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Bill, sorry to mention Shohei Ohtani again, but he is widely expected to win unanimous MVP even with the recent injury. Your HOF monitor gives 8 points for an MVP award. Do you think it should be 10 points maybe if it is an unanimous MVP?

Asked by: Stevez9753

Answered: 8/25/2023

I don't know. The reason the MVP Awards count as Hall of Fame credentials is that voters remember them, and focus on them. I doubt that very many people remember whether a vote was unanimous or not, and I doubt whether it has any influence on the voting even if people do remember. Al Rosen isn't in the Hall of Fame.

Going back to your previous query, the real problem with the Hall of Fame is not that it has no higher level, but rather, that it has no LOWER level. It is this problem--the lack of a lower level of recognition--that contributes to almost all of the problems with the selections.

Suppose that there was a lower level of post-career recognition, a level on which players like JD Drew, Julio Franco, Rico Petrocelli, Hank Bauer, David Wright, Cliff Floyd, Mike Cameron, Jose Reyes, Todd Zeile, Johnny Damon, Nomar Garciaparra, etc. . . . a level on which THOSE players were recognized and acknowledged. Then there would be a place for those fans who loved David Wright and admired him to go, and place of honor and recognition. But the fact that THERE IS NO SUCH HONOR forces people to argue that Johnny Damon is a Hall of Famer or Thurman Munson is a Hall of Famer or Omar Vizquel is a Hall of Famer, because that's all there is.

While a player is active there are a pretty good array of awards that he can win to earn recognition. He can be an All Star, a Gold Glove winner, a Silver Slugger, an MVP, a Rookie of the Year, a Comeback Player of the Year, a Fred Hutchinson Award winner or a Roberto Clemente Award Winner. But once he retires. . . pht. It's all gone. He's a Hall of Famer, or he doesn't count. THAT is what forces people to make irrational arguments for half-qualified people like Thurman Munson or Dave Stieb.

An alternative approach would be to have a 10-level Hall of Fame in which everyone who plays in the major leagues is automatically on Level 1, and certain other persons are also automatically on level one. Bob Fontaine, the scout who signed several Hall of Famers. They're automatic Hall of Famers.

Then you have some rule such as for every 3 players on Level One, one gets promoted to level 2; for every three players on Level 2, one gets promoted to Level 3, etc. You have 10 levels, but for every 19,000 players on Level 1--Clint Robinson--you will have one who is on Level 10--Willie Mays. The math is a little awkward; a 2-to-1 ratio gives you too many players on Level 10; a 3-to-1 ratio gives you too few.

Anyway, with that structure, THERE IS ALWAYS A PLACE for advocacy to go, Amos Otis is on Level 4 and I think he is worthy of Level 5, there is a place for me to go with that, a structure for me to get involved in that.

A structure like that would do more to keep baseball history alive and current, make it relevant.

And I would argue that the MVP Awards would benefit from a similar structure. In 1910 or 1911 it was decided that each league would have ONE MVP. In 1961, when there was expansion, they did

not revisit that decision, and in 1969, when the leagues split into divisions, they did not revisit that decision.

But what they COULD have done instead is this. Suppose that each TEAM named their MVP for the season. Suppose that, among the five Most Valuable (team) players, each DIVISION selected the MVP for the division. Suppose that, among the three divisional MVPs, one was selected as the MVP of the league. Suppose that, among the two league MVPs of the season, one was honored as the MVP of the major leagues.

And go even further. Suppose that, in each three-year-period, one of the three MVPs of a season was honored for having the best single season of the three-year period. Suppose that, in each decade, one player from that decade was honored for having the best single season from that decade.

Wouldn't that be fun? And think what you could do with it? I mean, shit, ESPN could fill up their calendar with MVP announcements. I wouldn't watch (unless Amos Otis was nominated), but a lot of people would. You could use it as a fund-raising system. You could create an institution to commemorate the honors.