

**The peak of the peak: Allen launches his most famous Sox homer -- the walkoff against the Yankees' Sparky Lyle to sweep a Sunday doubleheader before 51,904 on June 4, 1972 at old Comiskey Park.**

## ***Dick Allen best of his generation not already in HOF***

*(Part 1: Statistical Analysis of Allen's Career)*

*Editor's Note: This year's Baseball Hall of Fame Golden Era Veterans Committee votes on Sunday, Dec. 7, in San Diego to elect up to four new members of the National Baseball Hall of Fame. This is the second Veterans Committee meeting to consider candidates whose main contribution to baseball came between 1947 and 1972 – popularized as the Golden Era of baseball. In Dec. 2011, at the first meeting, the 16-member Golden Era electorate selected Cubs (and '73 Sox) third baseman Ron Santo, who was inducted the following July.*

*The results of the vote will be announced on Dec. 8. The Chicago Baseball Museum will be in San Diego covering this historic vote, which features five former White Sox players on the 10-person ballot (Minnie Minoso, Billy Pierce, Jim Kaat, Dick Allen, and Ken Boyer) – the most of any big-league franchise.*

*As a baseball historical non-for-profit educational institution, the CBM will be advocating for these Sox candidates. Before the vote, the CBM will feature stories on four of these players. The first entry featuring Billy Pierce ([‘Billy the Kid’ a sure Hall of Famer](#)) was published on Friday, Nov. 21.*

*Articles are about making the case for Minnie Minoso and Jim Kaat will be forthcoming before the Dec. 7 vote in San Diego.*

*Today's first installment of two parts is on Dick Allen. Part 1 makes the case that his stats alone qualify Allen as Hall of Fame-worthy. Part 2 will focus on his career and life, including his baseball rebirth in Chicago.*

*By Dr. David J. Fletcher, CBM President  
Posted Tuesday, November 25th, 2014*

He topped out at 18.9 percent in 1996, in his second-to-last year on the BBWAA voters ballot. In 2003, Dick Allen only got 13 out of 85 votes in the newly-formatted Veterans Committee Ballot that was composed of all the living Hall of Famers.

In 2011, Dick Allen did even not make the re-constituted Veterans Committee Golden Era ballot that prompted some controversy in baseball circles, including Stuart Miller's impassioned commentary: "Ken Boyer and Tony Oliva Are on the Ballot. Why Not Dick Allen?" in the Nov. 10, 2011 *New York Times*.

After being left off the 2011 ballot, Allen's profile was raised in June 2012 thanks to the efforts of the Chicago Baseball Museum, which partnered with the Sox to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Allen's 1972 MVP season.

He joins fellow former Sox players Ken Boyer, Billy Pierce, Jim Kaat and Minnie Minoso as one of the 10 finalists for enshrinement next year in Cooperstown.

Dick Allen belongs in the Hall of Fame. He is by far the best player of his generation not yet inducted into Cooperstown.

### **Path to Hall smoothed by self-promotion?**

Yet, some of his contemporaries enshrined in the Hall of Fame have publicly stated that Dick would already have been in the Hall of Fame if he did a little more self-promotion.

After the 2012 Dick Allen Tribute celebrating his '72 MVP season, Cubs Hall of Famer Billy Williams said: "If Dick had done more public appearances like he did recently, he would have been in the Hall of Fame years ago."

Dick, who is a very private person, feels very uncomfortable with self-promotion. While he is familiar with his basic career statistics, Allen admitted to this author in June 2012



**Bill Melton (No. 14) precedes Dick Allen back into the dugout amid the celebration after his famed walk-off homer off Sparky Lyle in 1972.**

that he had no idea about advanced sabermetrics, such as WAR and OPS+ statistics. He was amazed when I pointed out that he was tied for 19th place all-time with his 156 Adjusted OPS+ ranking.

Since Allen spent more time at first base (807 games) than third (652) or left field (256), the best comparison is with other Hall of Fame first basemen. Allen’s stats compare very favorably to other enshrined first basemen (see chart below).

In the era when pitchers dominated and the AL began the designated hitter in 1973, Allen hit 351 home runs. Orlando Cepeda, a contemporary of Allen's inducted into the Hall in 1999, hit 379 — but batted nearly 1,400 more times than Allen. Another first baseman from the same era as Allen who made the Hall of Fame was Harmon Killebrew. Allen outhit “Killer” .292 to .256; won three slugging titles to Killebrew's one, and hit more doubles and triples than Killebrew while batting about 2,500 fewer times. Another Hall of Famer, first baseman Tony Perez, broke in at the same time as Allen. Perez also hit 379 homers, but batted 3,446 more times than Dick in his 23-year career and his career batting average was .279.

