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THE INDUSTRY'S GUIDE TO SPORTS & FITNESS RETAIL

SPORTS EDGE

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ON THE EDGE

▶ WHAT'S HOT | By Dan Schechner

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Beyond bobbleheads:
Sports memorabilia
enjoying boom time.

Sports is all about the thrill of the moment, and what better way to commemorate a defining home run, jump shot or touchdown than immortalizing it in the form of a signed plaque or photo?

That's been the latest philosophy of Brandon Steiner, chairman of Steiner Sports Marketing and Memorabilia, who says that capturing the moment is tops among today's memorabilia aficionados.

"We like to take an event and create a plaque or jersey to solidify that moment," says Steiner, whose company accounts for about 25 percent of the authentic collectibles market and has exclusive rights to some of history's most memorable sports photographs, in addition to signing agreements with top athletes like Derek Jeter, Mia Hamm and Mark Messier.

Steiner says licensed products are currently the rage, with Jeter, Hamm and Messier receiving major play, among other stars such as Mario Lemieux, Eric Lindros, Dominik Hasek and Cal Ripken Jr.

"We have Ripken's exclusive product line, so we're doing real well with his jerseys and commemorative baseballs. Plus we've got this great photo

of him and Jeter from 1996 [Jeter's rookie season], so we're just having a field day with him right now."

As for football, inscription jerseys and helmets, both miniature and life-sized, are among Steiner's better movers. And in keeping with his "Capture the Moment" philosophy, Steiner Sports offers a Halsman helmet signed by 30 past award winners.

And on the ice, Lemieux has overtaken "The Great One" (Wayne Gretzky) as the collector's choice, with the highest



Curt Schilling, and the Bronx Bombers' ageless wonder Roger Clemens.

"Baseball is just dominating right now," Steiner says. "The Yankees did well, the home run race was on, and there's some pitchers like Johnson, Clemens and [Mariano] Rivera who did some incredible things on the field. But outside of Ichiro, Ripken and Jeter are the hot ones right now."

But Steiner is as much an innovator as he is a collector. In addition to the more traditional items, Steiner Sports also offers the Star Light, which features an athlete's image illuminated from within a frame.

And his "Last Licks" ice cream store located in Scarsdale, N.Y.,

has hosted autographed signings with baseball legends like Yogi Berra

and Bobby Thomson, who helped launch the "Shot Heard Round the World."

To be sure, sports memorabilia has taken the collectibles world by storm as of late, and the accessibility of products at retail, as well as through online stores and e-auction houses like SportsCollectiblesBiz.com, Prosportsmemorabilia.org and Sportsartifacts.com ensures a plentiful trade. SE



sought-after items

including game-used equipment and signed collectibles.

But the National Pastime remains No. 1 in the hearts of collectors young and old, Steiner says. Paving the way are Barry Bonds' recent assault on the single-season home run record, the Yankees' amazing run of World Series championships, and dominant pitching provided by the likes of the Arizona Diamondbacks' Randy Johnson and

