

Errors I: An Overview

Most collectible fields have them: coins, baseball cards, stamps, etc. But matchcovers? You bet! And, far from being simply the misfits of the hobby, they're wild, crazy, and often just plain funny and entertaining...well worth a special spot in your collection, and a certain crowd pleaser for guests. They're not all that common, of course; after all, they're errors. The manufacturers go through plenty of quality control procedures to make sure they never slip out to the public, but they have, occasionally, much to my delight, and so I started and maintain the Errors Listing. There are currently just over 2,556 listed, and I have hundreds more waiting to be catalogued.

I've always been surprised that more collectors don't see errors as worthy of their interest, for hardly any collectors actually collect them, seeing them, I suppose, as something on the same level as flats. Obviously, however, I wouldn't agree. Unlike flats, errors *are* real covers. They *have* held matches, and they *have* been in circulation. Moreover, they tell the collector a lot about the manufacturing process of the covers, themselves.

Well, what actually constitutes an error? Well, and this is just *my* definition, I believe an error is any cover, box, or label that makes it out to the public realm with its original design altered to something that it wasn't supposed to be. This gets us around the argument that some miscuts have purposely been released anyway, say as cost-saving measures on an order that has been cancelled at the last minute, or on over-runs, etc. (*i.e.*, a sheet of uncut 20-strikes released as 40-strikes).

At the same time, however, we shouldn't be too broad in our definition of errors, or we face the possibility of flooding the category with material displaying any and all sorts of minute flaws: a tiny smudge, a slight tilting of the text, etc. Similarly, for example, the Girlie Club had to decide if a pair of shapely legs actually constituted a Girlie. So, if a cover is only *slightly* miscut (so that the text on one side is only slightly clipped), I don't count it as an error worthy of cataloging. It *is* an error, of course, since the way it turned out wasn't the way it was designed to turn out, but one has to set the parameters *somewhere*. Thus, some common sense guidelines have been applied here and there.

What types of errors are there? The following are the basic types of errors that are found among matchcovers and boxes, although, depending on the collector, one could certainly identify further sub categories:

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| -Miscuts | -Misapplied strikers | -Off-center printing | -Reverse creasing |
| -Spelling errors | -Missing text/design | -Overprinting | -Upside down creasing |
| -Missing strikers | -Reversed text | -End-of-roll | |

And, who knows? There might even still be one or more types that I haven't discovered yet! That's part of the thrill of collecting, after all. We'll examine specific types in upcoming articles in this series.