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### 2003 Veterans Committee comparison of Allen, HOF first basemen

Name	Period	Years	GMS	AB	RUNS	HITS	2B	3B	HR	RBI	AVG
Allen, Dick	1963-1977	15	1749	6332	1099	1848	320	79	351	1119	.292
Cepeda, Orlando	1958-1974	17	2124	7927	1131	2351	417	27	379	1365	.297
Killebrew, Harmon	1954-1975	22	2435	8147	1283	2086	290	24	573	1584	.256
McCovey, Willie	1959-1980	22	2588	8197	1229	2211	353	46	521	1555	.270
Pérez, Tony	1964-1986	23	2777	9778	1272	2732	505	79	379	1652	.279

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Allen’s stats speak for themselves:

- Of the 10 candidates on the Golden Era ballot, Allen is the only one to have won both the Rookie of the Year award (Phillies '64 after hitting .318 with 29 homers, 91 RBIs and 201 hits) and Most Valuable Player (White Sox '72).
  - Allen has the best offensive stats of the 10 candidates, most evidenced by his position as tied for 19<sup>th</sup> all-time for Adjusted OPS (OPS+). OPS+ is one of the best measures to compare ballplayers across various eras, as it measures on-base percentage plus slugging percentage. Allen’s OPS+ 156 stat should make a lock, considering how he ranks with his contemporaries such as Hank Aaron and Willie Mays, especially in the dominant pitching era that Allen played in.
  - He has led the major leagues three times in single-season adjusted OPS (OPS+) plus, as well as three other times ranking in the top three in the league.
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**Dick Allen (No. 15 in Sox powder-blue road uniform) stands between future Hall of Famers Reggie Jackson (left) and Carl Yastrzemski as the American League lineup is introduced at the 1972 All-Star Game in Atlanta.**

- Allen had a .912 career OPS (On Base Percentage + Slugging Percentage) obtained during a severely depressed offensive era. The only player with a higher OPS during Allen's career was Aaron (.917).
- During the 10 seasons between 1964 and 1973 Allen had an Adjusted OPS (OPS+) of 165, which was the highest ranking OPS+ in the majors during that decade-long stretch and was greater than 11 Hall of Famers who played during that stretch, era including No. 2 Aaron (161), No. 3 Willie McCovey (161), No. 5 Harmon Killebrew (152), No. 6 Willie Stargell (152), No. 6 Roberto Clemente (151), No. 8 Mays (148) and No. 10 Al Kaline (140).
- Twice Allen led the league in OBP (On Base Percentage), including .420 OBP in his historic 1972 season
- He made seven All-Star Game appearances, two more appearances than fellow White Sox MVP and recent Hall of Fame inductee Frank Thomas.
- Allen hit more than .300 during six seasons.
- Seven times, he finished in the top three in the league in slugging.
- Allen finished in the top five in triples five times with 79 career three-baggers.
- He was league home-run leader twice ('72, '74) and second in home runs twice ('66, '68)
- Best of all, Allen hit in the clutch. Go ask Yankees reliever Sparky Lyle, who served up Allen's chili dog-laced walk-off pinch-hit home run that swept a Comiskey Park doubleheader on June 4, 1972.

## Advanced statistical analysis of Allen's career

Critics cite that Allen's statistics are a bit thin because he had less than 2,000 hits (1,848) in his 15-season run that was cut short for injuries, illness and other factors beyond his control. His defense was also not stellar. He had -12 dWAR, but his right-hand injury he suffered in Aug. 1967 (more information about the devastating effects of right hand injury in Part 2 of Dick Allen series that is forthcoming) greatly affected his ability to throw a ball. His offensive dominance, including his base-running, more than made up for sagging defensive skills.

When considering Hall of Fame eligibility, one must remember Sandy Koufax had only six stellar seasons out of 12-year career cut short by injury with only an average 165 career wins.

His career has also been criticized because he only had one postseason appearance (1976 Phillies).

When Allen was on top his game, he was unbelievable. His Wins Above Replacement WAR<sup>i</sup> stats prove his Hall of Fame value. He had seasons at 9.3 WAR ('72), 9.1 WAR ('64) and 7.8 WAR ('66). Every eligible player with two 9+ WAR seasons has been inducted (except for Barry Bonds, who has been suspected of statistics that have been inflated with PEDs).

