

NORTHERN STATES LEAGUE
2025 HALL OF FAME ELIGIBLE PLAYERS
Class of 2024 Pitchers

Matt Albers- Like most of the pitchers used in the NSL, Albers had some fine years as well as some lousy ones, dependent on the grade he achieved for each year. Matt had 3 years with a sub-2.00 ERA and although never a closer, he was able to log usually around 60 IP. His best year was his one All-Star season in Gulf Breeze with a 1.33 ERA and 6 saves as a set-up reliever. Indeed, he probably won't draw much interest as a reliever with a minimal amount of saves. He was traded 5 times in his career which reflects his league value.

Homer Bailey- His given name is David DeWitt. Why Homer? I'm not sure it's from the Simpsons, but I can guess. IN his 12-year career, he had a sub 4.00 ERA just once- in 2012 for TMI when he checked in with a 3.02 ERA. He lost 15 games in 2 different seasons, and although he was able to start 33 times in 2013, he could notch just an average of 16 starts per season throughout his career. His career W/L is not good, and although he whiffed 188 in 2014, he also walked 85 that year. He did serve a need as an inning eater, but the numbers remain below par. Drafted in the 2nd round of the 2008 draft by TMI, he moved with the club to Ne3w Hudson in 2013 where he tossed 207.1 innings. He finished off with a year in Creekside, Sparrow Lake, and Marietta.

Jerry Blevins- The third-round pick in the 2009 draft by Keystone, Blevins had a decent if unspectacular career. He was never the saves guy (4 in 10 seasons) but did post ERAs under 4 four different times. He pitched in 59 games for York in 2013 where he had a 2.17 ERA and a 7-2 W/L mark for the First Caps. He started with Keystone and ended with Keystone with 5 trades in the middle.

Clay Buchholz- It seems as if he was a workhorse, but then again, he never started more than 28 times in the league. In fact, his top IP season was 2013 with 180.1, yet generally he was down in the 130 IP range. His career ERA is okay- but just okay. His best year was the year before he retired (2019) for Magic City (now Grant Park) with a 2.65 ERA, but just 98 IP. It is interesting to note that in 13 post season starts, he was 9-4 with a 2.30 ERA- a better mark than any of his regular seasons. Mick drafted him in the 1st round of the 2008 draft and in his first 3 years he started just 26 times.

Andrew Cashner- His entire career can be summed up in one terrific season- 2018 for Sparrow Lake when he was 17-4 with a 3.29 ERA, only to toe the slab twice in the post season and compiled a 11.00 ERA in 2 starts. Cashner had double digit losses 4 different times which makes that good year look out of place. Drafted in the third round of the 2011 draft by Albany, he toiled there for 6 years going 24-36, then went to Cleveland (3-14) and on to Sparrow Lake for the big season.

Wei-Yin Chen- Chen just barely made the ballot thanks to his 7-year career. His ERA was decent enough and he had 32 complete games in his 1st 3 years in the league for Indiana. But he was traded 3 times and had a +5.00 ERA over 2017-19. He did have 6 shutouts in 2015 and 13 for his career which is nice. Chad took him with his 1st pick in the 2013 draft. His best ERAs were 2.68 in 2015 and 2.78 in his rookie year- 2013.

Bartolo Colon- His 2nd ballot- Holy Smokes- stop the presses! A real-life pitcher here! We all knew Colon for taking the ball every 5th day and competing. In his 22 years as a starting pitcher, he had just one hiccup, but it generally cost him 5 seasons (2007-11) in the majors. Still, though, he started 516 games in his career (7th best overall) and although his ERA is slightly high, his ability to get on the bump every 5th day was

generally great. He is 18th overall in wins in his career (197) and coupled with that are 193 losses (5th overall). He punched out 2500 (15th best) and walked 1118 (9th best). His 3369 IP is 10th overall. So- given these facts is he a pitcher worthy of your vote, or just a guy that hung around? Drafted by the TMI Tigers in 1998 (2nd round), Colon started putting things together in 2003 (2.70 ERA, 18-6). But just as fast (2005) he slipped to 6.48 (13-15). After the brief 5-year lull I mentioned, he was on the hill every 5th day and although the numbers aren't sparkling, he got it done. After 10 years in TMI, he moved to East York, Albany, York, and Albany again. Despite his 22 seasons, he visited the post season just once with an 8.18 ERA in 2 starts for 2013 York. Bartolo has the highest totals in a lot of categories this year, yet how valuable was he? He pitched in 22 games at the age of 46.

