



Pro Football Hall of Fame-Class of 2025 enshrinees Eric Allen, Jared Allen, Antonio Gates and Sterling Sharpe acknowledge the fans on Saturday in Canton, Ohio.

Gates recalls unusual path to Canton as Hall class enshrined

Field Level Media

It’s hard to be the first of anything when it comes to the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

But when tight end Antonio Gates was inducted on Saturday afternoon, he became the first Hall of Famer who didn’t play college football.

Gates certainly took the odd route to football stardom, but he was immortalized along with wide receiver Sterling Sharpe, defensive end Jared Allen, and cornerback Eric Allen at Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium in Canton, Ohio.

Gates, 45, first made a name of himself by being a star college basketball player at Kent State, helping the team reach the Elite Eight of the 2002 NCAA Tournament and putting up even bigger numbers the following season. But NBA franchises weren’t too fond of 6-foot-4 power forwards.

Earlier in his college career, Gates was at Michigan State and hoping to play basketball for Tom Izzo and football for Nick Saban. But the latter coach wanted Gates to focus on football, which turned out to be a good deal for Kent State.

When his college hoops career ended, NFL teams were interested in Gates as a tight end, and he

eventually signed as an undrafted free agent with the San Diego Chargers.

“Tim Brewster, at the time, was the tight ends coach for the San Diego Chargers,” Gates said during his speech. “Tim Brewster saw something in me. He would come and watch me play basketball, but he was confident I’d be an All-Pro tight end in three years.”

“Switching sports can be a life-changing experience,” he continued. “The unexpected opportunities are often the most powerful ones, because they can completely redirect your life – if you’re ready to take advantage of the opportunity.”

The switch certainly paid off for Gates as he earned the first of eight straight Pro Bowl selections in his second season when he caught 13 touchdown passes. He had 955 receptions for 11,841 yards and 116 touchdowns in 236 games in 16 seasons (2003-18) with the Chargers – the first 14 played in San Diego and the last two in Los Angeles.

The 116 touchdown catches are the most by a tight end and rank seventh overall.

Sharpe, whose career was ended by a serious neck injury at age 29, is the second football playing brother of his own family to earn induction. Younger brother Shannon

Sharpe, a stellar tight end, was inducted in 2011.

During his speech 14 years ago, Shannon Sharpe said he was only the second-best player in his family.

So naturally, Sterling Sharpe asked his brother to join him at the podium on Saturday.

“The last time I was here, you said you were the only pro football player in the Hall of Fame that could say this, that you were the second-best player in your own family,” Sterling Sharpe said, before cracking up the crowd with the finishing comment. “Well, I agree with that statement.”

Sterling Sharpe, now 60, entered the Hall in his 26th year of eligibility.

Sharpe was a force for the Green Bay Packers from 1988-94, topping 1,100 receiving yards five times. He caught 18 touchdown passes in his final season and had 65 in 112 regular-season games to go with 595 catches and 8,134 yards.

Jared Allen also took the hard route to the NFL.

He played at small-college program Idaho State and was a terror at that level, winning the Buck Buchanan Defensive Player of the Year Award in 2003. That helped prompt the Kansas City Chiefs to select Allen in the fourth round of the 2004 NFL Draft.

Allen, 43, was a pass-rushing force and had 10 or more sacks on eight occasions during 12 NFL seasons with the Chiefs (2004-07), Minnesota Vikings (2008-13), Chicago Bears (2014-15) and Carolina Panthers (2015).

He had a career-high 22 sacks in 2011 and finished his career with 136.

“My definition of fear is a healthy fear of failure,” Allen said. “It motivates you to do whatever you can to succeed. It’s about getting knocked down, learning why it happened and working towards making sure it doesn’t happen again.”

“The pursuit of greatness – I had the NFL sack leaders taped up in my locker so I could see greatness every day I came in,” he remarked. “Seeing that picture looking back at me meant that I never got complacent.”

Eric Allen finally received the call in his 19th year of eligibility.

Allen, 59, played 14 NFL seasons with the Philadelphia Eagles (1988-94), New Orleans Saints (1995-97) and then-Oakland Raiders (1998-2001).

Allen had 54 interceptions, returning eight for touchdowns. He set a then-NFL record with four interception returns for touchdowns in 1993 for the Eagles and later had three for the Raiders in 2000.

McIntosh caps swimming worlds with fourth gold

Field Level Media

Summer McIntosh captured her fourth gold medal at the world swimming championships by winning the 400-meter individual medley on Sunday in Singapore.

McIntosh, an 18-year-old from Toronto, finished the race in 4 minutes, 25.78 seconds, nearly 7.5 seconds better than Australia’s Jenna Forrester and Japan’s Mio Narita.

