your want list from this same set and we'll work out a trade!**

**Thanks!**

**David**

**Sportscardfun.com HOF member**

### **How to write a good subject**

Get into the habit of writing a good descriptive subject for your trade posts. Create a subject that gives the reader some of the basic information about the contents of your post. Try to include something additional that entices them to take the time to stop and read your message.

### **Here are some subjects that are not very helpful:**

“I want to trade”

“Cards for trade”

“Trade!!”

“I really want to make some trades”

**Here are a few examples of some good subjects:**

“WTTF/WTT 99 Bowman Chrome. Need 1 card to finish this set! I will throw in a game used card of my choice if you have it!”

“\*\*NEW LIST\*\* of game used, autos and rookies for trade!”

“WTTF Greg Maddux Auto”

“Need help with 05 Donruss set – I have many from the same set to trade”

“WTTF vintage baseball – I have game used and newer autos for trade.”

**How much should you post?**

Each sports card trading group has their own rules as to the number of posts you can make in one day. At Sportscardfun.com, we limit our members to a maximum of 4 posts per day to any one trading board. We have found that 4 per day is more than most people need. There are several different strategies that you can play experiment with in order to maximize your posting.

**Effective Sports Card Posting Strategies**

**1. List one card per post** If you only need one card or have just one card for trade, you can be very specific in the subject of your post. This can be an effective method. For example:

**Message Subject - WTT 2004 Upper Deck Derek Jeter Etched in Time Auto Black**

**Hello,**

**I have for trade a 2004 Upper Deck Derek Jeter Etched in Time Auto black. The book value is \$150. I am looking to get 1 equally valued card in return and I only collect Albert Pujols.**

**Thanks,**

**Jim**

## **155 Sportscardfun.com points**

The draw back to using this method is that it will require you to make multiple postings if you have many cards that you want to trade. In the example above, you could try including your entire want list (if you have one) right down to the exact cards you are looking for.

**2. List posts by player lots.** If you have several player lots available for trade, post each lot as a separate message. Include your want list in the post as well. The word “lot” implies that you want to trade all of those cards as a group and not break them up. Be sure that you specify whether you are willing to break up the “lot”.

**3. List your posts by other types of lots/lists.** For example, rookie lots, game-used (GU) lots, autographed card lots, etc. This can be effective since some collectors only collect those types of cards and are looking specifically for these lists.

**4. Post your entire want and trade list.** Some collectors post gigantic lists of cards for trade or cards wanted in a single message. There are traders who love to scan large want and trade. It is also fun to see all of the different cards that people have. Keep your eye out for interesting lists of cards that appear to check over just for entertainment!

All of these methods can be effective. Chances are you will come up with an effective posting method of your own. No matter how you post, remember that generally, the more details you put in your message the better.

## **The fundamentals of sports card trade negotiating**

Most baseball card collectors trade high book value for high book value, but this is not always the case and is one of the great things about trading. There will be times that someone might want a card that you have so much that he will happily trade in your favor.

Many traders come up with the following “like-card for like-card” trading system:

**Autograph for autograph**

**Game used for game used**

**Rookie for rookie**

**Common for common**

**Etc.**

Although many traders do use this “like-card for like-card” approach, some traders will trade autographs, game-used, and high-end cards for specific base (or common) cards that they need. It is not unusual for someone to exchange autos and game used for base cards of star players. Usually the person collecting base cards of the star will ask you to trade in his favor, such as \$300 worth of base cards in exchange for 4 \$25 dollar auto cards with a total value of \$100. In other words, you give them \$300 worth of the base cards they want and he will give you the 4 \$25 autograph cards that you want.

### **Unbalanced Sports Card Trading**

**Trading in peoples favor** or asking people to trade in your favor is a common phenomenon and will become something you do once you become familiar with negotiating a trade. If you are willing to trade in the other person's favor for a particular baseball card state that in your posts to the trading board. Often someone will offer that advantage when he needs only one card to complete a set. Many times, I have read postings stating, “I will trade in your favor for this 1 card” or “I will give you a game used card for this 1 common card that I need”. This is a great opportunity for you to not only help your fellow collector, but too also enhance your own collection by trading them a common card. Both traders walk away happy.

### **“Trade bait”**

This is a good time to acquire “trade bait” that you can use to attract other sports card traders in future trades. There will be times when you encounter people who want

something from you, but they have nothing you want from them in return. "Trade bait" is a card(s) that you trade for that you do not plan to keep for yourself, but you know that someone else will really want. Trading is fun and helping another trader get a baseball card from you that he needs is rewarding, so keep watching for good trade bait!

### **Do your share**

Put a concerted effort into the negotiation process. It is tempting to try to make your trading partner do the bulk of the work involved in negotiating a trade. Do not let this happen. Read all messages carefully. Do the same with each others trading lists. If, when someone posts a baseball card for trade specifies what he wants in return. You answer with "see my page to see if there's anything you want from me." You have created an extra step. He has already told you what kind of sports cards he wants from you! A better way for you to handle this would be for you to take the time to find a few of the cards he might want and send him that list. If everyone does their share during the trade negotiation it makes for a much more efficient trading experience for all.

### **Do not get too many trades going at one time and stay organized!**

Mistakes are most often made when too many trades are going at one time. Even the most organized baseball card traders can make a mistake when they have more than a few trades being negotiated at once. Take a few days off from trading once in a while and organize your cards. It will be helpful for you to go through your collection from time to time and inventory what you want to keep in your collection. Follow that with what you want to trade away and what you still need to acquire. These down times are also a great opportunity to update your sports card trading web site.

### **Pulling Sports Cards**

Pulling Cards and the subsequent putting them away again is one of the major activities involved in card collecting. You "pull" the card out of your stash in response to a posting that you have read from a fellow trader who is hoping to add on to his collection.

Baseball card collectors will post large lists of cards that they need for various sets. Picture this scenario. You see one of these messages and being the nice guy that you are decide to help out the collector. You then proceed to take an hour of your time to pull 255 cards off of his list out of your extras box from the same set. The next day you get an email message from the collector saying that he now only needs 5 of the cards on his list since he just completed a large trade with someone else. This can really be frustrating! Now you have got to spend another hour putting those cards away! Multiply this scenario by several different traders and several different sets, and you will wind up being surrounded by leaning stacks of cards only to have to file them again for future trades. Talk about a BIG waste of your time!

There are a couple of ways to avoid or at least minimize this situation. Here is a warning. First, do not pull any sports cards until you are absolutely sure that your fellow collector still needs them. After this is confirmed, let him know you are going to start pulling cards for him. If you know that you have a large percentage of cards that he needs, you should let him know. Ask him not to have anyone else pull cards for him until you are done. Second, clarify to him how long you will keep cards pulled; this will help reduce the stacks of cards piled on your work space. Many traders will pull cards and keep them pulled for 3 days only. They, tell those with whom they correspond that this is their procedure. They also inform the person that if they do not hear back from them within that time they will put the cards away and move on to another trade.

### **Provide Accurate Sports Card Information**

Include as much information as possible about a card you want or have for trade when posting your message. Remember that some people sort their cards by set and number, others by year and player name. For example, let us say you collect rookie cards and post a message asking for rookie cards of Chipper Jones, Bernie Williams and Carlos Beltran. Be sure to at least include the years that those players were rookies! Ideally, you will also provide the sets that they have rookie cards in as well. When fellow traders have no clue where to begin to track down a card for you they will often not even bother trying. Keep this strategy in mind for all of the different cards you want to trade for; chances are you

will wind up making a lot more trades!

### **Sports Card Condition**

Take pride in the condition of the cards that you send to your fellow collectors. Mostly people assume that the cards they will receive will not be flawed; dinged, stained, damaged, chewed on, etc. It is a good idea for everyone to describe any obvious flaws in the sports cards they are offering before they confirm a trade! For some people, the exact condition of a card is very important. If you are one of those people, be sure to let the person you are trading with know! Others do not take the exact condition of a card as seriously. Clear communication is the key to success

### **Backing out**

If you have spent time arranging a trade and both of you have agreed to the terms of the trade, try not to back out or suddenly change your mind. Some people have to spend hours finding cards in order to make a trade happen. Do not make them do all that work for nothing!

