



Hall of Fame Debate

by Brian Stull

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Granted I don't have a vote for the Hall of Fame, but the frustration and difficulty for those who did is easy to understand.

The argument for casting approval for more than the 10 allowed candidates has been well-stated and is resulting in mathematic strategies to try and keep certain candidates on the ballot for future election.

At least part of the back log of candidates is because the philosophy of whether or not to recognized the use of PEDs—real or perceived, remains undefined.

The Hall of Fame offers the following guideline in voting:

“Voting shall be based upon the player's record, playing ability, integrity, sportsmanship, character, and contributions to the team(s) on which the player played.”

Integrity, sportsmanship, and character are all listed above—which provides argument against the inclusion of those who used PEDs or had off-the-field issues. Yet, the application is subjective as there's already several notable players in Cooperstown that have their own violations of those guidelines. Recreational drug use. Domestic issues. Etc.

Last year, the Veteran's Committee elected three managers in their first year on the ballot—Bobby Cox, Tony La Russa, and Joe Torre. The trio rank three, four, and five all-time in wins. And all managed players during their tenure that have been linked to PED use.

The Veteran's Committee is composed of the living members of the Hall of Fame, the living recipients of the J.G. Taylor Spink Award, the living recipients of the Ford C. Frick Award, and the current Veterans Committee members whose terms have not yet expired.

If the wins count for the managers, what kind of consideration should be given to those who played the games for those victories?

We will never know every player who used PEDs. And there is no way to accurately adjust the statistics for those who did.

Admittedly, my position is softening on those who used PEDs during through mid-2000's.

Barry Bonds was a great player. Roger Clemens was a great pitcher. It was a culture the entire game was guilty of allowing.

For now, I'm just not ready to pull the trigger for their vote. Or those strongly suspected of PED use.

Conflicted, yep. Hypocritical, maybe.

But a vote today for Bonds or Clemens should then also be consistent years from now for Alex Rodriguez. That doesn't sit right with me. So, here's how I would cast my votes...

1. Randy Johnson
2. John Smoltz
3. Pedro Martinez
4. Curt Schilling
5. Tim Lincecum
6. Lee Smith
7. Craig Biggio
8. Alan Trammell

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