



SABR Nineteenth Century Committee

Overlooked Legend Award

2016 Nominees

Charlie Bennett

Bob Caruthers

Jim Creighton

Jack Glasscock

Paul Hines

Dummy Hoy

Bobby Mathews

Al Reach

George Van Haltren

Chris Von der Ahe

Biographies compiled by Adam Darowski and Joe Williams.

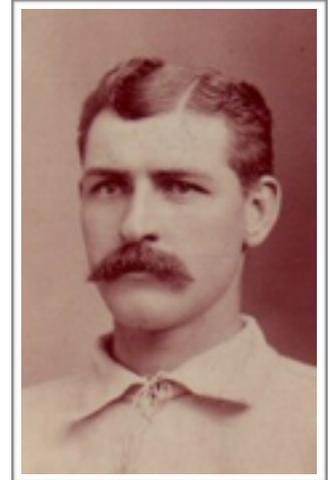
All references to Wins Above Replacement (WAR) use the version published on Baseball-Reference.com.

Charlie Bennett

Born: November 21, 1854, **Died:** February 24, 1927

Years as Player: 1878, 1880–1893

Position: Catcher



Charles Wesley Bennett was one of the greatest catchers of the Nineteenth Century, starring for the Detroit Wolverines in the National League (and playing every season of the franchise's existence). He was a powerful hitter who often ranked among the leaders in home runs and slugging percentage while finishing in the top ten in bases on balls six times. His .256 batting average was below the league average, but his .340 on-base percentage and .387 slugging percentage were both well above average.

Bennett, a leader on the field, also provided stellar defense behind the plate. He led National League catchers in fielding percentage seven times, putouts three times, and ranked in the top five in games caught ten times. He caught Lee Richmond's perfect game in 1880, the first perfect game in baseball history. Bennett is also credited with inventing the catcher's chest protector, though he deflected much of the credit to his wife, Alice. Alice sewed strips of cork inside a vest which Bennett wore under his uniform.

While traveling on a hunting trip with John Clarkson during the offseason in 1894, Bennett suffered a terrible train accident and lost both of his legs. He ended his career with the most games caught in history with 954. In 1896, Detroit's new ball park (Bennett Park) was named after the city's beloved hero. Bennett caught the ceremonial first pitch at the stadium every year from 1896 until 1926.

Bennett was an Overlooked Legend finalist from 2014–2015, finishing seventh last year.

Sabermetric slant: Bennett has a very impressive WAR total of 39.1 despite playing in only 1,062 games. While he was a very strong hitter (75 batting runs above average), his 142 fielding runs above average are second all-time among catchers (behind Ivan Rodriguez's 146. When you consider that Rodriguez played 2,543 games, Bennett's total looks even better. Gary Carter and Charlie Bennett are the only two catchers in history with 75+ batting runs and 75+ fielding runs.

Bob Caruthers

Born: January 5, 1864, **Died:** August 5, 1911

Years as Player: 1884–93

Position: Pitcher, Outfield



Born in Memphis, Tennessee and raised in Chicago, Illinois, Robert Lee Caruthers was among the greatest all-around players of his day. He was an outstanding pitcher with a deceptive right-handed delivery and a hard-hitting outfielder who had a solid reputation as a defensive player and a base-runner. Before signing with the St. Louis Browns of the American Association in 1884, Caruthers played for Grand Rapids (1883) and Minneapolis (1884) of the Northwestern League. The 5'4", 140-pound twenty-year-old made his major league debut for the Browns on September 7, 1884 and went 7-2 in 13 games to close out the season. In 1885, he teamed with Dave Foutz to lead the Browns to the pennant, going 40-13 and leading the league in wins, winning percentage (.755) and ERA (2.07). After the 1885 season he went to Paris, France and became engaged in a trans-Atlantic salary dispute with Browns' owner Chris Von der Ahe, earning his nickname "Parisian Bob" and settling for a \$3,200 salary. The Browns won the pennant again in 1886 with Caruthers going 30-14 with a 2.32 ERA (second in the league) while hitting .334, slugging .527 and leading the league with .448 on-base percentage. The 1887 season was much of the same with a pennant, a 29-9 record and a league-leading .763 winning percentage, at the same time hitting .357, slugging .547, scoring 102 runs, stealing 49 bases and getting on base with a .463 percentage.