There are only a few good reasons to withdraw from an agreed-upon trade. For example, perhaps you realize that you do not have the cards to trade that you thought, or you cannot complete the trade due to unexpected life circumstances, or perhaps you begin to suspect you are dealing with a possible bad trader. As you become a more experienced sports card trader, you will start to develop a good sense of when something is not right. You should trust that “trade problem radar”. In most cases, backing out of a confirmed trade is irresponsible and wastes the time and energy of your fellow traders.

### **Do not give up after one offer**

If everyone one gave up on a trade after making one offer, there would be very little baseball card trading going on. Hagglng out a trade can actually be fun and is definitely something you need to learn to do. There will be many times that you will make trades on the first offer, but if someone says “no” to one of your offers do not give up! Try to find out what it would take to get the person with to say “yes”.

1. Do they want more book value from you?
2. Are they looking for something specific for the card they are trading away?
3. Do they only want one card in return?

You will probably need more information from them to decide if you can make the trade happen before giving up.

### **Keep those emails positive**

Emails are limited in their ability to communicate emotions accurately. Remember this often during the negotiation process. Do not ruin a potentially good trading relationship by appearing rude, impatient, offended, etc. But if someone is being obnoxious, you should “take the high road” and politely move on to another trade.

### **Pick up the telephone!**

If you are negotiating a large baseball card trade and need additional information, protection, and reassurance, you should consider using the telephone to facilitate the process. Here are a few additional reasons to ask for the telephone number of the person with whom you are trading:

1. Not all collectors check their email every day so having a telephone number is good idea if you find yourself needing to communicate with the person you are trading with.
2. A phone call is a great way to help resolve communication problems and misunderstandings.
3. The telephone is often the quickest way to reach the person you are trading with and seal the deal!
4. Speaking live with the person you are trading with can often help both collectors feel more comfortable about their trade.

## **MAKING THE TRADE**

You have scanned the message board and found someone with whom you would like to trade. He has a football card that you want and you have made him a reasonable offer based on the clearly written message they have on the board. Since you are brand new to trading you have wisely decided to start with a low dollar trade of \$5. You have also

decided that you will keep making lower value trades until you gain more experience and a good reputation. You are the new kid on the block so the veteran trader you are trading with has asked you to send your cards to him first. He has informed you that once he receives your cards he will send you his to you. This is an important piece of the trade that we have not yet discussed in much detail: who sends when?

### **Who Sends Their Sports Cards When?**

This important detail needs to be spelled out by **both** parties involved. If you are a new trader with limited good trader points or other online references, it should not surprise you when people request that you send your card to them first. Conversely, if you are a highly experienced trader with 300 good trader points, you should not hesitate to ask someone with 10-50 references/good trader points to send to you first. If you are the one with more points, do not just assume that the person with fewer points is going to send to you first. Do not just wait until you have received their cards before you send yours. You need to be specific as to exactly when you plan to send. It is not fair to the other trader for you to wait to send your sports cards unless that is what you have told them you plan to do.

When two traders have approximately the same amount of references, they should agree to send at the same time. This is usually the day after the trade has been confirmed. You must arrange this and not simply assume that the cards will be mailed the next day. Sometimes when a trade is confirmed, one person mails the next day, and the other forgets to mention that he has to leave town for a week. This will cause him to be unable to ship until he is back. Do not leave someone hanging. If you are leaving town, going into the hospital, or snowed-in, **be sure to make it clear when you will be mailing your trading partner his sports cards!** If something major does occur to prevent you from keeping your agreement, this is also a good time to contact the manager of the trading site.

### **Life Happens**

Even though you thought you would be able to get those cards in the mail the next day, something comes up and you cannot. This is not a problem and happens to all of us, just be sure to let your trading partner know! There have been innumerable times that something serious has happened to a member of our sports card trading site including death, homes burning down, illness, etc., and the other members of the site rally around them. However, if you do not let somebody know about your personal crisis you are jeopardizing your reputation as a good trader.

### **Computer Crashed! (Have a back-up in place)**

Sometimes the people you are trading with will seem to disappear, do not panic. If you have done your smart trader homework, the chances are good that all will be alright. Just as I mentioned in the “Life Happens” section above, hardware and software problems happen to people as well. It is important for all sports card traders to at least have access to another computer. Even if you can only access your back up computer long enough to contact the person who runs the site. This way you can let them know that you are having some computer problems and have some trades in progress that you will take care of once you are back up and running. These days it is fairly easy to find a computer you can access if yours is down and you need to send some email.

You will want to have a back-up email account set-up as well. You can get free back-up email account from numerous services including Yahoo and Hotmail. These free email accounts come with an address book. You should put the email addresses of the site manager and a few fellow traders into that address book in the event that you need to reach them. Being a good sports card trader means you will take the time and make the effort to keep the people you are trading with well informed. Take an easy step to being a great trader and set-up a back-up email account and access to a another computer today!

## PACKING AND SHIPPING - CHAPTER 4



SportsCardFun.com

Knowing how to properly protect your baseball cards for shipping is essential if you plan to trade via the internet. There are several ways to pack cards safely; for starters it is a good idea to avoid using a standard envelope for mailing cards. Standard envelopes were designed to hold paper; they were not designed to hold hard plastic top loaders with

sports cards enclosed. Consider yourself warned, use standard envelopes and one will eventually wind-up getting damaged or lost in the mail.

Listed below are some of the ways you can package your sports cards; I am only outlining a few that I see used frequently, so keep in mind that this is not an exhaustive list of every method. The important thing is to ship your cards in a manner that will keep them from getting damaged during the shipping process. You do not want your sports cards to shift around allowing for the corners and edges to get dinged or the surface to get scratched.

Before learning how exactly to package your cards, it will be important for you to understand a few key components of basic card storage. These items historically have been used for card storage are a perfect set of tools to use for card shipping.

There are several good companies that manufacture these supplies. You will usually find these products available at your local baseball card shop or at the actual sports card storage distributor web sites such as [www.ultrapro.com](http://www.ultrapro.com) and [www.bcwsupplies.com](http://www.bcwsupplies.com).

### **Top loaders**

Top loaders are hard or semi-hard plastic holders for your cards. They are called top loaders because they are open on the top for you to slide your card into. They come in various sizes; some are thicker than others so that you can fit thicker cards into them. You'll need to use a bit larger top loader when dealing with some of the thicker game used cards coming out these days. If you try to cram a thick card into a tight/thin top loader you risk damaging the card!

Here are a few models of top loaders:

3x4 top loader (semi ridged)

3x5 top loader Stock (semi ridged and good for those thicker cards)

3x4 top loader super thick (again, good for those thick cards)

**Soft Sleeves**

A soft sleeve is a clear soft cover for you to slide your card into. Usually people will put their cards into a soft sleeve first and then into the top loader. To help protect your cards, you will want to make sure that your soft sleeves have no PVC and are Acid Free.

**Hinged boxes (15 card size)**

These are great for shipping 1 thick baseball card or a couple of medium thick game used cards. You might want to stick a small piece of Styrofoam in along with the card to keep it from shifting around, but overall these are great.

**Team bags**

These are kind of like little zip lock sandwich bag only they are made for cards. There is a little strip that you peel off and then fold over to seal the bag shut.

**Graded Card Sleeves**

These are like the team bags only longer. These are great for putting graded cards into or un-circulated cards into. Graded cards and un-circulated cards are protected by a clear hard plastic case. The graded card sleeves can be used to keep those protective hard plastic cases from getting scratched up.

**Card boxes**

These handy boxes come in many different sized. Any good sports card shop will have them for you. If you are sending a large number of cards or an entire set you will want to use these card boxes.

**Screw down card holders**

These are a fancier card holder that come with screws to help them stay held together. I do not see too many of these used for shipping cards, but some people use them.

**Bubble wrap/cushioned mailers** – size #000 or similar padded mailer. You can get a good quantity of these at your local office supply store. Grab a box of 25 of these to get started.

## **Common packing methods**

### **1. Basic packaging method.**

This is the most common card packaging method I see being used. It might vary a little from trader to trader but the core method is the same. You can use this method for 1-10+ cards.

