

## Sports

## Jim Kaat, former teammates see Hall of Fame chances pushed back

By [Dan D'Addona](#)

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Jim Kaat's wait for possible election to the Baseball Hall of Fame got a little longer.

It wasn't a lack of votes that made the wait longer for the Zeeland native, but a vote postponement by the Hall of Fame.

The Hall of Fame postponed the Golden Days Era Committee and Early Baseball Era Committee voting. It was scheduled to take place at the winter meetings in December and will now take place in December 2021 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"With the nation's safety concerns, the travel restrictions, and the limitations on group gatherings in effect for many regions, it is not possible to ensure that we can safely and effectively hold these committee meetings," said Jane Forbes Clark, Chairman of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. "The Era Committee process, which has been so effective in evaluating Hall of Fame candidates, requires an open, yet confidential conversation and an in-person dialogue involving the members of the 16-person voting committee. In view of these concerns, the Board of Directors has decided that the Golden Days Committee and the Early Days Committee will instead meet during the winter of 2021."

Each era will now be pushed back a year, a particularly tough blow to Kaat and several other players that will be in their 80s by the next election.

Kaat won 283 games as a left-handed pitcher, mostly for the Minnesota Twins. He won 16 Gold Glove Awards as the top fielding pitcher in the league.

Kaat missed election by two votes in the last Golden Days Era election, while his former teammates Dick Allen and Tony Oliva each missed by one.

All three, as well as other former finalists such as Minnie Minoso, Maury Wills, Ken Boyer, Luis Tiant, Billy Pierce and Gil Hodges will also have to wait. Wills missed by three votes and Minoso by four in the last election.

Kaat is 81 years old, while Allen is 78, Oliva is 82, Wills is 87 and Tiant is 79. Other possible living candidates include Bill Freehan and Mickey Lolich. Minoso, Hodges, Pierce and Boyer are deceased, as are possible candidates Roger Maris, Curt Flood, Elston Howard and Don Newcombe.

The Early Days Era Committee is also on hold. Likely finalists from this group were pioneer Doc Adams, shortstop Bill Dahlen and Negro Leagues candidates Buck O'Neil, John Donaldson and more. The Early Days Era Committee will also meet next year.

Each committee will consider a ballot of 10 candidates, compiled by the Baseball Writers' Association of America's Historical Overview Committee, which will be announced in the autumn of 2021. Both committees, which are reconstituted each time they meet, will consider these ballots later that year. Any candidates elected will be enshrined as part of the Hall of Fame's Class of 2022.

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