*Sports Illustrated* author Jay Jaffe, who has come up with the JAWS system to rank players<sup>ii</sup>, wrote Allen was "a clear Hall Of Fame-level talent who lacked the staying power for problems not entirely of his own making." His JAWS rating Wins Above Replacement (WAR) compared each candidate's value — career and peak (best seven years) — to the players already in the Hall of Fame at his position. WAR accounts for each player's offensive and defensive contributions while adjusting for the wide variations in scoring levels that have occurred throughout baseball history. Such computations aid considerably when it comes to cross-era comparisons and more clearly defining a player's core value. Based on his JAWS ranking, Jaffe advocates that Allen be elected next month with a 58.7 WARS/45.95 peak WAR/ and a 53.3 JAWS ranking. Allen's PEAK WAR of 45.95 is one the best of all-time.

Many fellow ball-players called Allen the best hitter of his time, and when one evaluates his peak-period with advanced sabermetrics from 1964-1974 it is obvious he was:

- His career performance by new statistical matrix (Black Ink, Gray Ink, Hall of Fame Monitor) shows he is clearly of Hall of Fame caliber. He is ranked 70th all-time with a Black Ink<sup>iii</sup> score of 27 that is better than 33 current Hall of Famers, including his boyhood hero Ernie Banks (Black Ink ranked 73rd), whom Dick met when he was in the 10th grade.
- His Gray Ink test<sup>iv</sup> shows Allen ranked 75th All-Time with a score of 159 that is better than 47 current Hall of Famers, including two members of the Golden Era electorate: Joe Morgan (137th all-time Gray Ink test) and Rod Carew (90th all-time Gray Test Ink).

- He averaged 31.68 Win Shares<sup>v</sup> per 162 which is higher than any other first baseman except Lou Gehrig.
- Allen helped his teams win. His WPA (win probability added) was 46.163, fourth during this time period, behind only Willie McCovey, Williams and Hank Aaron. Allen not only helped with wins, but did it when it mattered<sup>vi</sup>.
- Despite being only 5-foot-11, Allen hit the ball far. But how powerful was he? Looking at his ISO (isolated power)<sup>vii</sup>, Allen ranks fourth during this time period (.254 – min. 3,000 PA), behind only McCovey, Aaron and Willie Stargell. Willie Mays often has been quoted: “He could hit the ball farther than anybody that I’ve seen.”
- Dick Allen ranked fourth in the period 1964-1973 for Runs Created (another next generation statistic created by Bill James, who is widely quoted for saying in 1984 Dick was the No. 2 most controversial player in baseball history behind Rogers Hornsby and that “did more to keep his teams from winning”<sup>viii</sup>). Allen created 1,075 runs, behind only Williams, Aaron and Carl Yastrzemski.
- From 1964-1972, Dick Allen topped the major leagues for Weighted Runs Created Plus (wRC+) with a 162 ranking Weighted Runs Created Plus (wRC+). This is a stat that reveals how many runs a player created for his team and demonstrates how a player helps his team win by avoiding outs and creating runs.

### **The Allen Hall of Fame Campaign**

Unlike several other candidates, Allen has no MLB team he played on trying to help him gain admission to the Hall of Fame. His campaign is strictly being organized by his fans in Philadelphia and Chicago, SABR members and other baseball historians, supplemented by some political help from Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter and the New Jersey State Legislature. Meanwhile, the Minnesota Twins are actively campaigning for Tony Oliva and Jim Kaat (who spent far more time with the Twins than the Sox). The South Siders themselves are backing the two players whose numbers were retired by the team: Minoza (No. 9) and Pierce (No. 19). The Mets are campaigning hard for Gil Hodges, who managed them to their first World Series title in 1969.

Currently, the Phillies employ Allen as a "community/fan development representative," and they have honored his wishes by not pushing publicly for his induction.

Allen has only limitedly spoken about his Hall of Fame candidacy, as he believes his career statistics speak for themselves. But there is a small contingent of supporters speaking out on his behalf led by