- A. Put each card into a soft sleeve then place each card into its own top loader.
- B. Put the top loaders into a team bag so that the cards do not slide out of the top loaders. You can fit more than one into a team bag or you can put each top loader into its own team bag. You can also skip the team bag for this step and just tape the top loader closed. I prefer to use a "Team bag" instead of tape; when you start to use tape to keep your top loader closed the tape leaves a residue which is a bit obnoxious and makes reusing those top loaders less appealing.
- C. Print out the email message that details what you agreed to and include it in the padded mailer along with a thank you note. Having this printout helps the person receiving the cards immediately identify who sent the cards and the terms of the trade.
- D. Place the top loaders into a bubble wrap/cushioned mailer.
- E. Write "do not bend" or "Do not bend photographs enclosed" on the envelope, this will help remind the series of people who handle your item to use care when handling your piece of mail.

### **2. Good methods to use with 5-15 cards.**

The easiest thing to do when shipping this amount of cards is to send them in a small plastic "hinged box". Use a small piece of Styrofoam to take hold your cards securely inside the hinged box and tape it closed; combined this with items C, D, and E from the

basic method above to complete the job.

### **3. Top loader sandwich method:**

- A. Take your cards and put them into a soft plastic "Team Bag".
- B. Fold and tape the sides of the team bag so that they are flush to the cards inside, sort of like wrapping a present; you just want to make it so the cards will not slide around inside of the Team Bag.
- C. Sandwich the Team bag between two top loaders. For added security tape the outside of the team bag to the top loaders using folded piece of tape.
- D. Tape the top, bottom, and both sides of the top loaders together (with the Team bag in the middle).
- E. Place the top loader sandwich into a padded manila envelope.
- F. Print out the email message that details what you agreed to and include it in the padded mailer along with a thank you note. Having this printout helps the person receiving the cards immediately identify who sent the cards and the terms of the trade.
- G. Write "do not bend" or "Do not bend photographs enclosed" on the envelope, this will help remind the series of people who handle your item to use care when handling your piece of mail.

### **4. Set or bulk trade packaging**

For those times when you are working with a larger volume of cards the goal is the same, pack them securely to avoid their moving around inside of the package while en-route to their destination. Use a hard plastic card container or a cardboard set box from your local sports card shop. These containers come in all different shapes and sizes and it is best to try to use a container that most closely matches in size the number of cards you are sending. If your cards do not completely fill the container, you are using be sure to use some packing material to fill-up the space inside of the container. Foam pieces or bubble wrap work well for this. Tape your container closed. If you are using a cardboard set box, you can put the shipping address and postage right on the set box or you can put the set box into an additional shipping box for some added security as outlined below.

Place the container inside of a shipping box and fill-up any additional space around the set box with packing material such as Styrofoam peanuts or newspaper. Be sure to add the details of the trade and a thank you note. Before you tape up your box, close it up and give it a shake. If your container inside is moving around at all, open up the box and add more packing material. Repeat this process until it is completely free from movement. Tape up the box with packing tape. Write "fragile" or "handle with care" on the box in order to hopefully provide more protection from damage in the shipping process.

No matter which method you use to package your cards the goal is always the same, keep those cards from getting damaged in the mail! Once you start trading you will see the various methods people use and you will come up with the system that you prefer. It is important for you to remember that not taking the time to package cards your cards properly will quickly earn you the reputation of a careless trader. Play it safe, take the time to package your cards perfectly every time!

### **Money saving tip!**

A great way to keep trading inexpensive it to re-use your packaging supplies including padded mailers, top loaders, soft sleeves, etc.

### **Shipping Options**

Most of the trades that you make will require standard first class mail. This being said, there likely will be times that you will want to add some extra security or traceable shipping method into the mix.

**Registered Mail:** This is the most secure method of shipping offered by the United State Postal Service. If you are making a very high dollar sports card trade you should seriously consider sending via Registered Mail! Items you send with Registered Mail are placed under tight security from the point of mailing to the point of delivery, and insured up to \$25,000 against loss or damage. You can also verify the date and time of delivery and the delivery attempts. The cost to send via Registered Mail starts at \$8.00.

Let's have a look at a few of the other shipping features you can add for some extra protection and or tracking of your package.

**Insured Mail** – Adding insurance to your more expensive sports card packages is affordable and smart to do. Insured mail allows you to insure your package from loss or damage for the amount of what the contents are worth. Keep in mind that you are only covered for the actual value at the time and place of mailing. Although using insurance is definitely a good idea and one that many traders use often, it will not offer much protection from a sports card thief who takes your cards and you never hear from them again. This is because that in order for you to qualify for reimbursement from the post office, the person you sent the cards to must state in writing that they did not receive the baseball cards from you. I do not know too many crooks that will write this letter for you. In other words, if someone steals cards from you and you never hear from them again insurance will not help you at all, but if your cards are lost or damaged in the mail having insurance will help a lot!

**Delivery Confirmation™ (DC)** – Provides date and time of delivery or attempted delivery. Many people use this option because there's a tracking number that can be looked up online to confirm that the cards were sent and when they were delivered. It does not however guarantee your item will get to its destination. If you use DC, make sure you have the post office do this for you manually instead of using the self-service machines on your own. That way you'll be sure that your tracking number is scanned into the system.

**Signature Confirmation™** – Provides date and time of delivery or attempted delivery, the name of the person who signed for the item, plus signature proof of delivery upon request.

**Return Receipt** - Provides a postcard with the date of delivery and recipient's signature.

**Restricted Delivery** - Confirms that only a specified person (or authorized agent) will receive a piece of mail. Only available with Certified Mail, Insured Mail over \$50, or Registered Mail.

## **Sports Cards lost in the mail**

Unfortunately cards do occasionally get lost or damaged in the mail. The postal service is amazingly effective but not perfect. People tend to struggle with believing that something can actually get lost in the mail, and when it happens it often becomes an opportunity to accuse someone of being a thief. Take my word for it, items do get lost in the mail! I have spoken to postal workers and postal management numerous times about this topic and can assure you that it does indeed happen. If you have done your home-work and have been reassured by the manager of the site that the person you are trading with is a good trader; it is likely your cards were lost in the mail.

## **What To Do**

Let's say you made an average value sports card trade and although you shipped them, the person you traded with never received the cards from you. Let's also say that since this was not a high-end trade you sent via regular first class mail with no traceable shipping method. Here is what you should do to try and resolve this type of problem:

1. Contact the site manager explaining the situation. You should already have a good idea of the person's reputation that you are trading with since you are a smart trader and check references before making a trade. You may have even traded several times with this person already!
2. Let the person you are trading with know that you would like to give it a week to see if the cards finally show up. You would be amazed at how often baseball cards appear 7 to 10 past when they should have been delivered.
3. If the cards do not show up you should offer to send them replacement cards.

**Now, here is where the compromise part may come into play.** If you are the person who is still waiting for the cards and you know that the guy you are trading with is a good trader you might want to let them know you would be willing to give them some time to find some replacement cards. You might even consider letting them send less than they initially sent or perhaps you would just like to have them send you your cards back and leave it at that. You are not obligated to compromise, but being a little flexible in this situation can be very helpful.

If your cards get damaged in shipping, the post office will return them to you in plastic bag along with the envelope in which they were sent. I have only seen standard envelopes become damaged and returned, never a padded mailer. Standard envelopes should not be used to send cards.

### **Sports Card mailing tips**

1. Make it exact. Have your items metered and weighed by the post office so that you do not pay more than is required for shipping. (Postage rates are continually changing, but as of 2007 you're looking at \$1.13 or \$1.30 in postage for your average #000 bubble mailer.)
2. Save time by getting a postage scale and buying stamps online, have the post office deliver stamps to your home, or use the self serve postal kiosks now at most post offices.
3. You can also get a P.O. Box. Though only a small percentage of traders do this, it serves as a safety measure as you avoid giving out your home address. A disadvantage of using a P.O. Box is that many people like to have the real street address of the person with whom they are trading. A street address gives the impression that the other trader is legitimate. It is much harder to trace a P.O. Box if anything goes wrong with the trade. However, when it comes to personal security, using a P.O. Box is safer than giving out your home address over the Internet.