After the season in a Von der Ahe shakeup, Caruthers was traded to Brooklyn where he would play for four seasons, winning 29, 40, 23 and 18 games, respectively, while contributing to pennant winners in 1889 and 1890, Brooklyn's first season in the NL. In 1892, he went back to the Browns, now a NL team, and played primarily in the outfield, having career highs in games (143), at bats (513), hits (142) and walks (86). The 1893 season was his last in the majors, playing briefly for the Chicago Colts and the Cincinnati Reds. He finished with a 218-99 record, an ERA of 2.83 and a .391 OBP for his career. He continued playing in the minors until 1898 before becoming an American League umpire in 1902 and 1903.

Caruthers was an Overlooked Legend finalist from 2010–2015, finishing fourth last year.

Sabermetric slant: Caruthers was worth 43.8 WAR in his nine years as a pitcher. While that total alone is impressive, he added another 16.8 WAR as a hitter and position player. This puts him in small group of players who provided sixteen or more WAR both at the plate and on the mound. Caruthers is joined by only Babe Ruth (163.2 WAR at the plate and 20.6 on the mound) and John Montgomery Ward (35.8 WAR at the plate and 28.4 on the mound). This, of course, makes Caruthers' Hall of Fame case a unique one. While his pitching was certainly impressive, how much should his offense help his case?

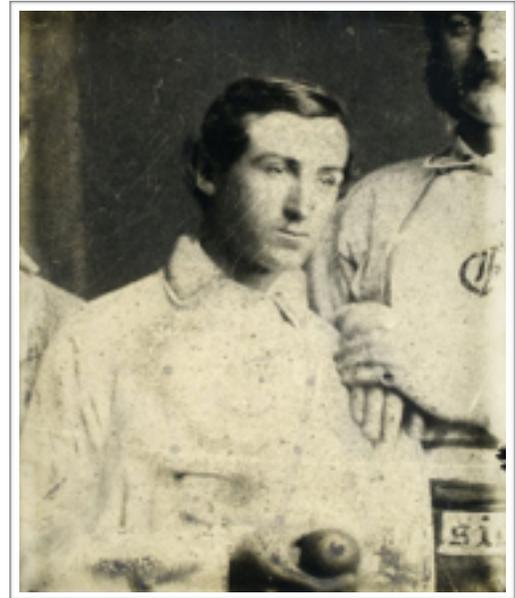
Jim Creighton

Born: April 15, 1841, **Died:** October 18, 1862

Years as Player: 1857–62

Position: Pitcher

James Creighton was baseball's first superstar and possibly its first professional. His life came to a tragic end just six months after his twenty-first birthday, making the young ballplayer a baseball legend and fueling the lore that makes baseball our national pastime. He was a tremendous hitter but made his mark on baseball history by revolutionizing the pitcher position with his swift and accurate pitching that didn't allow batters to get a solid hit on the ball.



Creighton grew up in Brooklyn, New York and took a liking to both cricket and baseball, for which he would excel at both sports. In 1857, he created a ball club with his childhood peers called Young America. The club played a few matches but lasted just one year. He then joined the Niagaras of Brooklyn and became their second baseman. In 1859, Creighton filled in for the Niagaras regular pitcher John Shields by taking the mound against the Star Club of Brooklyn. The rest is history (and lore).

Creighton threw with a sweeping low delivery and a wrist snap that increased the spin on the ball, causing the ball to rise to the catcher's shoulder. As John Thorn has written, "he possessed an unprecedented combination of speed, spin and command that virtually defined the position for all those who followed". After the game, the Star Club snapped up the new pitching phenom and by the following year he was a

member of the Excelsior Club of Brooklyn. It wasn't until he started pitching for the Excelsiors in 1860 that he became the game's most dominant pitcher. Creighton had the benefit of playing with the greatest catcher of the time in Joe Leggett, who was adept at handling swift pitching and limited his passed balls in comparison to others of the day. The battery was the best in the nation in 1860 and the Excelsiors were the best team in the land despite not officially beating the reigning champion Atlantics in a best-of-three series. The Excelsiors went on the first baseball tour of a team earlier in the season which enhanced Creighton's reputation outside of Brooklyn as his contemporaries and fans witnessed his attention-grabbing delivery and success. On November 8, 1860, Creighton pitched the first recorded shutout against the St. George Cricket Club, 25-0.

