

**NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME**  
**January 6, 2010**  
**1:30 pm CT**

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for standing by. Welcome to the National Baseball Hall of Fame conference call.

I would like now to turn the conference over to Brad Horn, Senior Director of Communications and Education. Please go ahead, sir.

Brad Horn: Thank you, (Charlene). Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for joining us on this very historic day, the 2010 Baseball Writers' Association of America Hall of Fame Induction Electee conference call with Andre Dawson.

The Hawk enters the Hall of Fame with 420 votes received, percentage of 77.9%. He will be inducted in Cooperstown on Sunday, July 25, as part of Hall of Fame Weekend 2010 festivities.

Additional information on Hall of Fame Weekend can be found at our web site, [baseballhall.org](http://baseballhall.org). And the transcript of today's call will be available in 24 hours also at our web site, as well as the Baseball Writers' web site as well.

At this time, I would like to introduce to you 2010 Baseball Hall of Fame electee Andre Dawson to take any questions that you may have.

Andre, welcome to the call and congratulations.

Andre Dawson: Okay, thank you.

Operator: One moment, please, for the first question.

Our first question comes from the line of Bill Madden with New York Daily News. Please proceed with your question.

Bill Madden: Hi Hawk. Congratulations.

My question for you is actually twofold. I was just curious first of all nine years on the ballot, was it worth the wait? And secondly, last year when Jim Rice went in, there's been a lot of comparisons between you and Rice. You - middle of the order sluggers throughout your careers, which paralleled each other. And I was just wondering if when Jim Rice went in last year if that gave you the feeling that this might be your year?

Andre Dawson: Well, obviously Jim being on the last year of eligibility and getting in I think says enough in itself about, you know, if you're a Hall of Famer, eventually you're going to get in, no matter how long it takes. And you mentioned, you know, myself, nine years -- the wait isn't a big factor - in the scheme of things.

You get frustrated when people continue to say well, when do you think you're going to get in and you don't really have the answer to that. As I sit here, the only thing I can think of is that it was well worth the wait.

I can't really describe the elation that me and my family experienced when I got that call. And regardless, I have just been patient over the years. And one

thing my mom always said that it's going to happen one day. It's inevitable.  
Just be ready when it happens.

Bill Madden: Thank you.

Operator: Our next question comes from the line of Bruce Miles and he's with the  
(Irvington) Heights, Illinois. Please proceed with your question.

Bruce Miles: Yes, Andre, your career underwent a sort of a revival so to speak with the  
Chicago Cubs. So I'm wondering if you could talk about your time in Chicago  
a little bit and do you have any idea which cap you'll be wearing into the Hall?

Andre Dawson: Well, I wish I knew the second part of your question. But I'm going to answer  
the first part because the second part I don't know.

Chicago, when you say rejuvenated in Chicago, for me, it gave me new life.  
Playing on the natural playing surface after playing in Montreal on artificial  
surface for ten years and to finally get into not really - I didn't want to call it a  
media center, but a major market where, you know, you had a huge fans  
following, a fan base, that really, really understood and supported the  
organization, it just allowed me to relax, enjoy the game.

And the game was fun for me again. And, you know, that first year for me  
was one of those career years where I didn't really set any goals for the first  
time. I devoted that season to a grandmother of mine who had passed earlier  
in the year.

I just went out and said I was going to have fun. The fans embraced me from  
day one of spring training. And I think even though I pressed a little bit at the  
outset, I hit a grand slam home run that kind of got me going.

And from there, you know, things just started to happen on a daily basis. But for the most part of the six years that I was there, I really enjoyed the reception, the fact that I had an opportunity to play amongst fans who really didn't put any pressure on you, you know.

Don Zimmer always would make the comment, get here early and don't really go out and do something that would embarrass the fans.

And that - to me, that was the one thing that I tried to take out on the field every day -- play the game hard and enjoy the most of it. And, again, those six years were definitely six years that I'll always remember. I won an MVP award there after finishing runner-up twice in Montreal.

And I always felt that, you know, if I got back to the States on the natural playing surface that I would play the game probably the way I knew that I could play it.