## **AFTER THE TRADE: the good the bad and the...gulp...ugly - CHAPTER 5**

Once you have received your sports cards from the person with whom you traded, inform them by email. It is a good idea to award good trader points or whatever feedback method the site uses when both traders involved have confirmed that they are happy with the trade. There have been times when one trader has awarded positive feedback only to want to retract it later because the person they traded with was not satisfied with the trade and or treated them rudely.

Do not consider any baseball cards you have received in a trade yours to trade away until you have confirmed that your trading partner is happy with the cards you have sent to him. Make sure that there is no reason to undo a trade that you cannot undo as you have already traded away those cards! Furthermore, never trade away sports cards that you do not have in your possession. Some traders have run into problems arranging trades for cards that they are still expecting from another trader.

### **TRADE PROBLEMS HAPPEN**

It is inevitable that if you trade a lot, eventually you will encounter some type of problem. Generally, most of these problems are minor and can be easily resolved. No matter if you are on the receiving or sending end of a trade problem, stay calm, communicate clearly, and be willing to ask the manager of the site for some help.

### **Compromise**

Resolving trade problems can sometimes require both traders to compromise. If you are not willing to compromise in a particular situation; stop and ask yourself if your position is worth all of the time, energy, and resulting stress it might cause. It is advisable to be open to some level of compromise. Also, remember that a trade problem does not mean that the traders involved are “bad traders”. Unless there is a pattern of an individual being

involved in trade conflicts, usually the people involved in trade problems are good traders who are unfortunately the victims of circumstances beyond their control.

### **Undoing a sports card trade**

Be prepared to undo a trade should a fellow trader be unhappy with the cards you have sent or visa versa. This will happen occasionally when a trader is not happy with the condition of a card, or perhaps was expecting something other than what he received. Sometimes it is simply a matter of accidentally sending the wrong card to the wrong trader! Undoing a sports card trade is frequently the best way to avoid additional problems. If you do have to undo a trade use a traceable and or secure shipping method such as insured mail, registered mail, or at least delivery confirmation. This will avoid the possibility of adding any additional problems onto an already problem trade.

### **Trade problem tip**

Do not send email when you are upset. Take a day or two to calm down and think about the situation before sending an email message that will possibly cause more problems. Many trade problems that take care of themselves if given a few days.

### **Another tip - Avoid sports card trading burn out**

Trading is a wonderful hobby but it does require time and energy for you to stay organized. If you find yourself getting involved in a lot of disputed trades, take a break for a while and come back to trading later when you are reinvigorated and ready to go!



### **Who takes the loss?**

When two "excellent traders" make a trade and one person's sports cards shows up and the other's does not (get lost in the mail), who takes the loss? "Excellent traders" would generally mean that the person has no major complaints on file with the trading club, a substantial amount of Sportscardfun.com good trader points, and or other positive feedback from sites such as eBay, Beckett, or other trading sites.

Ideally, I would prefer to see the two traders come up with some type of compromise to ease the "sting" of the loss that one of them will likely experience. However, compromising is not a requirement, and the bottom line in this situation is that the person who sent the cards that got lost (and did not use a traceable shipping method) is responsible for the loss, and should either send back the card he received or send equal value replacement cards. This is why it is so important to use additional shipping protection with your higher valued trades!!

In addition to both traders staying calm and contacting the site manager for help here are the options to consider if you find yourself in this situation:

1. Request that your trading partner wait one or two weeks and see if the cards finally arrive.

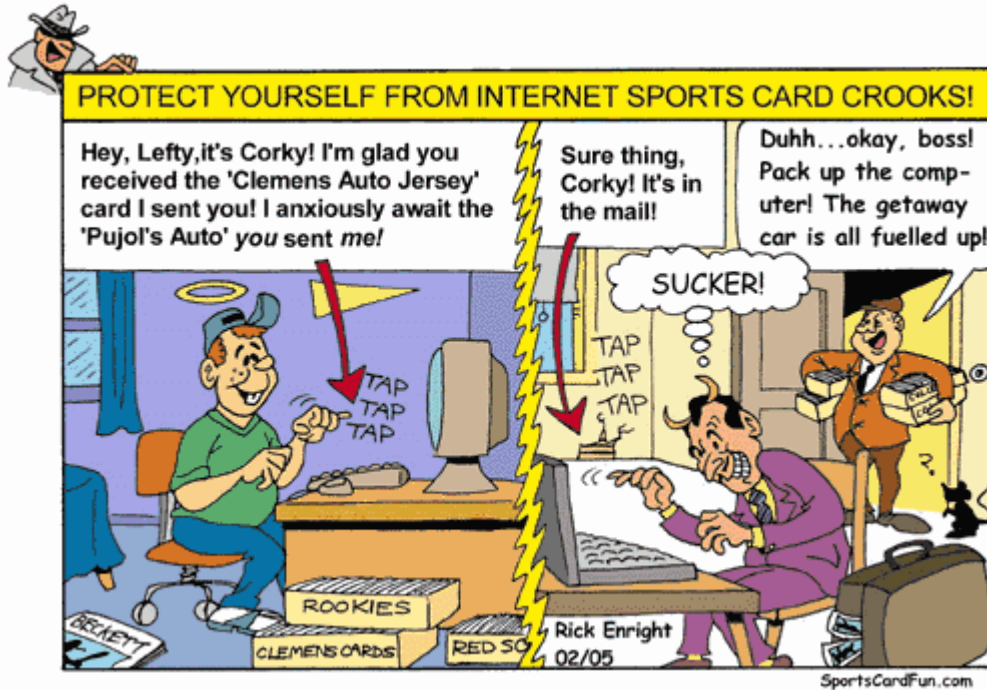
2. Come up with some type of compromise. (Get on the telephone if need be)
3. The trader who had his cards get lost in the mail sends back the card that he received from the other trader. Always send using insured or registered mail when undoing a trade!
4. The trader who had his/her cards get lost in the mail send an equal valued replacement card for the one that went missing. (Use insured or registered mail!)

How do you avoid this type of problem in the first place? When making larger trades, you should seriously consider making it part of your personal trading policy to require BOTH traders to send via insured or registered mail; if the other person is not open to doing this then do not make the trade.

Personally, I can not imagine sending hundreds of dollars worth of cards without using Registered Mail (the most secure shipping method available.) A large trade is a subjective thing and will vary from person to person; personally, I think of a larger trade as starting in the \$50.00 dollar range. Another option to consider when making a more expensive trade is to at least make sure that YOU add some sort of additional protection to your shipping method! Even if the other guy does not, at least you have added a measure of protection for yourself. If you are planning to require the other trader to add insurance or registered mail on a particular trade you should post that requirement in your original trade message.

### **Suspicion of Theft**

**Sports card trading on the Internet IS NOT WITHOUT RISK and there are criminals lurking out there that will steal from you when given the chance!**



The good news is that most people trading baseball cards, basketball cards, and other sports cards. on-line are honest and friendly and simply trying to build their collections and have chosen the Internet to get more enjoyment from their sports card hobby. Out of thousands of trades transacted those involving criminal intent are of a very low or minimal percent

Most of the problems that happen in the world of on-line sports card trading are not those involving a thief, but are problems involving communication or some form of shipping issue, but there are times when a true thief will try to take advantage of someone who is not "trading smart". If you have followed the suggestions outlined throughout this guide you will be less likely to become victimized by a crook. However, if you are lazy and choose not to practice good trading habits, do not be surprised if someone takes advantage of you. When good traders let their guards down they have learned this lesson the hard way.

Trust your instincts. If something just does not seem right about a trade or trade negotiation, you should listen to that feeling and halt the trade. Contact the site moderator for an opinion. The site manager should be able to provide you with some type of helpful information. A good trading site manager or moderator might be able to let you know

something about the person with whom you are trading that will help put your mind at ease. Perhaps your trading partner has a record of negotiating a bit differently, or maybe there is a language barrier that must be overcome. Conversely, perhaps by contacting the manager of the site a warning signal will be set off that alerts you to someone with less than honest intentions.