In 1861, the Excelsiors did not play any matches and Creighton played in just six games in 1862 before he passed away on October 18. It appears he died from a ruptured inguinal hernia. How that exactly happened will never be known but in baseball lore it occurred on October 14 against the Unions of Morrisania when he hit a home run. His death made him a baseball immortal. His pitching changed the game forever. Creighton was a pioneer that changed the focus from tossing the ball to the batter so they could put the ball in play to trying to get the player out and not giving the hitter a clean shot at the ball. Due to his success, others would soon follow this strategy and there was no turning back. Creighton died at his father's home and was buried with a large monument in Brooklyn's Greenwood Cemetery, a popular tourist spot for baseball enthusiasts.

Creighton was an Overlooked Legend finalist from 2012–2015, finishing third last year.

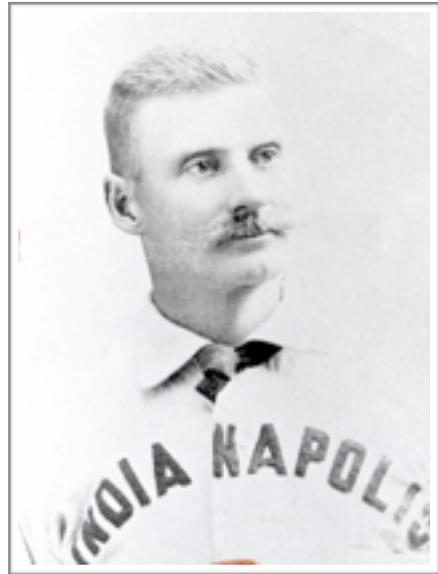
Jack Glasscock

Born: July 22, 1857, **Died:** February 24, 1947

Years as Player: 1879-95

Position: Shortstop

Considered by many historians as the greatest defensive shortstop of the Nineteenth Century, “Pebble Jack” played the majority of his career without a glove. He received his nickname for his dutiful inspection of the field for pebbles and tossing them away to avert bad hops during the game. He led the league in fielding percentage and assists six times, double plays four times, putouts two times and had the most range of any shortstop of his era. He retired as the career leader for shortstops in games, assists, double plays, putouts, total chances and fielding percentage.



At the bat, he got better with age. A career .290 hitter, he led the National League in hits in 1889 and 1890, winning the 1890 batting title with a .336 average after finishing second the previous year with a .352 average. He finished his career with 1,164 runs, 2,041 hits and more than 827 RBI. Striking out just 196 times in his career, Glasscock was also one of the toughest hitters to strikeout, leading the league three times in at bats per strikeout.

The “King of Shortstops” played for nine teams in seventeen years, starting his career in 1879 with Cleveland in the National League. Glasscock joined with Fred Dunlap to form an impressive double play combo until both players departed for the upstart Union Association in 1884. Upon returning to the National League, Glasscock played with several organizations through 1895, then continued playing in the minors until 1901.

Glasscock was an Overlooked Legend finalist from 2009–2015, finishing second last year.

Sabermetric slant: Among 19th century shortstops, Glasscock ranks second in the WAR batting component (behind Hughie Jennings), the fielding component (behind Germany Smith), and the base-running component (behind Herman Long). Glasscock's 155 batting runs rank behind ten of the twenty-one shortstops currently in the Hall of Fame, but his 149 fielding runs rank behind only three (backing up his reputation as the "King of Shortstops"). The only Hall of Fame shortstop with more batting runs and fielding runs than Glasscock is Cal Ripken.

Paul Hines

Born: March 1, 1855, **Died:** July 10, 1935

Years as Player: 1872-91

Position: Outfield

Hines, an outstanding defensive center fielder, was among the best all-around players in the game for 20 seasons. He started his professional career with Washington of the National Association before becoming a member of the Chicago White Stockings in 1874, playing for the first National League champion in 1876.



In 1878, he joined Providence and became baseball's first Triple Crown winner when he led the league with 4 homers, 50 RBI and a .358 batting average. He followed his historic season with another batting title in 1879 (.357), while also leading the league in games, hits and total bases as the Grays won their first NL championship. In 1884, along with Old Hoss Radbourn, Hines led the Grays to the NL pennant before defeating New York of the American Association to win the first "World Series." Hines played for the Grays during their entire existence (1878–1885).

