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It's Official...Topps Baseball in a League of it's Own

Last Fall, Topps became the official manufacturer of Major League Baseball trading cards. It has been several decades since Topps was the official manufacturer for MLB. When I was a kid, there were several different brands of cards' to choose from. Fleer, Donruss, and Upper Deck all competed with each other. The Upper Deck brand always cost the most money. Each package was wrapped in silver foil which made the packs tamper-proof.

Today, Topps no longer has to deal with competition from other manufacturers. Additionally, the package design has changed over the years. This is clearly a busy and exciting time for Topps. I recently had the opportunity to talk with Clay Luraschi of Topps about their exclusive MLB deal and the Million dollar giveaway promotion with Cal Ripken, Jr.

You are the exclusive baseball card manufacturer for MLB, is this monopoly good for fans and the baseball card dealers'?

MLB felt that the best way to get rid of the clutter and simplify the message to baseball fans and collectors was to go exclusive with one manufacturer. There were too many products on the shelf and it was becoming difficult for consumers, especially kids, to understand trading cards. In the long term it will benefit all, because we can get back to a more common language of collecting trading cards and the stores will see new collectors because of the hobby's back to basics mentality.

Congratulations on your million dollar giveaway promotion with Ripken, Jr. How did this idea come about and what can we expect in 2010 regarding this venture?

We really wanted to start off our new partnership with MLB with a bang, so we sat and brainstormed different dynamic promotions. We came up with The Million Card Giveaway. It celebrates the game of baseball, Topps and the love of baseball cards.

How much was spent in purchasing these baseball cards? What are the years of the cards that will be part of the promotion?

A lot of money. The promotion features every Topps base card since 1952, so that's 38,000 different cards. We purchased 1 million of these cards.

Many card collections' were thrown out in the garbage by our mothers.' The million dollar giveaway is a chance to buy back those cards from several decades past.