At Sportscardfun.com we have the experience to spot the cons and the thieves very quickly. Generally a crook will attempt to steal from more than one person at a time in order to obtain as many cards as possible in a short period of time and then disappear. If a trading site supervisor receives more than one report of a strange trade negotiation or behavior from someone, it often provides the information needed to inform the parties involved to exercise extra caution. If, out of the blue, five people report something suspicious about the same trader, the manager will immediately know to take additional action. However, even if a number of people report suspicious behavior about a trader, it is also possible that the person in question has had some sort of emergency in his life that is taking him away from his computer.

It has been interesting to note that with the addition a temporary membership fee for joining Sportscardfun.com several years ago now, the number of sports card crooks dropped dramatically. Apparently, sports card thieves do not like to pay in order to steal from people.

### **Try not to panic**

It is really easy to panic if you think you have been stolen from, especially if the trade is expensive. Joining a good trading site will minimize the likelihood of theft. Such a trading site will do all that they can to help resolve trading problems. At Sportscardfun.com, once you have contacted us about a possible crook, we set into action a system of attempting to reach the trader in question. Be patient and let the site manager try to contact that person. In the meantime, you should refrain from sending threats or crude email messages. This only makes matters worse and usually creates more work for everyone involved. Sometimes it will take a week or two for a trader to reappear and

resolve the issue. It will be important to remember that people do have lives outside of trading sports cards. It is not uncommon for people to go out of town on short notice and tell a friend or family member to mail their cards for them, only to have that friend or family member forget! People get sick, computers break, etc. Keep all of this in mind. People seemingly disappear off the face of the earth, only to innocently come back to an email box full of mean accusations, threats, etc. Try not to panic.

### **You have been “ripped off”**

If after all possible avenues have been exhausted, and it appears you have been a victim of theft; that there is not a lot that a sports card trading site can do for you. We cannot go get the cards for you or magically undo the crime, but there are a few helpful things that we can do. This includes providing you with resource information so that you can take further action on your own with the authorities, alerting the other members of the community, blocking the person in question from using the site, and making specific suggestions with each individual case. Sadly, a majority of the crooks we have encountered have been juveniles who think they have figured out an easy way to get good cards; sometimes finding and contacting their parents does wonders.

### **Here are a few tangible things you can do:**

Frankly, you might want to just chalk up your loss as a learning experience and leave it at that. Let the trading site block them and enter them into their system as a sports card crook to alert other traders. If you have lost a substantial amount of cards you can explore legal options to get them back.

Do not make bodily harm threats or try to make contact in person with anyone who may have stolen from you. Doing so could place you in the legal hot seat. Enlist the help of the proper authorities.

Below is a list of groups to whom you can complain:

### 1. Internet Crime Complaint Center

The Internet Crime Complaint Center is a partnership between the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the National White Collar Crime Center.

<http://www.ic3.gov/>

### 2. National Fraud Center

File a complaint Website address: <http://www.fraud.org>.

Telephone number: 1-800-876-7060

### 3. U.S. Postal Service

If your complaint involves the U.S. Postal Service visit them on the web.

Website address: <http://www.usps.com/websites/depart/inspect>

Contact the Postal Inspectors at 1-800-353-8177.

Email the details of your situation to the USPS inspection Service at [fraud@uspis.gov](mailto:fraud@uspis.gov).

### 4. File a complaint with the Better Business Bureau

Website address: <http://www.bbb.org/complaint.asp>

(This really only applies to those people claiming to be a business)

5. Also contact the State Attorney General's office in the state where the accused resides; most offices have fraud/consumer affairs offices, ask to file a report.

6. Report them to their ISP (for example hotmail, etc.)\*\* Most ISP's do not want their email addresses used for illegal activities and will shut down any verified abuse.

7. Occasionally it is effective to call the local police department where the thief lives.

### 8. Public Records Search

Sometimes baseball card thieves will attempt to make it hard for you to find them by using unlisted phone numbers, fake names, etc.

One effective way to locate someone that has stolen from you is to do a public records search for the mailing address that they had you send your cards to. Most local municipalities provide the ability for people to find-out the name and contact information of the person who owns a particular home or apartment building. Once you have the name and contact information for the owner of the property you have made a big step in the right direction. Often times simply making the thief aware of this ability is enough to inspire them to make good on a trade, so you could send them an email message stating your plan to do this.

To do a public records search you just need to go to the website for the county (all counties have a website these days) that the person lives in and follow the directions. Normally a public records search costs around \$5 and can take a little time, but can be well worth the effort. This suggestion may not help in all cases but is just one more tool to use should you ever be a victim of a thief. A Public records search will not work if the person used a PO Box for his mailing address.

Thankfully, it truly is a very small percentage of people who are out there looking to steal sports cards from you. However, having been in the midst of traders in an uproar about being the victims of a thief, I can tell you that when it happens, you really do appreciate the saying “a few bad apples can spoil the whole crop”. These sports memorabilia crooks will happily take the fun out of a good thing when given the chance. When you are the victim of a crook, it is definitely not fun! This is why it is so important that **YOU** do all that you can to prevent this type of thing from happening **BEFORE** it happens to you!

**Parents: help your kids learn how to trade sports cards!**

*A word of caution: Trading over the Internet involves providing your personal information to those you do not know. Parents and guardians of minors should be aware of all Internet activities of minors for whom they are responsible for. Children should NEVER meet in person anyone they meet on the Internet unless accompanied by their*

*parents or guardians. Everyone should use caution when giving out personal information to those who they meet online.*

With a little guidance and support from parents, kids can use the Internet to trade. Parents of a young sports card enthusiast who wants to start trading should “learn the ropes” themselves so that they can effectively help their child. Often times collecting sports cards is a hobby that kids and parents do together anyway, so online trading is just an extension of that common interest. Even if you are not a big sports card fan you might just find yourself getting excited about the trades your child starts to make. Speaking from experience, it is fun to see your child take an interest in what time the mail gets delivered in anticipation of some good sports cards heading his way. I have seen that at around the age of 13 some kids can start to handle a little bit of independent trading, but should still be closely monitored by mom or dad. Personally I am a big fan of parents being in the same room as their children when the child is online; sometimes this means putting the computer in the living room, but it is in everyone’s best interest and allows for easier monitoring of online activities.

These days it is usually not the technical aspects of using the Internet and computer that kids need help with; more often than not it is usually a matter of helping them communicate clearly and get the hang of negotiating trades that they might need your assistance. Parents will likely have to help their child obtain their shipping supplies, but hopefully before too long they will have supplies to reuse!

Kids will be kids and teenagers will be teenagers. As I mentioned, some younger sports card traders might view trading as a good opportunity to bolster their collection through less than honest means. When I first started Sportscardfun.com, and before we had a temporary membership fee and more safety measures in place, I had to help a few good traders contact the parents of Juvenal trader in order to help sort out the monkey business their youth was involved in. Since that time we have added several additional security measures on our site; one of which is a parental consent form. For kids under the age of 13 who want an account of their own on our site they must have their parents or legal

guardian approve this first. That being said, most kids seem to do just fine with a little help from mom or dad and thieves certainly do not only come in the youth variety, an equal number of crooks I have encountered are of legal age. It is worth stating again that it is in everyone best interest for parents to monitor their child's on line sports card trading ventures closely.

### **Smart trader tip!**

Some folks will set up a PO Box in order to avoid giving out a home street address.

## **UPGRADE AND MAKE MONEY! - CHAPTER 6**

### **Upgrading your sports card collection with trading!**

Once you have learned the art of negotiating a good trade, you will find that there are many people out there who are willing to trade in your favor in a variety of ways depending on what they might want in return. You will want to make sure you do not offend your sports card trading partners by making unreasonable trade offers, but with time you will get to know the various traders on the trading board and how they might be willing to help you in exchange for you helping them.

Keep your eye out for these opportunities! You will meet traders who will be open to:

1. Taking your common cards and giving you game-used, autos or rookies in return.
2. Taking your commons for hot star players.

3. Trading substantially in your favor in exchange for one card they might need to complete a set.

Another way for you to upgrade your collection without spending any additional money is for you to trade non-sports items for cards. Some folks will trade other items such as video games, DVD's, CD's, etc. in exchange for sports cards. You will want to double check the rules of the trading site that you belong to before doing this; if it is okay to do, give it a try and enhance your collection without spending more money!