He returned to Washington for the 1886 and 1887 seasons before bouncing from Indianapolis (1888 and 1889), Pittsburgh and Boston (1890) and back to play in Washington for the Statesmen of the AA in 1891. He continued to play in the minor leagues until 1896. Hines finished his career with 1,217 runs, 2,133 hits, 549 extra-base hits, 855 RBI and a .302 batting average. At the time of his retirement, he trailed only Cap Anson and Jim O'Rourke in hits.

Hines was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2009, and 2011–2015, finishing tenth last year.

Sabermetric slant: Hines collected 2,133 hits over a 20-year career. That sounds like a solid, but unspectacular career, but he did it in only 1,658 games. He wasn't missing games because of injury—his teams simply played fewer games because of the short 19th century schedules. Hines' durability and production might have made him a 3,000 hit man. In fact, if you project his hit totals over 162 game seasons, he could have gotten 3,972 hits. Of course, this is mere speculation and it is entirely unlikely he would have kept that same pace. But that does give you a general idea of how much playing time his era cost him.

Dummy Hoy

Born: May 23, 1862, **Died:** December 15, 1961

Years as Player: 1889-99, 1901-02

Position: Outfield

Hoy played 14 seasons in four major leagues, spending the most time in Cincinnati and Washington of the NL. Hoy was deaf and had difficulty speaking. Despite his challenges, he was among the best centerfielders and leadoff hitters in the game. He accumulated 2,048 hits, 1,429 runs, 121 triples, 596 stolen bases and 1,006 walks while hitting .288 with a .386 OBP. In 1901, at the age of 39, he played for the American League champion White Stockings, leading the league in walks and hit by pitches.



When he retired, he ranked ninth in games played, second in bases on balls, fourth in stolen bases and sixth in hit by pitches. He was the career leader in games played in centerfield (1,727) until 1920. Hoy has been credited with the use of hand signals in the game but that is open for debate. Still, the deaf boy from Ohio became one of the best players of his era and lived to be 99 (at the time, a record age for a former major league player).

Hoy was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2013 and 2014–2015, finishing fifth last year.

Sabermetric slant: Hoy accumulated 32.5 WAR in his career, which translates to a relatively long career at a moderately above average level. He did pull a unique WAR-related feat, however. He managed a 2+ WAR season in four different major leagues: 4.3 for Washington (National League) in 1888, 4.2 for Chicago (American League) in 1901, 3.4 for St. Louis (American Association) in 1891, and 2.6 for Buffalo (Players League) in 1890. No other player in history has done so in more than three leagues.

Bobby Mathews

Born: November 21, 1851, **Died:** April 17, 1898

Years as Player: 1869-77, 79, 81-87

Position: Pitcher



Mathews, a pioneer pitcher in the development of both the spitball and the curveball, won 297 games, including the National Association's first game in 1871. Listed as five feet, four inches and 140 pounds, Mathews played amateur ball in Maryland before joining the Fort Wayne Kekiongas in the NA.

In 1872, he joined Baltimore as their ace, winning 25 games and leading the league in strikeouts. Mathews moved again in 1873 and joined the New York Mutuals, where he would stay through the 1876 season. Mathews was their workhorse and led the league in strikeouts in 1873 and 1874, shutouts in 1874, and games started, complete games and innings pitched in 1875. Despite the Mutuals being a subpar offensive team, Mathews managed to become the third winningest pitcher in the NA's existence, behind only Albert Spalding and Dick McBride, winning 131 games.

At the end of the 1876 season, the Mutuals failed to play out their schedule and were removed from the National League, which was the beginning of an uncertain future for Mathews. From 1877 to 1882, Mathews bounced around from team to team, which ultimately cost him the three wins he needed for 300. He won just 39 games in those six seasons, although he was a key contributor as the change pitcher for the champion Providence Grays in 1879. Among his stops were the Columbus (1877) and Lynn (1878) teams of the rival International Association (considered a minor league) and a trip to the West Coast (in protest of the new reserve clause) to play for an independent team out of San Francisco in 1880. His career was rejuvenated in 1883 when he joined the Philadelphia-based Athletics of the American Association and led them to the

championship. It was the first of three consecutive seasons of 30 wins for the hurler. Mathews finished his career with nearly 5,000 innings pitched and a 2.86 ERA.

