

For immediate release
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Hall in tough to name 2009 Tip O'Neill Award winner ***Another fabulous year for Canucks between the white lines***

St. Marys – **Justin Morneau** and **Jason Bay** are strong contenders to become the only player other than nine-time winner **Larry Walker** to snag more than two Tip O'Neill Awards, presented by the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame annually to the player judged to have excelled in individual achievement and team contribution while adhering to baseball's highest ideals.

But they aren't alone, and the impressive list of candidates goes beyond Major League circles. The Ball Hall is welcoming e-input from fans at www.baseballhalloffame.ca or on their [FACEBOOK PAGE](#) until the decision is made and announced on December 23rd.

"We enjoy hearing from Canadians in the determination process of the Tip," said Ball Hall president and CEO Tom Valcke.

"Stats are stats, but there are different perspectives of who is deserving and why, and we normally receive hundreds of emails to that tune."

Bay hammered a team-high 36 homers and 119 RBI in leading the Boston Red Sox to the playoffs, won a Silver Slugger award and played in the All-Star Game.

Morneau, who missed September due to a back-injury, still managed to go deep 30 times while knocking in 100 in just 135 games for the playoff-bound Minnesota Twins, and also played in the All-Star Game.

Joey Votto batted .322 for the Cincinnati Reds while bashing 25 homeruns and 84 RBI in just 131 games. Votto became only the sixth Canadian to have a season with an on-base percentage over .400 (.414), a slugging percentage above .500 (.567) and a batting average higher than 300. The others were Bay (2005), Walker (1997, '98, '99 and 2000), **Jeff Heath** (1948), **George Selkirk** (1936, '37 and '39), and **Tip O'Neill** himself (1887).

Ryan Dempster won 11 games for the Chicago Cubs, logging 200 innings on the mound and 172 strikeouts. Teammate **Rich Harden** won nine, striking out 171 over 141 innings. Still on the mound, **Erik Bedard** won five games for the Seattle Mariners, with a Canadian-best 2.82 ERA, striking out 90 over 83 innings, and **Scott Richmond**, who the American League Rookie of the Month Award for April, chalked up eight wins and 117 strikeouts over 138 innings for the Toronto Blue Jays. **Blake Hawksworth** finished 4-0 with a 2.02 ERA over 30 games, allowing just 29 hits in 40 innings for the St. Louis Cardinals.

Roberto Clemente Award nominee and Hutch Award winner **Mark Teahen**, who was recently traded to the Chicago White Sox, batted .271, homered 12 times and drove home 50 for the Kansas City Royals. **Russell Martin**, who led the majors in innings caught leading the Los Angeles Dodgers to the playoffs, hit .250 and had seven homers and 53 RBI.

Other Canadians in the majors included **Matt Stairs**, who played in his second consecutive World Series, **John Axford**, **Luke Carlin**, **Jesse Crain**, **Dave Davidson**, **Shawn Hill**, **George Kottaras**, **Chris Leroux**, **Peter Orr**, **Mike Saunders**, and **RJ Swindle**

Minor leaguer **Rene Tosoni** had an incredible year. After being named Futures Game MVP, he led Team Canada to its first-ever World Cup Medal in the 20-team event held in Europe this past Fall. The World Cup has been played for 70 years, and Canada's previous best-finish was fifth, which they did four times. Canada defeated Japan for the Bronze, USA won the gold

over silver-medalist Cuba. Tosoni led the World Cup in runs scored (16), while batting .357 over the 14 games. He hit three homers and compiled 16 RBI, along with an OBP of .446 and a .714 SLG. His 20 hits ranked third overall. Tosoni was a Double-A All-Star for the Minnesota Twins organization, while notching 15 homeruns and 71 RBI.

Speaking of Team Canada, **Kate Psota**, who was awarded Team Canada Women's MVP Award, batted .462 and lead the team with an ERA of 0.90 at their international series in Granby, Ontario.

"Kate has really been the MVP for us since the creation of the Team Canada Women's program in 2004," said field manager Andre Lachance.

"She is the most reliable player I have ever coached. She also adjusted well to a new position (first base) this year, and is a true leader on and off the field, a key ingredient to our team's success at the international level."

Chris Robinson was named Team MVP and was an All-Star for the Triple-A Chicago Cubs team, batting .326 with 101 hits and 48 RBI.

Pete Laforest was named the CAN AM Player of the Year, whalloping 24 homers and knocking in 82 while compiling a .403 OBP, a 563 SLG and a .277 batting average for the Quebec Capitales. He was named first team All-Star catcher and the Independent/Foreign League Canadian Player of the Year.

Tyson Gillies led all minor league Canadians with a 341 batting average, 104 runs and 170 hits for the Seattle Mariners in Single-A. Gillies had nine homers, 42 RBI, a .430 OBP, and was named Affiliated Player-Canadian Offensive Player of the Year.

Matt Kniginyzky won a pair of games for Team Canada and compiled a perfect 0.00 ERA at the World Cup over three starts and 18 innings, striking out 11. He won five games in Double-A for the Kansas City Royals organization.

Nick Bucci won seven games and struck out 69 in 73 innings with Milwaukee's Rookie League entry. He also posted a 0.00 ERA at the World Cup, striking out nine over 14 innings and three quality starts.

Third baseman **Shawn Bowman**, named to the World Cup All-Star team, had three homers, and 15 RBI, and scored eight times over 14 games. He hit nine homeruns and had 44 RBI while compiling a .294 batting average with the New York Mets Double-A team.

Tryston Magnuson was the third Canuck at the World Cup to post a 0.00 ERA, as the reliever picked up three wins and struck out eight in 7.2 innings over five appearances. He won five games and compiled a 2.39 ERA in 43 outings with the Toronto Blue Jays Double-A club.

Past winners of the James "Tip" O'Neill Award:

1984 - Terry Puhl
1985 - Dave Shipanoff
1986 - Rob Ducey

1987 - Larry Walker
1988 - Kevin Reimer
1989 - Steve Wilson
1990 - Larry Walker
1991 - Daniel Brabant
1992 - Larry Walker
1993 - Rob Butler
1994 - Larry Walker
1995 - Larry Walker
1996 - Jason Dickson
1997 - Larry Walker
1998 - Larry Walker
1999 - Jeff Zimmerman
2000 - Ryan Dempster
2001 - Corey Koskie & Larry Walker
2002 - Eric Gagné & Larry Walker
2003 - Eric Gagné
2004 - Jason Bay
2005 - Jason Bay
2006 - Justin Morneau
2007 - Russell Martin
2008 - Justin Morneau

Note: *James "Tip" O'Neill was one of Major League baseball's first legitimate stars. With the St. Louis Browns in 1887, O'Neill batted .492, SLG-.691, Hits-225, Doubles-52, Triples-19, Homeruns-14, Total Bases-357, Runs-167 (4th all-time for a single season), RBI-123. The outfielder from Woodstock, Ontario set major league records in hits, doubles, slugging percentage, and total bases that season while compiling an astounding .492 batting average (walks were included as hits in 1887, but if his average was calculated by today's standard, it was .435, the second highest in major league history to Hugh Duffy, 438). The former US Speaker of the House was named after the Canadian baseball icon.*

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