### **How to make \$MONEYS by trading online**

Trading is not only fun and a great way to build up your sports card collection, but it also allows you the opportunity to **MAKE MONEY!** Obviously these money making opportunities are not for everyone, but if you are resourceful and hardworking chances are you will be able to turn your sports card trading skills into a way to earn some cash. In order to maximize your money earning potential, I would suggest that you become a very experienced sports card trader before using any of these suggestions. Here are some of the ways you can use sports card trading to turn your cards into cash and have more money in the bank.

1. Trade for cards that your local shop owner will then buy from you. These days most card shops are selective about what cards they are interested in buying from customers. Find out what cards they do buy and then trade your unwanted cards for those cards.
2. Set up an arrangement with your local shop owner to trade the cards that are not selling well in the shop for ones that will. Explain to them that trading takes time and that you would be willing to do this for them in exchange for some store credit or commission.
3. If you are a computer savvy sports card collector with a lot of trading experience, offer to teach someone how to trade. See if your local card shop will let you put a flyer up

advertising your trading tutorial services. You could even hold a small seminar about how to trade at your local shop; many shop owners will like this idea because it brings more people into their stores.

4. Many people either have no interest or no resources to get a computer and learn all of this stuff, offer to do it for them in exchange for cards or charge them a fee.

5. Trade for the cards of your local sports teams and sell them at a local card show, flea market, or have a garage sale.

6. Trade away your unwanted cards for cards to give away as gifts to friends and family members. It never fails, every holiday season I see a lot of folks trading for cards to give as gifts! What a great way to turn your unwanted cards into a gift that someone will love, this is an excellent example of saving money with the magic of trading baseball cards, basketball cards, and other sports cards on the Internet!

### **A sports card price guide reality check**

Speaking of all of this money stuff makes me think of the all important price guides. You are going to have to have a good handle on using price guides in order to trade sports cards. The Beckett price guides are the primary resource people use for look up the values of their cards. Beckett offers several versions of monthly and bi-monthly printed guides that you can pick-up at your local card shop or other magazine outlet. Now that you are getting comfortable using the Internet I would recommend you use the online versions of the Beckett price guides. I have found these online price guides to be a real time saver since I do not have to flip through printed pages of tiny price guide text. You will have to subscribe in order to use these, but I find them well worth the \$3.99 per month.

Another interesting price guide tool starting to emerge can be seen at [cardpricer.com](http://cardpricer.com) and [vintagecardprices.com](http://vintagecardprices.com). These subscription-based guides are a sort of “real world” price

index that is integrated into eBay. These new tools allow you to search for a card to see what it has actually sold for on eBay. But you ask “why would I care what the card sold for on eBay? The answer to that question can sometimes be a bit of a rude awakening for some collections, but here is; In the world of buying and selling sports cards, **your cards are only worth what someone is willing to pay for them.**

Occasionally an incredibly popular/hot card will sell for more than the listed book value. Then again there are times that a card will sell for about what the price guides have listed. More often than not however, a card will sell for far less than the high book value listed in the guides. For example, a card listed in the regular Beckett for a high book value for \$100 might only actually sell for \$50 (or less). I attribute eBay with providing a hefty dose of reality to collectors, what cards are said to be worth verses what a collector can actually get in cash value are two completely different things. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, but the faster a collector figures out what his/her cards are really worth in cash value the better. The longer a collector is under the impression that he has a collection worth substantially more cash than what it is really worth, the bigger the disappointment he'll eventually have to face. **This is also why I feel strongly that most collectors should collect for the fun of it. Collectors should also collect what they like and not what someone says they should like based on who or what the latest hot card is.** The average sports card enthusiast should not try to collect as an investment tool, and when it comes to investing their hard earned cash, should instead get the advice of a good financial planner. **This is also why trading sports cards can often be a more rewarding experience than buying and selling,** since most people trade high book value for high book value. Hence, when it comes to trading sports cards, the price guides are incredibly helpful.

## CONCLUSION

Trading sports cards on the Internet is a fun and rewarding way to add to an already fun hobby. You are now among the thousands of other collectors who have figured out what an excellent tool the Internet is for helping them expand their collections. I hope that you have learned that although trading on line is ultimately very easy to do, here is a lot

involved to being a great and efficient Internet sports card trader. Put this guide to good use and it will provide you with a solid foundation for earning an excellent reputation as someone we'd all like to trade with.

### **Contact me for advice**

If you ever want an opinion about a trade situation that you are involved in you are welcome to contact me. I may not always be able to give you the answer you are looking for, or the perfect solution to a trade problem, but I am willing to give you an answer based on what I might know about the type of situation you might be struggling with. Contact me at this email address help at sportscardfun dot com.

**But wait, the books not done! Be sure to read Chapter 7 and our resources page.**

Before we move on to THE BIG LIST OF SMART TRADER TIPS (be sure to read them!), I would like to invite you to visit **Sportscardfun.com** and try us out. We offer a 20 day free trial membership to all new members....see you online!

### **THE BIG LIST OF SMART TRADER TIPS! - CHAPTER 7**

The smart trader tips this list provides can make the difference between your having a positive Internet sports card trading experience or a horrible one. All of these tips are important and you need to take the time to become familiar with each of them. Some of the tips apply to more than one category, but instead of listing them twice, I have put them in the most appropriate place. I have the safety tips listed first with the exception one. The first tip on the list is the most common complaint I have heard for the past 10 years.

**The #1 trader tip for you is....**

## **Respond!**

If a Trader responds to a post you have made, please be kind enough to respond to them. Even if you are completely uninterested in their sports card offer, you need to show some them some courtesy and let them know. This is tremendously appreciated by your fellow traders and only takes a few seconds to do. Email is quick and easy to use so please do not leave people hanging!

**Now on to the rest of this important list.....**

## **Personal Safety**

*A word of caution: Trading baseball cards and other sports cards over the Internet involves providing your personal information to those you do not know. Parents and guardians of minors should be aware of all Internet activities of minors for whom they are responsible. Children should NEVER meet in person anyone that they encounter on the Internet unless accompanied by their parents or guardians. Everyone should use caution when giving out personal information to those when they meet online.*

## **Set-up a P.O. Box**

A post office box will allow you to avoid giving out a home street address.

## **“Do not get stolen from” Tips!**

### **Start with small trades**

If you have never traded with a particular trader before, it is smart for both traders to arrange a small trade, or even a few small trades, before moving on to higher dollar negotiations.

### **Trust your gut feeling**

If you have a bad feeling about a sports card trade that you are entering, do not rush the trade. Instead, contact the site manager and ask for more references, or start with a smaller trade.

### **Check References**

Earning Sportscardfun.com Good Trader Points is a great way to build an on-line trading reputation. There are many sites that offer ways to earn a good reputation including eBay, NAXCOM, Beckett, Sportscardforum, etc.

### **Contact the site manager**

When in doubt you, should check with the site manager about the person you are with whom you are trading.

### **Check Around**

The site you belong to should have a method of informing you of those individuals removed from the club for bad trader. If you are trading with someone for the first time that has no references, you should investigate whether they are on anyone's "bad trader" list.

### **Use those point rankings and references!**

The use of point rankings and references will help you establish the process to use in mailing cards to a fellow trader. You will need to determine the number of references/points that you are comfortable with in order to agree to send cards at the same time. Perhaps you decide that if someone has less than 10 points or references you will request that they send their cards to you first. Maybe if you have 200 references you will always ask people with less than 100 to mail their sports cards first. Be aware that people need to earn a positive on-line trading reputation. Whatever method of qualifications you decide to use, they should be used consistently. If you are the one with fewer points and someone else is asking you to send your cards first, you are also welcome to ask for additional references and/or start with smaller trades!

### **"Zero to a hundred"**

If you make a small sports card trade with someone and it goes well, do not automatically assume that because a small trade went well that a large trade will also go well. Other factors must be taken into account when you begin making larger trades such as point ranking, shipping methods, etc.

### **Do not get lazy!**

After you have made hundreds of trades without encountering even one small trade problem there might be a tendency for you to get lazy with your smart trader tips. Don't get lazy! I have seen this laziness happen the most when a seasoned trader agrees to send at the same time as a rookie trader; the rookie trader disappears and fails to send the cards they were suppose to send, but happily takes the sports cards that the veteran trader sent.