Zach Duke- His career W/L of 57-71 is not good. His 19 losses in 2007 is not good. He allowed 38 HR in 2007. He was 50-64 as a starter, then thankfully was moved to the bullpen by New Hudson- pitching in a whopping 70 games in 2015 with decent success (3.55). He was drafted by Albany in 2006 and finished with Albany in 2020 with 4 teams in between. Duke tosses 208 innings in 2010 but posted a sub 4.00 ERA only his rookie year, and after moving to the bullpen (in 2012). That hits vs IP ratio does make you shudder a bit.

Cole Hamels- A real workhorse. In his 14-year career, he started more than 30 games 10 different times. His 2663 IP total is 2nd on the ballot compared to C.C. Not only that, but Hamels' ERA is a fine 3.40 for his career. He was 18-6, 3.34 in 2012 for Glenville and 17-6, 3.12 the following year for Magic City. Overall, he wound up 67 games over .500. He whiffed a career best 227 in 2014 and pitched 227 IP in 2009. He completed 46 of his 417 starts and had 31 shutouts. Yet figure this out- he was never an All-Star or an All-League player. In the post season he was 7-10 in 19 starts. He was the #6 overall pick in the 2007 draft by Glenville, and Coach spun him off to Bryan in 2013. He later had stints with Keystone, New England, and Kalamazoo. He was as solid as an every 5th day starter as there has been.

David Hernandez- I must admit- sometimes I don't remember some of the guys on the ballot. Here would be the first one this year and looking it over I see where David started 13 games in his rookie season but then moved to the pen for the rest of his career. He was the closer for Southport in 2018 (24 saves and a 1.81 ERA) where he pitched a career high 53 times in 2019. He was Mr. Irrelevant in the 2010 draft, being picked by New England- but quickly moved to East York, then a quartet of other teams.

Kelvin Herrera- His career started with a bang. He was the Sparrow Lake #1 pick in the 2013 draft and turned in his best season that year- with 72 games, a lead leading 56 saves, and his lone All-Star selection. His ERA that rookie campaign was 1.40- and the career looked as if it would be studly. But traded to Cleveland, he went 2-10, 7.41 the next year and things certainly turned sour. He did save 19 games for Southport in 2017 but that was about it. In addition the the All-Star selection, he was a one-time All-League player, grabbing the win in 3 IP in the 2013 All-League game.

Edwin Jackson- I think the "real" Edwin Jackson pitched for 14 teams in the major leagues. Here we didn't even get close as he toiled for 5 different NSL teams. After starting just 5 games for Creekside in 2005 after being selected in the 2nd round of the 2005 draft, he appeared in just one game over the next 3 seasons. Thereafter he had a nice little run of 30+ starts for 5 seasons but then would start just 58 times over the next 7 seasons. He lost 17 games with a 5.90 ERA in 2011. He appeared in just 271 games over his 16-year career.

Shawn Kelly- His career looks to be mostly 2 IP relief appearances and with such a low W/L total, I'd have to guess it was in long relief in lost causes. Kelley joined the league in 2010 with Magic City's 3rd round pick,

and spent most of the next 3 years on the injured list. He did turn in a 2.02 ERA in 49 innings for Kalamazoo but was able to save just 11 games in 11 seasons. He pitched for me in 2020- and I don't even remember him. Not his fault that my memory is shot.

Mike Leake- With 105 wins in the NSL, Leake had a solid career with an ERA approaching 4 and 9 straight seasons of 20+ starts. His best year was 2014 when he went 16-7, 3.23 for a very good Muncie team (now Southport). In 192 IP that season, he allowed just 175 hits and led the club to the post season. He notched 12 shutouts in his career and he walk/whiff rate is nice. Originally drafted by Vermont in 2011, he rode the New England shuttle for a year, then on to Muncie for 4 and finally York for 4. His best ERA was 2.90 in 2015 despite an 8-12 record.

