A FACSIMILE OF the flip coin used at the start of Super Bowl XLV is expected to be a big seller for Grafton's MPI Coin. The company is a wholesaler for commemorative coins and medallions, including a wide array of Green Bay Packer-themed items.

Grafton company offers Packer fans facsimile of Super Bowl history

Commercial time during the Super Bowl XLV broadcast cost more than $2.5 million for a 30-second spot, but a Grafton company got a major boost from the game coverage without spending a dime.

MPI Coin is riding the tide of Packermania following Green Bay's 31-25 victory over the Pittsburgh Steelers by selling facsimiles of the coined flipped at the start of the game.

Head referee Walt Anderson even provided a detailed description of the coin before the kickoff, noting that "heads" has images of the helmets of the Packers and the Steelers on either side of the Lombardi Trophy and "tails" has an image of Cowboy
Stadium.

The original "flip" coin was commissioned by the NFL for the championship game, but limited-edition replicas of the memento are being offered by MPI's retail arm, Coins of America.

The final versions of the coins — with the game's final score — are still being produced by the

Highland Mint, but orders are being taken.

Based on the reaction on the day after the big win, it promises to be a big seller for the company. The two-tone medallion, plated in silver and 24K gold, costs $100. Production is limited to 10,000 coins.

The same design in a gold overlay costs $42, while the silver-plate version costs $28.

“There has been a lot of interest. I haven’t seen the sales numbers yet, but we are getting a lot of requests,” Andrew Schwartz, president of MPI, said.

Schwartz said sales are expected to be strong, too, for a Packers Super Bowl champions coin, also offered in gold overlay and silver.

“There is always an element of chance when coins like these are made because you aren’t sure how strong the fan following will be,” he said.

“Packers fans are among the most rabid in the league, so we have a pretty good feeling that sales will be strong. The fan base in Pittsburgh is also loyal, so from a business perspective this was an ideal match up.”

From a personal standpoint, Schwartz said he was delighted to have his favorite team prevail.

“I was on the Packer bandwagon all the way,” he said.

MPI Coin was founded in 1972 and took a keen interest in marketing collector coins in 1996.

“We are primarily a wholesaler. We sell U.S. Mint and privately minted coins,” Schwartz said.

“We don’t have exclusive rights to market these coins, but their availability is very limited. These are not items you can pick up at the big retailers.”

The added value the company brings to the collectors market is in the unique packaging.

The two-tone flip coin, for instance, is encased in an acrylic capsule, displayed in a lined, wooden box and accompanied by a certificate of authenticity that matches the number on the coin.

Similar commemorative coins were offered for the Rose Bowl, although demand was not nearly so high after the University of Wisconsin Badgers lost to Texas Christian University.

Schwartz said he anticipates the Packers coins will have staying power.

“I would think sales will start out strong and then continue as the next season starts,” he said.

Schwartz said the company often works with financial institutions interested in offering coin

collection programs for things like the National Parks quarters and the presidential dollars.

Merchandise is offered through institutions working with MPI, as well as the Web site www.coinsofamerica.com.