

Dave Parker Media Availability

December 8, 2024

Jon Shestakofsky 00:06

Well, hello everyone, and welcome to tonight's media availability with Class of 2025 Hall of Fame inductee, Dave Parker. My name is Jon Shestakofsky, Vice President of Communications and Content at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. Before we begin, please note that the session is being recorded, and transcripts will become available within the next 48 hours at the Hall of Fame's website, baseballhall.org. And as you all know, earlier today, Dave, along with Dick Allen, was elected to the Hall of Fame by the Classic Baseball Era Committee, and Dave will be inducted into the Hall of Fame on Sunday, July 27 in Cooperstown, alongside Dick Allen and any electees that may emerge from the ongoing 2025 BBWAA voting process.

In lieu of coming to Dallas tomorrow, Dave Parker will be attending a media availability in Cooperstown, New York, on Thursday, January 23 at the Hall of Fame as part of an event that will also feature any electees that emerge from the BBWAA voting. So with that, I want to say congratulations on behalf of everyone here at the Hall of Fame, Dave, and we are ready to open for questions from call participants. So if you would like to ask a question of Dave Parker, please click on Reactions at the bottom of your screen and then click the Raise Hand button.

And we will have the first question coming from Ron Blum. Ron, you can unmute yourself.

Ron Blum 01:50

Hi Dave, congratulations. In all the years of falling short on the BBWAA ballot and then some of the committee ballots, did you ever get discouraged and think this day would never come? And in some ways, does this mean more because it's been delayed?

Dave Parker 02:08

Well, I never did like the minor leagues or like not being in the Hall of Fame, but it was, I'm just glad it's over and I'm back doing what I do best.

Jon Shestakofsky 02:36

And the next question will go to Tyler Kepner. Tyler, you can unmute yourself.

Tyler Kepner 02:43

Hi Dave, big congratulations to you. When you were playing in your prime there with the Pirates and then the Reds, did you consider yourself a Hall of Famer? Did you expect to be a Hall of Famer someday?

Dave Parker 02:57

Without a doubt. "When the leaves turn brown, I'll be wearing a batting crown." That was one of my sayings. So I always thought that I was going to be a major leaguer. I told my mother at eight years old

that I would be a baseball star and one day buy her a house. Well, I did that in '78. I got that done. So I knew I would be a major leaguer.

Tyler Kepner 03:31

What was it like for you when you joined the A's and became sort of more of an elder statesman? How was your role different? And what did that Oakland experience mean to you? Well,

Dave Parker 03:46

Well, I taught them how to win. They didn't know how to win. They had all that thunder and didn't know how to win. So I was glad to be there, because I became very good friends with José (Canseco), Mark (McGwire), Dave Henderson, Walt Weiss. So I was glad to get there, because they was too nice of a guy and too good of players not to be able to win, and I taught them how to win. Don't you get mad at me, Tony (La Russa)!

Jon Shestakofsky 04:31

All right, the next question we'll go to Bill Ladson. Bill, you can unmute yourself.

Bill Ladson 04:35

Congratulations, Dave. Dave, while you were in the minor leagues, how much did Roberto Clemente help you? And also, will you wear the cap of the Pirates?

Dave Parker 04:50

I might have to split it up three way, but Clemente was an awesome player. It took a lot for me to keep up with him, because he could hit, run, throw, and I'm going to stand here and say that I could hit, run, throw too. I was, at the end of it all, the guy came up to me and asked, "Could you outrun Clemente?" I told him, yeah. He said, "Could you throw with Clemente?" I told him, yeah. And I let him guess on the third.

Bill Ladson 05:57

And will you be wearing a Pirates cap?

Dave Parker 06:01

Maybe.

Jon Shestakofsky 06:07

Alright. Next question we will go to Noah Hiles. Go right ahead, Noah.

