



## Hall of Fame Run-Off Elections

by

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With the 2004 inductions into the Hall of Fame behind us and the Presidential election in front of us, I began looking into the election process for the Hall of Fame to see if there were any *dangling chads* in Cooperstown's closet. What I discovered was quite interesting.

In the 68 years since the Baseball Writers' Association of America (BBWAA) first began conducting an annual balloting to determine who would enter the Hall of Fame, there have only been eight years in which there was no one elected. There were no elections held in 1940, 1941, 1943, and 1944. The BBWAA did distribute ballots in 1950, 1958, 1959, and 1960, but no one received the required 75% of the vote necessary, and therefore no one was elected in those four years.

But on three occasions – in 1949, 1964, and 1967 – the BBWAA conducted a special run-off election whereby the one player who received the most run-off votes would be elected to the Hall of Fame.

**1949 Ballot Results**

Player	Votes 115 Needed
Charlie Gehringer	102
Mel Ott	94
Al Simmons	89
Dizzy Dean	88
Jimmie Foxx	85
Bill Terry	81
Paul Waner	73
Hank Greenburg	67
Bill Dickey	65
Harry Heilmann	59
Rabbit Maranville	58

**1949 Run-Off Results**

Player	Votes 140 Needed
Charlie Gehringer	159
Mel Ott	128
Jimmie Foxx	89
Dizzy Dean	81
Al Simmons	76
Paul Waner	63
Harry Heilmann	52
Bill Terry	48

Detroit second baseman Charlie Gehringer thus became the first player ever elected to the Hall of Fame through a special run-off election, receiving 85% of the run-off vote and edging past former New York Giants outfielder Mel Ott who tallied 68.5% of the vote. Ott would eventually be elected in his third year of eligibility in 1951 with 87.2% of the vote.

The next special run-off election would not occur for another fifteen years.

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### 1964 Ballot Results

Player	Votes <i>151 Needed</i>
Luke Appling	142
Red Ruffing	141
Roy Campanella	115
Joe Medwick	108
Pee Wee Reese	73
Lou Boudreau	68
Al Lopez	57
Chuck Klein	56
Johnny Mize	54
Mel Harder	51
Johnny Vander Meer	51

### 1964 Run-Off Results

Player	Votes <i>170 Needed</i>
Luke Appling	189
Red Ruffing	184
Roy Campanella	138
Joe Medwick	130

The 1964 BBWAA ballot was close, with veteran Chicago White Sox shortstop Luke Appling only one vote in front of former New York Yankees' pitcher Red Ruffing. In the ensuing special run-off both Appling and Ruffing polled the necessary votes, but Appling was the winner with 84% of the run-off votes and was thus elected to the Hall of Fame on his seventh attempt.

As fate would have it, Ruffing was involved in the last special run-off ballot.

### 1967 Ballot Results

Player	Votes <i>292 Needed</i>
Joe Medwick	212
Red Ruffing	212
Roy Campanella	202
Lou Boudreau	143
Ralph Kiner	124
Enos Slaughter	123
Al Lopez	114
Marty Marion	90
Johnny Mize	89
Pee Wee Reese	89

### 1967 Run-Off Results

Player	Votes <i>230 Needed</i>
Red Ruffing	266
Joe Medwick	248
Roy Campanella	170

The 1967 ballot ended in a dead-heat, with former St. Louis Cardinals' outfielder Joe Medwick and former New York Yankees' pitcher Red Ruffing each receiving 212 votes. Both players received more than 230 votes needed on the run-off ballot, but since only one player is elected in the run-off the nod went to Ruffing with 86.9% of the vote. Medwick would be elected the following year.

Election to the Baseball National Hall of Fame is the game's highest honor, no matter what the means or the method. Charlie Gehringer, Luke Appling and Red Ruffing each deserve to take their place among baseball's elite.