



# OPERATION **TEAM PLAYER**



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## TIPS FOR BUYING AUTHENTIC SPORTS MEMORABILIA

The rapid growth of e-commerce has revolutionized the way goods are bought and sold, and criminals have found new ways to scam consumers on the internet. Some use photos of legitimate goods on their sites or social media pages and then actually ship fakes. Some advertise their counterfeit products at low prices and then steal buyers' credit card information.

Buy sports memorabilia only from authorized retailers connected with the league, association, or team it represents. For example, the NFL has its own online shop; it also does business with major sporting goods retailers.

In addition to buying from authorized retailers, keep yourself safe while you shop by using the following tips:

- Take advantage of security features, such as passwords, when you shop online.
- Read websites' privacy policies to see how retailers use your personal information.
- Keep track of your online and in-person purchases and check your bank statements to ensure retailers only charge you for what you buy.

Law enforcement agencies work with partners, like legitimate manufacturers and sellers, to quickly put scammers out of business and stop them from profiting.

Our shared goals are simple:

- Build successful criminal investigations targeting the most egregious violators.
- Educate consumers so counterfeiters can't dupe them, and so that they protect themselves from financial fraud schemes.
- Work with brand owners and rights holders to prevent trademark violations.

## HOW TO SPOT FAKE MEMORABILIA

Though the IPR Center is always watching, you can keep an eye out for potentially counterfeit goods, too. Here are a few signs that apparel such as jerseys, T-shirts, and hats memorabilia like balls and autographed photos, and other sports items may be counterfeit:

- ✘ Unusually low prices. If a price seems too good to be true, it usually is.
- ✘ Suspicious-looking websites. Authorized retailers have modern, easy to navigate websites with recognizable domain names.
- ✘ Fake-sounding reviews. Companies that sell authentic sports memorabilia don't have fake-sounding, hard to understand, or repetitive reviews.
- ✘ Out-of-country online sales. Authorized sellers for U.S. sports team and league memorabilia are typically located in the United States.
- ✘ Poor stitching, differences in design and varied materials. In person, you can sometimes feel and see the differences between officially licensed products and counterfeits. If a product feels "cheap" or appears poorly made, it's probably not the real deal.

## THE HIDDEN COSTS OF BUYING COUNTERFEIT SPORTS MEMORABILIA

Scammers who sell fake sports memorabilia don't care about giving you great deals or hooking you up with cool items. They're trying to scam you out of your hard-earned money and hurting other people in the process. On top of that, the items they sell are often made with substandard materials that could be dangerous to you and your family.

When you buy counterfeit sports memorabilia, apparel, and other items, you don't know its backstory. Keep in mind that:

- It could have been made in a country with few — or no — safety regulations.
- The product may be dangerous to you and your family.
- The product is likely to be inferior quality.
- Intellectual property theft is a serious crime with very real victims — and very real financial impacts. From fans spending their hard-earned money on fake jerseys to legitimate stores losing business to competitors selling cheap knockoffs, this crime sends ripples throughout our communities