Noah Hiles 06:12

Hi Dave, congratulations on making the Hall of Fame. I just wanted to ask, in Pittsburgh, I feel like the city and people connected with the Pirates organization have continued to advocate for you to receive this honor. They've continued to keep your name in the headlines and say that you're a deserving candidate. Have you felt that love from them throughout all of this? And if so, what does that mean that they kept pushing for you to get into the Hall of Fame all these years later?

Dave Parker 06:44

The Pirates meant a lot to me. They were a great brotherhood, and they were all always standing. I mean, I can leave, come back. Everything is the same.

Jon Shestakofsky 07:16

The next question will go to Bill Francis.

Bill Francis 07:22

Dave, congratulations. I was just wondering what your emotions were today when you got that phone call. Can you explain how you were feeling when that phone rang and you got the news?

Dave Parker 07:33

It made me feel great. Made my mother, I delivered a promise to my mother I was gonna buy her a house, and I did that. So I felt great.

Bill Francis 07:55

Any tears shed or anything?

Dave Parker 07:58

Yeah, I cried. It only took a few minutes, because I don't cry.

Bill Francis 08:08

Thank you.

Jon Shestakofsky 08:12

As a reminder, if you [AUDIO CUTS] to Robert Grayson. Robert, go right ahead.

Robert Grayson 08:26

Yes, congratulations, Dave, well deserved. I was wondering, did you find it as much fun to throw out runners as you did to get big home runs?

Dave Parker 08:37

I loved throwing out runners. I had 21 one year, had 25 another year. So I enjoyed throwing out players, and if they kept running, I would hit him in the back of the head with the ball.

Robert Grayson 09:04

Did you find that players would mention your throwing arm to you when you saw them from other teams?

Dave Parker 09:13

Yeah, I got a lot of love from American League players.

Robert Grayson 09:22

Thank you.

Dave Parker 09:24

You're welcome.

Jon Shestakofsky 09:26

Our next question will go to Justin Guerrero. Justin, go right in.

Justin Guerrero 09:33

Dave, congrats. Appreciate a few minutes of your time. I'm just curious when you reflect on the entirety of your MLB career, just how do you want to be remembered as a player?

Dave Parker 09:45

As a player? I want to be remembered as a guy that threw it all on the field, because I never ran... I never trotted to first base. I don't know if people noticed that, but I ran hard on every play. So I enjoyed playing in front of the New York fan base, Philadelphia, anywhere, and I always got that respect because I played it like it should be played – hard.

Jon Shestakofsky 10:26

Next question we will go to Andrew Destin. Andrew, go right ahead.

Andrew Destin 10:31

Dave, thank you for the time. When you look back on that 1979 season with the Pirates, the last World Series championship they had, your performance in the All-Star Game. What does that season mean to you, looking back on it? The '79 campaign in particular?

Dave Parker 10:49

I look at that '79 Series as a series that brought Stargell back to the Family, because he was losing ground with some of the Pirate players, and I didn't like seeing that. So we played one and I went to a function that we was at and told him that I wanted him to be a part of the Pirates forever. And we gave each other hugs, that love thing. And Willie hit that home run, and I was happy for that, but I knew it was over relationship-wise with Willie, because they had no need for being that there.

Jon Shestakofsky 12:03

And our next question will go to Danny Torres. Go right ahead.

Daniel Torres 12:10

Congratulations, Dave. This month, actually in 2008, marks the passing of your dear friend, Dock Ellis. If Dock Ellis was here right now and heard the news of your induction, what would he say to you?

Dave Parker 12:27

He would say, I told them... that you would. Man, they didn't believe me. Now look at him. That's what Dock would have said. I would say, let's get together, pull together, get them back on the field.

Daniel Torres 12:59

Thanks, Dave.

Dave Parker 13:02

Alright.

Jon Shestakofsky 13:03

And we have time for a few more. Next up, we'll go to Gordon Wittenmyer. Go right ahead, Gordon.

Gordon Wittenmyer 13:09

Yeah, congratulations Dave. I'm from The Cincinnati Enquirer. What do you remember from your four years going back to Cincinnati, and what did that mean to you to play for those guys back then?

