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More ridiculous early Hall of Fame talk

Alright, class, the exercise is to determine the apparent Hall-of-Fame-worthiness of three certain Oakland (and former Oakland) pitchers. I'll do this the simplest way possible. I'll take all the HOF pitchers I can get information for and figure out their WARP totals after their age-26 and -28 seasons (appropriate ages for Zito and Mulder, and Hudson, respectively) and after five and six seasons of major league play (again, for the pitchers in question, respectively). To make the exercise more fun and less a history lesson, I've also included certain great modern pitchers who are still playing (Roger Clemens, Greg Maddux, Randy Johnson, and Pedro Martinez).

The below table organizes the appropriate data alphabetically, for the in-HOF stars, with the current players at the bottom of the list (in no particular order). The "Method" column tells how the player got into the Hall, whether by BBWAA vote or by the Veterans' Committee. Votes, for the players who got in by BBWAA, tell what percentage of the writers' vote they received when they were elected. That information comes from the invaluable Baseball Almanac.

| Alphabetical, with non-HOF at bottom | Name | Method | Votes | WARP_26 | WARP_28 | WARP_5 | WARP_6 | Chief Bender | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------|--------|-------|---------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|--------|------|-------------|--------------|-------------------|----------------|----------|--------|------|------|------|------|
| Veterans | 37.8 | 47.6 | 20.2 | 24 | Mordecai Brown | Veterans | 4.1 | 12.2 | 28.6 | 40 | Jim Bunning | Veterans | 16.6 | 32.3 | 23.5 | 32.3 | | | | |
| Steve Carlton | BBWAA | 95.82% | 31.5 | 51.7 | 25.6 | 31.5 | Jack Chesbro | Veterans | 2.6 | 15.4 | 21 | 35.1 | John Clarkson | Veterans | 45.2 | 72.7 | 40.4 | 45.2 | | |
| Stan Coveleski | Veterans | 4.7 | 25 | 46.2 | 55 | Dizzy Dean | BBWAA | 79.17% | 49.2 | 58.5 | 49.2 | 55.6 | Don Drysdale | BBWAA | 78.41% | 60.3 | 80.3 | 36.8 | 43.6 | |
| Dennis Eckersley | BBWAA | 83.20% | 46.8 | 55.6 | 39.3 | 44.3 | Red Faber | Veterans | 9.1 | 17.5 | 19.5 | 19.5 | Bob Feller | BBWAA | 93.75% | 51.6 | 75.1 | 38.4 | 49.2 | |
| Rollie Fingers | BBWAA | 81.16% | 20.3 | 31.3 | 20.5 | 25.5 | Whitey Ford | BBWAA | 77.81% | 24.4 | 37.1 | 33.4 | 37.1 | Pud Galvin | Veterans | 30.1 | 50.7 | 21 | 30.1 | |
| Bob Gibson | BBWAA | 84.04% | 18.9 | 31.8 | 24.3 | 31.8 | Lefty Gomez | Veterans | 34.5 | 48.7 | 28.9 | 34.5 | Burleigh Grimes | Veterans | 19.4 | 33.6 | 19.4 | 29.7 | | |
| Lefty Grove | BBWAA | 76.40% | 10.7 | 27.4 | 35.3 | 47.7 | Jesse Haines | Veterans | 3.8 | 10.9 | 18.6 | 21.7 | Waite Hoyt | Veterans | 37.8 | 52.4 | 20.9 | 26.7 | | |
| Carl Hubbell | BBWAA | 86.96% | 9.3 | 21.7 | 32.2 | 45.5 | Catfish Hunter | BBWAA | 76.27% | 41.9 | 48 | 21.1 | 25.6 | Fergie Jenkins | BBWAA | 75.40% | 42 | 62.7 | 42 | 54.7 |
| Walter Johnson | BBWAA | 83.63% | 88.1 | 115.5 | 37.9 | 54.4 | Addie Joss | Veterans | 30 | 48 | 30 | 38.2 | Tim Keefe | Veterans | 28.2 | 42.4 | 38.6 | 42.4 | | |
| Sandy Koufax | BBWAA | 86.87% | 24.8 | 44.4 | 12.7 | 19.2 | Bob Lemon | BBWAA | 78.61% | 7.6 | 30.7 | 39.9 | 47.3 | Ted Lyons | BBWAA | 86.45% | 30.2 | 40.8 | 34.3 | 40.8 |
| Juan Marichal | BBWAA | 83.69% | 29.3 | 54.2 | 29.3 | 42 | Rube Marquard | Veterans | 23.8 | 26.8 | 23.8 | 26.5 | Christy Mathewson | BBWAA | 90.71% | 72.7 | 101 | 51.4 | 57.2 | |
| Joe McGinnity | Veterans | 0 | 8.8 | 32.2 | 43.8 | Hal Newhouser | Veterans | 68.6 | 90 | 30.2 | 45 | Kid Nichols | Veterans | 71.8 | 93.6 | 52.4 | 62.9 | | | |
| Phil Niekro | BBWAA | 80.34% | 1.8 | 9.2 | 25.8 | 30.5 | Jim Palmer | BBWAA | 92.57% | 37.8 | 51.5 | 21.5 | 29.1 | Herb Pennock | BBWAA | 77.69% | 12.4 | 21 | 0.7 | 1.1 |
| Gaylord Perry | BBWAA | 77.20% | 10.1 | 25.8 | 25.8 | 33.1 | Eddie Plank | Veterans | 12.5 | 30.3 | 38.9 | 44.6 | Old Hoss Radbourn | Veterans | 5.8 | 26.5 | 43 | 53.1 | | |
| Eppa Rixey | Veterans | 23.6 | 30.4 | 17.2 | 23.6 | Robin Roberts | BBWAA | 86.86% | 55.9 | 76.4 | 42.4 | 55.9 | Red Ruffing | BBWAA | 86.93% | 29.9 | 44.1 | 24 | 29.9 | |
| Amos Rusie | Veterans | 85.8 | 93.3 | 50.2 | 66.8 | Nolan Ryan | BBWAA | 98.79% | 27.8 | 42.1 | 16.1 | 27.8 | Tom Seaver | BBWAA | 98.84% | 49.8 | 70.1 | 49.8 | 58.3 | |
| Warren Spahn | BBWAA | 82.89% | 14.5 | 28 | 37.5 | 48.5 | Don Sutton | BBWAA | 81.61% | 31 | 47 | 23 | 31 | Dazzy Vance | BBWAA | 81.67% | 0.3 | 0.1 | 39.5 | 48.8 |
| Rube Waddell | Veterans | 29.3 | 50.9 | 21.7 | 29.3 | Ed Walsh | Veterans | 19.8 | 43.8 | 35 | 43.8 | Mickey Welch | Veterans | 32.4 | 45.7 | 22.4 | 29.2 | | | |
| Hoyt Wilhelm | BBWAA | 83.80% | 0 | 5.7 | 22.5 | 23.9 | Vic Willis | Veterans | 31.9 | 45.6 | 31.9 | 39.5 | Early Wynn | BBWAA | 76.01% | 17.8 | 27.9 | 17.8 | 25.6 | |
| Cy Young | BBWAA | 76.12% | 39.4 | 63.7 | 50.4 | 63.7 | Tim Hudson | Not in | 29.7 | 45.8 | 39.7 | 45.8 | Mark Mulder | Not in | 33.3 | 33.3 | 33.3 | 33.3 | | |
| Barry Zito | Not in | 35.2 | 35.2 | 35.2 | 35.2 | Roger Clemens | Not in | 50 | 72.9 | 41.4 | 50 | Greg Maddux | Not in | 39.9 | 60.6 | 28.4 | 39.9 | | | |
| Randy Johnson | Not in | 8 | 17.8 | 27.5 | 35.8 | Pedro Martinez | Not in | 41.6 | 68.1 | 32.1 | 41.6 | | | | | | | | | |

