

Canceling Schilling Is a Bloody Mark on Baseball

The Baseball Writers' Association of America (BBWAA) continues to block Curt Schilling's entry to the Hall of Fame, not because of his performance on the field, but because of his politics.

What should have been a straight-forward decision finalized years ago was tarnished by sports journalists' horror at Schilling's bold proclamation of conservative views. Apparently holding traditional views on [gay marriage](#) and [transgenderism](#), and [criticizing Islamic terrorists](#) are evils that carry more weight in Hall of Fame voting than a player's performances on the field.

Admittedly, Schilling hasn't been the most eloquent, polite, or even-tempered political commentator. Saying "[Rope. Tree. Journalist. Some assembly required](#)," for example, is not a good way to endear you to members of the BBWAA. But the amount of ink and vitriol spilled on Schilling's political activities by journalists is astounding. The man can hardly say *anything* without it making news somewhere as the media tries to destroy his Hall of Fame candidacy.

This vitriol against Schilling comes under the guise of the character clause of the BBWAA's [election rules](#), which states that "Voting shall be based upon the player's record, playing ability, integrity, sportsmanship, character, and contributions to the team(s) on which the player played."

Rather than focus on his record, liberal members of the BBWAA are abusing this character clause to impede Schilling's Hall of Fame case. This is demonstrated by how other baseball players are treated by the organization.

In 2016, Schilling's fourth year of eligibility, he received a

vote on 52.3 percent of ballots. By comparison, Omar Vizquel's fourth year of eligibility was 2021. He received votes on 49.1 percent of ballots, just behind Schilling's mark at the same time in his candidacy. But Vizquel had a much less impressive career than Schilling, and in December 2020 was accused of [domestic abuse](#) by his wife. He had been taken into custody by Seattle police following an incident at the couple's home in 2016.

Long time Atlanta Braves Manager Bobby Cox also incurred [accusations of domestic abuse](#) yet he was still inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2014. Does the BBWAA view Schilling's political leanings to be equivalent to beating one's spouse?

These examples demonstrate the enormous double standard politics in sports has developed recently. On the one hand, Tom Brady [continues to be negatively connected](#) to President Donald Trump after a MAGA hat was spotted in his locker in 2016. On the other, every pro sports league rushes to associate themselves with Black Lives Matter, an organization which aims to "[disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure.](#)" No one [who etches "BLM" into the pitcher's mound](#) will have their politics held against them by the BBWAA, but Schilling and his [Breitbart career](#) are anathema to sports writers who care more for politics than the game on which they are reporting.

Likewise, every [active professional](#) athlete who [comes out as gay](#) is a *cause célèbre* for the national media, regardless of their athletic prowess. Professional athletes who take a stand for traditional marriage on the other hand are shunned, no matter how [excellent their skills](#).

Hall of Fame outfielder Reggie Jackson [recently said of Schilling](#), "Freedom of Speech got your a** out of Cooperstown, bro!" If the tables are miraculously turned in 20 years or so, and a conservative majority among the BBWAA blacklists baseball players who supported Black Lives Matter, one wonders

if Jackson would hold the same views as he does on Schilling. It seems unlikely.

After receiving votes on 71.1 percent of ballots in 2021—the threshold for election is 75 percent—Schilling asked to have his name [removed from consideration](#) for the 2022 ballot, his 10th and final chance at being selected by the BBWAA:

I am requesting to be removed from the ballot. I'll defer to the veterans committee and men whose opinions actually matter and who are in a position to actually judge a player. I don't think I'm a hall of famer as I've often stated but if former players think I am then I'll accept that with honor.

Even if the BBWAA writers *would* have finally given in, Schilling made that increasingly unlikely following his controversial take on the [Jan. 6 events](#) at the Capitol. It's conceivable that those comments would bleed support for his candidacy, regardless of his letter about the selection process.

With 216 wins and the 15th most strikeouts of all time, Schilling ought to be a shoo-in for the hall. Every pitcher with [more strikeouts](#) than Schilling not connected to performance enhancing drugs has already been elected.

A six-time all-star and three-time World Series winner, [Schilling](#) accumulated more [Wins Above Replacement](#) (a single number metric used to evaluate a player's total worth) than over 100 players already in the Hall of Fame, including more than 2020 first-ballot inductee [Derek Jeter](#) and nearly double that of the great [Catfish Hunter](#).

Aside from all that, Schilling has a track record of generous achievements that bolster his case according to the BBWAA election rules' character clause. He did yeoman's [work](#) for [ALS research](#) long before the ice bucket challenge came along, as well as for [skin cancer](#).

Schilling did not use performance enhancing drugs and was vociferously opposed to them, [defending the integrity of Sen. George Mitchell](#) (D-ME) as Congress investigated drug abuse by MLB players. He never received domestic abuse allegations like Vizquel or Cox, and never had issues of marital infidelity like Clemens or Barry Bonds. Paul Molitor [abused illicit drugs](#) and Wade Boggs admitted on national television to [a sex addiction](#), but both men sailed in to the Hall of Fame on their [first attempts](#).

Any baseball writer who thinks that Schilling's career was not good enough to justify enshrining him in the Hall of Fame is incredibly misguided. Anyone who believes that the liberal bias of baseball journalists is not the thing keeping Schilling out is simply deluding themselves.

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