

## Honus Wagner and the T206

Name \_\_\_\_\_



The T206 Honus Wagner is the world's most valuable sports card. It was issued as part of a series of cards that were inserted in packs of cigarettes produced by the American Tobacco Company (ATC) in 1909.

### Who was Honus Wagner?

Wagner was one of the best baseball players of his time. He played shortstop for the Pittsburgh Pirates between 1897 and 1917. Wagner, who was nicknamed "the Flying Dutchman" for both his running speed and his heritage, won eight batting titles during his career. Along with Babe Ruth, Wagner was one of the first five players elected to the Professional Baseball Hall-of-Fame.

### Why is the T206 card so valuable?

The T206 card is so valuable because Honus Wagner forced the American Tobacco Company to cease production of this card. Although his reasoning remains unclear, experts believe one of two theories: Wagner did not want kids to buy packs of cigarettes to obtain the card, or, that he wanted more compensation from the American Tobacco Company. Whatever the reason, only between 50 and 200 of the T206 cards were ultimately printed, packaged, and distributed.

### The Value of T206

Even in 1933, the T206 was regarded as the world's most valuable baseball card; although it was valued at a paltry \$50.00 by the *American Card Catalog*. As sports cards became more popular as collectors' items in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, prices of rare cards rose dramatically as they became more in demand. In 1991, Wayne Gretzky, widely considered the greatest hockey player of all time, purchased a professionally graded T206 card for \$451,000. It was later revealed the card was trimmed to improve its condition. In 2016, a different T206 card in poor, but unaltered condition, sold for over \$3,000,000! Several T206 cards have emerged over the past few decades, a few of which are thought to be authentic and several others that are thought to be counterfeit.

**1. Which is NOT true about Honus Wagner?**

- A. He played shortstop
- B. His nickname was “The Flying Dutchman”
- C. He was recently elected to the Hall-of-Fame
- D. He won eight batting titles

**2. Which of the following best describes the T206 card?**

- A. Very rare
- B. Fairly common
- C. Fake
- D. Non-existent

**3. Which of the following would be good advice to someone who was considering purchasing a T206 card?**

- A. You should probably wait a few years as they will become less expensive
- B. You should probably ask Wayne Gretzky if he thinks purchasing a T206 is a good idea
- C. You should probably make sure the card you are considering purchasing is authentic rather than fake
- D. You should probably buy a lot of packs of baseball cards and maybe you'll get one

**4. Why is the T206 card so rare?**

- A. Because the card is so old
- B. Because Honus Wagner refused to buy cigarettes
- C. Because most people threw them out
- D. Because very few of the cards were produced

**5. Which of the following best describes why Honus Wagner refused to allow his cards to be packaged with American Tobacco Company cigarettes?**

- A. Because he wanted more money
- B. Because he didn't like the idea that kids had to buy packs of cigarettes to get his card
- C. No one is sure, but the answer is likely A or B
- D. No one is sure, but the answer is likely A and B

**6. What does the word “distributed” mean as used in the following sentence?**

Whatever the reason, only between 50 and 200 of the T206 cards were ultimately printed, packaged, and distributed.

- A. borrowed
- B. destroyed
- C. sent out
- D. returned

**7. Over time...**

- A. prices for rare baseball cards rose.
- B. people lost interest in expensive baseball cards.
- C. Wayne Gretzky bought more T206 cards.
- D. it was discovered that the T206 card wasn't actually very rare.