

1933 GOUDEY · CARD #144

# Babe Ruth

*The one the world pictures*

The 1933 Goudey #144 Babe Ruth

## What this is

A written record of one card: what it is, why it has mattered for seventy years, and what the public auction record shows it has actually traded for. It is not an appraisal and it is not advice. It is a description, assembled from sales we can point to, so that the person holding this does not have to take anyone's word for it.

|                   |                                                                           |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SET               | 1933 Goudey                                                               |
| CARD              | #144                                                                      |
| YOUR EXAMPLE      | PSA 2 · certificate 06246834                                              |
| VERIFY IT         | <a href="https://psacard.com/cert/06246834">psacard.com/cert/06246834</a> |
| RECORD DRAWN FROM | 301 verified public sales, 2005–2026                                      |

## THE STORY

# Why this card

Goudey thought so much of Babe Ruth that they put him in their 1933 set four separate times. Of the four, this is the one the world pictures — Ruth in full Yankees pinstripes, caught in the towering follow-through that became the defining image of the most important pre-war set ever made.

The set itself is the other half of the story. The 1933 Goudey issue is one of the cornerstones of the entire hobby — the release that set the template for the modern gum card, gorgeous in its artwork and stacked with Hall of Famers. That a single set contains four different Ruths tells you everything about his standing in 1933: even near the end of his playing days, he was the engine that sold the product. Most players in the set got one card. The Babe got four, and #144 is the one collectors mean when they say “the Goudey Ruth.”

There is a wonderful piece of mischief behind why this particular card is a little more available than its siblings. Goudey had teased collectors with a card #106 — the great Napoleon Lajoie — that was never actually inserted into packs, a ploy to keep determined children buying in pursuit of a card that was not there.irate parents eventually wrote in, and to make good on the shortfall Goudey double-printed several cards in the run, this Ruth among them.

So the Full Body Ruth exists in slightly greater numbers not by accident, but as restitution for one of the hobby's most famous marketing stunts. Even so, “more available” is deeply relative: high-grade survivors from 1933 are genuinely scarce. The most recognizable Ruth, in the most foundational pre-war set, and the most attainable of the four — which is what makes it the natural cornerstone of a serious vintage collection.

**A note on the four**

Ruth appears in the 1933 Goudey set as #53, #144, #149 and #181, and they are not interchangeable — they carry different images and trade at genuinely different levels. A listing that omits the number tells you nothing. Everything recorded in this document is #144 and only #144; results for the other three are excluded outright rather than blended in, which is the difference between a record and an average.

THE RECORD

# What it has traded for

Every figure below is a realized auction result from a house that has given us written permission to display it. Nothing here is an asking price, and nothing here is an estimate. Where a grade has traded thinly we say so rather than smoothing it over.

BY GRADE · TRAILING TWO YEARS

| Grade                | Sales | Range                 | Most recent |           |
|----------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------------|-----------|
| PSA 1                | 9     | \$3,840 – \$11,685    | 2026-05-17  | \$6,100   |
| PSA 1.5              | 4     | \$6,600 – \$10,148    | 2026-05-15  | \$9,840   |
| <b>PSA 2</b> · yours | 8     | \$7,200 – \$14,640    | 2026-01-31  | \$14,640  |
| PSA 2.5              | 3     | \$10,200 – \$16,470   | 2025-05-18  | \$16,470  |
| PSA 3                | 2     | \$17,080 – \$17,400   | 2025-10-26  | \$17,080  |
| PSA 3.5              | 3     | \$14,400 – \$27,631   | 2026-06-06  | \$27,631  |
| PSA 4                | 3     | \$13,800 – \$25,620   | 2026-01-31  | \$25,620  |
| PSA 5                | 4     | \$22,800 – \$46,360   | 2026-07-11  | \$46,360  |
| PSA 6                | 1     | \$86,100              | 2026-05-15  | \$86,100  |
| PSA 8                | 2     | \$183,000 – \$196,736 | 2025-02-01  | \$183,000 |

10 grades traded publicly in the trailing two years. A grade absent from this table has not traded at a house we can cite in that window — which is information, not an omission.

YOUR GRADE · PSA 2

Your card is graded PSA 2. Every public result we can cite at that exact grade is set out below, back twenty years — so the movement you are looking at is your card's own market, not a neighboring one.

|            |                 |                 |            |                 |                 |
|------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 2005-05-29 | <b>\$836</b>    | Heritage        | 2024-05-18 | <b>\$14,400</b> | Heritage        |
| 2013-08-15 | <b>\$1,304</b>  | Huggins & Scott | 2024-08-15 | <b>\$7,800</b>  | REA             |
| 2018-08-15 | <b>\$2,460</b>  | Huggins & Scott | 2024-08-15 | <b>\$7,500</b>  | REA             |
| 2019-12-07 | <b>\$3,600</b>  | Heritage        | 2024-11-15 | <b>\$7,200</b>  | REA             |
| 2020-01-05 | <b>\$3,600</b>  | Heritage        | 2024-11-15 | <b>\$7,800</b>  | Huggins & Scott |
| 2021-08-15 | <b>\$7,200</b>  | REA             | 2025-03-29 | <b>\$12,810</b> | Heritage        |
| 2021-08-15 | <b>\$6,642</b>  | Huggins & Scott | 2025-07-12 | <b>\$10,065</b> | Heritage        |
| 2021-11-15 | <b>\$9,102</b>  | Huggins & Scott | 2025-09-27 | <b>\$10,675</b> | Heritage        |
| 2023-08-15 | <b>\$10,200</b> | REA             | 2026-01-31 | <b>\$14,640</b> | Heritage        |

Sources

Robert Edward Auctions, Heritage Auctions, Memory Lane, Huggins & Scott — each result recorded against its lot. We hold written permission from every one of these auction houses to display their realized prices.

THE PERSONAL RECORD

# In the owner's hand

Everything to this point could be assembled by anyone patient enough. This page could not. It is the reason a Portrait is worth keeping, and it is the half a family almost always reads first.

## Where it came from

The shop, the show, the auction, the person. The year, if you remember it.

## What it cost, and how that felt

The number matters less than whether it felt like a lot at the time.

## Who you told

Most collectors call somebody within the hour. Who was it?

## Why this one

Of everything you could have chased, this is what you went after.

## Where it is kept

Safe deposit box, vault, safe, or somewhere in the house — and how to get to it.

## Who should be called

The person your family should ring before they ring anybody else.

These lines arrive blank, and they are meant to stay in your hand rather than ours. We could set your answers in this typeface, and we will if you ask — but in fifty years the handwriting will matter more than the record does. Answer the ones you want, leave the rest, and add anything we did not think to ask. Nothing you write here is sent to us or published anywhere.

## NOT AN APPRAISAL

This document describes public auction results and an object's history. It is not an appraisal, not a valuation, and not investment advice. For a formal appraisal — for a tax filing, an insurance schedule, or a legal matter — engage a qualified appraiser.