Francisco Liriano- Somehow Liriano went an incredible 18-0, 1.04 in 2007 after being selected by Cleveland in the 1st round of that draft. For a reward, he was elected the Rookie of the Year in 2007. But right away there was trouble, and he missed the entire 2008 season. Coming back slowly he started as many as 30 games just twice the rest of the way, transitioning to the bullpen for his final year of 2020 where he appeared in 68 games for New Hudson. Whatever the injury of 2008 was, it was devastating to Francisco and he was just never the same as what that rookie year promised. He still went 87-98 after the injury and tossed 1659 innings, but the high IP mark was 191 in 2011 (210 K, 2.96)- so it is not like he gave up or anything. He was traded to Canaan in 2012, then New Hudson in 2017. The BB/K ratio is not very good. Still, though, few can argue that he came on the deck ready to go, it's just a shame that rookie year took so much out of him.

Juan Nicasio- He has one of the lowest IP totals on the ballot, a sub .500 record, and nothing to write home about. Drafted by Duneland in the 2012 draft, he quickly rewarded Dan with a 2-7, 7.83 season. In his 9 year career he was traded 5 times, finishing up with Crosstown in 2020.

Clayton Richard- A Clayton Richard goes to my church. I guess they're not the same. Richard had sort of a checkerboard career with a lot of innings pitched but just so-so results. He started 32 games in 2018 for Vermont, where he went 7-14, with a 5.35 ERA and 259 hits allowed. He was 11-14 for Green Mountain in 2011 but 0-2 in the post season and a career ERA of almost 5. Drafted by Duneland with Dan's #2 pick in 2009, he was quickly moved to Green Mt, then Vermont.

Fernando Rodney- I think of maximum effort with minimal result from Rodney. I guess his BB/K ratio is okay, but it seems to me as if he was always in trouble after a walk- in the real world as well as the NSL. In his 17-year career he was exclusive in the relief role and was called upon to save games only once- 2013 for York when he amassed 47 saves and a 2.25 ERA in 72 IP. But you can easily see that he saved just 5 more games in his career. He was a horse, taking the ball often (62 games in 2013, 61 in 2014). He was traded 7 times and toiled for that many teams- the bulk of his career (2012-19) with York.

Rodriguez- Here is his 4th ballot- The original, not the middle initial M guy. Or for that matter Frankie Rodriguez of the mid-90s. I remember this Francisco got a card despite just a few innings pitched in 2003. That didn't stop Scoop from snapping him up in the 2nd round of the 2003 Rookie Draft and he rewarded the Creekside franchise with 15 seasons of solid ball- acting as the team closer from 2006-9 (153 saves in the 4 years). He was a solid contributor in other years but nosed out by other Creekside closers in those time frames. Still, he posted a 3.52 ERA in his career which included an All-Star appearance in 2009 and 10 post-season games with 6 saves. A pair of under 2.00 ERAs (1.82 in 2005, 1.74 in 2011) were great, yet a .500 career W/L isn't. His 731 appearances are 2nd on the ballot this year.

C.C.Sabathia- At times (like this one), we vote on the Hall of Fame while that player is being enshrined in Cooperstown. Of course, here is one of those situations where Sabathia went in to the “real” Hall of Fame in July, and now it’s time to see if he is worthy for a first-time ballot in the NSL C.C. was a horse. Just give him the ball and let him go. His problem? He played for some weak teams in the NSL, yet still wound up 90 games over .500 in the W/L with a solid 3.80 ERA. From 2008-12 he started 166 times with a whopping 1189 IP. He did miss the 2015 season with an injury, but otherwise- at least until late in his career- he took the ball when it was his turn. He won 21 games twice (2008 and 2009) and 19 another time (2012). He was a 3-time All-Star as well as a 3-time All-League player. His post-season record is not good (6-8, 4.00). But along with Hamels this year, Sabathia is horse #1, Hamels #2. 19 seasons and 525 starts- guess he didn’t have to go on the i.l. every 2 starts or so. The Jericho Roscoes drafted him in the 2002 draft first round, and he won the Nolan Ryan Award in 2008. The team moved to Kalamazoo in 2009, and he stayed with the team until 2016 when he was peddled off to Green Mt and promptly lost a career high 15 games. He finished up with York, then Indiana. You can’t sneeze at 235 career wins.

