

# Griffey elected to Hall with highest percentage

By RONALD BLUM  
AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK — Ken Griffey Jr. was considered Mr. Clean during 22 years in the major leagues, untainted by accusations of drug use as he climbed the home-run list during the height of the Steroids Era.

He nearly made a clean sweep in Hall of Fame voting.

Griffey received 437 of 440 votes in his first appearance on the Baseball Writers' Association of America ballot, a record 99.3 percent.

"It's real simple," he explained after Wednesday's announcement. "I've always said that I've got to look my kids in the eyes and you want to play fair."

Mike Piazza, the top offensive catcher in baseball history, was elected, too, and will be inducted along with Griffey in Cooperstown on July 24. Among the many muscled sluggers whose accomplishments were questioned during a time when chemists preyed on clubhousees, Piazza was made to wait until his fourth appearance on the ballot. After falling 28 votes shy last year, he was selected on 365 (83 percent).

He wouldn't say whether he was upset about being sullied by suspicions.

"That's the freedom we have," Piazza maintained. "You can say these things, and that's the country we live in."



Seattle Mariners' Ken Griffey Jr. smiles from beneath a pile of teammates who mobbed him after he scored the winning run in the bottom of the 11th inning of a baseball game against the New York Yankees in Seattle in 1995.

Elaine Thompson/AP Photo

Griffey topped the previous high percentage of 98.84, set when Tom Seaver appeared on 425 of 430 ballots in 1992. The identities of the three writers who did not vote for Griffey was not immediately known.

"I can't be upset," he said. "It's just an honor to be elected, and to have the highest percentage is definitely a shock."

A player needs to appear on 75 percent of ballots to gain election. Jeff Bagwell missed by 15 votes and Tim Lincecum by 23. Trevor Hoffman, second on the career saves list and appearing on the ballot for the first time, was 34 short.

Total ballots dropped by 109 from last year after writers who have not been active for 10 years were eliminated under a rules change by the Hall's board of directors. With a younger average electorate, Roger Clemens rose to 45 percent and Barry Bonds to 44 percent, both up from about 37 percent last year. Clemens has denied using performance-enhancing drugs, and Bonds said he never knowingly took any banned substances.

"They were Hall of Famers before all this stuff started," Griffey said.

Mark McGwire, who admitted using steroids, re-

ceived 12 percent in his 10th and final ballot appearance.

Half of baseball's top 10 home run hitters are not in the Hall: Bonds (762), Alex Rodriguez (654), Jim Thome (612), Sammy Sosa (609) and McGwire (583). Rodriguez, who served a yearlong drug suspension in 2014, remains active. Thome's first appearance on the ballot will be in 2018.

Griffey believes drug-testing, which began in baseball in 2003, should eliminate the possibility of stigma for the current generation of players.

"There won't be any questions and you'll know from here on out," he said.

## Elder Griffey beams about son entering Hall of Fame

By TIM BOOTH  
AP Sports Writer

SEATTLE — For a moment, forget about what Ken Griffey Jr. was as a professional.

Ken Griffey Sr. remembers a time when his son was a kid, before he became The Kid, running around the Cincinnati Reds clubhouse with the sons of other players like Tony Perez and Pete Rose.

And, of course, wearing his dad's hat backward in order to see.

"You're talking about a kid 7, 8, 9 years old and his thinking was, 'I can't see to catch the ball, I got to do something to make this hat fit.' So he just turned it around backward and he got used to doing that," Ken Griffey Sr. recalled on Wednesday after his son was elected to baseball's Hall of Fame. "He would come in all the time and turn it around backward just to play catch. And that's what was the funny part. A lot of people didn't understand it. ... He never disrespected the game. This was a game he knew and he loved and he enjoyed playing."

The younger Griffey took his place in the Hall along with Mike Piazza on Wednesday. Griffey will go to Cooperstown with the highest vote percentage at 99.3, getting 437 of 440 ballots. That bettered Tom Seaver's 98.84 in 1992.

Griffey's No. 24 was flying high, too, on a banner

atop Seattle's famed Space Needle hours after his election.

