



## SET COLLECTORS RECOGNITION LEVELS

In a series of articles that appeared in *Sports Collectors Digest* starting in 2014, OBC's George Vrechek suggested rather than collectors focusing on the finest conditioned cards in PSA graded sets, that instead they mark their collecting progress by keeping track of how many vintage single sports cards they owned regardless of condition. See [http://oldbaseball.com/refs/What\\_to\\_collect\\_next.pdf](http://oldbaseball.com/refs/What_to_collect_next.pdf)

The 160,000-card universe of vintage (pre-1981) sports cards was estimated to consist of 110,000 baseball cards, 20,000 football cards, 15,000 hockey cards, 4,000 basketball cards and 11,000 cards from other sports.

While it would be impossible to come anywhere close to collecting all 160,000 cards, Vrechek suggested that there be several levels of recognition for collectors who reported their totals.

**You Get to Name the Level**

Over 100,000 vintage sports cards and above – no one so far

**Jefferson Burdick Level**

Between 80,000 and 100,000 vintage sports cards



Mike Rich

**Buck Barker Level**  
Between 65,000 and 80,000 vintage sports cards



Mark Talbot

**Lionel Carter Level**

Between 50,000 and 65,000 vintage sports cards



Mac Wubben



Rick Lyons



George Vrechek

**Charles Bray Level** Between 35,000 and 50,000 vintage sports cards

- Don Rice
- Ken Morganti
- Larry Tipton
- John Scott Gray
- Sam Taylor
- T.J. Valacak
- Jay Tysver
- Joel Freedman
- John Stamper
- Jim Craig



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The numbers were initially determined as of May 2015 and have been adjusted whenever changes by any members are reported to George Vrechek. There are likely a few more members who are still counting their cards. Non-OBC members are welcome to report their totals and be included in the recognition system. Card counts of collectors so recognized are subject to annual surprise audits whereby cards will be taken out of shoeboxes, rubber bands removed, and independently verified, all via the telepathic method...meaning, not really.

## Level Name Honorees



Jefferson Burdick (1900-1963), the Father of Card Collecting, wrote the *American Card Catalog* and donated 305,000 vintage trading cards to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. He liked to get things organized.



Buck Barker (1911-1982) wanted to collect every baseball card ever produced or at least a card of every player who had appeared in a major league game. He assisted Burdick in completing the sports card sections of the ACC. He rode his bike to work.



G. Lionel Carter (1918-2008) was an avid collector and hobby writer starting in 1933 and continuing until 2008. He was one of Burdick's first subscribers to the *Card Collector's Bulletin*. Carter liked baseball cards only and in the best condition. George Vrechek visited Carter several times in his multi-million-dollar basement in a \$100,000 house.



Collector and dealer Charles Bray (1899-1987) took over publication of the *Card Collector's Bulletin* from Burdick in 1949 and ran auctions for collectors from 1942 until 1984. He kept the cardboard moving.

## Answers to FAQs





The rules committee for Set Collectors Recognition Levels was treated to a lavish, all-expense-paid resort getaway in order to be able to properly deliberate on restating the criteria for counting cards and to answer some of the frequently asked questions important to set collectors. The rules committee report follows.

Collectors have asked how to count vintage sports cards in order to attain the levels necessary to be enshrined on the Set Collectors Recognition Level page on the OBC website.

- Only single cards are counted, no duplicates count.
- Variations and printing differences are not counted.
- Only cards are counted. What is a card? Does it have to be cardboard? Does it have to have 90 degree corners? Can it cover a Coke bottle or be flipped like a coin? Must it be capable of being pasted in a scrapbook? Can you mail a letter with one? All these are very difficult questions and the rules committee has decided that you will know a card when you see it.
- Cards do not have to be properly licensed (SSPC, The Sports Hobbyist, LaPizza Royale Expos, Fuds Photo Expos) as long as the issuers did not serve jail time longer than one year.
- The card has to have been issued prior to 1981. Yes, it can cover the 1980-81 hockey season and basketball season, as long as the playoffs for those sports did not drag on for an eternity.
- It has to be an athlete in a sport. Activities are not sports. Cards of bird watchers do not count. Cards of chess masters do not count unless they are also riding a bike that is not stationary. However, cards of pool players count as do umpires, referees, team owners, league presidents, team emblems, and mascots. Cards of professional pedestrians count. Pretty girls playing baseball count, even if they don't look like they have a clue as to what they are doing. Dogs playing baseball do not count. People sitting in cars do not count unless they are racing against one another and their shirts are covered with ads. APBA baseball cards do not count since they don't have any pictures.
- Fictional players do not count: Roy Hobbs, Sid Finch, Steve Nebraska, Willie Mays Hays, and Nuke LaLoosh. But Crash Davis and Moonlight Graham count.
- The cards can be from any country on Earth.
- You don't have to actually count every card. You could stack all your cards, measure them in inches and come up with a cards per inch multiple. You could weigh them and do the same. You could look at how many cards are in each set in price guides and subtract your want list totals. You could make up a number that sounds believable and leave it at that.

### NON SPORTS CARD RECOGNITION

*In the absence of any high-paid Set Collectors Recognition Committee for non-sports cards, the sports collectors recognition committee has decided to recognize collectors of non-sports cards in some small way. This is the small way. The following collectors reported having over 10,000 vintage non-sports cards.*

*Larry Tipton*  , *Steve Rittenberg*,  *Mike Glasser*  and *Mark Talbot* 

*Other active collectors reported having between 2,500 and 10,000 vintage non-sports cards.*



*Taylor Schock, Don Rice, Jay Tysver, Josh Levine and Jim Craig, John Stamper, Joel Freedman*