

# **The Rogers USA Drums Big R Period 1975-1984**

## **Dating Guide For Snares and Drums**

by  
Jack McFeeters

Present day knowledge of the Rogers Big R period has long been fraught with myth, misinformation, assumptions, and a lack of sufficient research. There are no extant records for production numbers from year to year, nor for the Big R period as a whole. A number of dating guides for Rogers drums have surfaced over the years, some more accurate than others. These successive attempts made use of their predecessors, building upon them, adding to the trove of information, and thankfully, making their efforts public without restrictions. There is work currently being done to provide more accurate dating for the Cleveland, Dayton, and pre-Big R Fullerton eras.

I did not begin keeping track of serial numbers with the goal in mind to eventually write a dating guide. My interest was purely personal in the beginning. As time progressed, and I observed more drums, I began to disagree with the information that was available.

I have researched the subject for several years to make the following determinations concerning the Big R period. Many people have contributed to these findings through postings on various drum forums, as well as the many drums observed on EBay, drums that I own, and drums I have examined in person. I cannot even begin to exhaust the list of contributors, or even begin to thank all of those to whom thanks are owed. I gleaned information from any and every source available. A special thanks to all the members of The Rogers Owners Forum (ROF).

### **The Big R Badge 1975-1984**

Trademark number 1,098,732 was registered with the United States Trademark and Patent Office on August 8, 1978. The record shows the Big R Badge first used in or around December 1975. Included below are the registration document and badge variations during the Big R era.

Int. Cl.: 15

Prior U.S. Cl.: 36

United States Patent and Trademark Office

Reg. No. 1,098,732  
Registered Aug. 8, 1978

**TRADEMARK**  
Principal Register



CBS Inc. (New York corporation)  
51 W. 52nd St.  
New York, N.Y. 10019

For: MUSICAL DRUMS, in CLASS 15 (U.S. CL. 36).  
First use in or about December 1975; in commerce  
in or about December 1975.  
Applicant hereby disclaims "U.S.A." and "Drums"  
apart from the mark as shown.  
Owner of Reg. Nos. 616,564 and 844,115.

Ser. No. 84,902, filed Apr. 23, 1976.

A. D. HOOKS, Examiner



*Left: Early 1976 Five Digit Badge  
Right: 1977 Six Digit Badge*



*1980 No Serial Badge*



*Left: 1981/82 RD Serial Badge  
Right: 1983/84 D Serial Badge*



## **The Big R Period Myths**

### **Serial numbers repeat**

A few years ago, an accepted fact was that Rogers used the same serial numbers over and over in the Big R period. **This is simply not true.** Numbers do not repeat. There are no XP 8 drums that begin with D6xxxxx or D7xxxxx six digit numbers, a numbering sequence that is only found on five ply drums. There are no five ply drums with “No Serial USA” badges, a badge that is exclusive to the early Big R XP8 period. There are no five ply drums with RD badges. There are no five ply drums with badges in the D1xxxxx six digit range, a numbering sequence exclusive to later Big R XP8. Number sequences found on five ply drums never appear on XP8 drums. Number sequences found on XP8 drums never appear on five ply drums. There are No XP8 drums with five digit numbers. Five digit serial numbers only appear on early 1975 transition era Dyna-Sonic and SuperTen snares, as well as general production bass, toms, and floor toms. None of the numbers repeat. These facts are very significant; they prove that Big R serials did not repeat.

### **Serial number sequences are undependable**

For years we have heard that Roger's serial number sequences are unreliable, but the opposite is true, the sequences are dependable for dating. While numbers are not consecutive from 0 through 999,999, they are very dependable once a baseline is established for interpretation. Numbers within a specific range do not even run the full gamete of the range. Between D600000 and D700000 are 100,000 possibilities. We do not see them represented on drums. The proliferation of sales on eBay over the past ten years, has provided access to thousands of drums. It has been a great laboratory for observing specific hardware on snare drums. It has allowed observation of the construction of drums, and careful isolation of number sequences that appear exclusively on five ply shells, or on XP8 drums. When drums that were out of place due to replacement parts are carefully disregarded, I can say without a doubt, that serial numbers are a dependable means of dating the manufacture of a specific drum. This holds true whether it is a bass, tom, floor tom, Dyna-Sonic, or SuperTen.

### **How Many?**

Dyna-Sonics and SuperTens enjoyed a unique badge numbering system during the Oval Badge Period. However, the Custom Built Dyna-Sonic Badge also included all marching drums. It cannot be known exactly how many were built. During the Big R period, drums were badged as they were built. A tom, a bass, a snare, a tom, a snare..... etc. So how many specific snare drums were actually built is a question that cannot be answered by observing serial numbers, for either era.