The backward hat was a signature of Griffey as much as his smile, the flawless swing and the highlight catches. The elder Griffey said the family was hoping to get the call on his son's first year of eligibility; the highest vote percentage was a shock.

"I'm just a proud father, just glad everything went the right way," Griffey said. "He did the things that he was supposed to do the right way and that is what is most important to me."

The two Griffey's will be linked as father-and-son professionals and specifically the time they spent with the Mariners in the same lineup in the 1990-91 seasons before the elder Griffey retired. When they were in the lineup together, father typically batted second and son third. They homered back-to-back in September 1990 at Angels Stadium off Kirk McCaskill.

For the older Griffey, being in the lineup together was special — and a little odd the first time.

"It's the first time I ever heard me being in the batter's box and hearing somebody holler out 'Let's go dad!' and he's the hitter behind me," Griffey said. "That was a strange feeling. I had to step out of the batter's box and get myself back in order to think about what I've got to do, which is try to get a base hit."

## Fishermen host games Friday, Saturday

The Daily Astorian

ESTACADA — Two bits of good news this week for the Astoria boys basketball team: A 58-50 win at Estacada Tuesday, and news that starter Justin Fruith does not have a fractured knee cap, and will return in two to three weeks, Astoria coach Kevin Goin said.

Fruith injured his knee vs. Sandy in the finale of the Vince Dulcich Tournament.

In the meantime, Derek Jarrett scored a game-high 23 points in Tuesday's win, which included a pair of

dunks to close out the contest.

Ryan Palek added 10 points and Ole Englund scored eight for Astoria, which led 20-8 after one quarter.

Tied 31-31 at halftime, the Fishermen outscored the Rangers 12-6 in the third period.

Astoria continues non-league play Friday, when the Fishermen host North Marion for a girls-boys doubleheader, with the tip-off at 5:30 p.m.

The action continues Saturday, when Astoria hosts a doubleheader with Stayton, beginning at 4:30 p.m.

## NFC Playoff Picture: Every team has a flaw, but also reasons for hope

By ARNIE STAPLETON  
AP Pro Football Writer

Carolina didn't make it to the playoffs perfect, and maybe that's a good thing as they rest and recalibrate for the playoffs.

Arizona fended off Seattle, which came storming back from a stumbling start.

The Vikings overtook the Packers in the North but Green Bay reached the playoffs once again, and the Redskins capitalized on a bad division and a good quarterback decision to return to the postseason party.

Each of the half-dozen NFC teams still standing have reason to believe they'll put their fingerprints on the Lombardi Trophy next month. But each also has a major flaw that could derail those dreams.

The NFC gets going Sunday when the Seahawks (10-6) visit the Vikings (11-5). Then, the Redskins (9-7) host the Packers (10-6).

The Panthers (15-1) and Cardinals (13-3) each earned a bye.

Here's a look at the biggest strength and weakness of each of the six NFC playoff teams:

### 1. PANTHERS:

- Why they'll hoist the Lombardi: Cam Newton. The Panthers scored more points than any team in the league this season behind the versatile Newton, a leading MVP candidate. He became the first NFL quarterback to throw for 35 touchdowns and run for 10 scores in the best season of his five-year career.

- Why they won't: Health. The Panthers are struggling in recent weeks with their pass rush and lost starting cornerback Charles Tillman for the season in Week 17 to a torn ACL. Tillman is the second cornerback to suffer a season-ending injury in the last week.

- "We find our edge in playing in front of our home crowd. Everything feels just right. We don't have to travel to a hostile environment." — Newton on having home-field advantage, and playing in a stadium where they have won 11 in a row.

### 2. CARDINALS:

- Why they'll hoist the Lombardi: NFL's best offense. Carson Palmer set franchise re-



Seattle Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson (3) throws as Arizona Cardinals cornerback Jerrard Powers (25) looks on during the first half of an NFL football game, Sunday, in Glendale, Ariz.

Ross D. Franklin  
AP Photo

cord for yards (4,671) and TDs (35). Larry Fitzgerald and John Brown surpassed 1,000-yards receiving and Fitzgerald's 109 catches broke the franchise mark he set a decade ago. Rookie David Johnson has a team-high 13 TDs and is a big-play threat as both a runner and receiver.