But at that point, I think the toll had reached its peak with the knees. And, you know, having - looking back and seeing, you know, the problems, the history of the knees and what I had to endure and to prepare myself on a daily basis, playing in the National League Central Division with Chicago at that point in time, to me that made a difference in the second half of my career.

Bruce Miles: Thank you.

Operator: Our next question comes from Jeff Vorva with Vine Line magazine. Please proceed with your question.

Jeff Vorva: I guess I'll continue the theme with two questions. First one is what were you doing today? Were you sitting around waiting for the call? Was it any different than the previous eight years? And the second question is after '07 when your percentage dipped a little bit, did you think oh my gosh, that's it, I'm never going to get in? Did you ever give up hope?

Andre Dawson: No, I never really gave up hope. Let me back up. I started the morning out, I got up at 6 o'clock. I don't really get up that early. I went to the gym. And I wanted to make sure - that's my routine, it seem like every announcement day anyway. I go to the gym and try to get back home just in time for the announcement.

But I got an early start. From there, I left, I went by a cemetery to visit my mom and uncle and a grandmother. And that's the first time I had done that. And I just felt a little bit more optimistic about this year and I just wanted to share a few things at that grave site.

It meant a lot to me to get out there and, you know, get that off of my mind. And it kind of, you know, alleviated a lot of the nervousness that I was starting to encounter.

And from there, I went home, took a shower. And went out, I'm avid in my yard. I watered the bonsai. I started watching the clock. And about 12 o'clock, I went inside, sat down, had some lunch, and just sat there, did a couple of interviews. And I guess would - can say yeah, started to wait and see if I would get the phone call.

Jeff Vorva: Thank you.

Andre Dawson: You're welcome.

Operator: Our next question comes from the line of John Pitarresi with Utica -- oh, pardon me -- with Utica Observer-Dispatch. Please proceed.

John Pitarresi: Andre, you talk about playing on natural surface that year in 1987. You talked about the grand slam that kind of got you going. Who was that off of, what team, and was it make- do you remember exactly?

Andre Dawson: It was the top of the ninth inning against Saint Louis, against Todd Worrell.

John Pitarresi: Okay.

And tell me, you know, you said you felt it really helped you to play on grass and so on. What else was, you know, that year, 49 home runs, 137 RBIs, what else was going on? What - besides that, was there anything else that you - that really made you feel like King Kong out there so to speak? What came together for you?

Andre Dawson: Well, it was all a part of the new beginning for me, playing with a new ball club, the passion of my grandmother, dedicating the season to her. And every day before I took the field, I just thanked her. The toughest thing for me that season was to close her coffin.

And, you know, I vowed just not to put any pressure on myself with a new organization, but let the game come to me and let it be fun. And the Cub fans, they played a huge role. They embraced me right from day one and, you know, allowed me to relax and have fun.

And, you know, I look back at all of those things. And to me, the most satisfying of it all was the difference that the lower half of my body, my legs, felt playing on a natural playing surface as opposed to the artificial turf.

John Pitarresi: Right.

Andre Dawson: And it kept me a lot stronger over the course of the season, throughout the second half of the season. And, you know, once I sort of got on that roll, it seems like things were happening on a daily basis. And, of course, you know, there were my teammates, who I have to give a lot of credit to because, you know, we finished in last place. There were some guys there that kind of set the table and made it possible for me to have that kind of year.

John Pitarresi: Can you speak about your grandmother and the role she played in your life? Obviously it was a very large one.

Andre Dawson: Yeah, it was. She was the disciplinarian in the family. For me, you know, I had to do what I had to do this morning. And, you know, I thanked her for her upbringing as far as I'm concerned, the way she instilled certain things in me. She was my chief mentor by far. She never really got a chance to see me play a game live. Neither did my mom.

And those two individuals were probably the most inspirational people in my life growing up. And I just felt that I needed the need to thank them for - my mom in particular for the job she did raising eight siblings without a father in the household and my grandmother for allowing me -- and I'm going to back off a little bit because my grandmother, she told me before I even signed a professional contract that I wasn't going to play baseball. I was going to go to college and get my education.

John Pitarresi: Mm-hm.