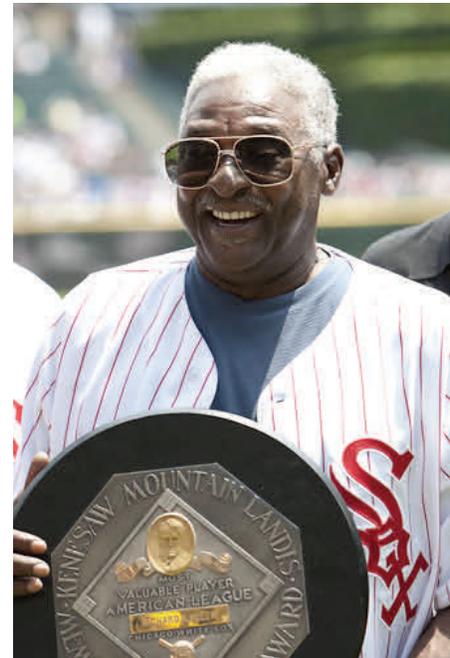


**"Frog," a former Phillies groundskeeper, directs "He Won't Campaign So We Will Explain" effort to boost Dick Allen into the Hall of Fame.**

his son Richard Allen, Jr. and former Phillies groundskeeper Mark A. Carfagno (better known as Frog), who operates a website: [www.dickallenbelongs.wordpress.com](http://www.dickallenbelongs.wordpress.com). Carfagno is obsessed with getting Allen into the Hall of Fame. He will be in San Diego when the Golden Era vote takes place.

Despite not publically campaigning, Allen does operate [www.DickAllen15.com](http://www.DickAllen15.com) along with social media sites for Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. The website does sell Allen memorabilia and has dozens of videos highlighting his career. The website also has a section on Horseracing News—Dick’s other passion, and one that he shared with Hornsby.

*Coming Next: Part 2 will focus on his career and life, including his baseball rebirth in Chicago.*



**Dick Allen during the mid-season 2012 celebration of the 40th anniversary of his Sox MVP season.**

### Footnotes

i. Wins Above Replacement (WAR) is an attempt by the sabermetric baseball community to summarize a player’s total contributions to their team in one statistic. WAR basically looks at a player and asks the question, “If this player got injured and their team had to replace them with a minor leaguer or someone from their bench, how much value would the team be losing?” This value is expressed in a wins format, so we could say that Player X is worth +6.3 wins to their team while Player Y is only worth +3.5 wins.

WAR is available in two places: FanGraphs (fWAR) and Baseball-Reference (rWAR). Both statistics use the same framework, but are calculated slightly differently and therefore sometimes show different results.

For position players and starting pitchers, here is a good rule-of-thumb chart:

Scrub	0-1 WAR
Role Player	1-2 WAR
Solid Starter	2-3 WAR
Good Player	3-4 WAR
All-Star	4-5 WAR
Superstar	5-6 WAR
MVP	6+ WAR

ii. Jay Jaffe, a writer for *Baseball Prospectus* and a member of the Baseball Writer’s Association of America, adapted WAR for a statistic he developed in 2004 called “Jaffe

Wins Above Replacement Score” or JAWS. The metric averages a player's career WAR with their seven-year peak WAR (not necessarily consecutive years). The final number is then used to measure the player's worthiness of being inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame by comparing it to the average JAWS of Hall of Fame players at that position. Baseball Reference's explanation of JAWS says, “The stated goal is to improve the Hall of Fame's standards, or at least to maintain them rather than erode them, by admitting players who are at least as good as the average Hall of Famer at the position, using a means via which longevity isn't the sole determinant of worthiness.”

iii. **Black Ink**: Named so because league leading numbers are traditionally represented with boldface type. The definition for the test used here was written up in Bill James's *The Politics of Glory*, Macmillan (May 2, 1994), p. 65-67. The essential point is to measure how often a player led the league in a variety of “important” stats. This method penalizes more recent players as they have 14-16 teams per league, while the older players had just eight. To get a point you must lead the league in that category.

iv. **Grey Ink**: Essentially the same as the Black-Ink Test, but it counts appearances in the top ten of the league. As with the Black Ink Test, this method penalizes more recent players as they have 14-16 teams per league, while the older players had just eight. To get a point you must be in the top 10 in the league in that category.

v. **Win Shares** are a calculation of the number of wins a player contributed to his team. Win Shares credit each team with three Win Shares for each win the club collects and then each player's contribution to the Win Shares is made. This another Bill James advance sabermetric matrix.

vi. How well did Allen do helping his team win in the “clutch”? According to Philly writer Ethan Witt, look at his WPA/LI, which is Situational Wins. What exactly is that? Taken directly from Baseball Reference, it is the sum of WPA divided by the leverage index for each play. WPA depends greatly on the context of the at-bats. This stat does not. To us, this described “clutch” almost to a “T”. Allen's WPA/LI was 47.457, 2nd in this time period to only Aaron.

vii. **ISO** stands for Isolated Power, in which the stat is used to determine which of a player's hits are going for extra bases. The higher the ISO, the more extra bases that player is getting.

viii. Dick told me has never met or talked to Bill James.