

## “Charlie Hustle”

Pete Rose was a Major League Baseball (MLB) player for 24 seasons, beginning in 1963. He still holds the all-time records for most career hits and most career singles. He is in the top five in several other hitting categories.

Between August 1984 and August 1989, Rose was the manager for the Cincinnati Reds. His teams went 426-388 over 6 seasons. In early 1989, rumors that Rose bet on baseball games reached the office of the Commissioner of Baseball. Rose was questioned, but denied the rumors. A new commissioner took over a month later and opened an investigation. Learning of the story, the press reported that Rose bet on baseball games while being manager. Upon completion of the commissioner’s investigation, Rose entered into a settlement: in return for MLB not formally finding him ‘guilty’ of gambling, Rose accepted a spot on baseball’s “ineligible list.” This means that, among other conditions (including not being able to work for a baseball team), he is not eligible to be elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame, despite being one of the sport’s greatest hitters ever.

On multiple occasions, Rose has asked that this ruling be revoked, but to date no commissioner has agreed. In 2004, Rose admitted that he gambled on baseball games as a manager, including games involving the Reds. He claims to have never bet against his own team, but the investigator said that he believes Rose may have done so.

Because of the recent steroid issues in MLB, some people argue that players who gamble are not as morally culpable as those who use steroids. They maintain that gambling for your team to win does not tamper with or alter record-keeping in the same way that steroid use does. In a 2007 interview, Rose said, "If you're going to put these guys that supposedly did steroids into the Hall of Fame, I mean I've got to get a shot somewhere. I was wrong ... but these guys today, if the allegations are true, they're making a mockery of the game. If you're going to cheat and alter the records of the game, that's worse than betting on your team to win."

A recent poll agrees: 75% of adult respondents said they thought players’ use of performance-enhancing drugs such as steroids was a more serious offense than gambling on games, compared with 14% who said Rose's offense was worse. Nine percent viewed these actions as equally serious.

Rose has over 1,500 more hits than Babe Ruth, a known alcoholic who often came to games drunk. Yet he is known as one of the greatest baseball players of all time and will always be honored in the Hall of Fame, while Pete Rose’s accomplishments may never receive the same recognition.

### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. If MLB allows Rose to “hold records,” then should it allow him into the Hall of Fame?
2. Should gambling (for your team) be considered as bad an offense, or worse, than performance-enhancing drug use?