McIntosh also secured gold in the 200-meter butterfly, 200-meter medley and 400-meter freestyle as well as the bronze in the 800-meter freestyle. She joined American star Katie Ledecky as the only other female swimmer to claim four individual golds at a world championships, with the latter winning the 200-, 400-, 800- and 1,500-

meter freestyle in 2015.

Also Sunday, the United States’ women’s 4x100 medley team of Regan Smith, Kate Douglass, Gretchen Walsh and Torri Huske broke their own record by finishing the event in 3:49.34, That was 0.29 better than the previous mark.

“This is the best way to end the meet,” Walsh said. “And I feel like we have such a good opportunity when you have this stacked group of women closing it out on a relay like this.

“We’re going to leave Singapore with a smile on our faces.”

From a team perspective, the Americans recorded nine gold medals -- one better than Australia.

France finished third followed by Canada, which saw McIntosh win all of its golds.

NFL expected to take ownership stake in ESPN

Los Angeles Times

Walt Disney Co. is expected to announce the NFL is taking an equity stake in its sports media property ESPN, according to people familiar with the plan.

Disney may reveal the deal during its earnings call Wednesday. Representa-

tives at the NFL and ESPN declined comment Friday.

In return for the equity stake, ESPN is expected at minimum to take over the NFL’s cable properties including the NFL Network and Red Zone, the popular channel that continuously updates fans on the slate of Sunday contests. The NFL Network also has the rights to several regular-season games late in the season.

NFL also owns the league’s production unit, NFL Films, and NFL+.

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FROM PAGE 1B PEREZ

middle of the lineup, and that’s a big threat at any time.”

Perez has 11 home runs in his last 21 games. If he reaches 300 career homers, he will become the eighth primary catcher to achieve the milestone.

Meanwhile, Scherzer is closing in on 3,500 strikeouts. He is a three-time Cy Young Award winner and has two World Series titles.

On Saturday, the Royals fell 4-2 to the Blue Jays at the Roger Centre in Toronto, Ontario. KC rookie Noah Cameron allowed four earned runs in 6 ½ innings in the loss.

“I thought we just continued to attack,” Cameron told reporters in Toronto via FanDuel Sports Network Kansas City. “I thought kind of after that (third) inning, we bear down and started to get into some good counts. Started to get ahead of hitters, kind of struggled doing that in the beginning and first three innings. Just continued to attack the zone and get some guys out early.”

The Blue Jays took an early three-run lead in the third inning. Davis

Schneider hit a two-run single and Bo Bichette added an RBI single in the frame.

From there, Scherzer kept the Royals at a distance. He allowed one run — the Perez homer — across six innings. He registered five strikeouts and didn’t walk a batter.

The Royals had a few opportunities. However, the offense failed to drive in outfielder Kyle Isbel in the third and fifth innings. Isbel doubled in both plate appearances but was left standing on third base. KC finished 0-for-5 with runners in scoring position.

Now, the Royals (55-56) will look to win the series on Sunday afternoon. KC veteran Seth Lugo will be on the mound for the series finale.

ROYALS DEALT INJURY BLOW

The injuries continue to mount for the Royals. On Saturday, Royals second baseman Jonathan India and relief pitcher Steven Cruz were removed from the game.

India was hit by a pitch on his left wrist and forearm in the third inning. He initially stayed in the

Kansas City Royals catcher Salvador Perez (13) hits a home run against the Toronto Blue Jays during the sixth inning at Rogers Centre on Aug. 2, 2025.

game but was replaced in the fifth. Nick Loftin pinch hit for him and remained in the game for the rest of the afternoon.

“It’s just a concussion,” Quatraro said. “We got an X-ray and nothing’s broken. Just sore and he has been battling that wrist anyway and he got hit there again.”

Cruz left with the Royals training staff in the seventh inning. Perez alerted the dugout after noticing something was bothering Cruz as he pitched to Blue Jays star Vladimir Guerrero Jr. in relief.

After a brief evaluation, Cruz left the game and was replaced by right-handed veteran reliever

Taylor Clarke. He induced a double play to retire Guerrero and end the inning.

The Royals provided an update after the game. Cruz left with right shoulder discomfort and will get further treatment.

“He felt a little pinching in his shoulder,” Quatraro said. “Just kind of some normal throwing discomfort. We will have to get him evaluated and see what we’ve got.”

What’s next: Seth Lugo will look to help the Royals secure a pivotal series win on Sunday afternoon against the Blue Jays. Toronto will counter with right-hander Chris Bassitt (11-5, 4.24 ERA).

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