Now, of course, the relevant averages. For players already in the Hall, the mean WARP_26 was 29.2; WARP_28 was 44.4; WARP_5 was 30.6; and WARP_6 was 38.7.

Tim Hudson looks pretty good across the board. He's certainly matched the early careers of the pitchers in this list. The WARP_28 and WARP_6 scores are of little use for Mark Mulder and Barry Zito, but their WARP_26 and WARP_5 scores are excellent compared to their compatriots through history.

Unfortunately, the Veterans' Committee isn't known for its extreme judiciousness in choosing who gets to join the Hall of Fame. Let's weed out the Veterans' selections for a second and see what happens to the various averages: WARP_26 is now 30.9; WARP_28 is 46.3; WARP_5 is 31.3; and WARP_6 is 39.4. There's surprisingly little difference here, so Hudson, Mulder, and Zito end up looking almost as good in comparison to the group that might be regarded as the cream of the Hall of Fame crop as they do to the whole group.

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I won't put any more tables here, because they're rather unwieldy, but when I sort everybody, non-HOFers and HOFers (of all stripes) alike, by WARP_26, I find Zito 22nd, Mulder 24th, and Hudson 33rd, leaving only the now-Brave below the median (and even then, just so, with 65 members of the study group). When we sort by WARP_28, Hudson gets bumped up a few notches, to 30th. Mulder and Zito have a few more seasons before we can talk about their status here, but if they want to beat Hudson's standing, they'll have to put up 12.5 and 10.6 WARP, respectively, over the next two years. Those numbers seem far from out-of-reach since both players had their worst full seasons as pros (by the by: was it coincidence that Rick Peterson left town last year?) but still put up 5.9 and 4.9 WARP in 2004.

By WARP_5, we find Hudson all the way up at the dizzying heights of 14th place, sandwiched between luminaries Bob Lemon and Dazzy Vance. Barry Zito is 24th and Mark Mulder 28th, very near their places in the WARP_26 rankings. Hudson loses a few spots in the WARP_6 standings, dropping to 18th, still a notch below Lemon.

A lot can happen to pitchers, especially young ones, and Zito and Mulder are both definitely "young veterans," with the emphasis on young (at least when considering their health possibilities). There are probably any number of pitchers who, after five seasons or six seasons, or through the age of 26 or 28, could score well in this kind of exercise. What I'm trying to say is that these numbers don't make the former Three Aces a lock for the Hall, nor does it even say it's likely that they'll get in. All it really demonstrates is that the discussion of their chances of making it to the Hall isn't a ridiculous one to have. None of the three have any "ground to make up" to pitch like the greats have. All they're supposed to do going forward is maintain.

Posted by jason in Baseball, Oakland A's at 18:16