- Why they won't: Protecting their passer and pressuring the other QB. If Arizona can't run, the O-line could be overwhelmed by the pass rush. Pressuring the opposing quarterback, especially without a blitz, has been a problem. The mid-season addition of Dwight Freeney helps, but he's not an every-down disruptive force.
- "It brings some guys down to earth and get back to work." Palmer on the Cardinals' 36-6 loss to Seattle last week.

### 3. VIKINGS:

- Why they'll hoist the Lombardi: Defense. With 14 sacks, seven takeaways and two touchdowns over a three-game winning streak to close the regular season and win the NFC North, this group is in a groove. It'll be even better if nose tackle Linval Joseph, who missed four of the last five games with a toe injury, returns to the lineup.

- Why they won't: Iffy offense. Teddy Bridgewater is 17-11 as a starter but he passed for 250 yards just four times this season. If they fall behind quickly, their run-first formula featuring Adrian Peterson implodes and protecting Bridgewater behind a so-so O-line gets harder. Exhibit A: their 38-7 home loss to Seattle a month ago.

- "We're excited about the opportunity to play those guys again in our house. They embarrassed us the last time we played them." — wide receiver Mike Wallace, on facing the Seahawks again.

### 4. REDSKINS:

- Why they'll hoist the Lombardi: Believe it or not, Kirk Cousins. The fourth-year QB is playing the best football of his career at the most opportune time — heading into the playoffs and heading into free agency. He led the NFL in completion percentage at 69.8, ranked fifth in passer rating at 101.6, set a franchise mark with 4,166 passing yards, and threw for 23 TDs and only 3 INTs over the last 10 games.

- Why they won't: This team is flawed in a number of ways, including a suspect running game and a shaky defense. And if Washington beats Green Bay in the wild-card round, it would be the first victory all season for the Redskins against a team that finished above .500.

- "He's been a great leader for us on offense. He's exactly what we need right now. We're going to keep fighting behind him." — tight end Jordan Reed, speaking about Cousins.

### 5. PACKERS:

- Why they'll hoist the Lombardi: No one wants to face Aaron Rodgers in the playoffs. When healthy, the offensive line is capable of opening holes for bullish running back Eddie Lacy. The defense and special teams have been strengths for

most of the year.

- Why they won't: The offense has been searching for consistency all season, especially since they were exposed by the Denver Broncos on Nov. 1, sending them tumbling through a 4-6 finish after a 6-0 start. The chances of finding a fix for their big-play woes after 17 weeks are slim and injuries have ravaged their O-line.

- "We're 16 games in, so you kind of are who you are, but we've got to find a way to put it all together for four quarters." — Rodgers.

### 6. SEAHAWKS:

- Why they'll hoist the Lombardi: Russell Wilson is hot and Marshawn Lynch is back from abdominal surgery. The two-time defending NFC champs know what it takes to win in the playoffs even if they have to hit the road to do it. They've won six of seven, including all three road games. Wilson has 24 TD passes and one interception in that streak.

- Why they won't: St. Louis showed the blueprint for stopping the Seahawks with its Week 16 win in Seattle. The Rams hounded him, dominated the line of scrimmage and disrupted the entire Seahawks offense. Seattle faces a difficult road at Minnesota in frigid conditions and, if it wins, at Carolina, both for early West Coast starts.

- "These guys are confident that we can go wherever we got to go," coach Pete Carroll.

AP NFL website: <http://pro32.ap.org/dailystar>

## SCOREBOARD

### PREP SCHEDULE

#### TODAY

**Boys Basketball** — Ilwaco at Raymond, 7 p.m.  
**Swimming** — Astoria at Tillamook, 4 p.m.

#### FRIDAY

**Girls Basketball** — North Marion at Astoria, 5:30 p.m.; Seaside at Newport, 5:30 p.m.; De La Salle at Warrenton, 6 p.m.; Vernonia at Knappa, 6 p.m.; Jewell at Country Christian, 5:30 p.m.; Ilwaco at Tacoma Baptist, 7 p.m.

