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## ***Will Raines, Smith Benefit from Steroids Fallout?***

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Sammy Sosa will get his first crack at the Hall of Fame next year, but based on early returns, the former Cubs outfielder may have to wait a while despite his 609 career home runs and one Most Valuable Player Award.

Dozens of voters appeared to tip their hands in the 2012 election, when Mark McGwire and Rafael Palmeiro failed to garner as much as 20 percent of the vote in their seventh and third attempts, respectively, far short of the 75 percent required for induction. Like Sosa, Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens – the latter two also will make their first appearances on the ballot next year – they have been widely linked to steroids in their careers.

The beneficiaries could be Chicago hopefuls Tim Lincecum and Lee Smith, who along with Jack Morris and Jeff Bagwell were the lead runner-ups in the most recent election. All except Bagwell experienced their peak years prior to the early 1990s, the dawn of the steroids era, and their achievements may look even better to the voters who have cast weary eyes on the steroids generation.

“Those are three good names to start with right there – Morris, Raines and Smith,” one veteran Hall of Fame voter told the Chicago Baseball Museum. “I imagine there will be a lot of discussion about the steroids issue in the next few months, and they might more consideration because of it. Some voters could focus on the pre-steroids candidates and comparisons with the Hall of Famers in their era.

“It took several years for Bert Blyleven and Andre Dawson to be elected, and Morris, Raines and Smith could fall in the same category.”

Said one longtime Baseball Writers Association of America member who also requested anonymity, “The candidates who are next in line usually get looked at first, and the fact that Morris and Smith have clean backgrounds may help them a bit. But Raines and Smith have a lot of ground to make up, and it's not easy to change that many minds.”



**Former Cubs reliever Lee Smith will make his 12th appearance on the Hall of Fame ballot next year.**

Raines and Smith are long shots for induction next year, but they are in position to build on their momentum of a year ago. In the most recent vote, Raines had a 48.7 percent approval rate, which represented a hefty 11.2 percent increase from the 2011 election. Smith was selected on 50.6 percent of the ballots, a 5.3 percent jump from the last previous year.

While Raines will make his sixth bid for election, Smith faces a more urgent situation in his 11th attempt. Candidates can appear a maximum of 15 times on the BBWAA ballot.

“Based on his numbers, I'm surprised that Smith hasn't received more recognition,” the first source said. “You don't hear his name that often, which leads you to believe that he didn't pitch much. It seems that he has paid a price for being on average teams for most of his career.”

Smith owns more saves (478) than Hall of Fame pitchers Dennis Eckersley, Rollie Fingers, Rich (Goose) Gossage and Bruce Sutter. The seven-time All-Star trails only Mariano Rivera and Trevor Hoffman in the category, and both are virtual locks to become Hall of Famers in the future.

Unlike Eckersley, Fingers, Gossage and Sutter, however, Smith had no postseason success to speak of in 18 seasons. His 71-92 career record is easily worst in the group.

Raines finished his 23-year career with 2,605 hits, 1,571 runs scored and 808 stolen bases, which puts the seven-time All-Star among the best of the so-called table-setters in major league history. Only Ty Cobb, Lou Brock and Rickey Henderson exceeded those numbers, and each has his own Hall of Fame plaque.

At the same time, character and integrity are among the six areas considered for enshrinement, and Raines had a well-publicized cocaine habit early in his career. Except for the 1993 ALCS – the one-time batting champion hit .444 in a White Sox uniform -- he failed to distinguish himself in the postseason.

Three other candidates who spent at least three seasons in Chicago will be on the ballot for the first time – catcher Sandy Alomar, pitcher Roberto Hernandez and infielder Todd Walker.