

2022-01-25 David Ortiz Media Availability

Jon Shestakofsky

Hello everyone and welcome to tonight's media availability with class of 2022 Hall of Fame inductee, David Ortiz. My name is Jon Shestakofsky. I am Vice President of Communications and Education at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. Earlier tonight, David was elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame on the Baseball Writers' Association of America ballot and he will be inducted into the Hall of Fame on Sunday, July 24, right here in Cooperstown, alongside fellow members of the Class of 2022, Bud Fowler, Gil Hodges, Minnie Miñoso, Jim Kaat, Tony Oliva and Buck O'Neil.

David Ortiz

I really wanna first of all, I really want to thank the baseball writers, for giving me the opportunity to be part of this elite group of players, which is the Hall of Fame; is something that I really never dream of it, you know. I was the type of player that I know I got the talent, all I was looking for was the opportunity to be able to be an everyday player and God at some point he came through once I got to the Red Sox, and the rest is history. But I feel so thankful and grateful for, you know, being able to accomplish what I was able to accomplish. And thank God, you know, have the career that I had. And, you know, I always blame it on the fans, you know, the fans got the best out of me, the fans, the Red Sox fans, they always it was the type of fans that got me and that kind of, you know, to be able to go to the field and get the best out of me. So wanna thank all of them very much.

Jon Shestakofsky

Thank you, David. And now we're ready to take questions from the call participants. So if you would like to ask a question of David Ortiz, please click reactions at the bottom of your screen and then click the raise hand button. And the first question is going to go to Pete Abraham, Pete, try and get you to unmute yourself.

Pete Abraham

Can you hear me Shesta?

Jon Shestakofsky

Yes.

Pete Abraham

Hey, David. Congratulations.

David Ortiz

Thank you. Pete.

Pete Abraham

Can you, can you kind of take us through how you felt today? And what did you feel like when you finally got the news from Jack?

David Ortiz

You know, like, my day was kind of smooth until like noon. Once it was noon, I was like, you know, when, when you go to the gym for the first time, then you jump on the, on the bicycle. And then you want to go for 30 minutes, but the first two minutes feel like they were the longest. That's exactly how my day feels right afternoon by, you know, was with my kids and family and, and basically, they make everything go smooth. And at some point, we were just, you know, receiving the news.

Pete Abraham

What did it mean for you to have Pedro there?

David Ortiz

Oh, man, I don't think without a Pedro here, this this would have happened, you know, Pedro have been, like a big brother to me. Pedro. You know, I encouraged me in so many wonderful thing, you know, and I don't have to tell you much. I mean, you were there with us down in Boston and Pedro has so much value when it comes down to being a teammate, being a friend, represent an organization. I mean, Pedro is the full package. And I was so lucky and blessed by God to have someone when I really need it in my career like him, so without a question, he was the first one that I invited to be part of what is going on right now.

Pete Abraham

Thank you, David.

David Ortiz

Thanks, Pete.

Jon Shestakofsky

Next up, we'll have Steve Buckley. Steve, go right ahead.

Steve Buckley

David, first of all, congratulations.

David Ortiz

Thank you, Steve.

Steve Buckley

(unintelligible) with the greats in Boston sports can you speak words to that? Put that in perspective in what you now mean in Boston sports history?

David Ortiz

Look, Steve when I first got to Boston, I always to look up to those guys like, wow, I don't think you can be part of that pack at all. You know, same. He's talking about real legendary, real OG, you know,

Steve, but they begin the career just like I did. Not with a thought that they were going to end up where they were they really at. You know, when you are playing, when you are in the mix, you're on the mix, you're not thinking about any of these you thinking about, do whatever it takes to win championship, do whatever it takes for the fans to go hoppy on you. You do whatever it takes for your community, for your organization for your people. I mean, you're not thinking about one day being a Hall of Fame. Well, I think that what I accomplished, being part of this very elite group is, you know, how you manage yourself, not just on the on the field, off the field, also, you know, how you how you do things, how you handle a business. And without even knowing you became to be part of this based on all the hard work, and all the good things that you put together.

Steve Buckley

David, did you ever meet Bobby Orr at Fenway, Larry Bird, Bill Russell, can you speak about that?

David Ortiz

I have hang out and it's been so many good times with Bobby Orr, Bill Russell. I got to meet Larry Bird a couple of times and you guys are ready. They got my respect on everything and these people I mean, I'm here right now, but I still don't think that my feet can fit in those shoes.

Steve Buckley

Thank you very much.

David Ortiz

Thank you very much, Steve.

