- The AL MVP odds for Cleveland ace Shane Bieber are almost three times better than they were at the start of September
- Only two pitchers have won an MVP award since 1993
- To see how Bieber stacks up with the rest of the MVP candidates, check out the article below

Cleveland Indians ace Shane Bieber is now the rightful frontrunner in the American League MVP race. Only eight days ago, he was a middle-of-the-pack candidate at +1350, lagging behind players like Brandon Lowe (+500), Jose Abreu (+600), and Mike Trout (+633). Bieber, the AL leader in just about every important pitching statistic, has since leapfrogged all three (and more). Drastic line movement is an unsurprising byproduct of such a short season. Here's how the average AL MVP odds currently look, with only a few weeks left in the season. 2020 AL MVP Odds Player (Position, Team) Average Odds on Sept. 9 Average Odds on Sept. 1 Shane Bieber (Pitcher, Indians) +400 +1350 Mike Trout (Outfielder, Angels) +550 +633 Jose Abreu (First Baseman, White Sox) +650 +600 Nelson Cruz (Designated Hitter, Twins) +825 +833 Brandon Lowe (Second Baseman, Rays) +950 +500 Anthony Rendon (Third Baseman, Angels) +1125 +1183 Luke Voit (First Baseman, Yankees) +1250 +1367 Jose Ramirez (Third Baseman, Indians) +1500 +2033 Willy Adames (Shortstop, Rays) +1500 N/A Tim Anderson (Shortstop, White Sox) +1650 N/A Luis Robert (Outfielder, White Sox) +2000 +2833 Matt Chapman (Third Baseman, Athletics) +2100 +2233 Francisco Lindor (Shortstop, Indians) +2450 +1967 Kyle Lewis (Outfielder, Mariners) +2500 +2600 Teoscar Hernandez (Outfielder, Blue Javs) +2500 N/A

Odds as of Sept. 9th.

Is Bieber really doing to do this thing? If not, who's the reasonable play? Let's dive in. Precedent for MVP Pitchers

There is not a ton of historical precedent for pitchers winning the MVP award, though there are two fairly recent cases. Justin Verlander (2011) and Clayton Kershaw (2014) are the only pitchers to earn MVP honors dating back to 1993.

OTD in 2014, Clayton Kershaw became the first pitcher to win NL MVP since Bob Gibson in 1968. <u>pic.twitter.com/PdwTAUYZPA</u>

— MLB (@MLB) November 13, 2019

Part of this is due to the fact pitchers sort of have their own MVP already, the <u>Cy Young Award</u>. Another part of it is that starting pitchers only work every fifth day, a key differentiator from other players.

But of course, the likes of Verlander and Kershaw prove it can be done. For this conversation, that's a point in Bieber's favor.

2020 MLB AL & NL Rookie of the Year Odds Tracker Read More The Mastery of Bieber To borrow a relevant baseball phrase, Bieber's season performance is nearly the equivalent of a perfect game. His current numbers — 7-0 record, 1.25 ERA, 14.9 strikeouts per nine, 1.58 FIP — are absolutely spectacular and well worth the MVP award.

Shane Bieber, 94mph Paint.

He makes this game look so easy. pic.twitter.com/Q0AgJLuMt7

— Rob Friedman (@PitchingNinja) September 6, 2020

All nine of his starts have featured at least two of the following things: six-plus innings pitched, three or fewer runs allowed, and eight-plus strikeouts.

And yet, as other-worldly as he has been, there's cause for concern: he has four scheduled starts to go, and if even just one of those is an implosion, it would likely derail his MVP bid. He

must continue to be near-perfect.

Don't Count Out Trout

The safer pick at this point is Mike Trout. The three-time (and reigning) MVP is doing something this season he has never done before: leading the majors in home runs.

Only Nelson Cruz has a better OPS than Trout, but Cruz's value is capped by the fact he is solely a designated hitter. Trout, on the other hand, mashes baseballs while playing the premier position of center field.

Have you ever thought "I want to watch all 300 of <a>@MikeTrout's HR swings in a 60-second span"?

You're in luck! pic.twitter.com/1MkZRJ2ihW

— MLB (@MLB) <u>September 6, 2020</u>

If Bieber has a bad day, he has far fewer opportunities to redeem himself. It might simply take one rough inning to pull him out of the race.

If Trout has a bad game, he gets to go right back on the field the next day to try again. For someone as talented — and decorated — as Trout, that's all the solace a bettor can ask for.

Pick: Mike Trout (-550)

The post <u>Cy Young Favorite Shane Bieber Now the AL MVP Favorite, Too</u> appeared first on <u>Sports Betting Dime</u>.

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