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BASEBALL DIGEST

SPECIAL ISSUE

MARCH 1965

35¢

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Houston



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OF BIG LEAGUE
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OFFICIAL
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COMPLETE DATA ON
320 ROOKIES

BASEBALL
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FEBRUARY 1943 15¢

AT BAT IN ICELAND
ROBBED OF SIX STRAIGHT HOMERS!—PAGE 1
BEST CARTOONS OF THE MONTH—PAGE 32
BATTING AVERAGES ARE COCKEYED—PAGE 34
Twenty Five Other Diamond Gems



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White Sox



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CORRALES
Philadelphia



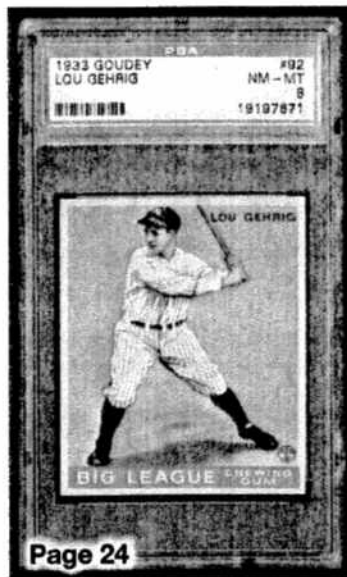
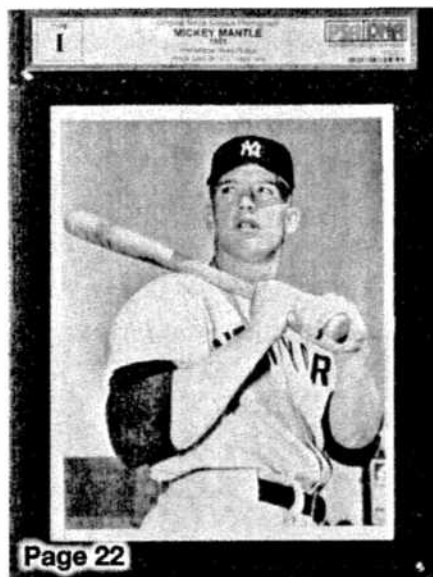
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EDITORIAL/ADVERTISING OFFICE
700 East State St., Iola, WI 54990-0001
www.sportscollectorsdigest.com
e-mail: scd@krause.com
715-445-4612 + 5-digit ext.
FAX: 715-445-4087

Publisher:
Scott Tappa, ext. 13428,
scott.tappa@fwmedia.com

Editor:
Tom Bartsch, ext. 13815,
tom.bartsch@fwmedia.com

Editor-at-Large:
T.J. Schwartz
porkyssports@aol.com

Senior Graphic Designer:
Kevin Ulrich, ext. 13434,
kevin.ulrich@fwmedia.com

ADVERTISING SALES:
Steve Madson, ext. 13441,
steve.madson@fwmedia.com

F+W MEDIA, INC.
Chairman & CEO: David Nussbaum
CFO: James Ogle
President: David Blansfield
EVP, eMedia: Chad Phelps
SVP, Operations: Phil Graham
SVP Advertising Sales: Dave Davel
Director, IT: Jim Kuster
Events Director: Cory Smith
For Newsstand Sales, contact:
Scott T. Hill, scott.hill@proclirc.com

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES
Call 800-829-5561 (U.S. / Canada)
386-246-3455 (International)
PO Box 421751,
Palm Coast, FL 32142-1751

SPORTS COLLECTORS DIGEST
(ISSN: #0278-2693 is published biweekly by Krause Publications, a division of F+W Media, at 700 E. State St., Iola, WI 54990. Periodical postage paid at Iola, Wis. and at additional mailing offices. Canadian Agreement Number 40665875. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *Sports Collectors Digest*, PO Box 421751, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1751. Copyright © 2012 by F+W Media Inc. All rights reserved. *Sports Collectors Digest* is a registered trademark of F+W Media Inc. Other names and logos referred to or displayed in editorial or advertising content may be trademarked or copyrighted. *Sports Collectors Digest* assumes no responsibility for unsolicited materials typographical errors that may appear in prices or descriptions in advertisements.)

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Cover design by Kevin Ulrich.



Collectible publication partner of
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Photo was of the same image used on Mickey Mantle's iconic 1952 Topps card.

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A must read for baseball fans

The relaunch of 'Baseball Digest' warrants a look back at the magazine's 70 years and the men who made it famous

By Richard Cuicchi

As originally reported in the May 15 issue of *SCD*, the September 2012 issue of *Baseball Digest* debuts a new design and format and begins providing fans with content from veteran Major League Baseball scouts.

