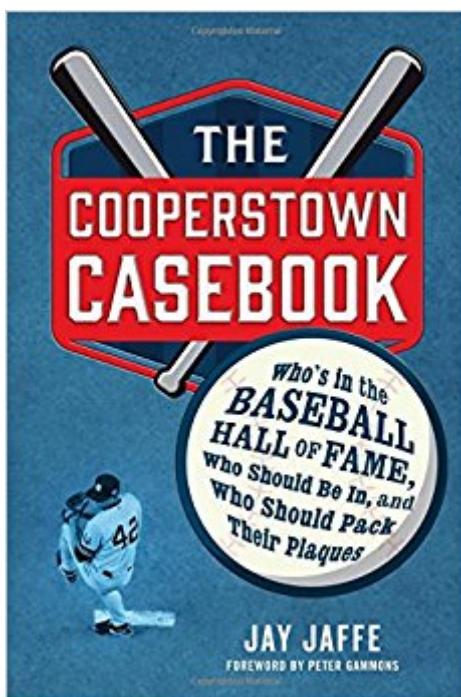


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# The Cooperstown Casebook: Who's In The Baseball Hall Of Fame, Who Should Be In, And Who Should Pack Their Plaques



## Synopsis

The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, tucked away in upstate New York in a small town called Cooperstown, is far from any major media market or big league stadium. Yet no sports hall of fameâ™s membership is so hallowed, nor its qualifications so debated, nor its voting process so dissected. Since its founding in 1936, the Hall of Fameâ™s standards for election have been nebulous, and its selection processes arcane, resulting in confusion among voters, not to mention mistakes in who has been recognized and who has been bypassed. Numerous so-called âœgreatsâ• have been inducted despite having not been so great, while popular but controversial players such as all-time home run leader Barry Bonds and all-time hits leader Pete Rose are on the outside looking in. Now, in *The Cooperstown Casebook*, Jay Jaffe shows us how to use his revolutionary ranking system to ensure the right players are recognized. The foundation of Jaffeâ™s approach is his JAWS system, an acronym for the Jaffe WAR Score, which he developed over a decade ago. Through JAWS, each candidate can be objectively compared on the basis of career and peak value to the players at his position who are already in the Hall of Fame. Because of its utility, JAWS has gained an increasing amount of exposure in recent years. Through his analysis, Jaffe shows why the Hall of Fame still matters and how it can remain relevant in the 21st century.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"There is no one whose insights I value more, come Hall of Fame season, than Jay Jaffe. And there is no one whose invention (JAWS) has made my life easier as a voter than Jay Jaffe. He's Bill James and Thomas Edison rolled into one!" â• Jayson Stark, baseball writing legend "With *The Cooperstown Casebook*, Jay Jaffe has given us the definitive guide to the greatest players in

baseball history, and the Hall of Fame. Smart and a lot of fun, this book reads like some of Bill James's finest work, which is the highest compliment a seamhead who grew up on Bill James can offer." •Jonah Keri, bestselling author of *The Extra 2% and Up, Up, & Away*"Jay Jaffe has revolutionized how we think about not just the Hall of Fame, but about baseball itself. This book taught me much about the Hall of Fame, but it taught me even more about baseball. I am smarter for having read it, and, even better, it's a blast to read." •Will Leitch, author of *Are We Winning?* and *God Save the Fan*, senior writer for *Sports On Earth*, and founder of *Deadspin*"Jaffe pulls no punches here, yet he shares enough pure information to make this nearly indispensable for informed debate." •Booklist (starred review)"For those who like to wade into the statistical weeds of baseball " to analyze player performance using todayâ™s advanced metrics " The Cooperstown Casebook delivers." •The Christian Science Monitor"Jay Jaffe's *The Cooperstown Casebook* reminds me so much of vintage Bill James writing, like the *New Bill James Historical Abstract*, in the best possible way." •Keith Law, ESPN.com senior baseball writer

JAY JAFFE is a contributing baseball writer for *SI.com*. He is the founder of the *Futility Infielder* website, one of the oldest baseball blogs, and from 2005-2012 was a columnist for *Baseball Prospectus*. He has been a recurring guest on *MLB Networkâ™s MLB Now* and *Clubhouse Confidential* shows and a member of the *Baseball Writers Association of America* since 2011. He lives in Brooklyn. *The Cooperstown Casebook* is his first book.

