

Buster Posey is leaving at the top of his game, and that's part of what makes him so likeable. ... [+] (Photo by Bob Kupbens/Icon Sportswire via Getty Images)

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Every once in a while, a player transcends a rivalry or fans' devotion to another team.

As much as fandom might tell someone to dislike a player from another club for the simple fact that they're not on your favorite team, that player is too likeable to hate. Maybe you don't actively root that player to crush your dreams, but it's a little more palatable if he's the guy who does.

In some weird way, that's one of the highest compliments a professional athlete can receive. It not only speaks to their performance, but to their character and personality, too.

Buster Posey is one of those players.

Undisputedly one of the two best players in Giants franchise history – alongside Willie Mays – Posey announced his surprise retirement Thursday, a day after the news broke. And just like he had been for his entire career, Buster was easy to like.

"I kind of went into last season feeling like it might be my last," Posey said during his retirement press conference. "I just gave myself some space in mind to be OK with deciding otherwise, if I wanted to keep playing. I just never really wavered. ... The reason I'm retiring is I want to be able to do more stuff from February to November with my family."

Posey, who also noted he was tired of feeling pain in his body for most of the year, will be 35 before next season and has played at least part of 13 major league seasons – 12 if you don't count 2020 when he opted out during the pandemic. So him leaving the game isn't a surprise in that way. Although, turning down \$22 million next season will surprise most.

It's more that Posey was still among the elite offensive catchers in the game. After that year off, Posey put up a .304/.390/.499 slash line with 18 homers (his most since 2015) and a 140 OPS+ in 113 games. He was a middle-of-the-order presence for a team that won 107 games, and as usual, one of its front-facing leaders.

Turns out his final season was a fitting way to go out. Like so many of his seasons with the Giants, Posey is finishing on top. He won three World Series rings, he was the National League Rookie of the Year in 2010 and the National League MVP in 2012.

Without question, he's going down as one of the greatest offensive and most decorated catchers the game has ever seen. No chance he needs a second ballot to earn his Hall of Fame election.

That \$22 million for 2022 was a team option the Giants were no doubt going to exercise. But it wasn't about the cash for Posey – he's made more than [\\$150 million](#) as a Giant – and maybe that's why he's

easy to like. Not that players who milk every last cent out of their playing career are inherently unlikeable. It's just that turning down that money was fitting for a guy who always played with a quiet poise and who led through an example that exuded class.

"In my mind, I'll always be part of the Giants organization," Posey said. "Kristen and I and our kids are grateful that this is the organization that drafted us. ... Just very grateful to have spent the last 14 seasons here with the Giants."

The Giants are working to keep Posey in the organization in some capacity. That's a no-brainer given that Posey has locked himself in as a Bay Area sports icon along with Joe Montana and Jerry Rice, and Steph Curry, Draymond Green and Klay Thompson.

For fans who don't root for any of those players or teams, Posey's retirement brought good news: The Giants just got easier to root against without one of the game's all-time greats in their dugout.

Source: [A San Francisco Giants Icon, Buster Posey Was Among MLB's Most Likable Players](#)