As the magazine celebrates its 70th anniversary issue in 2012, *Baseball Digest* has the distinction of being the longest-running monthly baseball publication. It ranks right up there among the all-time titans in baseball journalism, including the still active *Sports Illustrated*, *Baseball America* and *Sports Weekly*.

Baseball Digest has outlived a number of print publications from the past. Gone from today's baseball journalism landscape are other such long-running publications as *The Sporting News* (now online), *Street & Smith's*, *Baseball Magazine* and *SPORT*. Furthermore, other shorter-run periodicals, such as *Old-tyme Baseball News*, *Inside Sports*, *The Diamond* and *The National Sports Daily*, have met their demise, as well.

Baseball Digest has truly been a leader over the years and appears to be positioning itself for many more seasons to come.

Relaunch highlights

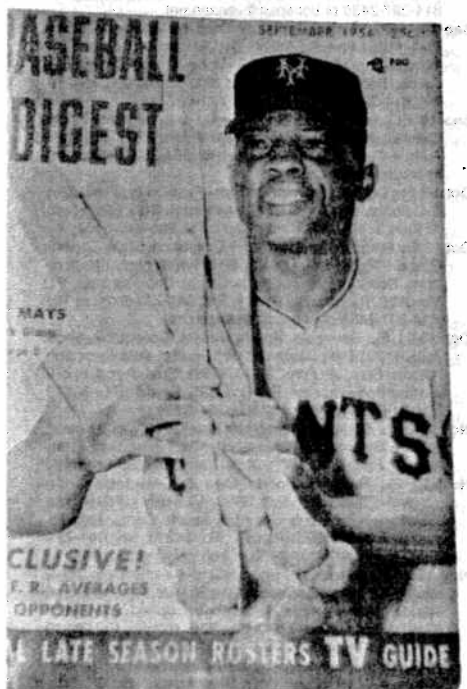
Baseball Digest secured sole rights to publish ProScouting materials previously available only to industry insiders. Consequently, each issue of the magazine now offers fans direct, unfiltered access to scouting information compiled by multiple impartial Major League Baseball scouts with vast combined experience. The magazine's features will continue to include current fan favorites, such as profiles of current stars, rankings, rosters and season-ending features on its All-Star rookie team. *Baseball Digest* will transition from a 48-page black-and-white publication to a four-color 80-100-page magazine. Subscriptions are available for \$24.95.

First Baseball Digest All-Rookie Team (1971)

Chris Chambliss, 1B	Indians
Doug Griffin, 2B	Red Sox
Roger Metzger, SS	Astros
Steve Braun, 3B	Twins
Ron Blomberg, LF	Yankees
Angel Mangual, CF	A's
Willie Montanez, RF	Phillies
Earl Williams, C	Braves
Bill Parsons, RHP	Brewers
Ross Grimsley, LHP	Reds



February 1943: Military picture during World War II. Notable scribes writing for the magazine at the time made it a must-read.



September 1954: Willie Mays was a rising star with the N.Y. Giants.



October 1942: Second issue of *Baseball Digest*; 15-cent cover price.

The following are highlights of two other key time periods in *Baseball Digest's* history.

The beginnings in 1942

Baseball Digest produced its first issue in August 1942. Its timing was

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somewhat ironic in that the World War II years were often beset by cutbacks in discretionary spending by corporations and individuals. Moreover, at the time of its introduction, *Baseball Magazine* and *The Sporting News* already had large, long-standing audiences of baseball fans/readers. However, *Baseball Digest's* founder adeptly identified its market and turned out a successful product. Chicago baseball writer Herbert Simon, who was listed as the business manager for *Baseball Digest*, was the first editor of the magazine.

The magazine represented itself as containing "Baseball's Best Stories of the Month." Similar to the approach of general interest magazine *Reader's Digest*, the articles were a combination of original pieces and reprints from other newspaper and magazine publications.

A self-promoting advertisement for the magazine posed the question, "What's *Baseball Digest*?" Part of its response included, "... the very best there is from the nation's foremost typewriters, carefully selected and 'digested' for you from scores of leading national magazines, hundreds of metropolitan daily newspapers, many prominent radio programs..."

In fact, the pieces were written by some of the more well-known baseball journalists and radio commentators of the day, names we still recognize today: Shirley Povich, Red Smith, Frank Graham, Sid Mercer, John Carmichael, Tommy Holmes, Bob Broeg and Dan Daniel.

The insightful articles written by well-versed baseball writers became the hallmark of *Baseball Digest*, from the first issues in 1942 through today's issues. The scribes imparted astute accounts of the players, topics and events of the game — past and present.

Some of the initial special features included "Di-Jests," which injected some baseball humor, and "Digesting the Questions," where the editorial staff answered baseball questions from readers. The magazine consisted of 64 pages until

Scouting reports

In 1956, *Baseball Digest* began its annual Rookie Scouting Report, which ran in March of each year. There was a brief assessment of the rookies' skills, past performance and projection of how close to reaching the majors and/or their expected success level. This feature continued until 2002.

