

Group I Pro Hockey

by Win Lang *[reprint]*

Following up on the success achieved by Colgate in getting the lowly matchbook into a waiting market, despite no commercial advertising, Diamond Match Co. found a moderately successful new market with its Baseball covers.

Diamond then turned to professional hockey as its next market outlook. Hockey was then the only other professional sport with a following of rabid fans. Pro football was just getting started; other sports, such as pro tennis, golf, and basketball were not even on the horizon.

In 1934, Diamond issued its first release of what was to become one of the most famed and most wanted sets in our hobby...From T & T List #29: "The Diamond Match Company issued two styles showing HOCKEY PLAYERS. The first issue was a SILVER background with GREEN and BLACK bars running vertically from top to bottom on the left side. Players were shown in a playing position, in various colors. The back panel gives a career history. Print is black on a green background. Sets were sold in chain cigar and drug stores in twin-packs. We shall call this FIRST HOCKEY, TYPE I. It is commonly called the SILVER HOCKEY SET. The mm is below the striker in two lines.

There are 60 covers in this set. Only two complete sets have been found. One is, or was, owned by Stuart Bergman, TX; the other has disappeared. Players named ranged from Clarence "Taffy" Abel, Chicago Blackhawks, to Roy Worters, N.Y. Americans. Teams represented: Chicago Blackhawks, Boston Bruins, N.Y. Rangers, N.Y. Americans, Montreal Canadiens."

From T & T List #30: TAN HOCKEY, TYPE I: "A new issue, background color is TAN. The use of SILVER and MULTI-COLOR proved too expensive. We believe that this issue was over two years but we have no record to prove it. We shall call these sets THE TAN HOCKEY SETS.

TAN HOCKEY, TYPE I: The player is shown in a frame on the front panel. The back panel has a career history. Player's name appears at TOP and either the team name OR the position played appears between his name and his history. MM is a single line. This set will be known as SECOND HOCKEY, or as TAN HOCKEY, TYPE I.

There are 70 covers in this set. Players listed range from Andy Aitkanhead, N.Y. Rangers, to Roy Worters, N.Y. Americans. It is believed to have been released in 1935."

From T & T List #31, TAN HOCKEY, TYPE II: "Similar to Type I, except the player's team or position is omitted. MM is a single line. There are 66 covers in this set. Players named range from Tommy Anderson, N.Y. Americans, to Roy Worters, N.Y. Americans. Teams represented are the same as Type I, but no mention of the Boston Bruins."

From T & T List #32, TAN HOCKEY, TYPE III: "The next TAN issue is similar to Type II, except the mm is now a double (two line) designation. This set will be known as SECOND HOCKEY, or TAN HOCKEY, TYPE III. 60 covers in this set. Believed to have been released in 1938 (one of 3 issues all attributed to 1938).

1938: TAN HOCKEY, TYPE IV: same as Type III, but only 15 covers, all are...Blackhawks."

From T & T List #34, TAN HOCKEY, TYPE V: "This set is the hardest to distinguish. A two line MM. Now, the names and records do not appear between the name and record. Last lines in records are different. Instead of the team name, the team's nickname is used. (Black Hawk instead of Chicago Blackhawks). This set will be known as SECOND HOCKEY, or TAN HOCKEY, TYPE V. There are 14 covers, all Chicago Blackhawks. TAN TIPS."

From T & T List #35, TAN HOCKEY, TYPE VI: "Same as Type V but with black tips. Issued a year after last issue." "These covers sold two for one cent." Isabelle Lord, June 1971.