Mathews was an Overlooked Legend finalist from 2009–2010 and 2012–2015, finishing ninth last year.

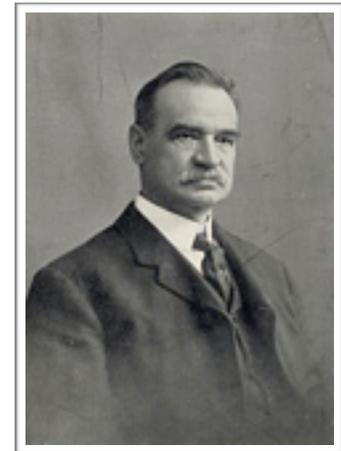
Sabermetric slant: Bobby Mathews had a 2.89 ERA and 104 ERA+ in 4,956 innings. Meanwhile, Old Hoss Radbourn had a 2.68 ERA and 116 ERA+ in 4,527 innings. Yet, Mathews is worth 62.2 WAR while Radbourn received credit for 73.5. You would think the difference between the two would be greater. So what gives? Baseball-Reference's pitching WAR adjusts for not only era and park factors, but also strength of competition and the defense behind the pitcher. No pitcher in history was hurt more by his defense than Mathews. Mathews' defenses allowed 126 runs more than an average squad. Meanwhile, Radbourn's defenses helped him more than anyone. They allowed 146 runs fewer than average. This enormous shift closes the gap between their WAR totals considerably. But how much can we trust advanced defensive metrics from the 19th century? It's a good question. Radbourn's teams were better than Mathews', but how much of that was because of the pitching and how much was because of the defense?

Al Reach

Born: May 25, 1840, **Died:** January 14, 1928

Years: 1858-1903

Position: Second Base/Outfield/Executive/Pioneer



Reach spent over 40 years in baseball. He was one of the best players of his era and one of the first to be paid. He played for the Eckford Club of Brooklyn from 1861-1864, participating on championship teams in 1862 and 1863. In 1865, he joined the Athletics and became their regular second baseman through the team's 1871 season when they won the National Association championship.

In 1874, he opened a sporting goods store which led to him forming the A.J. Reach Company. His company would go on to merge with Albert Spalding's sporting goods empire in 1892 but both companies retained their own identities. Reach balls, which was the official baseball of the AA from 1883-1891, became the official baseball of the American League and Reach's Official Base Ball Guide was published from 1883 to 1939. Reach became a founder and owner of the NL's Philadelphia Phillies in 1883. He

sold his interest in the team in 1903. During his tenure as Phillies owner, he built a ballpark in 1887 which was called both Philadelphia Base Ball Park and Huntingdon Street Grounds. In 1894, a fire destroyed a good portion of the mostly wooden ballpark. Reach repaired and rebuilt the ballpark. In 1913, the structure was renamed Baker Bowl. It was the first modern ballpark made from brick and steel and was used by the team until 1938.

Reach was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2013 and 2014–2015, finishing sixth last year.

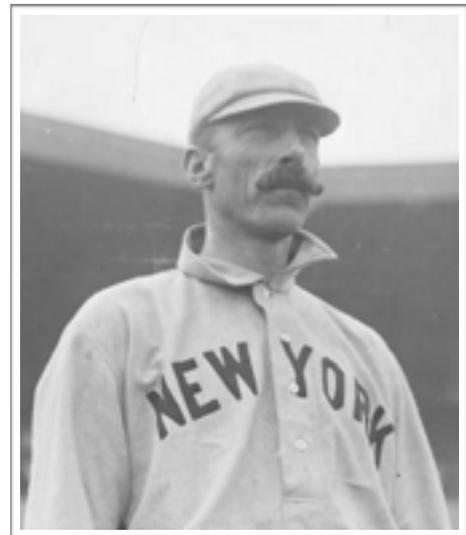
George Van Haltren

Born: March 30, 1866, **Died:** September 29, 1945

Years: 1887–1903

Position: Outfield

St. Louis born “Rip” Van Haltren became a baseball star in Oakland, California as a young man. The news of his pitching exploits traveled to the East and Pittsburgh signed him in 1887. After his reluctance to join the team, he was traded to the Chicago White Stockings for the then 252-game winner Jim McCormick. Van Haltren played three seasons in Chicago, the first two starting 42 games as a pitcher, going 24-20, and playing the outfield in 84 games. In 1889, the lefty did not pitch and played 134 games in the field. He had an outstanding year as a hitter, scoring 126 times and batting .322 with a .416 on-base percentage. In 1890, Van Haltren joined the Players’ League, going 15–10 as a pitcher and batting .335 in 92 games. From 1891–1893, he played in Baltimore and Pittsburgh before being bought by the New York Giants.