Below are a few excerpts for some recognizable players that were included in the reports:

Phil Niekro: "Fair in all departments, but not of major league caliber as a starter. Might become a relief man."

Tony Perez: "Weak hitter. Fair fielder. Must bat higher to have a chance."

Gaylord Perry: "Wants to be a nibbler like his brother. Throws hard but does not have major league speed. A borderline case."

Rick Reichardt: "Can be the next Mickey Mantle plus!"

Mike Schmidt: "Bat will earn him chance somewhere, but still needs work on double play at second. Could play third."



(Left) November 1969: This year's issues ushered in major changes in content, including many new features such as Lou Boudreau's "Tips for Budding Ballplayers" and "The Game I'll Never Forget." (Right) March 1965: Rookie Scouting Reports were an annual feature. Per the sidebar, some reports were right on, while others swung and missed.

early 1948, and its covers often featured the slogan "64 pages — and every word baseball."

While commercial advertising in the magazine did not take hold until much later, the issues during the war years contained slogans like, "The Axis is throwing up the sucker pitch; belt it out of the yard by buying war bonds," and "Everybody scores with war savings bonds and stamps."

The initial price for an issue of *Baseball Digest* in August 1942 was 15 cents.

A watershed year in 1969

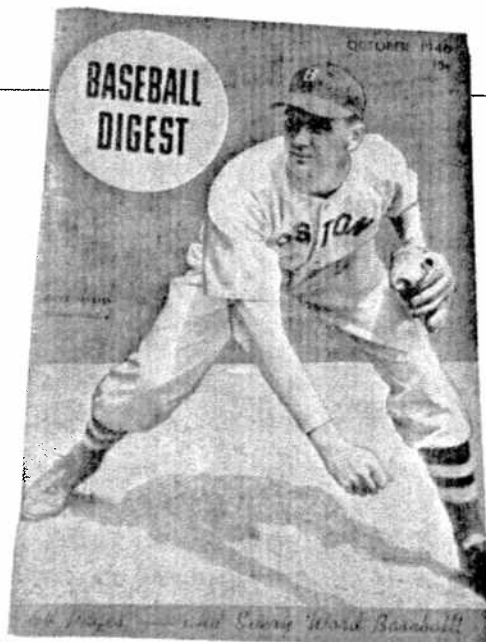
In the 25-plus years that followed, the magazine's content, format and publication did not materially change. However, a change in *Baseball Digest's* leadership became a defining moment in the maga-

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BASEBALL DIGEST from page 49

(Far right) October 1946: This issue show the slogan "64 pages and every word baseball."

(Right) 1985 Annual: An example of one of the annual guides that supplemented the regular issues of Baseball Digest.



zine's history.

Original founder/editor Herbert Simons died in September 1968, and Norman Jacobs became owner/publisher in 1969. Jacobs hired *Chicago Daily News* baseball writer John Kuenster as the editor in May 1969.

Jacobs and Kuenster put *Baseball Digest* on a path to increase circulation and, in the process, instituted a number of noteworthy changes to the magazine. In many respects, the significance of the changes introduced in 1969 is akin to the types of change being introduced now with the magazine's relaunch.

Starting in 1969, *Baseball Digest* showcased its own "Player of the Year" Award. Tom Seaver of the 1969 Miracle Mets was the first selection. Two years

later brought the magazine's first Rookie All-Star teams. Both of these annual post-season features continue today.

One of the most characterizing features of the magazine began in 1969. "The Fan Speaks Out" provided a monthly forum for *Baseball Digest* readers to submit questions, comments and feedback. The editors entertained all types of input from fans. Common inquiries from readers included such items as:

● "Whatever happened to a specific player?"

● "Can you print the box score of a noteworthy game attended by my father and me?"

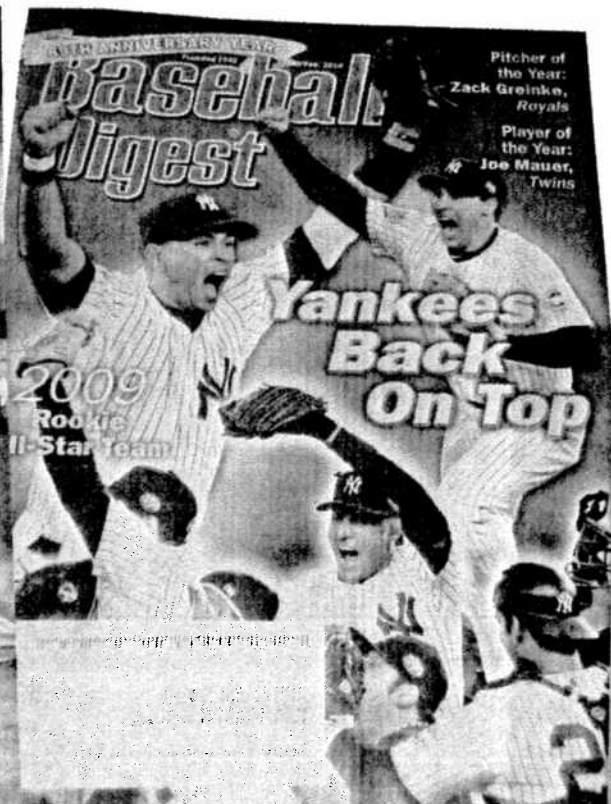
● "Can you settle an argument between my friend and me about a specific rule of the game?"

