

## Rating the '06 HOF Candidates by Win Shares

Written by Bill Gilbert  
Monday, 26 December 2005 12:00

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Rating the 2006 Hall of Fame Candidates Based on Win Shares

By Bill Gilbert 12/27/05

One of the first items of business in baseball each year is the announcement of players elected to the Hall of Fame. This leads to lots of speculation and a little analysis prior to the announcement which is scheduled for January 10.

Many systems exist for evaluating player performance. One such system, the Win Shares method, developed by Bill James in 2002, is a complex method for evaluating players which includes all aspects of performance – offense, defense and pitching. James has stated that, “Historically, 400 Win Shares means absolute enshrinement in the Hall of Fame. 300 Win Shares makes a player more likely than not to be a Hall of Famer. However, future standards may be different. Players with 300-350 Win Shares in the past have generally gone into the Hall of Fame. In the future, they more often will not”.

The 2006 class of Hall of Fame candidates is not strong. It consists of 15 holdovers and 14 players eligible for the first time. No one on the list has even 350 Win Shares. Four holdovers have over 300 Win Shares, Andre Dawson with 340, Bert Blyleven, 339, Dave Parker, 331 and Alan Trammell with 318. Will Clark heads the list of newcomers with 331 Win Shares. None of the other newcomers on the ballot have 250.

With the weak incoming class, the holdovers should gain votes. Last year, with another weak class, twelve of the holdovers gained votes with Ryne Sandberg getting enough to make it. The three that lost ground were Steve Garvey, Dave Concepcion and Don Mattingly, none of whom are serious candidates

The leading vote-getter among the 15 players who were on last year's ballot is Bruce Sutter who ranks last in Win Shares among the holdovers. With 66.7% of the votes last year, he has a chance to get the necessary 75% this year. Of the four holdovers with 300+ Win Shares, Andre

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Dawson and Bert Blyleven are the only serious candidates. Dawson has been right around the 50% mark for three years so he is unlikely to make the jump all the way to 75% this year. Blyleven, by far the most deserving pitcher on the list, has been gaining about 5 percentage points per year as voters appear to be slowly realizing how good he was. A jump to 45-50% is about all he can expect this year, but he could eventually make it.

The only other holdovers with more than 50% of the votes last year were Jim Rice (59.5%) and Goose Gossage with 55.2%. Rice has been in the 52-59% range the last 3 years. He doesn't seem to have enough momentum to make the jump to 75% this year. Gossage, like Blyleven, was largely overlooked by voters in his early years on the ballot but jumped from 40.7 to 55.2% last year. He should move up some more this year but not to 75%.

Other than Wade Boggs, last year's class was even weaker than this one. Willie McGee was the only other newcomer with enough votes to remain on the ballot and he barely sneaked in with 5.0%. Clark is the only newcomer on the ballot this year that is a serious contender and most of the other newcomers will likely drop off the ballot next year as a result of getting less than 5% of the votes.

Clark's career did not follow the path that was expected after his strong start. In his first 7 years with the Giants, he appeared to be a sure-fire Hall-of-Famer. However, the 7 years in the American League, in what should have been some of his prime years, were good but not great, and not up to HOF standards. His main attributes were his batting average (.303) and especially his on-base percentage (.384). However, he did not have the power expected of a first baseman. He hit 35 home runs in his second year in the major leagues and never again hit 30. He never had a .300-30-100 season, and after he left the Giants, he never hit more than 23 home runs. He did have a strong finish when he returned to the National League for a half season with the Cardinals. However, his record doesn't appear strong enough to get in on the first ballot.

The only other newcomer on the list that merits mention is Albert Belle. Belle had some HOF caliber years but not enough of them. His total of 243 Win Shares reflects his relatively short career which ended at the age of 34.

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This, combined with his charming personality, won't be enough for the Baseball Writers to give him significant support.

All of this leaves open the real possibility that no one will be elected in 2006.

Following is a list of Win Shares for the 29 players on the ballot. Players on the ballot for the first time are shown in bold. 2004 and 2005 voting is shown for the holdovers.

**Win**

**2004**

**2004**

**2005**

**2005**

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**Player**

**Shares**

**Votes**

**Percent**

**Votes**

**Percent**

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1

Andre

Dawson

340

253

50.0

273

52.3

2

Bert

Blyleven

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339

179

35.4

211

40.9

3

**Will Clark**

331

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4

Dave Parker

327

53

10.5

65

12.6

5

Alan Trammell

318

70

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13.8

87

16.9

6

Dale

Murphy

294

43

8.5

54

10.5

7



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Tommy John

289

111

21.9

123

23.8

8

Jim Rice

282

276

54.6

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307

59.5

9

Steve

Garvey

279

123

24.3

106

20.5

10

Dave

Concepcion

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269

57

11.3

55

10.7

11

Don Mattingly

263

65

12.9

59

11.4

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12

**Gary Gaetti**

249

13

**Albert**

**Belle**

243

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14

Jack Morris

225

133

26.3

172

33.3

15

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Willie McGee

224

26

5.0

16

Rich Gossage

223

206

40.7

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285

55.2

17

Orel Hershiser

210

18

Lee Smith

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198

185

36.6

200

38.8

19

**Dwight Gooden**

187



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20

Bruce

Sutter

168

301

59.5

344

66.7

21

Greg

Jefferies

162

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22

**Ozzie Guillen**

148

23

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**Rick**  **Aguilera**

147

24

**Doug**  **Jones**

146

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25

**John**

**Wetteland**

127

26

**Walt**

**Weiss**

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123

27

Alex

Fernandez

110

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28. **Hal Morris** 104

29. **Gary DiSarcina** 65

The players elected by the Baseball Writers since 2000 have averaged 360 Win Shares, well above all of the players on the ballot this year

Player	Year	Win Shares
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Carlton Fisk	2000	368
Tony Perez	2000	347
Dave Winfield	2001	415
Kirby Puckett	2001	281
Ozzie Smith	2002	325
Gary Carter	2003	337

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Eddie	Murray	2003	437
Paul	Molitor	2004	414
Dennis	Eckersley	2004	301
Wade	Boggs	2005	394
Ryne	Sandberg	2005	346

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**Average**                      **360**

With three strong candidates scheduled to be on the ballot next year (Cal Ripken, Jr., 427 Win Shares, Tony Gwynn, 398 and Mark McGwire, 342), the holdovers who don't make it this year will probably not make it next year either.

### Conclusions:

1. No players will be elected by the Baseball Writers this year.
2. Despite receiving 66.7% of the votes last year, Sutter will not get the necessary 75% because many writers will realize he is not the most deserving relief pitcher on the ballot.
3. Dawson will again be held back by his career .323 OBP.
4. Blyleven and Gossage will continue to move up but will fall

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short.

- |            |                 |   |
|------------|-----------------|---|
| 5.         | Rice            | will continue to fall short because of his relatively |
|            | short career.   |   |
| 6.         | Clark           | will get the most support of the newcomers but will   |
| fall       | short. No other | newcomers will come close.                            |
| 7.         | There           | will not be a groundswell of support for Gary         |
| DiSarcina. |                 |   |
| 8.         | All             | others – no chance.                                   |

If I had a ballot, I would cast votes for Blyleven, Trammell and Gossage. If I were on the Veterans Committee, I would vote for Gil Hodges, Ron Santo and Minnie Minoso. If I had a vote for the Ford Frick Award, it would be for Gene Elston.

Bill Gilbert - 12/27/05

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