

## Analyzing the 2015 Hall of Fame Vote

By Bill Gilbert

The Baseball Writers Association of America elected 4 players to the Hall of Fame this year for the first time since 1955, Randy Johnson (97.3%), Pedro Martinez (91.3%), John Smoltz (82.9%) and Craig Biggio (82.7%). All four easily surpassed the 75% required for election.

Of those on the ballot who were not elected, Mike Piazza came the closest with 69.9%, putting him in position for likely election next year. Twelve of the seventeen holdover candidates received more votes this year than last led by Curt Schilling (48 votes), Tim Lincecum (39 votes), Piazza (29 votes) and Biggio (27 votes).

Jeff Bagwell, who finished 6th in the balloting at 55.7%, had a disappointing showing, receiving 4 fewer votes than last year. He needs a strong move next year to get back on track. Others who received fewer votes in 2015 than 2014 were Jeff Kent (-10 votes), Mark McGwire (-8 votes), Sammy Sosa (-5 votes) and Lee Smith (-5 votes). Support for McGwire and Smith continues to decline and they are running out of time on the ballot. Smith's final year is 2015 and McGwire's is 2016 and neither are close to election. Sosa, with only 6.6% of the vote is in danger of dropping below 5.0% next year which would remove him from future ballots. Don Mattingly, in his final year on the ballot, picked up only 3 more votes to 9.1% and will drop off the ballot.

The voters are still largely negative with regards to players associated with Performance Enhancing Drugs (PEDs). Roger Clemens and Barry Bonds each picked up only 4 additional votes and are mired in the mid 30% range. It appears that voters have not changed their minds on PEDs with roughly one third supporting them and two thirds choosing not to vote for them, at least for now.

Following is a list of candidates that received votes in the election this year. For the holdovers, vote totals for last year are also shown.

Player	Years on Ballot	2014 Votes	2014 %	2015 Votes	2015 %	Difference Votes	Difference %
Randy Johnson	1			534	97.3		
Pedro Martinez	1			500	91.1		
John Smoltz	1			455	82.9		
Craig Biggio	3	427	74.8	454	82.7	27	7.9
Mike Piazza	3	355	62.2	384	69.9	29	7.7
Jeff Bagwell	5	310	54.3	306	55.7	-4	1.4
Tim Lincecum	8	263	46.1	302	55.0	39	8.9
Curt Schilling	3	167	29.2	215	39.2	48	10.0
Roger Clemens	3	202	35.4	206	37.5	4	2.1
Barry Bonds	3	198	34.7	202	36.8	4	2.1

Lee Smith	13	171	29.9	166	30.2	-5	0.3
Edgar Martinez	6	144	25.2	148	27.0	4	1.8
Alan Trammell	14	119	20.8	138	25.1	19	4.3
Mike Mussina	2	116	20.3	135	24.6	19	4.3
Jeff Kent	2	87	15.2	77	14.0	-10	-1.2
Fred McGriff	6	67	11.7	71	12.9	4	1.2
Larry Walker	5	53	10.2	65	11.8	12	1.6
Gary Sheffield	1			64	11.7		
Mark McGwire	9	63	11.0	55	10.0	-8	-1.0
Don Mattingly	15	47	8.2	50	9.1	3	0.9
Sammy Sosa	3	41	7.2	36	6.6	-5	-0.6
Nomar Garciaparra	1			30	5.5		
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Carlos Delgado				21	3.8		
Troy Percival				4	0.7		
Aaron Boone				2	0.4		
Tom Gordon				2	0.4		
Darin Erstad				1	0.2		

In addition to the three ballot newcomers who were elected, two others received enough votes to remain on the ballot, Gary Sheffield and Nomar Garciaparra, although Nomar barely made it with 5.5%. In something of a surprise, Carlos Delgado, with 10 straight 30 home run seasons, fell off the ballot in his first year.

The following seven players were on the ballot but did not receive any votes: Rich Aurilia, Tony Clark, Jermaine Dye, Cliff Floyd, Brian Giles, Eddie Guardado and Jason Schmidt.

One encouraging aspect this year is the continued increase in the average number of votes per ballot. In 2013, 569 writers voted for an average of 6.6 candidates. In 2014, 571 writers voted for an average of 8.4 candidates. This year, only 549 ballots were turned in but they continued to average 8.4 votes per ballot. If this continues, the problem of an overcrowded ballot should gradually be relieved. The change that reduces the time on the ballot from 15 to 10 years will also help. The 2016 class of ballot newcomers headlined by Ken Griffey, Jr., Trevor Hoffman, Billy Wagner and Jim Edmonds is not as strong as the last two. Griffey will make it in his first year but the others are not likely to generate much first ballot support. This should improve the chances of ballot holdovers like Piazza, Bagwell and Raines and especially Schilling and Mike Mussina with other starting pitchers out of the way. It will be a critical year for Bagwell who appears to be stuck in the 55% range.

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1/15/2015