● Recommendation for their "all-time team" for such categories as favorite franchise, their home state or players' nicknames.

The staff of *Baseball Digest* did a remarkable job of researching and answering some challenging questions in this

(Far right) Jan./Feb. 2010: The first issue with the new size (8-by-10 1/2 inches), breaking the tradition of its 5 1/2-by-7 3/4 inches size.

(Right) December 1999: Highlighting the Rookie All-Star Team feature that started in 1971.



part of the magazine, while often calling upon the Baseball Hall of Fame research staff for supplementary expertise about the game.

Additional features introduced in 1969 as standard entries in the publication's table of contents included:

- "Turn Back the Clock"
- "Baseball Crossword Puzzle"
- "So You Think You Know Baseball"
- "The Game I'll Never Forget"
- "Whatever Became of...?"
- "Baseball Rules Corner"
- "Baseball Quick Quiz"
- "Baseball Tips for Budding Ball Players," authored by Hall of Famer Lou Boudreau.

In 1969, the price of the magazine was 50 cents.

Continued appeal

Most of the back issues of *Baseball Digest* are relatively accessible via eBay and other Internet-based sources. A recent search on eBay yielded more than 3,000 *Baseball Digest* items. However, the condition of the issues varies widely and affects their desirability as collectibles. The availability of the 1942 and 1943 issues is frequently limited. Obviously, the August 1942 premier issue is the most desirable, and, as expected, the most expensive as well, with the price commonly in the \$300-\$500 range.

The good news is that the other limited availability issues are well below this range. The more commonly available issues are in the \$4-\$12 range.

In addition to being collected for its memorabilia value, *Baseball Digest* provides an immense source of information for baseball researchers. The magazine has blended a sound combination of stories and information about baseball's history and lore, current events, individual players, teams and records. From its very beginning, *Baseball Digest* has dependably included top-notch articles from some of the best journalists covering baseball.

Baseball Digest's most recent development of providing player insights from MLB's scouts seems poised to provide opportunities for the magazine to remain an industry leader and fan favorite. ♦

Richard Cuicchi is a freelance contributor to SCD. He can be reached at rcuicchi@aol.com

Digestible facts

● *Baseball Digest* was one of a family of similar monthly periodicals (also called "Digests") covering other sports by its publisher. Other main line sports included football, basketball and hockey, while there were others covering auto racing, bowling and soccer.

● One of the humorous quips in a World War II era issue of *Baseball Digest*: "Hitler calls Mussolini Italy's greatest son. He's probably never heard of Joe DiMaggio."

● At age 27, Brent Musburger was a contributor to *Baseball Digest*. Over the years, additional writers/personalities included: Dick Young, Jimmy Cannon, Jerome Holtzman, Larry Merchant, George Vass, Bill Conlin, Bob Verdi, Joe Falls, Peter Gammons, Phil Pepe and Mel Antonen.

● One of the more peculiar articles in *Baseball Digest* was titled "How to Marry a Ballplayer." Author Herbert Simons used results from a *Baseball Digest* survey. A few of the suggestions were "become an airline stewardess, become a model and get a job at a team's hotel."

● *Baseball Digest* once started a campaign to gather information on missing ballplayers. The magazine offered \$25, current books of the time and subscriptions for four years to readers who could provide information on the whereabouts of selected players, referred to as the "Missing 100."

● In 1969, *Baseball Digest* included a regular piece on current news of the amateur leagues. Chris Chambliss (AL Rookie of the Year and All-Star with the Yankees) was named "Sandlot Player of the Year" in 1969 by the National Baseball Congress.

● The dimensions of *Baseball Digest* began as 8-by-5½ inches, then were modified to 7¼-by-5½ inches in January 1951. This size remained one of its trademarks in the baseball publication industry until January 2010, when it transitioned to a full-sized (8-by-10½ inches) magazine.

● The price of a *Baseball Digest* issue remained less than \$2 through 1988. By 2002, the price reached \$5.99.



March 1990: Ken Griffey Jr. as a budding star with the Seattle Mariners.