Jon Shestakofsky

Next up is Tyler Kepner. Tyler, you can unmute yourself.

Tyler Kepner

David, congratulations.

David Ortiz

Thank you very much, Tyler.

Tyler Kepner

Sure, one of the biggest things about your career was your, you know, ability to postseason and the clutch in the World Series in the playoffs? What was it about you that allowed you to either be at your best or elevate when everybody was watching and when it mattered most?

David Ortiz

I was always concerned about going home without a trophy, it was something that I used to (unintelligible), you know what I'm saying and he it happened, it happened few times, but it was something that it was the ride or die type of situation and I used to get really prepared for that. You know, and to be honest with you, I was lucky enough to have the right teammates, I was lucky enough to have the right coaches, I was lucky enough to play for the right organization who got my back of all

time. And I mean, the Red Sox is some organization that if I born again, I would like to get the opportunity to play for them again, because they educate me not only as a player, they educate me as a human being, you know what I'm saying what is going on in that organization is perfect for a guy like me, you know what I'm saying and everything pretty much work out at the same time. That's why I say always, you know, that time is perfect because you go into places with this type of ideas. Thinking that is the best but then once you start seeing things around you, you kind of start changing your mentality and and you know, it played out very well for me to be honest with you and I'm always gonna go proud into the Hall of Fame wearing the Red Sox uniform based on everything that you know, that put me in the right track and made me a better person.

Tyler Kepner

Thanks, David.

Jon Shestakofsky

Next up, we'll have John Shea. You can unmute yourself.

John Shea

Yeah. Hi, David. Congratulations on getting elected for the first year on the ballot.

David Ortiz

Thank you, John.

John Shea

This was the final year on the ballot for several people including Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens. Do you believe they belong in the Hall of Fame considering what has kept them from getting elected so far, their ties with performance enhancing drugs?

David Ortiz

Look, man, I remember one time I when I used to be with the Mariners with Seattle. I remember seeing Barry Bonds walking across the field and I remember watching him hit in batting practice and right away he became my idol you know. Barry Bonds I don't think there's ever gonna be a human being capable of, of you know, doing what he did while he play. You know he is special. This is special I mean sometime probably going to be hard for people that have nothing to do with this game to understand that but Barry Bonds to me separating himself from from the game at the highest level you know, I mean, I know that there's a lot of things going on but to me the guys is a Hall of Famer way before everything you know all the talk and all the things I mean this is a guy who take the game to a whole totally different level. Same things with Roger, the Rocket you know? I mean when I see these guys to be honest with you, I don't even compare myself to them because I saw so many times those guys performing and it was something that it was very special you know, so not having them join me at this time is something that it's hard for me to believe to be honest with you because those guys they did it all you know and really it is what it is you know and there's nothing me personally I can do about it.

John Shea

And what is your take now on that report from 2003 that you tested positive in surveyed testing back then?

David Ortiz

Well you are here at all you know I'm saying like we have someone coming out with this one list that you don't know what anybody test positive for. So all of a sudden, people is pointing finger at me. But then we start you know being drug tested and I never fail a test. What that tells you?

Jon Shestakofsky

Next up, we have Ian Brown. Ian, you can unmute yourself.

Ian Brown

Hey, David, how you doing? Congratulations.

David Ortiz

Thank you.

Ian Brown

Hey, just following up with when Pete was asking you about Pedro, do you wonder if you would have ever got to the Red Sox without that phone call that Pedro made and how that changed your career just when he kind of vouched for you told the Red Sox to sign you?

David Ortiz

Ian, what's happening brother? Um reality is the future is something that is sometimes you know, like you don't you don't you don't really know what can happen and I wouldn't like to know what my future was gonna be like because the same way you know the good how the good things are gonna happen is the same way that you were gonna know about the bad things. It was a critical moment when Pedro make the phone call. I have no job at the time the Minnesota Twins just let me go based on salary, because it was my best year over there without you know, getting any playing time basically but they thought my salary was going to be too high and that's why they let me go they didn't let me go because I don't have the talent because that's what people get it all twisted. They didn't let me go because I don't have the talent they let me go because they thought they're not playing me. Looking up to the salary that I was supposed to get a year coming from a smaller market. You know, they thought I was in (lost connection).

Jon Shestakofsky

Looks like we may have lost the connection. If everyone can hang tight. We'll try and get him right back.

David Ortiz

I'm back.

Ian Brown

He's back.

Jon Shestakofsky

Ian, did you have any follow ups?

Ian Brown

No, I think it David you answered the question. Thank you.