Dave Parker 13:21

I was the best player they had. I did a lot of driving in runs, scoring runs...

Gordon Wittenmyer 13:47

They had a couple other pretty good players for some of those years, Eric Davis and Barry Larkin and those guys.

Dave Parker 13:53

Yeah, I saw Lark yesterday, and I saw Eric Davis too. Those are my babies. I took them, brought them out, bought them clothes. Taught them what to do, showed them what to do. Pete Rose once said that I should be giving Dave Parker half my salary. I agreed with him.

They had another young kid, Kal Daniels. He could hit, but if it had a wrinkle in it, he couldn't hit that well.

Gordon Wittenmyer 14:50

Thank you.

Jon Shestakofsky 14:52

Thanks, Gordon, and we'll go back to Tyler Kepner. Go right ahead.

Tyler Kepner 14:58

Yeah, Dave, of all the things that you did well – fielding and hitting and running, you know, hitting for average, home runs. What was your, what skill were you best at, do you think?

Dave Parker 15:11

I was a five-tool player? I could do them all. I would go out, take balls in from the outfield, just to stay sharp, and play right field.

Tyler Kepner 15:41

You were also a guy who was very fun to watch. The fans loved, and it seems like your teammates loved you. Can you just tell me that famous T-shirt that we see all the time. "If you hear any noise, it's just me and the boys boppin." What was the story behind that?

Dave Parker 16:01

Right. We were kind of dragging as a team, and we all got together, being upset with where we were in the standings. And there, I came in and told them, if you hear any noise, it's just me and the boys. Waking them up, getting them up. And it caught on. People loved it.

And don't go out and try to copyright it, and because it's mine.

Tyler Kepner 16:47

Thank you. Congratulations.

Jon Shestakofsky 16:53

Thanks, Tyler. And as we wrap up, one or two more. Bill Francis, did you have a question?

Bill Francis 16:59

No, I'm good. Thank you.

Jon Shestakofsky 17:04

Bill Ladson, did you have a follow up question?

Bill Ladson 17:07

Yes, I did. Dave, when you were a kid, I understand that you knew Frank Robinson. And what was it like to know Frank Robinson as a kid, and how much of an influence he was on you playing baseball? major

Dave Parker 17:22

Major influence. I used to meet him. We used to see them come in and they had the porthole, Thunderbird with the porthole on the side. And they both had white ones with red interior. Frank's had red interior, and Vada (Pinson) had black, so we would see him come in.

We would fight for balls outside of the stadium until we got enough to pay for whatever's gonna cost us for the day. And Frank would hit, I don't know how he hit to the day. He had that hand and arm up there like this, and you think you can sneak something in on it, and he hit it over the highway, eight-lane highway, and Vada's pet peeve was running, he could fly.

And I played with Pete also. When I first got back to playing in the minor leagues, it was base leagues then, hmm. So they got Frank hitting balls all over the post office. We had a ballpark right on the post office dime, and Frank, he was there every day. He would give me bats, ball, you know, and did me some good, because I was in the neighborhood, I was gonna knock a few people out. And Frank took care of me. He gave me bats. Vada gave me bats and ball. And it probably had a major influence on my life.

Bill Ladson 19:31

Thank you.

Dave Parker 19:33

Because I did the same thing to the youth in my neighborhood.

Jon Shestakofsky 19:41

That's great.

Bill Ladson 19:42

Thank you.

Jon Shestakofsky 19:43

What a wonderful day, what a wonderful way to end this news conference. So we'll just say thank you again for joining us, Dave, and congratulations. We do look forward to celebrating your exceptional career at the 2025 Induction Ceremony, which will take place on July 27 in Cooperstown. And thanks to all the media members for joining us on this call.

As a final note, again, rather than the previously scheduled news conference in Dallas tomorrow, instead, Dave Parker will attend a news conference [AUDIO CUTS] electees that emerge from the Baseball Writers' Association of America Hall of Fame balloting.

Thanks everyone for joining us.