



IT'S BARRY'S WORLD

Baseball star Barry Bonds is a newsmaker. After winning a record sixth National League MVP award last year, Bonds announced he was leaving the Major League Baseball Players' Union, a move that could trigger a change in the memorabilia landscape. For now, Bonds remains popular among collectors. A ticket stub from the game in which he hit his first home run (June 4, 1986) recently sold on eBay for \$1,232 while a PSA-graded 10 (Gem Mint) full ticket from the game Bonds hit his record-breaking home run #73 during the 2001 season drew \$331.

HR KING: UNDERVALUED

You can make the case that Hank Aaron memorabilia is undervalued. Example: a ticket stub from the game in which baseball's all-time home run leader smacked his 714th (tying him with Babe Ruth) recently went up for auction at Leland's. It drew only two bids, fetching \$259.

WARNING TRACK

Interested in adding event tickets and ticket stubs to your collection? Consider these tips:

- Know the difference between season tickets issued by teams vs. box-office tickets issued individually vs. Ticketmaster-issued tickets. "Collectors despise having a Ticketmaster ticket in their collection, unless they have no alternative," says expert David Anzicsek. "Season tickets are usually much more spectacular."



A box-office ticket from the game in which Barry Bonds tied Mike Schmidt with his 548th career home run. Value: around \$35, compared to around \$75 for a season ticket from the same game). At left: an example of a season ticket, this one from the game in which Bonds tied Reggie Jackson with HR #563.

- As with nearly all collectibles, condition is a major concern for tickets and stubs. Anzicsek:

"Common types of wear and tear are damage from a ticket-taker's rip, folds from being in fans' pockets, and glue from being in a scrapbook."

- Be aware that sellers and traders aren't always accurate in describing the condition of the stubs they're selling. With online sales, ask to see a photo of the item. And make sure you get a commitment on shipping charges before you buy a ticket or stub; we've seen cases where sellers charge \$7, without insurance! —K.G.

THAT'S THE TICKET!

Before you trash the contents of that drawer of old sporting event tickets and stubs, take a closer look. You might have a valuable collectible on your hands.

By Keith Gentili

As 51,267 fans made their way out of Denver's Coors Field after the conclusion of baseball's 1998 All-Star Game, they were greeted by a dozen or so folks waving \$100 bills and screaming, "Sell me your Beanie Baby!" It was a strange sight for sports fans on this hot July night, but many did indeed peddle their star-spangled "Glory Bear" Beanies, which had been given to ticket-holders as a promotional item.

The same night, there were people waving \$20 bills and barking, "Sell me your ticket stub!" Again, many fans were more than happy to exchange their stubs for enough cash to buy a round of post-game refreshments.

A mere 48 hours later, reports had Glory Bear selling for as much as \$500. There were no such reports of frenzied buying surround the All-Star Game ticket stubs.

By now, of course, the Beanie Baby market has all but disappeared, and Glory Bear—along with its commemorative All-Star Game card—can be had for \$5–\$15. While the Beanie market is ice-cold, the same cannot be said for ticket stubs, a collectibles segment that's enjoying rising popularity.

KNOCKING ON THE DOOR

David Anzicsek began collecting ticket stubs seriously in 1999 when he moved to Chicago from rural Michigan. A year later, he launched an Internet site, www.ticketstubcollector.com, in hopes of bringing together collectors who share his passion.

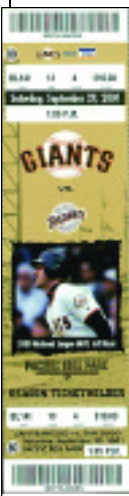
"I don't think ticket-stub collecting has hit the mainstream yet," Anzicsek says.

"But in the past year, we have certainly moved closer. eBay has created a 'Ticket Stubs' category within its Sports Memorabilia area. PSA [Professional Sports Authenticators, known for its card-grading services] has started a grading system for ticket stubs. And sports card manufacturers are issuing cards with an actual piece of a ticket in them. Also, many teams are handing out lanyards [cords, often worn around the neck, made for securing an item] to fans as they enter games, which allows them to keep their stub in a safe place."

Does this mean that the 1998 Coors Field All-Star Game stub is now worth big bucks? Not exactly—at least not yet. But more desirable tickets can be worth hundreds of dollars, or even thousands. In 1998 at Sotheby's, for example, a rare 1903 World Series ticket from the famed Barry Halper sports collection drew \$23,000.

More recently, in a December 2003 auction at Mastro's, a bidder paid \$8,000 for a full, top-condition ticket to the June 13, 1948 game at Yankee Stadium—the day on which Babe Ruth was honored for the last time. The Yankees retired Ruth's #3 jersey that day, and the Bambino, suffering from cancer, died just two months later. (By comparison, a torn ticket stub from the same game drew \$787 on eBay.)

Keith Gentili, a New Boston, NH-based journalist, has two New England Patriots Super Bowl stubs in his office (Super Bowl XXXI and Super Bowl XXXVI) as well as stubs from six professional All-Star games.





This milestone ticket stub comes from Game 5 of the 1956 World Series, when Don Larsen pitched a perfect-game no-hitter. The ticket turned up at *Antiques Roadshow's* New York visit in 2002. Value: around \$500.

recalls. "People could search for information about games, milestones, and sports history. This contributed additional interest in tickets as collectibles."

says: "The Internet has made the world a small village, so deal with individuals in the hobby who are professional. You may buy from a dealer in that niche or you may get a referral from somebody like me to someone who shares your interest. Then you can learn more about what's available, where to get it, and what's doable. You can also get a sense of the item—the look, the feel, the smell of a ticket from a particular era."

