

Blyleven is Hall-worthy

By Bob Sansevere

Pioneer Press

December 8, 2005

Bert Blyleven belongs in baseball's Hall of Fame. He put up better numbers than many pitchers already enshrined.

It takes votes on 75 percent of the ballots submitted by Baseball Writers' Association of America members to get into the Hall of Fame. Blyleven had 40.9 percent last year — his best total — and is on the ballot a ninth time.

"I don't get my hopes up now," Blyleven said Wednesday. "The last eight years, I've kind of accepted that some writers believe I don't belong in the Hall of Fame. There's nothing I can say or do."

It should help that there are no slam dunks with first-year eligibility, as Wade Boggs was last season.

I have a ballot and can vote for up to 10 candidates. I haven't decided every pick, but there will be a trio of pitchers on my ballot — Tommy John and former Twins Jack Morris and Blyleven — who should have been inducted years ago. All three already would be in the Hall of Fame if they had 300 wins, an unofficial benchmark for voters. Blyleven had 287 wins, John 288, Morris 254.

Blyleven also ranks fifth all time in strikeouts and 24th in wins, and had a 3.31 earned-run average. John's ERA was 3.30, and he led the American League in shutouts three times. And Morris was one of the dominant pitchers of his time.

"You mention Tommy John and Jack Morris. Both had great careers," Blyleven said. "You look at their numbers and say, 'Why aren't they in?' "

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