**The SuperTen Rogers Snare Drum**  
**1973-1984 Chrome Over Steel 5x14, 6.5x14**  
**1981-1984 XP10 Ten Ply All Maple 5x14, 6.5x14, 8x14**

It is impossible to know with certainty what the highest number is for an oval badge SuperTen. This is an area where more research is needed. I have observed numbers well into the 5,000 range. I know numbers started in 1973 with a unique SuperTen badge that probably began with number 0001. Drum number 0007 sold on eBay in 2007, and was a rusted out basket case. Our only source for estimating how many SuperTen snares were built is by observing numbers on Oval Badge drums that come up for sale. We can only estimate, through observation of drums, how many Big R era drums were built. It is a number that is impossible to nail down. What I have discovered through observation of SuperTens for sale, and consultation of catalogs issued by Rogers, in the USA and Japan follows.

The 5x14 SuperTen never had a Big R “transition period.” The concluding number for the Oval Badge era was the last Oval Badge Drum built, and the beginning number in the Big R period was the first Big R SuperTen built. From 1975 through to the end of production, or until shells ran out, the Big R SuperTen was built on an Oval Badge Period shell. The badge was never relocated to the Big R Period location, two panels to the left of the throw off. All other Big R era built snare drums, did move to the new location. The only exception is the 5x14 COS SuperTen. The badge remains in the Oval Badge location, with the Oval Badge mounting holes, for the duration of production. Catalogs as late as 1983 confirm this. It is implausible to assert that Rogers kept the badge location the same on SuperTen to create a noticeable difference from the Dyna-Sonic, and retained the two oval badge screw holes as well; the 6.5x14 SuperTen, proves it.



1973 Oval Badge 0934  
1975/76 Big R D26782  
1975/76 Big R D32130  
1980 Big R “no serial”

The 6.5 SuperTen did run out of Oval Badge shells in 1976 or 1977; subsequent catalogs show the badge in the new Big R location, without oval badge screw holes. An exact date for this change is indiscernible simply because too few 6.5 drums have been available for sale.

**The Dyna-Sonic Rogers Snare Drum**  
**1961-1984**  
**1975-84 Big R Period Chrome Over Brass 5x14, 6.5x14**  
**1981-1984 XP10 Ten Ply All Maple 5x14, 6.5x14, 8x14**

Relatively few construction changes to the Dyna-Sonic are evident during the Big R period, not nearly as many as the period from 1961-75. There was the Gretsch shell, the seven line, and in 1968, the five line. Changes in the frame, changes from B&B lugs, changes in the first generation beavertail lug, the second generation beavertail, hoop anomalies, shine of the chrome, to name a few. During the Big R period, there are only a few major changes that can be observed in the COB Dyna-Sonic. Big R changes included badge relocation, a brief period of shells with no dampener, the introduction of the XP 10, all maple ten ply keller shelled Dyna-Sonics and SuperTens, a different hoop profile in 1982. C-Clip Lugs, the late Fullerton "Big R" style snare frame, and the "Big R" style Dyna-Sonic bottom hoop introduced on late issue Fullerton Oval Badge Drums are changes that were already in place when the Big R badge was introduced in 1975. Many people routinely associate these three principle pieces of hardware with Big R drums, but they were Oval Badge period changes.

**Dyna-Sonic Late 1975-76**

In late 1975 going into 1976, Oval Badge shell stock was used with the new Big R Badge covering the screw holes for the Oval Badge. These unique shells range until the high 14,000 serial range of Big R badges. I have seen some above this number, not many, with the highest as number D22641. Again, reminding you that these five digit numbers are only found on five ply drums with speckled gray interiors. This is the First Generation Transition Era Big R Dyna-Sonic. 1975 drums would, by nature of the badge introduction date on the trademark registry, be limited to very low badge numbers, (D0xxxx).

1976 Overlapping five digit numbers with six digit numbers beginning with D60xxxx. I believe the 60xxxx numbers did not advance very high in the range.

Beginning with Dyna-Sonic snare drums in the high 14,000 range and continuing well into the 40,xxx range, a shell is used that has no dampener. These are all five digit drums, and you will see them with five ply shelled sets bearing five digit serial numbers. These no dampener drums are unique to 1975/6 and are Second Generation Transition Period drums. I have observed a number of drums on e-bay lately, five digit numbers, no dampener, Big R Badge in the new location. All parts are, with a few replacement exceptions, early Big R construction. These drums are most definitely 1976, and the first true Big R Dyna-Sonics.

