

McGwire Strikes Out!

Steroid scandal blocks slugger from Hall of Fame.

Two star athletes will join the National Baseball Hall of Fame this summer [2007]—Cal Ripken Jr. and Tony Gwynn. Former St. Louis Cardinals slugger Mark McGwire, however, will have to wait for admission.

McGwire didn't come close to receiving the 75 percent of the votes required for a player to be elected. This is the first year McGwire was **eligible**, or qualified, for the honor. (To be on the ballot, an athlete must be retired for at least five years.)



AP/Worldwide Photos

Mark McGwire

McGwire is suspected of having used **steroids** when he broke a major-league record with 70 home runs in the 1998 season. Steroids are drugs that build up muscles to increase strength. During his career, McGwire hit 583 home runs, the seventh highest of all time. Before joining the Cardinals, he played first base for the Oakland Athletics.

Retired Baltimore Orioles shortstop Ripken and San Diego Padres outfielder Gwynn have never been suspected of using steroids. They are admired by many baseball fans for their fairness and honesty. Both played their entire careers on one team. In July [2007], the pair will be **inducted**, or admitted, into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York.

Questionable Career?

McGwire has never openly admitted to steroid use. However, during a hearing before the U.S. Congress in 2005, he did not deny using the muscle-building drugs. That testimony has led many people to believe that McGwire did use steroids. In 2002, Major League Baseball banned the use of the drugs, which are **hazardous**, or dangerous, to a person's health.

Reading Passage

After learning he was not voted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame, McGwire defended his baseball career. "I had an absolutely wonderful career that I'm very proud of," he told the *Daily Titan* newspaper of California State University, Fullerton. McGwire added that he wasn't in control of getting into the Hall of Fame. "I was in control of hitting the ball."

Two New Hall of Famers

Check out the stats for the two newest members of the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Cal Ripken Jr.

Ripken grew up near Baltimore, Maryland, where he played pro baseball throughout his 21-year career. He was a two-time American League Most Valuable Player and set a record for playing the most games in a row: 2,632.

Team: Baltimore Orioles (1981—2001)

Positions: shortstop and third base

Games played: 3,001

Batting average: .276

Home runs: 431

Runs batted in (RBIs): 1,695

Total hits: 3,184

Tony Gwynn

Gwynn grew up in California, where he played basketball and baseball. He decided to play baseball professionally and became one of the sport's best hitters. During his 20-year career, he led the National League in batting average eight times.

Team: San Diego Padres (1982—2001)

Position: right field

Games played: 2,440

Batting average: .338

Home runs: 135

RBIs: 1,138

Total hits: 3,141

Question Sheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

“McGwire Strikes Out” Questions

- _____ 1. Cal Ripken Jr. and Tony Gwynn always played on one team. This shows their
- a. loyalty.
 - b. honesty.
 - c. strength.
 - d. fame.
- _____ 2. Which of the following shows honesty?
- a. McGwire always played for the Cardinals.
 - b. McGwire did not deny steroid use.
 - c. McGwire hit 70 home runs in 1998.
 - d. McGwire left the Athletics to play for the Cardinals.
- _____ 3. Which sentence does *not* use “eligible” correctly?
- a. He was not eligible for the scholarship because of his grades.
 - b. She doesn't like eligible mashed potatoes.
 - c. To be eligible to get a driver's license you need to be 16.
 - d. He was eligible to be president.
- _____ 4. Being voted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame, shows a player's
- a. athleticism and sportsmanship.
 - b. wealth and power.
 - c. interest and drive.
 - d. dishonesty and deceit.
- _____ 5. Mark McGwire should not be inducted into the Hall of Fame. Is this a fact or opinion? Explain.

Question Sheet

Name: _____

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“McGwire Strikes Out” Answer Sheet

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a. athleticism and sportsmanship.
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- F/O 5. Mark McGwire should not be inducted into the Hall of Fame. Is this a fact or opinion? Explain.

Answers will vary. This statement is an opinion. Not everyone ___ agrees. Some say that he should be inducted and some say that he should not because of his suspected steroid use. _____

Suggested Additional Vocabulary
admire, banned, stats, scandal, suspected