Andre Dawson: And she would write me two to three times a week trying to explain her reasoning behind that when I was in college. And she always said, you know, take God with you. If you have the talent, the ability, someone will see it later on.

I had an opportunity to sign with the Kansas City Royals Baseball Academy when I was coming out of high school. And I was trying to find a way to let her know this and hope that she would embrace this.

But as it turned out, I didn't sign. And she - that's when she made the comment, you know, if you have the talent and the ability, one day someone will take notice.

And with that in mind, you know, I went to college. And she would write me and she would tell me, you know, to get down on my knees, be thankful, and to continue to go out there.

She was most responsible I think for my character and my makeup. And the fact that she didn't really get an opportunity to see me play along with my mom, you know, that - to me, that was the most disturbing part.

John Pitarresi: And, Andre, what was your grandmother's name?

Andre Dawson: Eunice Taylor.

John Pitarresi: And how about your mom?

Andre Dawson: Mattie Brown.

John Pitarresi: Thanks very much, Andre.

Andre Dawson: Thank you.

Operator: Our next question comes from the line of Tom Haudricourt with Milwaukee Journal (Centennial). Please proceed.

Tom Haudricourt: Well, congratulations, Andre.

Andre Dawson: Thank you, sir.

Tom Haudricourt: Hey, tell me a little bit about how you feel about Bert Blyleven today. He - after all of this time, he missed by five votes. He was very gracious in an interview a little while ago about you and saying that it was about time you got in. I was just wondering if you felt the same about him.

Andre Dawson: Well, I was optimistic that we both probably would get in and I was - I kind of prematurely thinking and looking forward to that. I remember the battles with Bert when he was with the Pittsburgh Pirates.

And, you know, as I sit here, that's, you know, it's awful to even think about five votes as the decision between, you know, not being in the Hall of Fame at this particular time and now having to have to wait another year. You know, it could've very easily been me.

We were both right there at about 65% to 67%. And, you know, I'm - my heart goes out to him. I feel for him because, you know, five votes, it's a little hard to swallow.

Tom Haudricourt: And as far as the debate about what is a Hall of Famer, in your nine-year wait, have you come to terms with what exactly is a Hall of Famer?

Andre Dawson: Well, based on the criteria that it takes, that's expected of the Hall of Famers, no, I know it's not just about numbers, even though numbers play an important part.

You know, I know the character, the makeup, the integrity, sportsmanship, all of that plays a key role. Longevity is a key. Consistency over a period of time during that longevity is a key.

And I think the fact that, you know, when you start to draw the line between a lot of small things that might be a determining factor in your not getting in the Hall of Fame, that's pretty much where you need to look at the big picture.

Of course, the criteria, you know, seems to fluctuate from year to year. But in my mind, in my opinion, if you're a Hall of Famer, you're a Hall of Famer.

Tom Haudricourt: Thank you. And you are one today. Congrats.

Andre Dawson: Thank you.

Operator: Our next question comes from the line of George Castle with Times of Northwest Indiana. Please proceed.

George Castle: Congratulations, Hawk.

You just mentioned character is one of those criteria. Do you feel that that along with your numbers was a big factor in your election today? And do you

also attribute your character to your mother and grandmother, the way they raised you? Is the way - they basically were the way you became as a player?

Andre Dawson: Well, there were some instances where I may have made myself look like fool out there on the field with some confrontations with the umpires, but I would get a call immediately.

And, you know, the question was who do you think you are and what do you think you're doing? And that, you know, humbled me to a degree that a lot of people, you know, don't really understand.

And that's just the way I was brought up, to work hard - work ethic, work hard, dedication, determination. And those were, you know, key factors in I think my being able to persevere. I almost quit this game after four years because I had a fractured knee.

And, you know, nobody really knew that. And my wife, she sat me down and she said, you know, this is something you don't want to do. You're going to regret it in a year or two. Whatever needs to be done, you know, you need to take care of it.

But this is something that you don't really want to do. And, you know, this was only after four years in the major leagues. And it was just the people who I surrounded myself with always said the right things. You know, they wouldn't hesitate to pat me on the back when it was warranted. And when I needed a boot in the rear end, they wouldn't hesitate to do that.

