

President Trump Plans to Pardon Pete Rose: A Second Chance for Baseball's Outcast?

President Donald Trump announced on Friday that he will issue a posthumous pardon for Pete Rose, the all-time Major League Baseball hits leader who was banned from the sport for gambling. President Trump also called for Rose's induction into the Baseball Hall of Fame, expressing his frustration over Rose's lifetime ban.

"Major League Baseball didn't have the courage or decency to put the late, great, Pete Rose, also known as 'Charlie Hustle,' into the Baseball Hall of Fame," Trump wrote on Truth Social, according to Yahoo Sports' Sean Leahy. "Now he is dead, will never experience the thrill of being selected, even though he was a FAR BETTER PLAYER than most of those who made it, and can only be named posthumously. WHAT A SHAME! Anyway, over the next few weeks I will be signing a complete PARDON of Pete Rose, who shouldn't have been gambling on baseball, but only bet on HIS TEAM WINNING. He never bet against himself, or the other team."

Rose, who passed away in September at the age of 83 due to heart disease, remains MLB's all-time leader in hits (4,256), games played (3,562), at-bats (14,053), and singles (3,215), as reported by USA Today's Scooby Axson. However, his legacy was damaged by a 1989 lifetime ban from MLB after an investigation led by John Dowd determined that he had gambled on baseball games involving the Cincinnati Reds while serving as their manager.

For years, Rose denied the allegations, but he admitted in his 2004 book that he had bet on games involving the Reds. Despite his on-field accomplishments, his permanent ineligibility has prevented him from being considered for the Hall of Fame. In 2015, MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred rejected Rose's bid for reinstatement, reaffirming the league's stance on gambling violations.

Trump's planned pardon has raised questions about its legal implications. While presidential pardons apply to federal crimes, it is unclear what specific offense Trump intends to pardon. Rose previously pleaded guilty in 1990 to two counts of filing false income tax returns and served a five-month prison sentence. According to FOX Sports, Trump did not mention Rose's tax case in his announcement, instead focusing on his baseball career and gambling history.

In response to Trump's statement, John Dowd, who led the 1989 investigation, told ESPN that MLB is "not in the pardon business nor does it control admission to the Hall of Fame." However,

as reported by FOX Sports, MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred has begun reviewing a petition filed by Rose's family to remove him from the league's ineligible list. ESPN sources indicate that Manfred met with Rose's lawyer and Rose's eldest daughter in December to discuss the matter.

The Hall of Fame's board of directors adopted a rule in 1991 that prevents individuals on the permanently ineligible list from appearing on the Hall of Fame ballot. If MLB does reinstate Rose, it remains uncertain whether the Hall of Fame would reconsider its position.

###

493 words.

References

Axson, S. (2025, March 1). President Donald Trump says he will pardon MLB's all-time hit king

Pete Rose. *USA TODAY*.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/mlb/2025/03/01/president-trump-says-he-will-pardon-pete-rose/80950968007/>

FOX Sports. (2025, March 3). President Trump to posthumously pardon Pete Rose; Rob

Manfred considering reinstatement. *FOX Sports*.

<https://www.foxsports.com/stories/mlb/president-trump-says-he-will-posthumously-pardon-baseball-legend-pete-rose>

Leahy, S. (2025, March 1). President Trump says he will issue Pete Rose a “complete pardon.”

Yahoo Sports.

<https://sports.yahoo.com/mlb/article/president-trump-says-he-will-issue-pete-rose-a-complete-pardon-163532604.html>