**Boys Basketball** — North Marion at Astoria, 7:15 p.m.; Seaside at Newport, 7:15 p.m.; De La Salle at Warrenton, 7:45 p.m.; Vernonia at Knappa, 8 p.m.; Jewell at Country Christian, 7 p.m.; Ilwaco at Tacoma Baptist, 7 p.m.

**Wrestling** — Seaside Pac Rim, 3:30 p.m.

#### SATURDAY

**Girls Basketball** — Stayton at Astoria, 5:30 p.m.; Warrenton at Riverdale, 4 p.m.

**Boys Basketball** — Stayton at Astoria, 7 p.m.; Warrenton at Riverdale, 5:45 p.m.

**Swimming** — Seaside at The Dalles Invite, 10 a.m.

**Wrestling** — Seaside Pac Rim, 10 a.m.

### BOYS BASKETBALL

**Astoria 58, Estacada 50**  
**AST (58):** Derek Jarrett 23, Palek 10, Englund 8, Strange 5, Fremstad 5, Arnsdorf 4, Gohl 3.  
**EST (50):** Sam Blankenship 11, McDaniel 10, Albrecht 9, Kirchofer 8, Smith 6, Stittner 6.

**Astoria 20 11 1215—58**  
**Estacada 8 23 613—50**

**OES 46, Warrenton 37**  
**OES (46):** Ian Holzman 13, Zack Halsey 13, Olander 11, Lamb 7, Spindel 2.

**WAR (37):** Christian Holt 13, Cochran 9, Knight 8, Little 4, Wilson 3, Alcobendas.

**OR Episcopal 4 13 1811—46**  
**Warrenton 7 6 1410—37**

**Knappa 70, Neah-Kah-Nie 61**  
**KNA (70):** Dale Takalo 37, Weirup 18, Severson 8, Miller 5, Rubus 2, Engblom, Eltagonde, Geisler, Hendrickson, Hunt, Goodman.

**NKN (61):** Max Halverson 20, Croman 10, Hooley 10, Spliethof 6, Champ 5, May 4, Davidson 2, Kelly 2, Holm 2.

**Knappa 14 16 2513—70**  
**Neah-Kah-Nie 12 16 1023—61**

**Livingstone 59, Jewell 36**

**LA (59):** Pierce Kroschel 22, Magee 11, O'Dell 8, Hermus 6, Halvorsen 5, Castorena 4, Mendoza 3.

**JWL (36):** Sean Hinson 14, Silva 8, Murray 4, Stahly 4, Ritchie 2, Meehan 2, Lyon 2, Munk.

**Livingstone 21 14 213—59**  
**Jewell 6 9 219—36**

### GIRLS BASKETBALL

**OES 43, Warrenton 31**

**OES (43):** Rachael Haugh 13, Harms 10, Schlendorf 6, Lowell 4, Dellit 4, Garner 4, Sipowicz 1, Aaron 1.

**WAR (31):** Sophia Thomas 7, Landree Miethe 7, Little 5, King 5, K.Blodgett 4, Bussert 3, Morrill, Schenbeck, Dyer, M.Blodgett, Digo, Hunt.

**OR Episcopal 12 11 146—43**  
**Warrenton 4 7 812—31**

**Neah-Kah-Nie 48, Knappa 14**  
**KNA (14):** Paris Vanderburg 8, Corder 3, Vandergriff 2, McMahan 1, Miethe, Strain, Inman, Truax.

**NKN (48):** Alaina Holm 14, Scull 13, Romig 10, Lambert 6, Clifford 2, Sherman 2, Dunn 1.

**Knappa 5 3 2—14**  
**Neah-Kah-Nie 19 11 612—48**

**Livingstone 39, Jewell 27**  
**LA (39):** Emilie Hathaway 20, Forshee 13, Beaver 2, Clute 2, Hasslen 2.

**JWL (27):** Gabi Morales 11, Guilen 10, A.Littlepage 3, Kaczynski 3, Olvera, Haddock, H.Littlepage.

**Livingstone 10 11 126—39**  
**Jewell 7 8 84—27**