



KEEP ME POSTED

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Curious Legacy of 1962 JELL-O Baseball Cards

As an advanced collector or devoted food issue trading card collector, you've got to wonder about those 1962 JELL-O baseball cards. Hobby lore has placed that General Foods (GF) promotion among the strangest and most mysterious card issues of the 1960s. The dearth of verifiable documentation on the marketing plan or execution of the promotion has left hobbyists to endlessly speculate on what the good folks at GF had in mind when they produced the 197 card set. Was it really conceived strictly as a test issue intended exclusively for the Midwestern United States? Or was it simply a misreading of consumer demand accompanied by an abominable failure to coordinate promotion, printing, packaging, and distribution of the product?

While hard evidence may never be revealed, collectors can always speculate and attempt to deduct what the 1962 JELL-O baseball card set was attempted to accomplish and the difficulties GF encountered. One undisputable fact is that the 1962 results must have been promising enough to induce generation of the 1963 JELL-O set, which was a tie-in promotion with Post cereal. With that statement, we now venture into the world of deductive reasoning employing the United States and Canadian 1962 Post cereal promotions as reference points.

Laying the three 1962 GF baseball card offerings side-by-side reveals a couple of interesting aspects about the gelatin set. First, it appears the JELL-O set was designed and printed subsequent to the U.S. and Canadian cards.



"Was there always room for JELL-O baseball cards in the General Foods Marketing Department?"

This is evidenced by the variations in text unique to the 1962 JELL-Os. While the Canadian text (truncated to accommodate both English and French narrative) is derived from the U.S. Post, the JELL-Os contain new and updated information not displayed on either Post set. As examples, the 1962 JELL-O #6 Maris notes his MVP status, #9 Ford reflects receipt of the Cy Young Award, and #85 Killebrew brags that his home-run output tied Gentile but fell behind the M&M boys. It is also interesting that the JELL-O cards eradicated Post cereal errors linking #105 Tommy Davis and #106 Willie Davis as brothers. Ken Boyer #159 is also credited as the principle power behind the Cardinals. Finally, and most telling, are the numerous updates to team affiliations unique to JELL-O.

DRAFTED, TRADED, PURCHASED, AND LATE SCRATCHES

In over a dozen cases, the JELL-O cards uniquely document the plight of select players in the final days of November 1961. Cards of Sievers, Minoso, Pierce, Buddin, Amalfitano, Cimoli, Thomas, and Cunningham depict results of transactions occurring November 27-30. The latest dates of trades noted on the Post cards are October 10, which reinforce the theory that the JELL-Os were designed and printed up to seven weeks after its cereal crunching counterparts.

The later timing of the JELL-O is additionally supported by noting the four significant differences between players appearing on Post and the gelatin sets. It is well established within the hobby that JELL-O cards of Brooks Robinson, Burgess, and Kluszewski are not known to exist. Also, Colavito was pulled in deference to Ken Aspromonte. These nuances suggest that late developments in contracts, production, or

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distribution created the aberration. It is highly possible that the timing and dwindling impetus of the 1962 JELL-O baseball card campaign did not warrant "fixes" to the players scratched from the lineup. Or, it may simply indicate that the test issue had served its purpose, and it was time to concentrate on developing a JELL-O gelatin set for 1963.

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