



Sports

by Jerry Keys

With election hype flooding the airwaves, I considered a discussion on baseball revenue and the state of the national economy. This article will come at a later date because I would like to discuss the next step in card collecting.

The next part will deal with cards made from 1953 to 1973. I chose to bulk so many years together because they all have one thing in common: different series. Until 1974, each Topps set was released in different series. An example of a set breakdown by series would be the 1972 Topps. The cards were issued in the following groups: 1-132, 133-263, 264-394, 395-525, 526-656, and

657-787. The first four groups are commonly referred to as the "low series". The fifth series are called "semi-high series" and the last "high series".

The reason different series are so important is the scarcity of the high numbers. Decades ago when cards were released by series, by the time the last series of a set was issued it was almost time for the next year's first series cards to be issued. It was common for stores to not even order the last series of a set due to poor sales.

With only one glaring exception, cards issued

from these years typically rise in value as the series number increases. A series one common card from 1972 is priced at \$0.60 and a high series common at \$12. The one

numbers 353-407 are only \$8.

A star player's cards are usually priced in a downward manner with his most expensive card being his rookie and the least expensive being his last card produced. An example would be Hank Aaron. Aaron's rookie card (1954) is valued at \$1800, while his last active card (1976) is \$25.

An example of a player having his card produced in the high series and reflecting the higher dollar amount would be Brooks Robinson. His 1966 card (#390) is \$50, his 1967 (#600) \$250, and 1968 (#20) \$25. Some players have rookie cards in the high series and are greatly sought after, while the rest of his cards are considered commons (Rick Dempsey 1972 Topps rookie).

The first and last cards in these sets are priced higher than usual because not only is one in the high series, both are bookend cards. Years ago when kids collected Topps, they would wrap the cards up with a rubber band, very tight. Therefore a sharp card of either is sometimes hard to find, which raises the price.

As we learned about cards that were DP'd (double printed) in the late 1970's, cards in this period were as well. They were also SP'd (short printed). Some sets in this period had DP's, some SP's, and some had both. Most collectors chalk this up as a uniqueness of the set. Gaylord Perry's 1966 card was a high number, a short print, and the last card in the set (#598). This card is valued at \$200, whereas his 1962 rookie is only \$80.

It is not always a high

numbered rookie that gets an inflated price. An example is the 1967 rookie card of Rod Carew. It is DP'd and lists at \$300. One can only speculate what it would be priced at had it not been DP'd...\$500 maybe?

Most collectors only seek out certain players or

later ones. None of these sets have over 270 cards. This makes it hard to build a set card by card because there are no cards considered "cheap" and buying a full set would require a lot more than a few thousand dollars.

A few subsets of note are the first All-Star sub-

set in 1958. They were produced yearly until 1962 and were resumed in the late 60's (1968-1970). League leader cards appeared for the first time in 1961. Several special cards were printed in tribute to players who passed away during their careers (1964 #550 Ken



teams in these years because the full sets are so expensive. The last four sets of this group are moderately affordable compared to the others. The 1973 set lists at \$700, 1972 \$1500, 1971 \$2500, and 1970 \$2000. A NM or better set will bring these prices easily. Due to these prices being high, it is difficult to pinpoint an accurate amount for an EX-MT set.

Hubbs) or had their career cut short due to a non-baseball injury (1959 #550 Roy Campanella). And 1962 contains a 10-card tribute to Babe Ruth. Because these sets command such a lofty price, I stick to collecting certain players I was able to watch in their final years. If you find you are collecting enough players on the same team, it may be better to go after the team sets. For example, if you are a Braves fan and you collect Aaron, Warren Spahn, and Ed Mathews... it is most likely better to just purchase the team set.



Whether you are chasing down a 1953 Mickey Mantle (\$3000) or a 1973 low number common (\$0.50), make sure it remains a hobby and not "a job". It is easy to get burned out collecting older cards due to the number of sets available and/or the price tag.

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