

Alomar, Dawson, McGriff, Smith head list of local Hall of Fame hopefuls

By Paul Ladewski

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After a two-year absence, Chicago could get its due at the Hall of Fame induction ceremonies in Cooperstown, N.Y., next summer.

Roberto Alomar, Andre Dawson, Fred McGriff and Lee Smith head the list of local players who merit strong consideration for the honor. In order to gain induction, a candidate must be named on at least 75 percent of the ballots in the vote of Baseball Writers Association of America members.

In addition to Alomar and McGriff, one-time Chicago players Ellis Burks, Mike Jackson, Eric Karros, Robin Ventura and Todd Zeile appear on the ballot for the first time. They are joined by Harold Baines (5.9 percent) and Tim Lincecum (22.6), who last year received the minimum 5 percent of the vote required to remain under consideration.

The BBWAA will announce the results on Wednesday morning.

The last player with Chicago roots to gain induction was former White Sox pitcher Rich (Goose) Gossage, who had an 85.8 percent approval rate in the 2008 election.

A breakdown of the lead candidates:

+ Alomar: The 12 All-Star and 10-time Gold Glove-winner is widely considered to be the best second baseman of his generation.

A career .300 hitter, Alomar ranks among the leaders in hits (2,724, 53rd), doubles (504, 47th), runs (1,508, 63rd) and stolen bases (474, 40th) in major league history. He spent parts of his final two seasons in a White Sox uniform.

Chances for induction: 75 percent.

+ Dawson: In 21 seasons, Dawson totaled 2,774 hits (45th overall), 438 homer runs (36th), 1,591 RBI (34th) and eight Gold Glove awards. The eight-time All-Star and one-time Most Valuable Player spent six seasons as a Cubs outfielder.

Dawson has seen vote total increase from 56.7 to 65.9 to 67.0 percent in the last two elections, which leads some to believe that his time has come.

Chances for induction: 65 percent.

+ McGriff: In his 19-year career, the first baseman produced 493 homers (26th overall) and 1,550 RBI (41st).

McGriff never hit as many as 38 homers in any season, but he twice led the league in the category. The five-time All-Star spent one season and part of another in a Cubs uniform.

Chances for induction: 25 percent.

+ Smith: The one-time bullpen ace ranks third on the career saves list (478) and was the league leader in the category three times. His strikeout rate (8.7 per nine innings) is 14th overall.

Last year Smith was named on 44.5 percent of the ballots, his highest total since 2006 (45.0). He began his major league career with the Cubs, for whom he played in eight of his 18 seasons.

Chances for induction: 10 percent.

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