One great advantage to starting a ticket-stub collection is that the category is relatively young, so you can still find great deals. "Ticket collecting is not restricted to lawyers and doctors," Jose says. "People should be aware that for \$5, they can own tickets that are significant to them."

Ultimately, tickets and stubs are great connections to an event. "Just like grass or blood stains on a jersey, or the sweat on a player's hat, a ticket is an actual artifact of a game," Jose says. "It's not a commemorative collectible. The ticket was there. You can own a genuine piece of the game. To me, that's the electricity of ticket collecting." ❁

Other recent sales on eBay include a stub from the 1936 All-Star Game—baseball's fourth such game—at Braves Field; that auction closed at \$320. Another piece that turned up on eBay was a ticket stub from Game 6 of 1952 World Series, the contest in which Mickey Mantle hit the first of his record 18 World Series home runs. That stub drew \$565.

What makes some tickets and stubs more valuable than others? A key factor is the importance of a given game. "The stub from Cal Ripken Jr.'s record-breaking game [for consecutive-games played] is very popular, as are all of Michael Jordan's return games," Anzicek says. "And many people collect stubs from the first and last game of a stadium. If it's a milestone game, the stub is collectible.

"Collectors love ticket stubs from home run achievements," Anzicek adds, noting that stubs from the games in which Roger Maris, Mark McGwire, and Barry Bonds hit historic blasts are especially desirable.

In fact, points out Dennis A. Jose of Chicagotix.com, it was the McGwire/Sammy Sosa home run race of 1998 that sparked "a lot of interest in the hobby." As those two sluggers pecked away at Roger Maris's former record of 61 home runs in a season, "many individuals began searching the Internet for the first time," Jose

A THEME'S THE THING

Just like other areas of sports memorabilia, tickets and stubs present a seemingly endless variety of options, so it helps to have a theme as you build your collection.

"Collect in an area of sports you're passionate about," Jose suggests. "It may be the World Series, the Super Bowl, or Mickey Mantle home-run games. [Be careful about] getting caught up in the hot item of the time. If you're a Rose Bowl fan, Michigan football fan, or Kentucky Derby fan, then match your interest with the tickets you collect. That will fuel your enthusiasm over time and connect you with people who share your interest."

Jose, who also works with the grading company Professional Sports Authenticators (PSA), notes the importance of communicating with experts in a given field. Talk with experienced collectors, he

A CLOSER LOOK

SUPER STUBS

On Sunday, Jan. 15, 1967, nearly 62,000 football fans spent around \$10 each to watch what is now known as Super Bowl I. Then billed as the "World Championship Game" featuring the AFL champion Kansas City Chiefs vs. the NFL champion Green Bay Packers, the event included little of the circus atmosphere now associated with Super Sunday. In fact, nearly one third of the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum's tickets went unsold.

Today the Super Bowl is as American as the 4th of July. It's the single biggest day in sports, and collectors have taken notice. From pins to pennants to programs, Super Bowl memorabilia is gotta-have stuff, and tickets are at the top of the list. In fact, two entire runs of Super Bowl tickets (untorn) recently sold for more than \$40,000 at auction.

"Super Bowl ticket sets are becoming one of my key areas in working with collectors," says Dennis A. Jose of Chicagotix.com. "While baseball is the national pastime and NASCAR may have the most fans in terms of attendance at tracks, Super Bowl collectors are participating in the single-game, winner-take-all obsession. There are people as passionate about their team as they are about family and religion."

You'll find at Super Bowl ticket stubs starting at around \$40 and full tickets starting at around \$100 at Chicagotix.com. Tickets and stubs from the more notable Super Bowls can sell for far more. In December, a ticket from the first Super Bowl (1968) sold on eBay for \$355. That's nearly \$1 for every yard the Packers gained (361) in their 35-10 win over the Chiefs—not bad for a \$12 ticket.

Values are often determined by the popularity of the teams, condition of the item, and such factors as scarcity and game location. Recent sales on eBay include:

- \$212: full ticket from Super Bowl XXXIII (1999, Broncos 34, Falcons 19)
- \$187: ticket stub from Super Bowl VI (1972, Cowboys 24, Dolphins 3)
- \$154: full ticket from Super Bowl XXXV (2001, Ravens 34, Giants 7)
- \$104: ticket stub from Super Bowl XXV (1991, Giants 20, Bills 19)
- \$101: ticket stub from Super Bowl IX (1975, Steelers 16, Vikings 6)

"Every year I make a New Year's resolution to build a set of tickets in the upcoming year. In 2003, I went after a run of Super Bowl ticket stubs and built two of them," says Jose, who lives three blocks from Wrigley Field and his beloved Chicago Cubs. "In 2004, I may focus on my Cubs ticket-and-schedule collection representing every year since 1906. That may be my holy grail." —Keith Gentili



Super Bowl tickets feature more elaborate designs than most other tickets.

SOURCES & RESOURCES

Two Internet sites that provide more info on collecting tickets and stubs:

- www.ticketstubcollector.com: A great interactive Web site loaded with tips, resources, links, and useful message board.

- www.Chicagotix.com: The granddaddy of ticket sites has it all, from Super Bowls to Cal Ripken's streak to Sammy Sosa's 500th home run game.

Keep your eye on the auction market for ticket stubs. These auction houses specialize often offer vintage tickets/stubs:

- [Leland's \(www.lelands.com\)](http://www.lelands.com): 3947 Merrick Road, Seaford, NY 11783. Phone: 516-409-9700.

- [Mastronet Inc. \(www.mastronet.com\)](http://www.mastronet.com): 10S660 Kingery Highway, Willowbrook, IL 60527. Phone: 630-472-1200.