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Rosenthal: Pete Rose hasn't given Rob Manfred any reason to change his mind



By Ken Rosenthal Nov 16, 2022

545

It's sad, more than anything.

The average person who has not followed along closely might sympathize with Pete Rose, believing he has suffered long enough. That at 81, it's time for baseball to forgive and forget. Reinstate him. Make him eligible for the Hall of Fame.

Except with Rose, it's never that simple.

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Even if Manfred was willing to remove the ban, Rose hardly would be guaranteed entry to the Hall. He would not even be eligible for consideration until Dec. 2024. And he only would stand a chance for induction if the Hall’s [Historic Overview Committee](#) put him on the ballot for the Classic Baseball Era election, which covers players prior to 1980.

Rose is in the news again because of a [letter of apology](#) and request for forgiveness he sent Manfred earlier this month. It wasn’t the first time he [expressed such sentiment](#). And typical of Rose, it didn’t stay private. TMZ published the letter Friday, saying Rose sent it to Manfred four days earlier. Crazy things happen in reporting, but it seems unlikely the commissioner’s office released the letter to TMZ. Rose did not respond to a request for comment.

“Despite my many mistakes, I am so proud of what I accomplished as a baseball player — I am the Hit King and it is my dream to be considered for the Hall of Fame,” Rose wrote in his letter. “Like all of us, I believe in accountability. I am 81 years old and know that I have been held accountable and that I hold myself accountable. I write now to ask for another chance.”

Sounds reasonable, no? [Major League Baseball](#) partners with gambling companies now. So do its broadcast partners, including my other employer, Fox Sports. But while the sport’s stance on gambling has softened due to the financial benefit, [its rules](#) prohibiting players, umpires and any club or league officials or employees from betting on games have not.

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Another problem: Too often, Rose’s words ring hollow. Too often, he can’t get out of his own way.

In August, the commissioner’s office allowed Rose to participate in [Phillies](#) Alumni Weekend and celebrate the 1980 World Series title he helped make possible. It was Rose’s first appearance in a Philadelphia ballpark since his ban more than three decades earlier. The Phillies planned to add him to their Wall of Fame in 2017, but canceled his induction [following allegations](#) that he had sex with an underage girl in the 1970s. A woman [said in a court filing](#) that she had sexual encounters with Rose starting in 1973, when she was 14 or 15 years old; Rose said that his relationship with her started when she was 16, the age of consent in Ohio. (Fox, where I worked with Rose from April 2015 until August 2017, [cut ties with him](#) around the same time.) The statute of limitations had expired, and Rose never was charged with a crime.

The reunion of Rose and his former teammates should have been a happy occasion. Instead, Rose made it tumultuous. When Alex Coffey, a female reporter for the Philadelphia Inquirer [asked him about the allegations of statutory rape](#), Rose responded, “No. I’m not here to talk about that. Sorry about that. It was 55 years ago, babe.” Later, he said, “Who

...ing and he got on baseball, including in his 1987 autobiography, *My Prison Story*. He served 18 months in prison in 1990 for lying about meeting the requirements for a secret meeting in Milwaukee with former commissioner Bud Selig in 2002, during which he admitted betting on baseball as a manager for the first time, also apparently went awry. News of the meeting leaked, and Rose promptly followed it with an appearance at a sports book in Las Vegas.

Two years later, Rose released a second autobiography, “My Prison Without Bars,” as the Hall of Fame prepared to induct two new members, Dennis Eckersley and Paul Molitor. Rose said the timing wasn’t his fault. Nothing is ever his fault.

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The day Giamatti announced Rose’s banishment, he said, “The burden to show a redirected, reconfigured, rehabilitated life is entirely Pete Rose’s.” Rose has met that burden only sporadically.

Others, too, are in Cooperstown purgatory, but let’s not draw any equivalencies between Rose and players like Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens who allegedly used steroids before the league instituted penalties for such conduct. Rose broke the cardinal rule, one that long had been on the books. Perhaps he could have created a path to reinstatement by quietly remaining on the league’s good side. But acting discreetly, following a process ... that’s not how he rolls.

Manfred, who became commissioner in January 2015, [denied a request](#) by Rose for reinstatement the following December, saying Rose fell “well short” of [meeting the requirements](#). For all Manfred knows, he could reinstate Rose and then be subjected to some other bombshell. Rose has admitted to betting on baseball only after his playing career ended. But in June 2015, [ESPN obtained copies](#) of betting records from 1986 that provided the first written corroboration Rose had gambled on games as the [Reds’](#) player-manager. It’s always something.

The Hall of Fame, that’s what Rose wants. Strictly on his accomplishments as a player — the record 4,256 hits, three World Series titles and 17 All-Star Game selections at five different positions — it’s also what he deserves. But the Hall in 1991 adopted a rule barring players on baseball’s ineligible list from induction to Cooperstown. Before Rose could even be considered, Manfred would need to take the lead by removing Rose from the ineligible list. Again, induction would not necessarily follow.

The Historic Overview Committee that creates the Classic Era ballot is comprised of 11 members of the Baseball Writers’ Association of America. Perhaps Rose would get past that group, which only would be nominating him for consideration. But would the Classic Era committee, a combination of 16 living Hall of Famers, executives and historians/writers,

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... remains pending its reinstatement, appealing to public sympathy. But Rose, to borrow a term from horse racing, one of the infamously sports, is getting lost at the gate. The race for Cooperstown remains permanently stalled, and it's no one's fault but his own.

(Photo: Matt Rourke / Associated Press)



Ken Rosenthal is the senior baseball writer for The Athletic who has spent nearly 35 years covering the major leagues. In addition, Ken is a broadcaster and regular contributor to Fox Sports' MLB telecasts. He's also won Emmy Awards in 2015 and 2016 for his TV reporting. Follow Ken on Twitter [@Ken_Rosenthal](#)

545 COMMENTS

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M Manny G. · Wed

You nailed it rosenthal. All these apologists make me laugh. This guy shows no contrition at all. He's the ultimate "I'm sorry because I got caught" guy.

He's a slow drip of information, only revealing the smallest possible amount to try and save himself, only for more damning information to come out soon after.

I'm happy to discuss Pete rose as soon as shoeless joe gets unbanned. He batted .375 in the World Series he was allegedly throwing, highest BA on either team.

I'm tired of talking about Pete rose.

S Stephen B. · Wed

The problem is that this commissioner has been extremely soft on what some people would consider a worse offense, the Astros sign stealing debacle. I'm not a gambler but I understand how it can become a severe addiction. Haven't we become more tolerant and willing to help those suffering from addiction problems as a society? He's the hit king. I do not condone gambling but come on...he's been punished.

N Norm P. · Wed

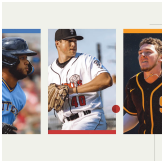
Not sure the help metaphor fits since Pete denies having a problem. Of course he belongs in the Hall, but as he showed in the Coffey exchange he's completely unrepentant of his mistakes- many of which were crimes by the way. I'm big on forgive and forget but Pete has never done the work to get back in baseball's good graces. That's why he's stuck on the outside looking in.

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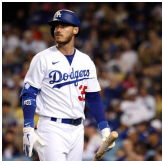
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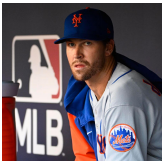
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