Jeff Samardija- He won 99 times, and it can be said that he had a solid NSL career. But with this type of player, I always wonder how they would have done had they played their 2nd sport- in Jeff’s case football. Drafted in the 1st round of the 2009 draft by Vermont, he played 2 non-descript seasons before sitting out all of 2011. Miscast as a reliever in 2012, he pitched 87 innings but then moved to the rotation for Cleveland in 2013 (13-9, 3.86). Back to Sparrow Lake again for 2015 and it was his best season for the Stallions, 33 starts, 18-6, 2.42. After 92 starts with SL over 3 seasons, he moved to New England, then Duneland to end it. He had 16 complete games for Sparrow Lake in 2016, but his hits/IP numbers aren’t very good despite the BB/K ratio looking pretty good. He had a productive career, but no TD passes that I know of.

Tony Sipp- For every Sabathia on a roster, there are 2-3 Tony Sipp. Sipp was a 10-year reliever, with his one closer year successful (24 saves, 23.04 for 2016 Albany). But that was the only time he was in a stressful season, and the rest of his career was a mix of set-up and inning eater. He finished with a nice ERA and a +.500 W/L. Yet he probably didn’t pitch enough to be considered. JB and Keystone took him in the 2010 draft in the third round where he played 4 years, then 4 with Crosstown, followed by the final 2 in Crosstown.

Tyler Skaggs- I don’t think we’ll ever know the whole story of how he perished. His NSL career was uneventful, though, and despite a nice 36-28 W/L, there just is not enough meat on the bone. Duneland’s 2nd pick in the 2014 draft, he quickly went to Crosstown (2015-17) and on to Longstown (2018-20). The high-water mark for starts was 24 in 2019 where his 125.1 IP was also his best total.

Pedro Strop- Things looked great at the start- a 1.35 ERA in his rookie year after TMI selected him in the 5th round of the 2012 draft. He doubled that in 2013 for New Hudson, then posted an ugly 7.16 for Albany in 2014. He rebounded in 2015 for Albany, posting a 40 save season and his first and only All-Star campaign. He was a serviceable reliever through 2018 for the Wildcats, before heading off to New Freedom for 2019 (1.98) and 2020 (yikes- 8.29). As we’ve talked about all ballot long, he was one of those guys with a grade-cast as a closer in 2015. Still, though, a solid 3.47 ERA looks nice.

Jason Vargas- In his 13-year career, Vargas was injured for 2 seasons and pitched in 10 games or less in 3 others. In the meantime, he hangs his hat on 2013 for York when he was 17-10, 4.24. That year he started 33 times and combined with the previous 2 seasons he started 96 times. But his innings total quickly declined and after 2020 he was done. He played for 5 different NSL franchises, including York twice. Again, we see

Duneland in the mix as they selected Vargas in the 3rd round of the 2006 draft. He did his best work for the First Capitols (39-24 in 4 seasons).

Jordan Zimmermann- There were 2 of them- one has 2 n's at the end of his name, the other one. This is the better of the two, so I guess 2 n's are better than 1. A solid 4.02 career ERA for the 2 n and double digit wins from 2013-17. He was a middle of the rotation starter with decent numbers across the board including 1186 punch outs over 11 seasons. He did spend 2011 as a no card after being selected by Magic City in the 2010 draft, then put together a decent run of nearly 800 IP and 46 wins over the next 4 years. He was traded 3 times, including a massive 8 for 3 deal with brother Duneland. He played 5 seasons for Green Mt, In 45 IP in the post-season, he allowed just 5 ER. His best ERA total came in 2015 with a sparkling 2.56 mark.