So I look back at my career, the one thing I think that drove me to play as long as I did is I remember my grandmother telling me about my blessing and never taking that for granted and just going out, applying yourself to the best

of your ability and having fun and not being too overly concerned about what the outcome is.

Operator: Our next question comes from the line of Toni Ginnetti, pardon me, with the Chicago Sun-Times. Please proceed.

Toni Ginnetti: Hawk, congratulations.

Andre Dawson: Hi Toni. Thank you.

Toni Ginnetti: One - you're welcome.

One of the things that your teammates always talked about was watching how much you went through just to get ready for games with your - because of your knees.

I'm wondering if - and you talked about that -- but any time during all of those years with all of the - that you went through with all of the operations, was there any thoughts ever then to quit then? Do you know what I mean? For what you would go through to play?

Andre Dawson: I know you all got tired of waiting for me, too. So I appreciate, you know, the efforts in waiting, you know, because I could be in that training room for a long time.

At that point, no, I - the damage had been done already. And for me, even though it was uncomfortable at times, a lot of people only see the glamour side of the game when you're out there on the field. They don't know what goes on off the field, in the clubhouse.

In my particular case, it was painful. It was painful for a lot of years. But, you know, I took the attitude that if, you know, I fell flat on my face, then I - you know, someone would carry me off the field and I knew that I would've left everything on the field. And it got to the point where, you know, that didn't really happen.

And I got up later in the years and I started thinking a little bit different. I put my time in. And then, you know, the question I posed to myself was I probably should get out of this before someone have to carry me off the field.

And, you know, I look back at the 21 years that I played and, you know, the average life span I think was about four years for a major leaguer. I set a goal for 15 years and, you know, I was able to wear the uniform for 20-plus years.

And in the end, I was very thankful, gracious for the opportunities and thankful that I was able to walk away on my own terms. But no, at no point the second ten years was I thinking about quitting or walking away from the game.

Operator: Our next question comes from the line of Barry Bloom with mlb.com. Please proceed.

Barry Bloom: Hey, Hawk. Congratulations.

Andre Dawson: Thank you, Barry.

Barry Bloom: I'm just trying to gauge -- you know, you seem pretty intact here, but I'm trying to gauge your emotions at this point, how you're controlling them and, you know, it sounds like you - from your description of the day, you had quite a day.

Andre Dawson: Yeah, well, I've shed some tears today. I've been nervous today. You know, I've been happy before the announcement -- optimistic I should say before the announcement.

And for some reason or another, I slept better last night than I did maybe the last eight years. It's a feeling that I'm sure I won't feel the magnitude of it for a couple of more days or so. I'm still kind of light in the stomach.

My daughter, my wife, you know, they showed a lot of emotion when I got the phone call. And, you know, they're probably my biggest supporters right now. And, of course, I'm trying to, you know, keep myself contained.

But it has been a wonderful day for me because I think going and visiting my mother, grandmother, my uncle at the cemetery, it relieved a lot. It put me in a better perspective and I think helped me get over that edge that I was starting to feel.

Barry Bloom: Thanks Hawk. That's perfect.

Andre Dawson: Okay, thank you.

Barry Bloom: (See you tomorrow).

Operator: Our next question comes from the line of Jeremy Sandler with the (Nashville) Post. Please proceed.

Jeremy Sandler: Yes, hi, congratulations, Andre.

I wanted to ask you what your memories are of Montreal, from those days with the Expos.

Andre Dawson: Yes, that's where I got my start. I played there for ten years. I came up through their minor league system with some young, talented ballplayers, went through times when we, you know, struggled and then when we were playoff bound, fielding a team to the point where, you know, we were competitive with the powerhouses in the National League, always maybe a player or two away from, you know, really being one of the dominant teams in the National League, but always on a ballclub where they would bring up players through their minor league and bring players through their system to the big leagues.

I felt the Astroturf probably took a lot out of what the best that I had to offer. It was painful. There were times when, you know, I really didn't think that I would make it.

