

Nigel's Webspaces News

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

Panini Mexico 70

Adrian has been doing some excellent research on the Panini Mexico 70 set and album. I'm very grateful to Adrian for providing me with much of his research, and I'm happy to summarise his findings and my own research in this month's newsletter. As I've said many times before, I'm not an expert on Panini but their Mexico 70 set and album are always big news so I'm keen to learn more. If you can help with additional information please be in contact via the website email cards@littleoak.com.au.

As most collectors will know, Panini is a company headquartered in Modena, Italy, named after the Panini brothers who founded it in 1961¹. According to the Wikipedia article Benito and Giuseppe Panini were operating a newspaper distribution office in Modena, Italy during 1960, when they found a collection of figurines (stickers attached with glue) that a Milan company was unable to sell. The brothers bought the collection, and sold them in packets of two for ten lire each. They sold three million packets. Having had success with the figurines Giuseppe founded Panini in 1961 to manufacture and sell his own figurines. Benito joined Panini the same year. Panini sold 15 million packets of figurines in 1961.

Panini published its first World Cup sticker album for the 1970 World Cup in Mexico. According to the Panini website the 1970 World Cup was the first time that a sticker collection was sold and marketed on an international level². Confusingly, the Panini website claims that, prior to 1971, stickers were normally made of light cardboard, and collectors had to paste them into the album with glue, but then self-adhesive stickers were introduced in the 1971-72 Calciatori collection. However, the Mexico 70 set includes 42 self-adhesive stickers. Are Panini wrong about their own history?

There are considered to be two versions of the Panini Mexico 70 album and stickers/cards: an Italian version and an international version. The set includes 42 stickers and 242 cards. The Italian cards have green text on the backs (or bisvalida, or red/blue – see below), while the international set has red/black backs.

The Italian version

I'm told that Panini's normal issue football cards in the 1960s and early 1970s were sold in packets containing four cards at the cost of 10 lire. In each packet one card had the word 'Valida' or 'Bisvalida' printed on the back. The Valida cards were one-point premium (or redemption) cards and Bisvalida two-points ('Bis' in Latin meaning two). Italian boys sent to Panini all the Valida and Bisvalida cards they collected and received desirable items like leather footballs, wool shirts of the favourite teams, football shoes and so on in exchange.

However, for the Mexico 70 set I think (but am not absolutely sure) that Panini issued two green back football cards or stickers and one Bisvalida card in each packet for 20 lire i.e. they did not issue Valida cards with this set. I've sourced this wrapper image from Steve Marsh's excellent West Ham site (<http://theyflysohigh.co.uk/#/1970-world-cup/4546244332>), and it clearly shows the 20 lire price tag.



The Panini brothers – image sourced from <http://grandiopere.fcp.it/casa-editrice/en/storia-2/>



¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panini_Group, accessed 30/08/2014

² <http://www.paninionline.com/collectibles/institutional/bt/uk/faq.asp#dom2>, accessed 30/08/2014

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The set also included 42 stickers, but I'm not exactly sure what the backing was for these stickers. I think that they may have had blank backs. Remember that this was among the first days of self-adhesive football stickers, so very few have survived today with their original backs still intact.



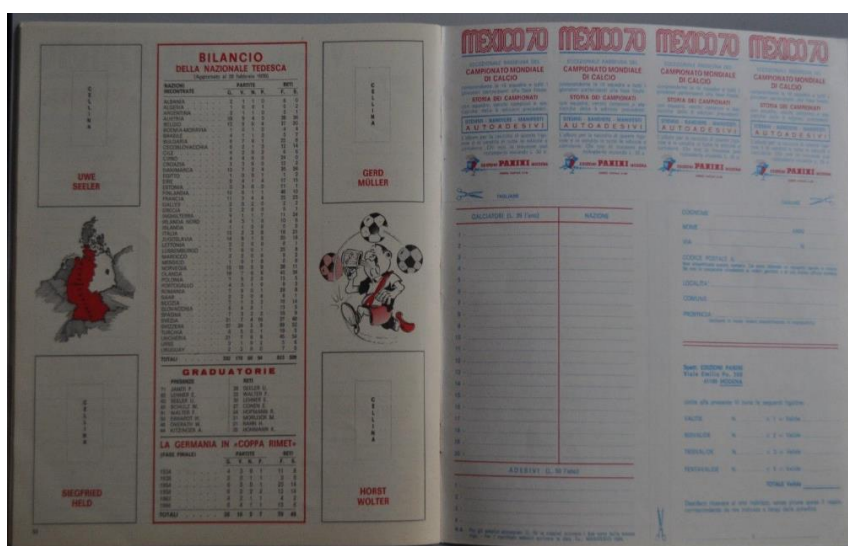
The Italian cards, other than the Bisvalida cards, normally had green backs. This raises a couple of interesting questions. Were all cards available as green backs and bisvalida backs, or were certain cards green backs and others bisvalida? If each card was available as a green back or a bisvalida then it means that you could collect a complete green back set as well as a complete bisvalida-backed set? Perhaps someone who collects the Italian version could let me know through my website?



