

Chicago hope: Alomar, Dawson, Smith head next Hall of Fame class

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The Cubs and White Sox sat out the Hall of Fame ceremonies in Cooperstown, N.Y., on Sunday afternoon, when Joe Gordon, Rickey Henderson and Jim Rice became the latest inductees, but the event could have a taste of Chicago next year.

Five former Chicago players will merit serious consideration in the next election, a group that features White Sox second baseman Roberto Alomar, Cubs outfielder Andre Dawson and Cubs pitcher Lee Smith. Ex-Cubs first baseman Fred McGriff and one-time White Sox outfielder Tim Lincecum round out the list.

In addition to Dawson, Lincecum and Smith, pitcher Bert Blyleven, first baseman Mark McGwire and pitcher Jack Morris will appear on the ballot again. Alomar, McGriff, shortstop Barry Larkin and designated hitter Edgar Martinez will be eligible for the first time.

Here is a look at the top local representatives:

Alomar: Chicago didn't get to see the Puerto Rico native at his best – he spent part of his last two seasons there – but he is widely considered to be the best second baseman of his generation. As such, he is considered to have the best chance to become a first-ballot selection.

Alomar was a 12-time All-Star and finished among the top 20 in the Most Valuable Player vote six times. He was selected for 11 Gold Glove and four Silver Slugger Awards. He owns more career hits than 11 second basemen in the Hall of Fame currently.

Alomar compares very favorably to former Cubs great Ryne Sandberg, the most recent inductee at the position. Of the two, Alomar has a higher batting average and more career hits, RBI, runs scored, stolen bases, Gold Glove Awards and All-Star appearances.

According to the Hall of Fame Monitor (see Baseball-Reference.com), which measures the probability for Hall of Fame induction based on career accomplishments, Alomar has a 193 score. Among eligible candidates with a higher mark, only Pete Rose (308) is not in the Hall of Fame at this time.

Career statistics, 17 seasons, .300 batting average, 2,724 hits, 210 home runs, 474 stolen bases.

Dawson: The eight-time All-Star gained only three votes (from 358 to 361) in the last election, but with fewer serious candidates ahead of him, he could make a quantum leap this time around.

In the 1980's decade, Dawson had few if any peers at his position. His career year took place in a Cubs uniform, as in 1987, he lead the league with 49 home runs and 137 RBI and claimed MVP honors. His eight Gold Glove Awards were indicative of his all-around effectiveness.

On the Hall of Fame Monitor, his 117 score ranks ahead of such Hall of Famers as Willie McCovey, Roy Campanella, Willie Stargell and Hack Wilson among others.

Career statistics: 21 seasons, .279 batting average, 2,774 hits, 438 home runs, 1,591 RBI.

McGriff: A five-time All-Star and two-time home run leader, he was among the most consistent power hitters of his time. He totaled 30-more homers 10 times and 100-or-more RBI eight times. At the same time, he never hit more than 36 homers or drove in more than 107 runs in any season.

Mark McGwire is the only eligible member of the 500 Home Run Club not in the Hall of Fame currently. McGriff totaled 493 in his career. Are seven home runs enough to keep him on the outside?

Expect the McGriff case to be debated often in the months ahead.

Career statistics: 19 seasons, .284 batting average, 2,490 hits, 493 home runs, 1,550 RBI.

Raines: By any measure, he ranks among the greatest offensive catalysts in recent decades. He led the league in stolen bases four times and ranked first or second in runs scored four times. He also was among the top four in on-base percentages five times.

If Raines had retired with a .300 batting average – he fell six points short – or distinguished himself in the postseason, then his case would be stronger. Even so, the Hall of Fame Monitor ranks him ahead of Gordon, Phil Rizzuto and Lloyd Waner, each of whom is a Hall of Fame member.

Career statistics: 23 seasons, .294 batting average, 2,605 hits, 1,571 runs scored, 808 stolen bases.

Smith: The seven-time All-Star received 240 of the 405 votes required for admittance last year, and if he had pitched in more than two postseason games in his career, then he certainly would have gotten more consideration. Nonetheless, since 1900, no pitcher with his score (135) on the Hall of Fame Monitor failed to gain induction.

Smith ranks third in saves and first in games finished on the all-time list. He also received votes in four MVP and Cy Young Award elections.

Career statistics: 18 seasons, 1,022 games, 71-92 record, 3.03 earned run average, 478 saves.

Former White Sox outfielder Ellis Burks and third baseman Robin Ventura and one-time Cubs first baseman Eric Karros and third baseman Todd Zeile will make their debuts on the ballot next year. Ex-White Sox outfielder Harold Baines will appear for the fourth time.

Other noteworthy players who will become eligible for the first time: pitcher Kevin Appier, catcher Andy Ashby, first baseman Andres Galarraga, pitcher Pat Hentgen, pitcher Mike Jackson, outfielder Ray Lankford and pitcher Shane Reynolds.

The Chicago Baseball Museum invites you to take part in its Hall of Fame poll. To cast your vote for the best local candidate in the 2010 class, [visit the Chicago Baseball Museum Facebook page](#)