But the Astroturf in itself was something that I look back on and it really made me appreciate a little bit more my work ethic because when you go out and you play on that stuff, I hear players complain about back problems, but when you have the problems that I had with my knees and, you know, you got to go out there and perform on that every day, then, you know, you really think about, you know, the fortunate individuals who get to play on a natural playing surface.

And that was something that I looked forward to. I felt I would retire as an Expo. It didn't pan out or work out that way. And when I did have the opportunity to go and play on a natural playing surface, I welcomed it and it put another ten years of life on my baseball career.

Jeremy Sandler: Was there a fondest memory for you? Maybe the '81 playoffs or just being at the Big O when it was crowded or maybe winning the Rookie of the Year? I mean, was there any one memory that (sticks out)...

Andre Dawson: Well, I - when I won the Rookie of the Year actually I started out being platooned with Del Unser. And it was a new role for me. I couldn't really gain the necessary rhythm I felt I needed as an everyday ballplayer.

And there was talk about sending me back to the minor leagues for additional seasoning. I had an opportunity to start a game against a right-handed pitcher. I hit my first major league home run.

And I started the next game against a right-handed pitcher. I got a couple of hits. And then the third game, I think I got two or three hits. And a lot of the talk started to subside. They started to play me on an everyday basis.

And I - as it turned out, I won the Rookie of the Year award, you know. But there are a lot of fond memories dating back to the Montreal days, teammates, Tim Lincecum, Warren Cromarte, they're very dear friends of mine, and Warren, who grew up here in Miami, the All Star game, which was, you know, the first in Olympic Stadium, and then we had, you know, the playoff runs, a couple of years where we battled the Dodgers and the Phillies, the Pirates, for the National League crown.

Eventually they would win out, but also they went ahead and won the World Series. So that was a little bit easier to swallow. But there are a lot of fond memories that I do have dating back to my Montreal days.

Jeremy Sandler: Great, thank you. And congratulations again.

Andre Dawson: Thank you.

Operator: Our next question comes from the line of (Ian McDonald) with the Baseball Writers' Association. Please proceed.

(Ian McDonald): Hey, Hawk, congratulations.

Andre Dawson: Thank you, (Ian).

(Ian McDonald): Gee whiz, it was a long time coming, but I remember going to the park very early some of those days when you were getting your knee treatment and, you know, that - you used to start that three and four hours before the ballgame. Wasn't that right?

Andre Dawson: Well, I had a routine before and after the game. I - you know, I would get them taped before the game. I would ice them down before the game. You know, I did - I would do certain exercises loosening up before stretching. And after the game, I was a routine where I would try to cool the joint down with ice treatments.

And it was a process, the process I think that really helped me. Had I not been able to go that direction, that route, and have the trainers be adamant about working with me, then I would've really, really run into problems. But, again, I apologize for having you guys wait, you know, as long as you did just to ask one or two questions.

(Ian McDonald): Well, it was just amazing what you had to go through every day.

Are you in touch with many of the guys from the Expos now, Hawk?

Andre Dawson: A couple of them I do talk to and run into on occasion. Timmy called me earlier. Warren called. I see - I run into Wallach every now and then, Jerry Manuel, of course, who was a teammate. I run into Spaceman every now and then. He'll be here as a matter of fact next month.

So, yes, I do have on occasion Gullickson is in West Palm Beach. (Rudin) is in West Palm Beach. So I do have occasion - I do have the occasional opportunity to run into them every now and then.

(Ian McDonald): Do you - I mean, do you hear from fans or anything still from Montreal?

Andre Dawson: Oh, of course. There are a lot that are here in South Florida. I run into them in restaurants, in the malls. And they kind of, you know, recognize me, which is surprising because I'm not sure. I don't look like I did when I was in Montreal. But, yeah, they come up to me and they reminisce about the days when the Expos were there.

(Ian McDonald): Hawk, have they told you for sure would you be - would you have an Expo cap on at the Hall of Fame?

Andre Dawson: No, I haven't been told. Major League Baseball and I are going to sit down and talk about it. I'm just excited just to be a Hall of Famer right now and be, you know, amongst that elite group. And in the days to come I think, you know, that's something that I'll probably reflect on.