While the Italian cards had green backs, there were also some with red and blue backs, and this is where Adrian's research is proving very useful. Four red/blue back cards were included in each album, printed on the order form as an insert inside the back cover. Adrian suspects that every one of the 242 cards may have been available as red/blue backs, but this is yet to be proven. However, if it is true, then perhaps there are three different sets of the Italian version to collect i.e. green backs, bisvalida backs and red/blue backs?



Since you only received four red/blue in each album, and there do not appear to be other ways to collect them, it seems difficult to imagine that collectors have managed to acquire too many of these. If you are in the market to buy an Italian version of this album (remembering that the red/blue cards were included in the Italian album only, not the international version) then keep an eye out for the order form, and see whether the original red/blue cards have been cut out.



As you can see from the image, provided by Adrian, you had to cut these red/blue cards with scissors from the form, and cut the four cards from each other before sticking them in the album. Adrian advises that this tradition continues today with Panini World Cup albums, where there are six stickers inserted as an insert which you can then stick in the album. It also means that the red/blue back cards were hand-cut by the album owner, not machine-cut by Panini so if you do find any you might expect them to perhaps have uneven edges.

Adrian has been trying to put together an index of the possible variations of the red/blue cards available through the albums. The ones that have been identified so far include:

- Sweden team photo, Puskas (1954), Rahn (1954), Garrincha (1962)
- Italy team photo (1938), Amarildo (1962), Kocsis (1954), Fontaine (1958)
- Dzodzuashvili (CCCP), Serebrianikov (CCCP), Albrecht (1966), Uruguay team photo (1950)
- Dermengiiev (Bulgaria), Pele (Brazil), Zoff (CCCP), Salvatore (Italy)

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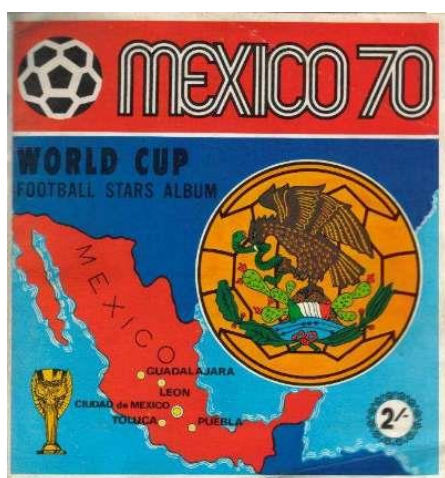


The Italian album has a distinctly different cover from the international version. It has a large yellow stripe down the left hand side, and obviously Italian text. The inside of the album is the same layout as the international version, except for the order form insert which include the four red/blue cards.

Empty versions of this album can sell for in excess of €1,500.

In June 2014 a complete set of all cards and stickers, including two wrappers and an empty album, sold on ebay for £5,050.

The international version



The international version was distributed in the U.K. by a company called Thorpe and Porter (Sales) Limited of Melton Road, Thurmaston, Leicester.

The cards were only available with red/black backs i.e. no red/blue cards on the order form, and no bisvalida cards. I'm not sure how widely they were distributed in the UK, or how popular they were at the time. I was 11 years old in 1970 but I don't recall them in my local sweet shops or being traded in my local schoolyard.

I've never seen the UK wrapper, so I don't know how much these cards cost.

An empty version of this album sold recently on www.ebay.co.uk for £410.

A complete album in excellent condition sold recently for £2,630.

I'm always keen to add more information to my website about the Panini company and their 1970's football card issues, including through the local company name they used in the mid-70s, Top Sellers. If you have any views, comments or information please feel free to be in touch either through my website (<http://cards.littleoak.com.au/index.html>) or Nigel's Webspaces English Football Cards Facebook page.

Until next time...**Nigel**