

Nigel's Webspaces News

A newsletter distributed by [Nigel's Webspaces](#), a website dedicated to the history of English football cards 1965/66 to 1979/80.

U.S. soccer cards 1965/66 to 1979/80

[Nigel's Webspaces](#) concentrates on football cards produced in England, or for the English or Scottish markets, in the period from 1965 to 1980. However, a website visitor recently asked about any U.S. football (soccer) cards produced during this period. My reply was that I was not aware of any, though the [FKS Soccer 81](#) set did include a number of English players playing in the U.S. league (card numbers 429 to 450). There is also the Sun Soccercards set of 1978/79 which features the U.S. national team flag (card number 984).

I referred the question to Brian Fleischer from [Beckett's Sports Cards Price Guide](#) in the U.S. Brian kindly replied:

I don't know of any US soccer sets from before the 1970s. Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, there were a handful of locally distributed NASL team sets (usually sponsored by a local business or media outlet and sold or distributed at home matches) and in 1979, Topps released a sticker set of team logos from the NASL, as the league was quite popular at the time. From the late 1980s through the early 1990s, indoor soccer experienced a bit of popularity in the States, and as such, there are MISL (Major Indoor Soccer League) sets produced by a company called Pacific. The MISL sets aren't very popular today and unopened boxes can be found for under \$25.



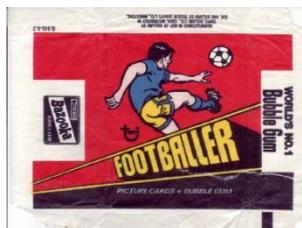
There has been some form of professional (or semi-pro) soccer in the United States since the late 1800s. However, I seriously doubt that it was popular enough to warrant any type of trading cards. American baseball cards at the time? Of course. American soccer cards? Probably not.

There MIGHT be some very, very rare soccer team sets or team photo or team captain "cards" that were produced before the 1970s, but if they're out there, I've never seen them.

So, there is the challenge. Does any know of any early U.S. soccer cards? If so, please get in touch via the website.

Topps two card cellophane wrappers

[Topps Chewing Gum](#) cards were usually sold in the same type of waxed bubble gum cards wrappers as their English football card predecessors, [A&BC Chewing Gum](#). Martin has sent in images (right) of some interesting unopened cellophane packs from the 1977/78 Topps set. The packs contain two cards



each, and appear to be genuine from the time. Martin reports that each pack of two cards states 'Manufactured in Rep. of Ireland by Topps Ireland Ltd. Cork', as does the gum wrapper (left). I'm assuming that these were giveaways or special promotions. They do not appear to have prices, so probably were not designed for sale. Does anyone else remember these from the time?



Brian Fleischer again helped out here by letting me know that this method of distribution was popular with Topps in the U.S. in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. They are commonly referred to as 'cello packs' for sports card collectors, though they were sale items. In the 1970s each cello pack contained 18 cards and one stick of bubble gum and sold for 25¢.

My favourite team football card websites

I often get asked what football card websites I enjoy. While these are all listed on my [links page](#) I wanted to provide a bit more detail on what I like, and why.

Firstly I should explain that it is mostly the social history of these cards that interests me, the producers and manufacturers, the reasons why they produced cards, and whether or not they were successful. This is actually

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almost impossible to determine now, since company records are mostly long gone, and probably never recorded the economics of how much it cost to produce the cards, and whether or not they thought the cards added to their company profile or bottom line for profits. Small companies, with one-off offerings like [Sugosa](#) probably thought long and hard about their cards and, for reasons we will probably never know, never repeated it again.

The other reason that I like football cards from this period is that they resonate with my memories of childhood. When I see particular cards, or a particular player, it can instantly take me right back to my days as a schoolboy in England. It is very powerful. While I had my favourite team at the time I was not one of those boys who only wanted to collect my team, I wanted the whole set (though often didn't complete them). However, some boys, and now some collectors, follow their teams in all aspects of collecting e.g. programmes, shirts, pennants and cards. As these boys have aged some of their collections have become very large and, thankfully, some now feel the need to display them as websites. Here are some that focus on football cards:

[Burnley](#) – a comprehensive display of Burnley player cards from 1958/59 to the present day. One interesting feature of this site is that you can hover your mouse over the cards to see an image of the back (very clever).

[Derby County](#) – Andy has built a really comprehensive site featuring, in his words, his '*Cigarette, Sticker, Trade, Periodicals & Other Cards Collection*'. His site is not limited by time, going right back to the early days of football cards, through to the present day. At the time of writing this newsletter his site has 2,492 card images. Very impressive!

[Huddersfield Town](#) – Roger Pashby has put enormous effort into his brilliant Town website for cigarette and trade cards from 1908 to the present day. As well as displaying all of the cards Roger provides Town history and comment, adding to the visitor experience. Roger has gone even further and published a book, titled [Huddersfield Town Cards and Stickers](#), which you can buy from his website.

[Newport County](#) – Tangerine Tommy's comprehensive site of everything County includes some very interesting football card images from the past.

[Reading](#) – Chris Lee's impressive site with some lovely old Reading material.

[Tottenham Hotspur](#) – Martin Lilley's site, known as 'White Card Lane', has 4,806 items in the collection. It provides incredible detail of the Spurs items produced over the years, categorised by producer and year. His card images are excellent, showing the front and back images.

[West Ham United](#) – Steve Marsh's epic site with everything you would ever want to collect about the Hammers. He displays his cards by decade and then season, and clearly knows a lot about graphic design and presentation as it is a very high quality site. His images are beautiful and clear, accompanied by good historical text.

If you know of other team related football card websites please let me know and I will add them to my links page.

Company records and history

While on the subject of company histories, I would like to put out a general request to anyone who might know of any company records which might record the production or distribution numbers of any of the football card-related items featured on this website. I seriously doubt whether any will turn up, but you never know. It would be great to know how many of particular cards and albums were produced, and how many were sold. When The Sun newspaper produced their Soccerstamps, set of 500, in 1971/72 they proudly boasted that there were over 60 million Soccerstamps being printed. In comparison, I wonder how many of their Famous Footballers cards, set of 12, Sugosa produced in 1966?

Until next time...**Nigel**