



# Duncan to be Inducted

by Brian Stull

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<http://www.stlbaseballweekly.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/15-10-30-Dave-Duncan.mp3>

He is one of the most respected pitching coaches in the history of the game and with half of his coaching career being spent with the St. Louis Cardinals for sixteen seasons. And while he will have to wait on Cooperstown, Dave Duncan will be inducted into the St. Louis Sports Hall of Fame this November.

“I really appreciate that and I consider it an honor,” said Duncan. “I guess for me, I know there were years we had really good pitching staffs and won. There were some years where we didn’t have a bunch of known guys on that pitching staff. In 2006, I think we had four or five rookies on that pitching staff and we won, which is not very common. I think those things are the things that make me most proud and when you’re able to maybe get more out of somebody than you would have expected in the beginning, or the public expects, or even baseball people expect. Just having an association and thinking that you might have contributed a little bit to them performing above what was expected—that makes me proud.”

Pitchers such as Bob Welch or even Jeff Suppan are often cited as those who were able to turn things around under Duncan’s tutelage, but he reminds of another right-hander of importance, Kent Bottenfield.

“He was so important,” recalls Duncan. “He had a pretty decent half a year as a reliever when we traded for him from the Cubs. Because of need, I just kind of took a shot at putting him in the starting rotation and convincing him he could do it and he ended up winning 18 games. We were able to take him and trade him for Jim Edmonds, which Jim Edmonds was huge for us. That was really something I was very proud of.”

His philosophy was built around getting as many groundballs as possible, what kind of pitches produce those ground balls, and what did a pitcher need successful—concentration, focus, and simplification.

Before he entered coaching, Duncan enjoyed an 11-year playing career—which included being an All-Star in 1971 and winning a World Series with the 1972 Oakland A's.

“The guy who gave me the most trouble was Joe Coleman—he knew I couldn't hit a breaking ball and that's all he threw me and I kept swinging at it whether they were strikes or balls,” shared Duncan on the toughest pitcher he faced. “There were guys like Luis Tiant, he was really a good pitcher. Sam McDowell was a really good pitcher.”

As for the mentally toughest pitcher he ever caught or worked with, Duncan can't name just one.

“I've been so lucky to have so many guys that have been that kind of pitcher...I coached Tom Seaver for a couple years later in his career. He never threw a pitch that he didn't know exactly what he wanted to do with it. I'd put Dave Stewart in that category. I'd put Carpenter in that category. I think Woody Williams developed into being that type of pitcher. I think Adam Wainwright, guys that we know. There were guys like Jim Palmer, Hall of Famer. He didn't get into the Hall of Fame because he wasn't paying attention to what was going on. He was. He's a great pitcher. You go back to the Catfish Hunters, the Vida Blues.

“Let me put it this way, all of the guys who reach a high level of success—they don't waste pitches. They don't waste games. They're mentally and physically ready each and every time they're asked to pitch. Dennis Eckersley another good example. You just don't reach that high level of success if you're not the total package.”

The [St. Louis Sports Hall of Fame](#) induction ceremony is November 13th at the Missouri Athletic Club downtown.

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