(Ian McDonald): When you had such a good year when you first went to Chicago, did that have you wishing darn it, I wish I'd gotten a chance to do this before? Or is the things you did in Montreal still (unintelligible) highly in your memory?

Andre Dawson: No, I was - I always wanted to be a player that was loyal to the organization. I wanted to retire as an Expo with the understanding that, you know, it might shorten my career.

But no, there were never really no ill feelings. I think when I left as a free agent, I was disappointed that an arrangement couldn't be agreed upon to keep me in an Expo uniform.

But when I made the decision as a free agent to sign with the Cubs, you know, it was water under the bridge. It was time to set my sights in other directions. And, you know, that's the way I looked at it.

(Ian McDonald): Well, congratulations anyway. And we certainly as the writers I'm saying on the chapter, we continually voted you high on our list with everything - for everything you did. And it was a wonderful career and we're very happy for you now.

Andre Dawson: Okay, (Ian), thanks a lot. Say hello to (Serge).

(Ian McDonald): I will for sure.

Andre Dawson: Okay.

Operator: Our next question comes from the line of Carrie Muskat with mlb.com. Please proceed with your question.

Carrie Muskat: Hi Hawk, this is Carrie. Congratulations.

Andre Dawson: Thank you, Carrie. Thank you very much.

Carrie Muskat: You just answered the question I had about the cap. I guess - I think I know which way you're leaning, but I guess you have to sit down and talk to the MLB officials. Is that right?

Andre Dawson: Yeah, we're going to sit down and discuss it. You know, obviously the decision is made by Major League Baseball. I respect that, with some input. But that's, you know, it's important, but not at this moment.

Carrie Muskat: Okay.

Andre Dawson: You know, the fact that, you know, I'm a Hall of Famer right now, really doing my darndest to compose myself and just, you know, enjoy the moment.

Carrie Muskat: Mm-hm.

When you look back on that contract, when you first - you and Dick Moss came up with that contract to come to the Cubs, could you ever imagined - can you see a player doing that now?

Andre Dawson: Absolutely not, no. No. You know, I'm an individual that, you know, do I guess a lot of firsts in the game, you know, winning the MVP on a last place team.

I look back at that and it was - for me, it wasn't a monetary issue. It was about respect. It was about, you know, not depriving me of that. And it was about that organization really not showing a sense of loyalty after being there for ten years.

And I realized pretty much the writing was on the wall. I don't think they wanted to really go a different direction. But it appeared that maybe, you know, my time was up there and it was time to move on.

And it was during the era of collusion. And I think had I gone in looking for a contract, I probably wouldn't have received one. I would've received one to turn down.

The blank contract was something that I felt I was sticking my neck out, but I was going to be man enough and stand up to it. And if they would make an offer and really, really be serious about it, I was going to be man enough to go out there and say okay, you know, we have an agreement.

And I think they really made an offer for me to turn down. But, again, you know, I wanted the game to be fun again and monetary issues, you know, wasn't a matter at that point.

Carrie Muskat: Good, good. Thank you. Congratulations and well deserved.

Andre Dawson: Thank you, Carrie.

Brad Horn: (Charlene), before you ask another question, this is Brad Horn with the Baseball Hall of Fame. I'd like to just clarify a couple of things regarding the cap issue.

The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum will make the ultimate determination as to which logo is featured on his cap that appears on his Hall of Fame plaque.

Those discussions begin tomorrow with Andre and prior to our press conference at 12:00 noon tomorrow. Should there be news that will be announced, it will be announced at that time. Otherwise it will be forthcoming in the time leading up to Hall of Fame Induction Weekend on July 25.

And then also just to clarify, the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum is independent of Major League Baseball, so those discussions that Hawk has will be with Hall of Fame officials starting tomorrow.

And, (Charlene), too, in terms of call, let's take questions up until just before 3:30 East Coast time and then we'll conclude the call.

Operator: Okay, thank you.

Brad Horn: Thank you.

Operator: Our next question comes from the line of Marty Noble with mlb.com. Please proceed.

Marty Noble: Congratulations Andre.

Andre Dawson: Thank you, Marty.

Marty Noble: My question is this -- have you allowed yourself to think of what you would've accomplished if you had played all of your career on natural grass?