Initially, a drum came up for auction with no dampener and I thought, "Cool, custom order, no dampener." However, as I observed more drums showing the same characteristic, all within the same five digit serial range, I began to see this as less of an anomaly and more as a manufacturing blip, possibly caused by a mistake in the initial Big R shell order. I sat on this theory for quite a while before publishing in a post on the Rogers Owners Forum. I knew it was a bit radical and did not fit with previously held beliefs regarding the Big R period. The more drums I observed, the more certain I became that this no dampener shell was a unique early Big R period oddity. No drums that I have observed in the above mentioned serial range have a dampener, with the Big R badge in the new

location. What solidly clinched this for me was the observation of a double bass set, five ply, gray speckled interior, with all drums in five digit ranges from the 15K into the 30K ranges. This set also had its original Dyna-Sonic (five digit, no dampener) within the serial ranges represented by the overall set.

1977: Six digit numbers beginning with D70xxxx- lower D72xxxx range. I have Floor Tom D724xxx with Swivo Cast mounts, D729xxx with Memrilock.

1978: Six digit numbers running from approximately upper D725xxx-D74xxxx. Also 1978 seen the introduction of Memrilock Floor Tom Legs and Mounts replacing the Fullerton Cast Swivo. This could have been a late 1977 change over. See below on 1979 numbers.

Note: These series of numbers do not run the full gamete of numbers in each range. So I have not seen numbers past the D60xxxx or D75xxxx. Cannot explain the methodology here. I just see what I see.

1979: XP8 Eight Ply All Maple. Movement of the Badge from left or right of the mount to a 180 degree position opposite the mount. I still need to see some original owner sets and snares to more accurately determine numbering. Some early drums did have serial numbers. These are clearly visible in the initial XP8 Catalog. I do not know what the range is on these, other than possibly starting in the mid D95xxxx range. I have seen reports of drums in this badge range. I have a D955545 badge that was attached to a drum, but I have no idea what drum, it is possible it was a late Tobacco Sunburst five ply 8x12 I used as a donor drum for shell stock, (the drum was beyond restoration when I got it) or it could have been on an early XP8. This series of numbers could be on very late five ply drums, and very early eight ply drums. Unused tags have sold on Ebay in the D96xxxx range.

1980: A special thanks to Tom Taylor, who solidly established the No Serial Badge as being 1980/81, that fairly well explains why we've never seen six digit numbers beginning with an 8. If there are, I haven't seen them.

Later 1981/82 saw the reintroduction of six digit serial numbered badges with RD numbered badges. Numbers in RD95xxxx and up into RD96xxxx, D97xxxx, and RD98xxxx have been observed. All on XP8 drums. Use of the RD in the badge series made these serials unique in relation to late five ply and early XP8 issue drums. The next series of numbers drop the RD and use only a D in front of the number. This range, beginning with D100,000, only appear on XP8 drums. It was not used on five ply drums.

1982, early 1983: numbers roll over into a six digit beginning with D100,000.

1983: Mid 84 sees numbers ending with the close of production somewhere around D125,000.

In approximately 1980, the knob on the throw off changed on all snare drums, as did the dampener. We see the introduction of a rivet top knob that is used exclusively for the remainder of production. In late 82 going towards 83, there was a hoop change. The shoulders still have that characteristic Rogers profile, however, the top flange of the hoop gets much flatter. I have seen this hoop only on a very few drums, and those few are all very close to, or, above the D100000 range. The change is first observed on numbers above RD98xxxx and below D101xxx. Dampeners were discontinued from XP 10 snare drums sometime after January 1983, probably as a cost saving measure, and quite possibly, stock was running out. I cannot confirm that dampeners were discontinued from metal Dyna-Sonics and SuperTens as yet. I observed drum number D114590, a COB Dyna-Sonic built after January 1983, from the number, and it has a dampener. So I know that close to the end, it is still present. The dampener could only be eliminated by a shell not prepped for one, and I do not believe CBS would

have ordered new shells with old ones in stock to replace a part that cost less than replacing the shells.

Rogers XP10 snare drums will be dealt with in a separate essay.

My special thanks to everyone who shared information over the years, or challenged me to seek answers, and most special thanks to the Rogers Owners Forum.

<http://brogersownersforum.runboard.com/>

Jack McFeeters  
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