

Dear BBWAA Hall of Fame Voter:

Over the years, I have been approached by many Hall of Fame members telling me we needed to do something to speak out about the possibility of steroid users entering the Hall of Fame. This issue has been bubbling below the surface for quite a while.

I hope you don't mind if I bring to your attention what I'm hearing.

Please keep in mind I don't speak for every single member of the Hall of Fame. I don't know how everyone feels, but I do know how many of the Hall of Famers feel.

I, along with other Hall of Fame Baseball players, have the deepest respect for you and all the writers who vote to decide who enters Baseball's most hallowed shrine, the National Baseball Hall of Fame. For some 80 years, the men and women of the BBWA have cast ballots that have made the Hall into the wonderful place it is.

I think the Hall of Fame is special. There is a sanctity to being elected to the Hall. It is revered. It is the hardest Hall of Fame to enter, of any sport in America.

But times change, and a day we all knew was coming has now arrived. Players who played during the steroid era have become eligible for entry into the Hall of Fame.

The more we Hall of Famers talk about this – and we talk about it a lot – we realize we can no longer sit silent. Many of us have come to think that silence will be considered complicity. Or that fans might think we are ok if the standards of election to the Hall of Fame are relaxed, at least relaxed enough for steroid users to enter and become members of the most sacred place in Baseball. We don't want fans ever to think that.

We hope the day never comes when known steroid users are voted into the Hall of Fame. They cheated. Steroid users don't belong here.

Players who failed drug tests, admitted using steroids, or were identified as users in Major League Baseball's investigation into steroid abuse, known as the Mitchell Report, should not get in. Those are the three criteria that many of the players and I think are right.

Now, I recognize there are players identified as users on the Mitchell Report who deny they were users. That's why this is a tricky issue. Not everything is black and white – there are shades of gray here. It's why your job as a voter is and has always been a difficult and important job. I have faith in your judgment and know that ultimately, this is your call.

But it still occurs to me that anyone who took body-altering chemicals in a deliberate effort to cheat the game we love, not to mention they cheated current and former players, and fans too, doesn't belong in the Hall of Fame. By cheating, they put up huge numbers, and they made great players who didn't cheat look smaller by comparison, taking away from their achievements and consideration for the Hall of Fame. That's not right.

And that's why I, and other Hall of Famers, feel so strongly about this.

It's gotten to the point where Hall of Famers are saying that if steroid users get in, they'll no longer come to Cooperstown for Induction Ceremonies or other events. Some feel they can't share a stage with players who did steroids. The cheating that tainted an era now risks tainting the Hall of Fame too.