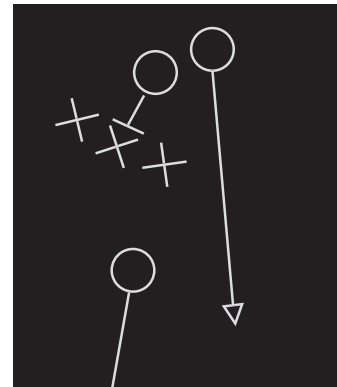
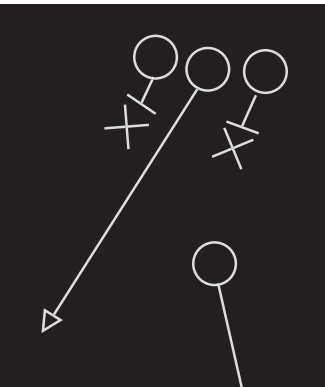


# PLAYING BALL WITH SPORTS-THEMED FRAMES



*By Meg Glasgow*

**O**f all the types of custom framing projects that customers bring into our shop, sports collectibles remain at the top of list. That's not surprising when you consider the massive size of the sports collectible industry. Forbes reported that the value of the market has reached \$370 billion worldwide with over 200 million collectors. This is a big opportunity for framers to capture a bigger piece of this market by promoting more shadowbox displays. Framing offers the perfect solution for collectors wanting to protect their valued item while enjoying it as it is displayed on their wall. I hope these design ideas spark your own imagination when it comes to stepping up your sports shadowbox game.

## CELEBRATING THE FIRST PITCH

"Swing for the fences, and swing real hard" is a phrase coined by Scentsy owners Heidi and Orville Thompson. At their 2017 convention in Kansas City, the pair threw out the first pitch and wanted to commemorate the special occasion with a shadowbox. With the fence as the central theme of the project, I began designing a frame that would be a game-changer on the wall in their office headquarters.

Incorporating the fence design from their logo into the matting was a key part of the concept, but equally important was the color scheme. They requested colors of white and silver—perfect! A simple color story would keep the visual focus on the photos and jersey names. But to keep the project from resulting in a boring look, I wanted to use shapes, shadows, and layers for added interest. I worked in the home plate shape at the top and fence shapes at the bottom. The mats were designed using Wizard's PathTrace.

The photo shows the layers inside the frame. The mat is held halfway between the backing board and Tru Vue Museum Glass. It holds the baseball in place and gives the piece extra dimension. Two sets of side walls elevate the mat off the backing mat and hold the glass in place.

## FRAMING A MIKE TROUT SIGNED JERSEY

We wanted to create a special frame design for this signed Mike Trout jersey and collector photos. Our team went to work designing an elaborately cut mat that is worthy of this baseball superstar.

Our primary objective is always to protect the items we're framing from damage of all kinds. From



● The photos were mounted to the black mat surrounding the jersey.

how it's secured in the frame and the quality of materials used to the Museum Glass that protects it, we employ the highest standards and techniques to protect the value and preserve the items for generations. Here's how we do it.

First, we never use any permanent glues or adhesives on the collectibles. The jersey is stretched over an acid-free board and sewn in place to the supporting backing board with needle and thread. We take great effort to hide the stitches from view while ensuring the item will safely be held in place. Finding a solution for mounting the photos poses a bigger challenge. We can't attach them to the jersey, so our idea combined a complicated mat cut that attached to the black mat around the sides of the jersey. It used to be that cutting a complex mat design like this



● This design, centered around a special golf trip, benefited from layering so as not to look too busy or cluttered. Placement was also key; like this, the viewer's eye moves down in a zig-zag pattern.

took hours to draw out by hand and cut with a sharp blade. Thanks to our Wizard computerized mat cutter, we could design and cut the multi-layered mat in minutes. We finished off the project with a decorative V-groove carved into the mat and decorative logos in the upper corners.

## CYCLING SHADOWBOX

Road cycling is a grueling endurance sport that is worth commemorating; especially when it's done by a father-and-son team. This shadowbox showcases several years of competition in The LoToJa Classic, the longest one-day road race in the US. When these items arrived in the shop, they were a colorful bag of brightly colored bib numbers, ribbons, and photos. There was so much going on with different shapes, colors, and patterns, that I knew the best design would introduce balance and symmetry to the collection. The poster would take center stage with the most important photos below. The racing bibs and medals would make nice compliments to each other on either side of the poster.

Cutting the double mat for the poster, photos, and medals was very straightforward. When designing the mat on my CMC, I left a wide empty space on the left where



● The items in this shadowbox, which captures years of competitive cycling, needed a balanced, symmetrical frame design to tie them all together in a visually appealing way.

the elevated panel would eventually be placed. I want to point out why this approach is effective in this design. The medals on the right are visually “heavy” due to the large size and 3-D shape. To create balance in the frame design, I wanted to bring the other items forward to give them more importance. I did this by cutting a white panel with two openings for the photos and a black mat underneath. I top-mounted the race bibs to the mat and added the wrist bands at a 45-degree angle to mirror the medals on the right. That repetition creates balance. To hold this raised matboard in place, I tucked it inside the two parts of the side wall. Between the two sections of sides, I used 1/8” black spacer to keep the mat in place.

## GOLF TRIP OF A LIFETIME

Scotland’s famous St. Andrew’s Golf Course was a bucket list vacation for one couple, and this shadowbox commemorated their special trip. The wife in this husband-and-wife duo told me that she purchased a piece of plaid fabric; the pattern of which traces back to her ancestors. I really wanted to incorporate it into the frame design to help tell the story of their trip to Scotland.

In designing this frame, I was thoughtful about how

the viewer’s eye would move across the items. I was careful about placing the items so that your eye would move in a zig-zag pattern through the frame. Beginning at the top with the light-colored photo, your eye moves down and across each item. Layering the objects keeps them visually connected and creates emphasis and areas of focus. Without layering, the shadowbox can be left looking cluttered.

The best way to inspire customers with such sports-themed shadowboxes is to show them. Showcase examples of projects on your gallery walls. Include project photos on your website with descriptions of the story behind each piece. With permission, share project ideas on your social media sites. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest are great places to show sports collectors what you can do. **PFM**



**Meg Glasgow**

The owner of Finer Frames in Eagle, ID, Meg is a nationally recognized consultant in the art and framing field and the winner of Larson-Juhl’s inaugural Design Star competition in 2013. She travels widely around the US presenting sales and marketing seminars for small businesses, and has recently published her second book, “Recharge Your Business.” She is a popular instructor at The National Conference in Las Vegas.

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