### **Negotiating and trading tips!**

#### **Communicate clearly**

The majority of the sports card trade problems reported over the past 10 years have involved good traders who simply miscommunicate with each other. The Internet and e-mail is so fast and easy to use that we frequently assume that we have made ourselves clear when we have not. Trading smart means that you will go out of your way to be absolutely sure that the person with whom you are trading completely understands the terms of your trade.

#### **Email Abbreviation Tips**

There are many abbreviations used on the Internet, here are a few that you may come across while you are trading sports cards online:

WTT – want to trade

WTTF - want to trade for

WTF – want to find

LOL – laughing out loud

TTYL – talk to you later

BRB – be right back

GU – game used

RC – rookie card

HTG – hard to get

VHTG – very hard to get

### **Do not conduct too many trade negotiations at the same time**

It is often tempting to trade baseball cards, hockey cards, etc., non-stop with many different people. Until you know that you can handle it, be careful to not engage in too many trades at the same time.

### **Keep your sports card collection organized!**

It is much easier to trade when you have an organized collection. Trading is a lot more fun when you do not need to spend hours upon hours looking for cards that have been requested by another trader. It is important that you keep track of the cards that you have promised to someone else. Unless you have more than one of a certain card, make sure you have a system whereby you know what you are already trading away and what is still available.

### **Card condition**

Take pride in the condition of the sports cards you send to your fellow collector. People assume that the cards they will be receiving will not be flawed, dinged, stained, damaged, chewed on, etc. Every smart trader knows it is a good idea to describe ANY OBVIOUS FLAWS in the cards they are trading away before they confirm a trade! For some people, the exact condition of a card is VERY important. If you are one of those people, be sure to let the person you are trading with know! Other people do not take the exact condition of a card as seriously. CLEAR COMMUNICATION is mandatory in all trading negotiations.

### **Read trade messages carefully**

The people you are trading with have already stated what they want for a particular trade; take the time to read that information! Other traders like it when you have read their messages and make them an offer of a card that they actually want.

### **Make reasonable trade offers**

Do not offer a \$5 baseball card for a \$20 dollar baseball card; unless of course the person has said they are agreeable to this, or if they have made a blanket statement of “make offer”. Remember that most of the time people trade close to high book value for high book value.

### **Do not back out or suddenly change your mind**

If you have spent time arranging a trade try to do your best to not back out or suddenly change your mind. There are only a few good reasons to withdraw from an agreed-upon trade. An exception would occur if you didn't realize that you do not have the cards to trade that you thought you did, or you realized that you can't complete the trade due to unexpected life circumstances. Occasionally you may begin to suspect that you are dealing with a possible bad trader. In most cases backing out of a confirmed sports card trade is irresponsible and wastes the time and energy of your fellow traders.

### **Be prepared to undo a trade**

Be prepared to undo a trade if your fellow trader is unhappy with the cards you have sent. Undoing a trade is frequently the best way to avoid additional problems. If you do undo a trade use a traceable and secure shipping method to help avoid additional problems with an already problem trade.

### **Hold on to those email threads!**

Keeping your original email thread going when setting up a trade insures that you have a record of what was said and agreed upon each step along the way. Most email programs allow you to do this. When replying to your fellow trader's email message make sure to use the "reply" feature on your email program. Starting a new email message when the subject has not changed is not a good way to keep track of the trade arrangement.

### **Pick up the telephone!**

If you are negotiating a large sports card trade and need some added information, protection and reassurance, you should consider communicating by telephone. Here are a few additional reasons to get the telephone number of the other trader:

1. A phone call is some times the best way to help resolve communication problems and misunderstandings.
2. The telephone is often the quickest way to reach the person with whom you are trading and finalize the deal!
3. Not all traders check their email every day so having a telephone number is good idea if you find yourself needing to communicate with that other person.
4. Speaking live with the person you are trading with can often help both traders feel more comfortable about their trade.

Certainly not all trades require speaking on the telephone, but for those larger more complicated trades you may want to add the telephone call into the mix!

### **Do your share**

Doing your share of the work is always appreciated by your fellow traders! For example, instead of simply saying "look at my list", look at their lists. If someone responds to your post and indicates that they have found a few football cards that you need; the courteous thing for you to do in return is to offer to look at their list. This is a much better response than saying "great, you found a few football cards that I need, now take a look at my page to see if I have anything that you need." Studying lists takes time and effort! If traders try to share the load of scanning each others lists, everyone will have more time to make more trades!

### **Send your sports cards to your fellow trader when you say you will.**

Most people agree to ship their cards a day or two after they finalize a trade, keep your part of the agreement! Tell the person if you plan to wait until you receive your cards first, that this is your intention. Not doing so is an unfair trading practice. Those with

more points than the person with whom they are trading will often request the person with fewer points to send his/her cards first.

### **Irregular Schedule**

If you have an irregular work schedule, or one that takes you out of town from time to time, you should inform the other traders. If you know that you are frequently away, you need to communicate this clearly so that they do not think you are ignoring them or, even worse, have stolen from them if a problem arises when you are not available.

### **Do not trade them away #1**

Do not trade away sports cards that you have recently received in a trade until you are absolutely certain that the person you traded with to obtain those cards is happy with the cards that you provided to him or her. Do not consider any cards you have obtained in a trade to be yours to trade away until you confirm that your trading partner is happy with the cards you have sent.

### **Do not trade them away #2**

Do not trade away sports cards that you do not actually have in your possession. Some traders have run into problems arranging trades for cards that they are still waiting to arrive from another trader. It is best to only trade away cards that you have in your hands.

### **Be prepared for the unexpected #1**

A responsible on-line sports card trader is prepared for the unexpected. Being able to contact your fellow traders in the event of a computer crash or other problem that requires you to be away from your computer is critical. The designation of a good trader means that you will take the time and make the effort to keep the people with whom you are trading with well informed. Take the easy step to being a great trader and set-up a back-up email account today!

### **Be prepared for the unexpected #2**

Have access to a back up computer in place. A back-up email address will not help you if your computer crashes. Think about what computer you can use to contact the site manager or your fellow sports card collectors in the event that your computer needs repairing.

### **Stay cool**

Try to refrain from sending rude or offensive email messages. They really help no one and usually do more harm than good.

### **Do not burn out on trading**

Trading sports cards online is really fun! You will most likely make many great trades and some good friends as well. However, as with all activities, it is possible to get so caught up in trading that you may begin to burn out on it. If you find yourself getting frustrated easily with your fellow baseball card collectors or falling behind with keeping your collection organized, take a break Explore life outside of trading for a while. There really is more to life than just trading!

### **Sports Card Packing Tips!**

#### **Pack your cards carefully**

Take the time to learn how to properly package your cards for shipping! Packing your cards poorly will quickly earn you a reputation that you do not want to have.

#### **Include a note about the details of your trade.**

This helps the other person remember who traded what. Many traders will print out, and include, the email message created when the trade was being finalized. This is an easy way to provide a detailed outline of the trade to include in the package.

#### **Traceable Mail**

Use a traceable and insured form of shipping on the higher value sports card trades that you make. Shipping with Registered Mail and or Insured Mail can provide you with some

peace of mind and important protection. Remember that Registered mail is the most secure form of shipping that you can use.

### **Time saving tips!**

#### **Have a “sports card pulling” policy**

Clarify how long you will keep cards pulled for someone in your messages to them. Many traders will pull cards and keep them pulled for 3 days only, telling those they correspond with that this is their procedure. A policy like this will help keep you from having stacks piling up indefinitely. Another solution is to simply not pull cards until you are absolutely certain your fellow trader still needs them.

#### **Regular mailing days**

Save yourself some trips to the post office by having a couple of regular mailing days. Tell your fellow traders that you go to the post office on (for example) Mondays and Thursdays. This practice often helps traders save time by not having to stand in line at the post office too often.

### **Money saving tips!**

#### **Reuse stuff**

It is common for people to reuse padded mailers and other packaging supplies; this is a great way to save money to buy more sports cards!

#### **Use exact postage**

Using the exact postage, and not a penny more, is another excellent way to save money in the long run. Buy a small postage scale.