Andre Dawson: I think about that and I think about healthy knees also, what would it have been like? But, you know, Marty, I don't like to say what if because what if is what really drove my work ethic.

And I feel if I didn't put in the time that I did away from the field or preparation, I wouldn't have lasted ten years. I may not have lasted four years. My wife is sitting here now and I mentioned to one of the writers earlier, she really talked me really talked me out of quitting the game after four years.

Marty Noble: Right, right.

Andre Dawson: But no, I - you know, and I did, I have thought about that on occasions, but for the most part if I look back and had to do it all over again, I would do it the same way, you know, because I put everything I had into the game, tried to make it as enjoyable and have as much fun as I could.

And in the end, you know, maybe walk away from the game on my terms. And there was an organization, the Florida Marlins, that allowed me to do that.

Marty Noble: One more question -- if you had played your entire career on that wretched stuff they had in Montreal and everywhere else, are you in this position today? Are you a Hall of Famer today if you had more years on turf and fewer years on grass?

Andre Dawson: Oh, I can honestly say probably not. Probably - I don't know if I would've lasted, you know, any more than another two or three years. (Unintelligible) I never was on the disabled list until my tenth year despite the fact that I had all of these problems with the knees. I had a fractured knee that I went through a season with and I didn't go in the Hall of Fame -- I'm sorry, I didn't go on the disabled list.

Marty Noble: Right.

Andre Dawson: But, you know, I started to really feel the wear and tear right at the end, you know, there in Montreal. And, you know, had I continued on it, I was probably looking at another three-year contract in hopes of retiring as an Expo because I felt that that's probably what I was going to get out of the rest of my career on the Astroturf. But to me, the key was as a free agent getting away and then getting back on the natural playing surface.

Marty Noble: And how do your knees feel today?

Andre Dawson: Hm. Well, let's just...

((Crosstalk))

Andre Dawson: ...I've had two replacements, probably looking to get one more. And after the replacement, I feel fine. I mean, it feels great to be able to walk around and not be in discomfort or pain every day.

Marty Noble: Thank you very much.

Andre Dawson: Thank you.

Operator: Our next question comes from the line of (Murray Chass) with (MurrayChass.com). Please proceed.

(Murray Chass): Andre, congratulations.

Andre Dawson: Thank you.

(Murray Chass): You don't have three knees, do you? You said you had two knee replacements and you might need one more.

Andre Dawson: Yeah, I've had one done twice.

(Murray Chass): Oh, okay.

The - just wanted to check the cemetery where your mother and grandmother are buried is in Miami?

Andre Dawson: Yes.

(Murray Chass): Okay.

The question is you talked a little bit about the contract in '87 and you mentioned collusion. You did not have a contract and the way you got it was you and your agent showed up at the Cubs spring training camp with a contract, a signed contract with the blank salary to be filled in. How did you feel about taking that approach and did you think it would succeed?

Andre Dawson: Well, initially I told my wife that I was going to go to Japan. And she told me I was crazy. And then when we - I told her about the blank contract, she thought, you know, even worse where, you know, you're not going to play for anything.

But she felt a little bit better about the fact that I was, you know, at least going to attempt to stay in the States. And, you know, looking back at, you know, what - that whole scenario, I did what I felt in essence I had to do at the time because, you know, you're probably familiar with the collusion era and what was going on with free agents at the time.

And for me, it was a - it was really a no-brainer. Tim Raines re-signed with the Expos, but he couldn't come back until, you know, after the season had started.

And we were the two free agents at that time. I think the only other - (Jack Morris) -- it wasn't (Jack Morris). The catcher from the Tigers I think went to the - went to another team.

And for me it was - like I said, it was a no-brainer. I just felt that's what I had to do in order to open some people's eyes and, you know, let them know that, you know, for me it wasn't about as a free agent trying to get my monetary value or worth. It was trying to, you know, get somewhere where I could play and enjoy the game.

(Murray Chass): Mm-hm.. That was Lance Parrish you were talking about.

Andre Dawson: Lance Parrish.

(Murray Chass): The Tigers catcher. Yeah.

Andre Dawson: Right.

