

Photo of the Day | Championships built upon a dream



The University of Connecticut men's basketball team advances to the Final Four after a huge win against Duke on March 29, 2026. Braylon Mullins scored the game winning three pointer with only three seconds left in the game, securing the Huskies a 73-72 win.

PHOTOGRAPH BY EMMA MEIDINGER, ASSOCIATE PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

IS GIANCARLO STANTON A HALL OF FAMER?

by Thaddeus Sawyer
CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT
HE/HIM/HIS
thaddeus.sawyer@uconn.edu

Here's a fun fact that might make you feel old: It's been almost a decade since Giancarlo Stanton was named National League MVP as a Miami Marlin after leading Major League Baseball in home runs with 59.

Less than a month after winning that award, Stanton was dealt to the New York Yankees as part of the Marlins' fire sale that also saw outfield mates Christian Yelich and Marcell Ozuna get shipped out of town.

Now entering his ninth season in pinstripes, the trade was a clear win for the Yankees. Stanton has accumulated 11.5 wins above replacement across 748 games in the Bronx, never scratching the heights of his time in Miami but providing 187 home runs and counting. In comparison, the three-player package of former all-star second baseman Starlin Castro and prospects José Devers and Jorge Guzmán sent to Miami resulted in a combined 2.4 WAR.

The 36-year-old Stanton is off to one of his hottest starts in years through eight games, sprinting out of the gates with a .394 batting average while sitting tied for sixth in MLB in hits. Any performance this early in the season is to be taken with a grain of salt. Still, the promising start reaffirms the unexpected but well-rounded approach Stanton took at the plate in 2025.

As has been the case every time Stanton has gone on a hot streak in recent seasons, debates arise whether the MLB veteran of 17 seasons deserves to be a Hall of Famer.

That conversation starts and often ends with his 454 career home runs, the most of any active player.

28 players have reached 500 career home runs in the 150-year history of MLB. Of those 28 players, 19 are enshrined in the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Two more, Miguel Cabrera and Albert Pujols, will be honored in Cooperstown, N.Y., as soon as they are eligible.

The remaining seven all have connections with steroids through either positive tests, being named in the Mitchell Report or seemingly admitting to their use.

Stanton is within striking range of the 500 threshold that seems to be an automatic qualifier. Reaching that mark will be

easier said than done.

The most obvious barrier is injuries, something that Stanton knows all too well. Coming into this season, Stanton had only appeared in 56.4% of the Yankees' 1,032 regular season games since 2019, according to Randy Miller of NJ.com. He didn't make his season debut until mid-June last season.

Prior to 2025, Stanton was diagnosed with both a chronic calf issue and tennis elbow in both arms, according to Jon Heyman of the New York Post. Both issues persist to this day, with Stanton saying the elbow issues will remain throughout the rest of his career, according to the NJ.com article.

"I can't open a bottle," Stanton said to Miller. "I can't open a bag of chips ... a bag of anything. That's the way it is."

The guarantees in Stanton's contract signed with Miami expire after 2027. The Yankees hold a club option for his 2028 services at a rate of \$25 million. There is a \$10 million buyout on that option, meaning that it's a net-\$15 million decision.

Either way, Stanton is guaranteed at least two seasons to hit 46 home runs. If he gets three, it's almost a lock. If he gets two, it might come down to the wire. He reached at least 24 home runs in each of the last three seasons, coming in a bit higher in 2024 with 27.

If Stanton can't stay healthy or otherwise falls short of 500, his other career accomplishments likely won't be enough to make up the difference.

Stanton will presumably fall short of 2,000 hits. Besides the MVP award, his five all-star appearances and smattering of Silver Sluggers and other similar awards early in his career are résumé builders but not game changers. His other stats are also lacking compared to the average Hall of Fame candidate.

An average Hall of Famer has between 50 and 70 WAR. Stanton will fall on the lowest edge of that range if he breaches it at all. He sits at 47.4 on his career and has crossed one WAR just once since 2021, with one season falling in the negatives.

A more optimistic outlook may consider that he reached 1.9 WAR last year while also losing value due to appearing in the field due to Aaron Judge's mid-season elbow troubles.

A full-time designated hitter once again to start the 2026 campaign, Stanton has already

reached 0.5 WAR eight games into the season, and Fangraphs projects him to finish the season right on cusp of a whole number once again.

There's also Stanton's post-season performances. In short, Stanton turned back the clocks and became one of the best hitters in baseball once again when the calendar flipped to October.

A career .254 postseason hitter since his first with New York in 2018, the right-handed hitter's 18 postseason home runs



New York Yankees designated hitter and outfielder Giancarlo Stanton. Stanton won the National League MVP in 2017 as a member of the Miami Marlins. PHOTO COURTESY OF @GINARCARLO818 ON INSTAGRAM