Granted, this book is exactly something I like to read but Jaffe does a great job in laying out various cases for and against candidates for the Baseball Hall of Fame. Yeah, I know, it's not the most important topic but everything doesn't have to be life or death. I would have liked Jaffe to explain his thinking on JAWS, the statistic that he created to measure which players are Hall-Worthy, but I'm sure there's an explanation somewhere on the web. This will be a book that I will pick up randomly in the future to refresh my memory.

very interesting. well put arguments re past and future " Hall of Famers" Sometimes too analytical but the writing is excellent. I must admit some of the criteria used was somewhat esoteric.

Well written and researched. More a book for true stat heads (which I am not), but still found it interesting, with good explanations of the newer baseball stats employed here--and why they are a good measure of a player's worth.

I bought this as a gift for my son, who is a huge sport's fan. He loved it!

This book is an essential read for any fan of the history of baseball.

Very informative book.

I've been reading the words of Jay Jaffe since at least 2004 (he wrote for Baseball Prospectus's site and on their annual for many years; now he pens for Sports Illustrated). He has been writing about the Hall of Fame for the better part of two decades. Mr. Jaffe created the JAWS system, a unique way of evaluating both the peak and the entire career of every qualified player (10 year veteran). His JAWS system is used throughout the industry, and is referred to by writers throughout the baseball spectrum each December, January, and July when the Hall of Fame receives its greatest attention. Like a rock band that worked on their first album for years, this is a surefire baseball hit. Mr. Jaffe is able to combine some basic statistical analysis with a good narrative style along with some funny comments. The first hundred pages has a number of chapters that provide the history, methods, and insights about the hall of fame. The next three hundred pages are evaluations of players in the Hall of Fame and those that are currently eligible or will be eligible soon (Mr. Jaffe also makes the case for people that have been unfairly passed over - Alan Trammel rates high on that list). I'm comfortable saying that there are two great books on the baseball hall of fame: Bill James's "The Politics of Glory" and now "The Cooperstown Casebook." If your favorite player didn't make the cut, Jaffe happily points out that it is because he hates that player, your team, and you.\* that last bit is a joke, but baseball writers get inundated with angry emails and comments about how they hate that particular fans' team

I've enjoyed Jaffe's work online for a few years as I love the Hall of Fame. This book is broken into two sections. The first is a history of the HOF and the voting practices used to induct players. The second part does a nice job of exploring the candidacy of players on the outside looking in (and the worthiness of those who have been elected) based on Jaffe's JAWS stat, which is a WAR-based calculation of total WAR and peak WAR. It makes for some interesting reading and is recommended to baseball fans, especially those interested in the Hall of Fame. Couple of problems. First is the treatment of Jack Morris' candidacy. I'm not a huge supporter of Morris to get in the HOF. But Jaffe notes that his WAR stats fall short of the JAWS standard. The problem is that Jaffe is only looking at

WAR from baseball-reference.com. As another review noted, Morris' WAR from Fangraphs is a quite a bit higher. Jaffe has his JAWS stat tied in with Baseball Reference and mentions Fangraphs only in passing. This would have been an excellent place - and Jaffe easily someone who could handle the job - to discuss the difference in how WAR is calculated from those two websites. Instead, we don't get anything. This could be an oversight. Or, since Jaffe has a relationship with Baseball Reference, it could be something worse, like Jaffe being disingenuous. Whatever the reasoning, it stood out to me and generally weakens the overall argument for cases like Morris, where the numbers from the two methods are far off. I love WAR and created a draft analysis website based on it. But when it comes to the Hall of Fame and the DH, it seems like some tweaks are needed. For example, Jaffe goes into detail about Edgar Martinez' worthiness of election and notes the difference in WAR-value between Martinez and Griffey was merely a half a run in a seven year period (1995 to 2001) during which Griffey won an MVP, four Gold Gloves and led the AL in dingers three times. This comparison fails in that Griffey missed a large chunk of 1995 after he broke his wrist crashing into the outfield wall trying to make a catch - a on the job hazard that Martinez largely avoided since he played DH. Downplaying Griffey's accomplishments to lift up Martinez fell flat with me. Contextually, how many more games would Martinez have missed over the course of his career if he had to play the field 150+ times per year? Seems like that could be quantified and should be factored in to the discussion. Couple of other smaller problems. Jaffe and his editors also somehow managed to misspell the name of Puerto Rican baseball pioneer Hiram Bithorn (Birthorn?) in the discussion on Minnie Minoso. The index is also incomplete. As noted earlier, recommended to fans of baseball and its history.

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