

Debate

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Should Barry Bonds Be in the Hall of Fame?

This legendary baseball player tested positive for steroids.
Does that mean his achievements don't count? BY RACHEL BERTSCHE

It was the bottom of the fifth inning on August 7, 2007, and San Francisco Giants star Barry Bonds was about to make baseball history.

He stood at bat, his eyes fixed on the pitcher for the opposing team.

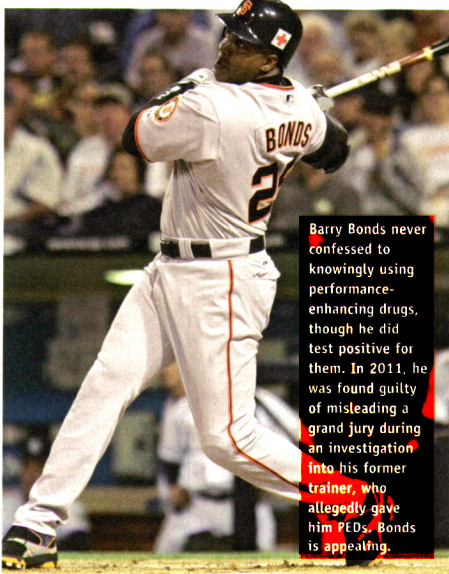
The pitcher launched a fastball. Bonds swung.

Crack! The ball soared into the bleachers. Bonds had just hit the 756th home run of his career, a new record. The crowd roared as Bonds cruised around the bases. Fireworks burst in the sky above the stadium. It was a perfect moment.

Except for one thing: He cheated.

The Dangers of Doping

A shadow was cast over Bonds's new record, despite the feeling in the stands that day. Bonds had been accused of doping, that is, using performance-enhancing drugs (PEDs). These drugs give athletes an



Barry Bonds never confessed to knowingly using performance-enhancing drugs, though he did test positive for them. In 2011, he was found guilty of misleading a grand jury during an investigation into his former trainer, who allegedly gave him PEDs. Bonds is appealing.

unfair advantage by making them stronger and faster. Some PEDs, such as **steroids**, have legitimate medical uses, but using them without a **prescription** not only is dangerous (they can have severe or fatal **side effects**), it is also against the law. On top of that, Major League Baseball (MLB) has rules banning PEDs, as do many other

sports organizations.

But Bonds is not the only player to be involved in a doping scandal. Others have doped or been accused of doping too, including big stars like Roger Clemens and Sammy Sosa. Now, fans are asking whether these players deserve a place in the Hall of Fame.

Highest Honor

The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, located in Cooperstown, New York, recognizes baseball's greatest players; to be **inducted** is the sport's

highest honor. This year, Clemens, Sosa, and Bonds were all on the ballot for the first time. Yet when the results were announced, not one of them had been chosen. In fact, *no* new players had been chosen. It turns out, many voters could not bring themselves to elect players suspected of doping.

But is that fair? During the 1990s

and early 2000s, when Clemens, Sosa, and Bonds were at the heights of their careers, doping was not actively regulated by MLB. In fact, MLB didn't test or punish players for doping until 2003.

"As players got bigger and bigger, no one said, 'I wonder why this is going on?'" says *Boston Globe* sportswriter Peter Abraham. "They just said, 'Wow, they're hitting 50 home runs!'" As Abraham sees it, players should not be excluded from the Hall of Fame for behavior that the league—and many fans—treated as acceptable.

Behind Closed Doors

Not everyone sees it that way. Hall of Fame voters must consider an athlete's character, as well as his playing record. And the fact is, doping is illegal. "Nobody was doing it publicly; it was all behind closed doors," says Scott Miller, a columnist for CBSSports.com.

Some fans believe records set by dopers shouldn't really count. However, Abraham argues that players like Bonds did not stand out because they were the only ones using PEDs; they stood out because they were the best. He estimates that at least half of professional players were using PEDs in the '90s and early 2000s. In other words, doping did not give players an unfair advantage; it gave them a chance to compete.

So will Bonds ever take his place in the Hall of Fame? At this point, it seems the majority of Hall of Fame voters are saying no. ●

What Do You Think?

Should players suspected of doping be allowed into the Hall of Fame? Use evidence from the article to support each side of this debate. Write the information on the lines below.



YES

IT'S ALL IN THE PAST.

1 Doping rules weren't actively enforced.

2

3

NO

THEY'RE CHEATERS.

1

2

3

EXAMINE POINTS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE DEBATE—AS WELL AS YOUR OWN BELIEFS—and decide whether players suspected of doping should be allowed into the Hall of Fame. State your opinion in one sentence below. This can become the thesis statement for an argument essay on this topic.

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