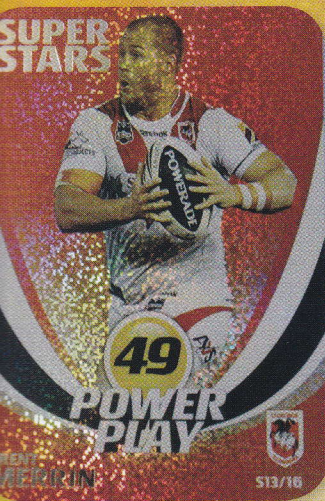


PLAYING YOUR



As a child growing up in the eighties I always looked forward to the start of the Rugby League season because it meant new Scanlens football cards. Being a die hard Balmain Tigers fan I couldn't wait to get my hands on the latest cards of Garry Jack, Steve Roach, Ben Elias, Scott Gale, Paul Sironen and Wayne Pearce.

If I didn't snare one of my precious Tigers, I was content if Steve Mortimer or Peter Sterling popped up in my packets bought from the corner shop. During recess and lunch breaks at St Pius Enmore, high-level trades would take place. A Mortimer or Sterling would be worth five cards – meaning I could get lower profile Tigers like David Brooks, Gary Bridge and Ross Conlon. Sometimes three-way trades or a sweetener like a sausage roll with tomato sauce from the tuck-shop would be required to get Garry Jack over the line and into my hands. In many ways, I guess we were mini Peter Doust's and Todd Greenberg's.

Scanlens' first rugby league cards release was back in 1963. Back then collectors would be opening packets to find the likes of Reg Gasnier, Norm Provan, Johnny Raper, Noel Kelly, Arthur Summons, Ken Irvine to name a few. In fact the cards were a

way of enticing kids to buy the bubble gum that came in the packet. Scanlens was a bubble gum manufacturer so the cards were not its focus. I can still remember the stick of bubble gum that came in the packets I bought, but the gum went straight in the bin, it was the cards I was after. Scanlens last was produced in 1991, although New Zealand bubble gum manufacturer, Regina, brought out sets in 1992 and 1993.

With the onset of the NBA craze in the early 1990's, basketball cards were all the rage. Names like Shaquille O'Neal, Charles Barkley, Shawn Kemp and Michael Jordan became household names overnight. People who had never collected cards suddenly didn't want to be left out of the loop. Stores like Card Shaq and Card Junction seized the opportunity and started opening up franchises more frequently than McDonald's. Almost every suburb in Sydney had a card store at some point in the nineties, so high was the demand. Rugby League cards were now in need of a major overhaul in order to combat the NBA phenomenon.

In 1994, card manufacturer, Dynamic Marketing, took over the licence for rugby league cards. For the first time, collectors were introduced to insert cards (or as collectors refer to them, "chase" cards) just like basketball cards.

'TIM JONAH' STERLING'

Parramatta Eels Co-Captain Tim Mannah collected footy cards as a kid. Before he joined the Eels he was a Canterbury Bulldogs man, but surprisingly he told us the most cherished cards in his collection were not of Bulldog great Terry Lamb, but rather Knights duo Paul "the Chief" Harragon and Rugby League Immortal Andrew Johns.

To help launch Tip Top Sunblest Footy card promotion the Eels enforcer got an 80's make over to replicate the look of Parramatta great Peter Sterling in one of his iconic Scanlens footy cards. We can't help he looks a little more like Jonah off Summer Heights High than Sneaky Pete, but it'll do the job anyway!

The promotion runs for 12 weeks and there are 48 cards to collect. To find out more collectors can go to www.facebook.com/tiptop