(Murray Chass): Okay.

And one - what did you think when Dallas Green filled in the figure \$500,000?

Andre Dawson: He called me. I was - I had returned home and - from Arizona and he called me and he said, you know, I've gone through this. I've let - I let my attorneys view it. And, you know, there seems to be no gimmicks about it.

But the best thing that we can do, I'll offer you, is only \$500,000. And I said, you know, perfectly fine. I - when can I report? And he paused for a moment and he said well, can I get back to you?

And I said fine. Take your time. And I don't know, you know, what he - I had to do in that time, but I can only speculate. He called me back about an hour later and he said welcome aboard. You know, I understand you and realize you just left here. Take your time and come back.

And I told him no, I'll be back out tomorrow, which was the followed day. And that's, you know, pretty much how we finalized the arrangement with the blank contract.

(Murray Chass): Okay. Well, thank you very much.

Andre Dawson: You're welcome.

Operator: Our next question comes from the line of Manolo Hernandez-Douen with (Spanish Baseball). Please proceed.

Manolo Hernandez-Douen: Hey, congratulations Andre.

Andre Dawson: Thank you.

Manolo Hernandez-Douen: Hey, Andre, you mentioned a few minutes ago about Blyleven falling short. Looking forward to this election, did you believe that Roberto Alomar was going to be going into - with yourself into the Hall of Fame today? And what do you think about his possibilities of going in soon to the Hall of Fame?

Andre Dawson: No, I didn't think that he would, you know, go in with me. I don't really think about who's going to go in other than the fact that you're hoping that you can get in. I do feel that, you know, Roberto Alomar is a Hall of Famer.

The fact of the matter, you know, that remain to be seen was whether or not the writers would put him in on his first ballot. He was one of the greatest second basemen I ever saw play the game. And, you know, I was stunned - it was astounding to see, you know, his numbers, all of his numbers.

And I don't know. I didn't get an opportunity to see what the percentage total was, but I was definitely thinking in terms of Bert Blyleven because we both were right there. And felt that this would be the year that we would get in.

But when you're a first ballot, you never know how the writers are going to go, what direction they're going to go, unless you have those what they call absolute numbers that are going to put you in.

Manolo Hernandez-Douen: Thank you very much, Andre.

Andre Dawson: You're welcome.

Brad Horn: And we'll go ahead and maybe take one more question.

Operator: Our next question comes from the line of Bob Nightengale with the USA Today. Please proceed.

Bob Nightengale: Hey, Andre. Congratulations.

Andre Dawson: Thank you, Bob.

Bob Nightengale: The - Andre, have you been to Cooperstown before, either just a visit or any induction ceremony to watch a friend get inducted?

Andre Dawson: Yes, I went to Sandberg's induction and I've also visited.

Bob Nightengale: Okay.

And also today besides being with your immediate family, was there any phone calls that meant a lot to you as far as either you reached out by phone or somebody called you that was close to you?

Andre Dawson: Well, on my way, I had to scramble real quick and get here for this conference call. I'm looking at my phone now. I have 34 voice messages and 62 texts. I don't know if I know that many people. But Tim Lincecum called and I think I was on the phone with MLB Network when he was trying to reach out to me.

And I've gotten a call from Warren Cromarte also, who was a teammate. I hadn't really been able to go through. Al Oliver called, who was a teammate. So I'm pretty sure that, you know, a lot of my friends, teammates, players that I played against, are trying to reach out to me right now. I just hope that, you know, they can be patient with me. I will get back to them.

Bob Nightengale: Okay, good. All right. Congratulations again.

Andre Dawson: Thank you.

Operator: And there are no further questions at this time. I'll turn the call back over to you.

Brad Horn: Great. Thank you for your help. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your time. Andre, I know you're very busy. Thank you for your time. And members of the media, a reminder that the transcript from this call will be available within 24 hours at our web site and there is a press conference on Thursday in New York to announce Andre's arrival into the Baseball Hall of Fame. Please contact the Hall of Fame's communications department at 607-547-0215 with any questions you may have.

Thank you for your time.

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen, that does concludes the conference call for today. We thank you for your participation and we ask that you please disconnect your lines.

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