### **Message posting tips!**

#### **Be specific**

Try to be as specific in your sports card trade posts as possible. State what you have for trade and what you want in return whenever possible.

### **Provide the details**

Looking for rookie cards? If you are, it is a good idea to include the year of the rookie cards that you need. Including the year of the cards will help those that may want to trade to start their search to determine if they have what you want. When a fellow trader doesn't even know where to begin trying to track down a card for you, they will often not bother trying. Keep this in mind for all of the cards you want to acquire and you will make a lot more trades!

### **Do not post the same message too frequently**

Give the members of your trading club a chance to read your messages. Not everyone is on their computer each day. Posting the same sports card trading messages everyday will tend to frustrate the trading community. Wait a few days and then post it again.

### **Do not post too many messages every day**

Good trading sites will normally have a rule in place stating the maximum number of posts each person can make in a day. Sportscardfun.com allows 4 posts per day in each of the groups that we have, for most people this is more than enough.

### **Technical tips!**

#### **Keep your computer in shape!**

You can't trade on the Internet without your computer, so learn how to keep it in tip top condition.

#### **Update your Anti-virus software often**

Don't want to become the victim of a computer virus. Update your anti-virus software and scan your computer for viruses weekly.

## **Other important tips!**

### **Keep the site manager informed and Ask for help!**

If you think you might be having a sports card trading problem of any kind, let the site manager know and ask for his or her help. The sooner the manager is aware of any potential trade problems or bad traders, the faster he or she will be able to assist. A good trading site should be willing to help you with any trade problem or question that you might have.

### **Your personal sports card trading policy**

Now that you have read this guide from cover to cover it's time for you to get to work on creating your personal trading policy, remember that it will likely evolve over time as you figure out the ins and outs of what you're comfortable with. Your policy should consist of good safety, communication, card packing and shipping, and integrity guidelines. It's not a bad idea to post your trading policy on your web page or even in the messages that you post to the trading board.

### **A sample personal trading policy:**

I always do my best to communicate as clearly and politely as I can with the people who I trade with. I RESPOND TO ALL TRADE OFFERS. I go out of my way to be very specific in my trade posts about what sports cards I have for trade and what I want in return. My goal is to always package my cards very carefully and use at least the combination of soft sleeves, top-loaders, team bags and bubble mailers. For any trade over \$50 in value I add insurance. When making a trade for \$100 or more I require that both of us send with insurance. For trades valued over \$300 I will only make the trade if both traders agree to send via Registered Mail. I consider it mandatory that people with less than 20 sportcardfun.com good trader points send their cards to me first; if they refuse I will not trade with them. I do not make large dollar trades with people I've never traded with.

## **SPORTS CARD RESOURCES**

Over the years I have had the pleasure of using several excellent sports card resources on the Internet. I have listed some of my personal favorites below and hope that you get some benefit out of these recommendations.

### **Trading Sites**

There are many sports card trading web sites out there these days. I hope that you give them all a try and decide to make Sportscardfun.com your home for online sports card trading. You will find that we provide a safe and fun place to trade.

**Sportscardfun.com**

**Beckett.com**

**Sportscardforum.com**

**Sportscardhaven.com**

**Sportscardsheriff.com**

**Tradingcardcentral.com**

### **Blogs**

Thankfully more and more sports card collectors are turning to the blogosphere to discuss this great hobby! Here are a few baseball card blogs that you might want to add to your daily reading: (or start one of your own!)

**Waxheaven.com**

**The Baseball Card Blog**

**Treasure Never Buried**

**Beckett Behind The Scenes**

**Dinged Corners**

### **Beckett.com**

What do not these guys do? As with their dominance of the market place with their printed materials and guides to sports cards, their Internet presence is a force to be reckoned with as well. The Beckett web site is packed full with great information about all areas of collecting including price guides, an excellent card grading service, release dates, a market place, trading boards, reviews, news, auctions, etc!

### **eBay.com**

If there comes a time that you would like to buy or sell sports cards on the Internet it is likely that eBay will be a good place for you to do it. eBay is the king of all auction sites. There are many good resources available for you to learn how to use eBay, including resources right on the eBay site. When you do decide to use eBay, you will find that you will be able to use many of the same suggestions in this trading guide.

### **Mastronet.com and Heritageauctions.com**

Ebay works great for most collectors. However, if you're searching for or selling high-end cards or sports memorabilia **Mastronet.com and Heritageauctions.com** are a couple of fantastic specialized auction sites you should be aware of.

### **NAXCOM.com (Now has auctions!)**

Online since 2001 NAXCOM.com is another great place to buy and sell sports cards. One unique feature at NAXCOM is the ability for users to post not only sales offers but purchase offers as well. NAXCOM also offers a Buyer Protection Guarantee with every purchase, where buyer's funds are placed into a holding account until their item is received and approved. NAXCOM also offers Seller Protection Guarantee, where sellers are guaranteed to receive their payment for a successful sale. NAXCOM is also one of the country's largest collectibles show promoters, with more than 100 show dates annually.

### **Thepit.com**

Owned by NAXCOM, Thepit.com is a market place to buy and sell sports cards; however, it's modeled after a stock market and not an auction site. As with the real stock market, the pit displays the real-time market value fluctuations in the prices of sports cards based on supply and demand. Unlike traditional Internet auctions, you are only dealing with thePit.com when you trade in their exchanges. Thepit.com also guarantees each transaction, buying or selling.

### **Etopps.com**

Etopps.com (yes the Topps Company) cards are actual sports cards that you can choose to buy, trade, sell, or track online without ever even actually having the cards in your hand. You can also play or make up games with fellow Etopps collectors and use your cards as the wager. Also, each week they release a limited-time Rookie card. Etopps is tied into eBay and Etopps cards can be swapped or purchased on the eBay site. Etopps collectors have a portfolio that displays the values of their cards partly based on what the

cards are selling for on the Etopps trading floor. Collectors can also choose to have their cards sent to them!

### **Tuffstuff.com**

Krause Publications produces the well known **Tuff Stuff** sports card magazine and has a web site to go along with it. You will find a lot of good information on this site including **a free price guide**, check lists, and sports card news. The parent site to Tuffstuff.com is called collect.com and has resources for all different types of collectibles.

### **SportsCollectorsDigest.com**

Sports Collectors Digest (SCD) has been published for the past 30 years by Krause. The Digest covers all aspects of sports memorabilia collecting including sports cards, equipment, autographs and uniforms.

### **Psadna.com**

Professional Sports Authenticator (PSA) is a very well established third-party sports card authentication service. PSADNA.COM is the division of PSA that specializes in autograph authentication service.

### **Sports Market Report (SMR)**

If you're thing is collecting graded sports cards and other sports memorabilia, you'll want to check out SMR. The publication also has some online accessibility as well. Sports Market Report is published by the folks at Professional Sports Authenticator (PSA). Learn more about **Sports Market Report**.

### **Steinersports.com**

If you are looking to purchase high quality authentic sports memorabilia be sure to browse through the inventory at Steinersports.com.

### **Tristar.com**

Tri-star is one of the premier producers of authenticated, autographed sports memorabilia. They also put on some of the best sports collectible events in the country.

### **Ultrapro.com and BCW.com**

Need some top loaders, boxes or any other sports memorabilia storage device? If you can't purchase your supplies from a local card shop, Ultrapro.com and BCW.com are the online places to pick up whatever you might need.

### **Photobucket.com and Flickr.com**

Photobucket.com and Flickr.com are free online photo album services that you can use to display your collection and the cards that you have for trade. It's very common for traders to ask to see photos of cards that they are trading for.

### **Sports card manufacturers**

#### **Donruss/Leaf (Playoff)**

2300 E. Randol Mill Road Arlington, Texas 76011

(817) 983-0300

<http://www.donruss.com>

#### **SAGE**

16776 Lakeshore Drive #C, PMB 231 Lake Elsinore, CA 92530

(909) 678-6449

<http://www.sa-ge.com>

#### **Topps**

One Whitehall Street, New York New York 10004-2109

(212) 376-0300 or fax (212) 376-0623

<http://www.topps.com>

**Upper Deck (also now owns the Fleer trade name)**

5909 Sea Otter Place Carlsbad, CA 92008

(760) 929-6500

<http://www.upperdeck.com>