

August 2009 "COLLECTING WITH JEFF"

by **JEFF FIGLER**

Jeff will be starting with Sports Byline as a syndicated talk show host on September 5, 2009. His two radio shows will be heard on radio stations throughout the United States, as well as on Sirius Radio, Cable Radio Network (CRN), and on the 500 stations of the American Forces Network in 177 countries.

BASEBALL CARD COLLECTORS

Collecting baseball cards has been a national pastime for over a century, like the game of baseball itself. The future of collecting these cards is bright.

There are several methods collectors have used to build a collection. Some of the most popular methods are:

Collect by player. Try to acquire as many cards of Craig Lefferts or Wayne Causey as you can, for example;

Collect by team. Complete a set, let's say, of the 1953 St. Louis Browns;

Collect by years. Try to obtain all the cards from all sets from 1973, for example. Keep in mind that, once in a while, Topps has skipped numbers for various reasons.

Collect by other criteria, such as no-hit pitchers, players who have hit for the cycle, players in the Hall of Fame, or pitchers who have won twenty games in a season. This selection option allows you the opportunity to be a bit creative.

If you are wondering if your cards are valuable, the main factors determining value are:

Rarity

Desirability

Condition

Remember, the value of an item is only what someone is willing to pay for it.

It is generally accepted that there are six card grades:

Mint. A mint card is perfect, and has no damages at all. The card is well-centered, has sharp corners, and the picture is glossy.

Excellent. An excellent card is an almost-perfect card. The corners are still sharp, there are no creases, and the gloss only

shows a little wear. There is no visible damage, but the card may be a little off-center.

Very Good. A very good card probably has a little damage (from handling), but there are no damages or major creases. The corners are not as sharp as a mint or excellent card, and may show some rounding. A very good card is an ideal card for collectors who want to keep their costs down but still have a nice collection.

Good. A good card does show an amount of wear not seen on higher-graded cards. There may be creases or quite a bit of rounding. In general, there are some problems.

Fair. A fair card displays quite a lot of damage, such as slight tearing, pen or pencil marks, pin or staple holes, and large or multiple creases. The card is still together, and is still valuable if it is a rare card.

Poor. A poor card may have water damage, large holes, parts that may be torn off, back damage due to glue or tape removal, and possibly major pen or pencil writing.

Keep in mind that, even with a fair or a poor card, the value will depend on its rarity. The classic example is that of the T206 Honus Wagner card. Due to the extreme scarcity of the card, any Wagner card is very valuable. If you are the holder of a fair or poor Wagner card, congratulations! If you can upgrade, fine, but what you have is the envy of all the other baseball card collectors in the world.

Unless you are a dealer do not be obsessed with the grade of the card. Nowadays, there are in-between grades, as well, such as Very Good-Excellent (VG-EX) and Near Mint (NM). Collect to have fun, and don't be overly concerned about condition.

A couple of very good books on the subject include: [300 Great Baseball Cards of the 20th Century](#) by Mike Payne, and the [Standard Catalog of Baseball Cards](#) published by Krause Publications.

EMAILS:

QUESTION #1: How much is a single boxing glove signed by Muhammad Ali worth?

ANSWER: About \$500.

QUESTION #2: How much is a basketball signed by Wilt Chamberlain worth?

ANSWER: About \$300-400.

TRIVIA QUESTIONS:

Easy: Which major league baseball player holds the record for the most hits in a nine-inning game?

Moderate: Which NFL star holds the record for the most points in a single game?

Difficult: Which NHL player holds the record for the most points in a game?

TRIVIA QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM THE JULY NEWSLETTER:

Easy: What three major league baseball teams have retired Nolan Ryan's number?

Angels, Astros and Rangers

Moderate: Who was the last New York Met to throw a no hitter?

There has never been a no hitter thrown by a Met pitcher.

Difficult: Who was the only player in baseball history to have struck out four times in an All-Star game?

Roberto Clemente