

Collecting Baseball Cards Popular, Expensive Hobby

By TODD GOSSETT
Staff Reporter

For years, kids have enjoyed trading and collecting baseball cards. In the past few years, trading and collecting has become a grown-up pastime with older and rarer cards selling for thousands of dollars.

Enter Darrell Van Dyke. As a child, he was an avid baseball fan and collected a few cards, said his father, James Van Dyke. But it wasn't until around 1980 or 1981 that Darrell started collecting in earnest. And in April of this year, he opened a "collectibles" shop in Kings Mountain.

"He had too many cards to stack in the closet...He had to do something with his cards," said James.

Darrell had operated a stand for a few months at the Dixie Village Flea Market before he opened his shop on Mountain Street earlier this year.

Walking into the shop is a dream come true for a young baseball collector. Baseball posters adorn the wall of the shop and a display case of old cards for sale is at the center of attention. A stand of 1988 cards for sale is behind the display case.

In the case you can find cards of many players, both past and present. The prices of the cards range from 50 cents (for several different cards) to \$200 for an autographed Mike Schmidt rookie card. Other noteworthy cards in the display case include a George Brett card (\$35), a Yogi Berra card (\$45), a Hank Aaron card (\$80), and a Carl Yastremski card (\$80).

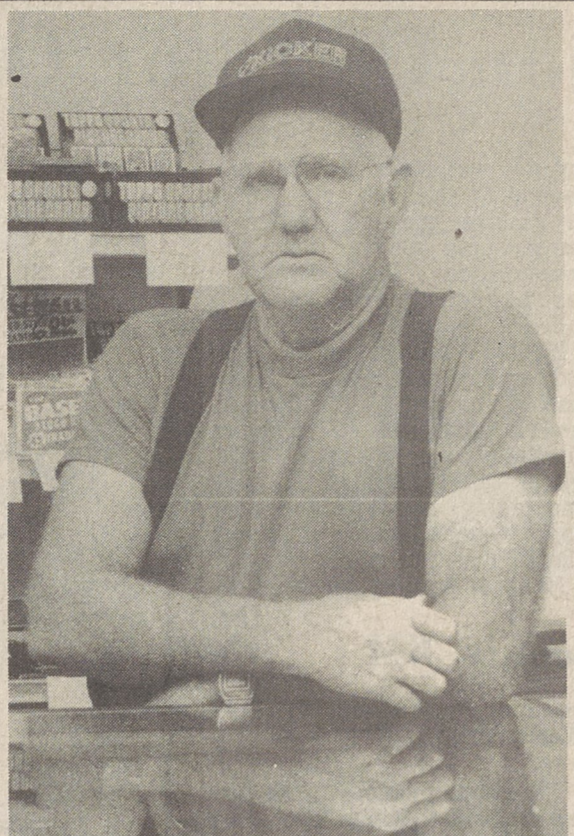
Among the Van Dykes' more favorite cards are a Thurmond Munson rookie card from 1970, Mickey Mantle cards from 1954 and 1961, a Johnny Bench rookie card from 1968, and a Bob Uecker rookie card from 1962.

And that's not all in the collection. Around 200 cards are displayed in the case. Thousands of newer cards are on the stand behind the case. And in the Van Dykes' storage room at the back of the store, there are hundreds of thousands more cards in their original packs and cases.

James estimated his son's collection to be around 3 million cards.

The store opens at 6 p.m. every night after James, a retired truck driver, finishes work at the Western Auto. Darrell works at the shop when he can, but has been busy lately coaching the East Gaston High School Baseball team and the Stanley American Legion team. Darrell is also a math teacher at East Gaston.

The Van Dykes plan to have some daylight hours at the Kings Mountain store in a few weeks and are



James Van Dyke

going to start operating a stand at the 321 Flea Market on Saturdays and Sundays.

So far, business has been good at the store, said James. Most people that come in the store buy only the new cards, but there have been sales of the older cards. The highest price paid for a card at the store yet was \$60 for a Don Mattingly rookie card.

Any Don Mattingly card is popular right now, James said. Others that have enjoyed popularity lately are Dale Murphy, Jose Canseco and Mark McGuire. Another player who is popular right now is the Mets' Greg Jeffries, who has only appeared in five or six Mets games. He is perhaps the hottest player in the Mets' farm system, but there is no room for him in the Mets' line-up right now, James said.

The cards' prices are determined by the popularity of a card, its supply and demand, and the condition a card is in, James said.

The Van Dykes have tried to protect their collection by installing complex burglar and fire alarms and taking out insurance on the collection. But despite all the serious security measures, it is still a favorite pastime for them. "It's still a hobby," James said.

Early Mistakes Costly For West All-Stars In Defeat

Shelby's Clint Gwaltney kicked a 42-yard field goal for the only points for the West team in a 32-3 loss to the East in the annual East-West Coaches All-Star football game Thursday night at Greensboro.

Kings Mountain's Denny Hicks was an assistant coach for the West team.

"It was an enjoyable week," said Coach Hicks. "We had a real good bunch of kids to work with. But as far as the ballgame was concerned, everything went wrong in the first few minutes and the East team got on top of us early."

A bad snap on a punt attempt and a fumble in the endzone which resulted in an East touchdown gave the Eastern all-stars a quick 14-0 lead.

Kings Mountain's Brent Bagwell, who was chosen for the West team as a tight end-defensive tackle, watched from the sidelines. He was unable to participate due to a knee injury



Sports Talk

GARY STEWART

sustained during the high school basketball season. Bagwell plans to enter N.C. State in January on a full football scholarship.