The mustached Van Haltren became a popular player in New York for the next decade. By 1893, he was primarily a center-fielder and a leadoff hitter and would continue to play almost every day until he broke an ankle in 1902. When his major league career

was over, he had accumulated 2,544 hits, 1,642 runs, 161 triples, 1,015 RBI, 583 stolen bases with a .316 batting average and an on-base percentage of .386. He scored over 100 runs eleven times and batted .300 twelve times. Van Haltren, an outstanding defensive stalwart with a tremendous throwing arm, finished in the top ten in hits, triples, runs, batting average, stolen bases, total bases and on-base percentage a grand total of 42 times. He managed and continued his ball playing career in the Pacific Coast League until 1909.

Van Haltren was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2010 and 2014–2015, finishing eighth last year.

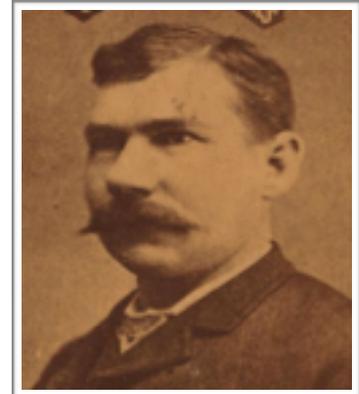
Sabermetric slant: Only three players before the DH-era produced an OPS+ of 120 or better across 9,000 plate appearances without getting into the Hall of Fame. One is Jimmy Sheckard and the other two are a pair of very similar players—Van Haltren and previous finalist Jimmy Ryan. The similarities between Van Haltren and Ryan are staggering: 2,544 hits, .316 average, .386 on-base percentage, 122 OPS+, and 40.9 WAR for Van Haltren and 2,513 hits, .308 average, .375 on-base percentage, 124 OPS+, and 43.5 WAR for Ryan. If you add in Van Haltren's pitching value (1.5 WAR), he closes the small gap in WAR. The question then becomes: should both Van Haltren and Ryan be in the Hall of Fame or should neither?

Chris Von der Ahe

Born: October 7, 1851, **Died:** June 5, 1913

Years: 1881–99

Category: Executive/Pioneer



Von der Ahe was the owner and the “Boss President” of the St. Louis Browns from 1881 to 1899. A German immigrant, Von der Ahe started out in the grocery and saloon business before becoming a baseball entrepreneur. As early as 1875, he was involved in the organization of a local and competitive amateur St. Louis team, the Grand Avenues. By 1881, he bought controlling interest in the Sportsman’s Park and Club Association that refurbished the baseball grounds a few blocks from his Golden Lion Saloon, an early sports bar, where the Browns would play and dominate the AA.

Von der Ahe was a powerful force in the AA and has been credited with bringing baseball back to St. Louis after the Brown Stockings dropped out of the NL in 1877. He fully supported the AA’s three main differences from the NL, a cheaper admission

fee that was affordable for the “common man” (25 cents), games played on Sunday, and the sale of alcohol at the ballpark. The Browns were an instant financial success and Chris put much of the profits back into the team, securing top talent and investing in many innovations that were a century before their time. During his tenure, he introduced a beer garden, a stadium club, a water ride and a race track among his many gimmicks to attract people to the park. Eventually, many of these ideas failed and contributed to his financial downfall but he planted the seed for future innovators like Bill Veeck.

Before the AA merged with the NL in 1891, the Browns would win four straight pennants (1885–1888) and the “World Series” in 1885 and 1886. He also helped keep the AA afloat financially during their battles with the Player’s League and the NL in 1890 and 1891. Von der Ahe was a finalist on the Hall of Fame’s Pre-Integration ballot in 2016.

Von der Ahe is an Overlooked Legend finalist for the first time this year.