David Ortiz

All right.

Jon Shestakofsky

Awesome.

David Ortiz

Thanks, Ian.

Jon Shestakofsky

Next up is going to be Rob Bradford. Rob.

Rob Bradford

Congratulations. David,

David Ortiz

Thank you, Rob.

Rob Bradford

So you said that you didn't really think about the Hall of Fame, but there must have been a point where you thought about the Hall of Fame for the first time, right? Said, this is actually a possibility. Do you remember when that was?

David Ortiz

It had been pretty much the last year out of the five years, you know, the first four years I was very relaxed and I wasn't paying attention to any of it. But as the time get closer, and now I mean, people start just making those noise. I mean, in the Dominican Republic right now back in my country, this is something that is it's a very big deal. I mean, I know is a very big deal everywhere but here we had the way to celebrate baseball, because it's in our blood, you know, saying it's something that doesn't matter where you come from, in the Dominican baseball is we live through it, you know what I'm saying it's part of who we are. So I have been spending a lot of time in the Dominican because of my dad, he's right here sitting right next to me. And that's the whole talk for the past year also, you know, it's just, you know, you had the opportunity you have the chances you got the numbers you got the personality you got to get the whole package. Not believe because I always look up to the Hall of Fame like as a very high standard you know what I'm saying I mean, I have met so many Hall of Famer and when I see those guys, it's like when a kid go to the candy shop, you know what I'm saying and I'd be like, and I used to talk to Mr. Hank Aaron, Morgan, even Tony Oliva he just got in now. It's just something, so Tony Oliva was around us when I used to play for Minnesota and I used to look at Tony Oliva and be

like, it's amazing. I mean, this this this the caliber of player, you know, all the story that I heard about Mr. Ted Williams, Kirby Puckett, who was the guy who basically inspire me in so many ways when I was with Minnesota, Kirby was a friend was a was the father was the brother. Matter of fact, he's the one reason why I went and once I got to Boston, I started wearing number 34.

Jon Shestakofsky

Next up, Veronica Contreras. You can unmute yourself.

Veronica Contreras

(In Spanish.)

Jon Shestakofsky

Did we lose him?

Veronica Contreras

I think so.

Jon Shestakofsky

Alright, let's hang tight. One more time. We'll get back to Veronica.

Veronica Contreras

Thank you.

David Ortiz

I'm back.

Jon Shestakofsky

David, Go on Veronica.

David Ortiz

Gracias, Veronica.

David Ortiz

(In Spanish.)

Veronica Contreras

(In Spanish.)

Jon Shestakofsky

We're gonna try and squeeze in one more question from Sean McAdam. Sean, you can unmute yourself.

Sean McAdam

David, congratulations.

David Ortiz

Sean. What's happening, brother?

Sean McAdam

I'm curious what the first ballot means to you getting in on your on the first time. That's something that Ted Williams did, Yaz did, Pedro did it only 57 others have done? Does that make it feel like it's a it's an additional honor, in addition to being in the hall to go in on the first ballot?

David Ortiz

Well, to be honest with you, sometimes is extremely hard to be ignorant. And I can call myself that I started paying attention to that. Lately, you know, the importance of getting into the Hall of Fame. To me getting into the Hall of Fame... (lost connection)

Jon Shestakofsky

Looks like we lost him again. Oh, he's back.

David Ortiz

Okay. So, going back to the question, Sean. I thought of just getting into the Hall of Fame no matter what was important, because I know so many great players, that they haven't get him in the first ballot, but down the road they you know, they finally find a way to get in. But now I know and I also kind of learned not too long ago how difficult is to get in first ballot, you know, and man, you know, like, it's a wonderful honor to be able to get in. My first rodeo is something that is very special to me. I can imagine how New England has to feel about one of his baby, you know, getting into the Hall of Fame today. I'm not even going to tell you about the Dominican Republic, you know, the Dominican Republic is a country that breathes baseball and people is very excited right here in everything is going crazy right now. But I mean, it's amazing, you know, be part of this pack on the first ballot is something very special.

Jon Shestakofsky

Hey, thanks for joining us, David. We really look forward to celebrating your exceptional career at the 2022 Induction Ceremony which will take place July 24th in Cooperstown and thanks for all the members of the media that were able to hop on and join us for this call.

David Ortiz

Thank you Jon and I'll be there on the 24th.

Jon Shestakofsky

We're looking forward to it.

David Ortiz

Thank you man, take care.

Jon Shestakofsky

Thank you, Papi. Appreciate it.

David Ortiz

All right, buddy.