Fullback Cedric Surratte of Shelby also had to withdraw from the game because of an injury. Gwaltney and quarterback Therome George of Shelby represented the Southwestern 3-A Conference in the contest.

*** Kings Mountain High's scrimmage with West Lincoln, originally planned for Fri., Aug. 12, has been re-scheduled to Sat., Aug. 13 at 7 p.m. at John Gamble

Stadium. The Mountaineers will also scrimmage West Caldwell at Gamble Stadium at 7 p.m. on Thurs., Aug. 18.

The Mountaineers open their regular season on Fri., Sept. 2 at Bessemer City.

Booster's Club Selling Tickets

The Kings Mountain High Booster's Club is conducting its annual membership drive.

Memberships for one year are \$7 and include parking stickers for all home football games. The stickers allow the members to park on the hill behind the pressbox, giving them easy and quick exit from each ballgame.

The memberships and stickers will be on sale during the two Kings Mountain scrimmages on August 13 and August 18, or by seeing Booster Club members Dean Brannon or Dale Hollifield.

CAR RENTALS

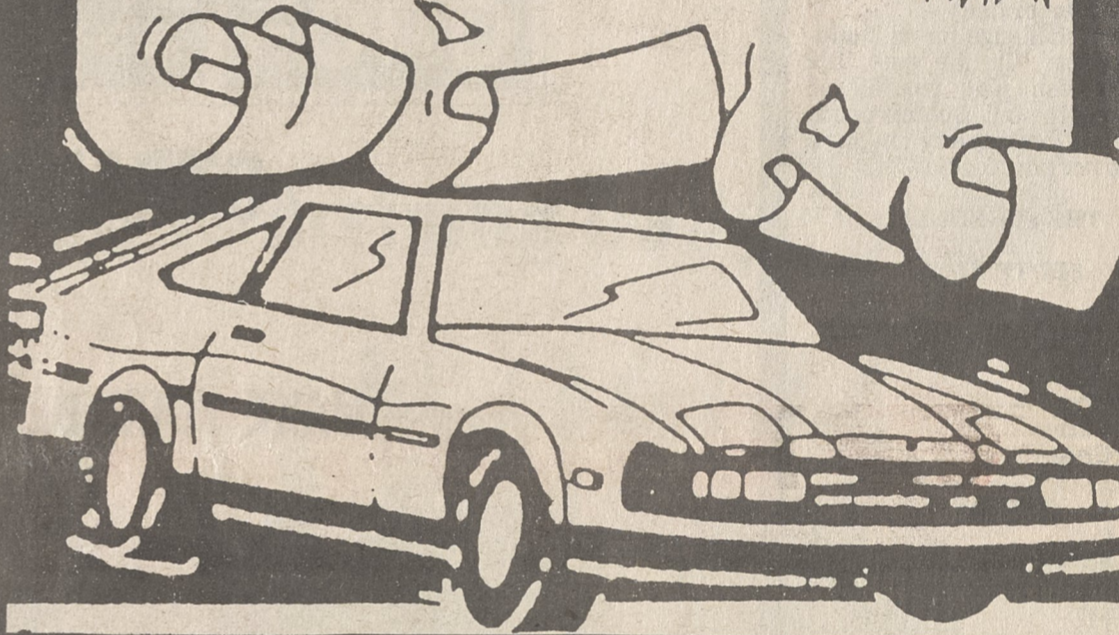
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Junior High Physicals August 9

Physicals for all boys and girls who plan to play sports at Kings Mountain Junior High during the 1988-89 school year will be given at 5:30 p.m. August 9 at the KMJH gym.

All athletes must have physicals before they can begin practice.

The junior high will be going to a seventh-eighth grade concept for athletics this year.

David Heffner, who has served as the Patriots' athletic director for several years, is taking over the head football coaching duties

this year. He had spent the last several years as the high school baseball coach. He will be assisted by Tommy Wease and Bobby Mode. Practice begins August 15 at 3 p.m.

The girls softball team will play a fall schedule this year. Audrey Harris will serve as coach.

The school will add a soccer team for boys and girls this fall and will begin practice on August 23 at 3 p.m. Eric Faust, will be the coach.



REGISTERING — Bo Phongsa, left, is pictured signing up for Pop Warner football with KM Coach Jim Littlejohn Monday at City Stadium. Registration will continue at 6 p.m. each day this week at the stadium. Youngsters ages 10-13 who weigh no more than 115 pounds may play with the junior midgets, players ages 8-10 who weigh no more than 80 pounds may play with the junior pee wees and 11 years olds who weigh no more 100 are eligible to play for the pee wees. The teams are sponsored by the Optimist Club and City Recreation Department.

POP WARNER

Registration for Kings Mountain Pop Warner football will begin August 1 at City Stadium.

Youngsters ages nine through 13 are eligible to compete in Pop Warner play. The person's weight determines which team he plays for.

Registration for ages 10 through 13 will be held at 5 p.m. and registration for ages nine and 10 will be held at 7 p.m.

Youngsters from Kings Mountain, Grover and Bessemer City and surrounding areas are invited to participate.

SOCCER

The Greater Cleveland County Soccer Association will hold registration for the fall season on August 15 from 5:30 until 7 p.m. at Mauney Memorial Library in Kings Mountain.

Other registrations are slated for August 8-9 from 5:30 until 7 p.m. at Cleveland Memorial Library and on August 15-16 from

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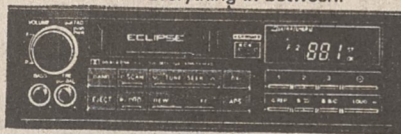
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