

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL CARDS

INAUGURAL MLBC SEASON

MLBC SEASON ONE

2022 GAME LOG



SEASON PREVIEW

For the first time, Major League Baseball Cards has a season to play. Thirty clubs enter a forty-game sprint with no defending champion, no established hierarchy and no MLBC history to lean on. Every roster arrives as a theory waiting for the schedule to test it. Los Angeles carries the heaviest preseason expectation, while New York and Boston renew the sport's most familiar rivalry, Houston and Atlanta expect to contend, and San Diego, San Francisco, St. Louis and a long list of challengers believe the short race can belong to them. There will be no time to sleep through April, no long summer to erase a disastrous week and no reputation strong enough to bank wins in advance. Every four-game block consumes ten percent of the schedule; every sweep can redraw a division before a club has time to recover. The first standings, the first rivalries, the first records and the first champion are all still unwritten. The gates are open, the cards are on the table, and an entirely new baseball history is waiting on the other side of the first pitch. Opening Day will not simply begin a schedule. It will begin the league's memory.

Because three of the best words in sports are...

It's Opening Day!

MLBC — WEEK 1

GAMES 1-4 • OPENING WEEK

A LEAGUE COMES TO LIFE

The first four games set an almost impossible standard.

THE LEAD The inaugural MLBC season opened with no standings to defend and no history yet written. Kenta Maeda's first pitch to Akil Baddoo opened a 40-game sprint with marquee baseball everywhere: Chris Sale and Hyun Jin Ryu at Fenway, Gerrit Cole and the Yankees staring down Chicago, Clayton Kershaw opposite Shohei Ohtani in the Los Angeles rivalry, José Fernández against Max Scherzer, and Jacob deGrom waiting for the Cubs in Queens. Seattle drew Justin Verlander in Houston; San Francisco opened with Madison Bumgarner against Zack Greinke. Thirty clubs entered even. Four games later, the league already had a personality.

THE WEEK It took one night for the impossible to become the standard. Verlander no-hit Seattle for nine innings, yet Félix Hernández matched him at 0-0 until the bottom of the 9th, when Carlos Correa ended the duel with a 3-run walk-off HR. Then deGrom struck out 20 Cubs in a complete-game 2-hitter. The drama kept multiplying. Cedric Mullins finished Baltimore's opening sweep with a walk-off 3-run HR; Milwaukee erased late Pittsburgh leads twice before Willy Adames won it in the 12th; and Colorado stunned Los Angeles with back-to-back-to-back extra-inning HRs before completing the road sweep. The Mets simply bludgeoned the week, scoring 35 runs. Mike Piazza homered in all four games and drove in 10, Joey Gallo launched four HR for Texas, and Jeff McNeil drove in 10 as New York finished 3-1. Atlanta scored 12 in Washington, then was shut out the next day, another reminder that Opening Week would not sit still.

THE STAKES No club escaped Opening Week at 4-0. Instead, eleven teams crowded the top at 3-1, including Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Houston, Kansas City, Atlanta, Cincinnati, the Mets, San Diego, San Francisco and Washington. At the other end, Tampa Bay and Miami are already 0-4, while the Dodgers and Blue Jays leave at 1-3 with expectations suddenly carrying weight. Week 2 arrives with pressure built in: Baltimore goes into Yankee Stadium, Chicago visits Kansas City, Houston meets Texas, San Francisco carries its start into Dodger Stadium, and the Mets get Washington before traveling to Philadelphia. One week did not identify a favorite. It did something better: it gave the league stakes.

TOP OF TABLE

11 clubs • 3-1

HOT BAT

NYM • 35 runs

EARLY TROUBLE

TBR / MIA • 0-4

GAME OF WEEK

HOU 3 • SEA 0

WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK

GOLD MIKE PIAZZA • NYM*HR in all 4 games • 10 RBI***SILVER JOEY GALLO • TEX***4 HR • 8 RBI • two 3-run HR on Opening Day***BRONZE JEFF McNEIL • NYM***10 RBI • 3-run comeback HR • Grand Slam*

PITCHER OF THE WEEK

GOLD JUSTIN VERLANDER • HOU*9 IP • 0 H • 1 BB • 10 K • no-hitter***SILVER JACOB deGROM • NYM***CG • 2 H • 0 BB • 20 K***BRONZE LUIS SEVERINO • NYY***CG SHO • 2 H • 0 BB • 11 K*

MLBC — WEEK 2

GAMES 5-8 • EARLY SEPARATION

THE FIRST SEPARATION

The Mets and Braves sprint away while Philadelphia falls through the floor.

THE LEAD Opening Week left eleven clubs packed at 3-1, which made the second week feel less like a continuation than a sorting mechanism. Baltimore carried first-place confidence into Yankee Stadium, Chicago and Kansas City met at 3-1, San Francisco went to Dodger Stadium, and the Mets had four games against Washington and Philadelphia. Tampa Bay and Miami were searching for a first win. The Phillies, Blue Jays and Dodgers were 1-3 and under immediate pressure to prevent a short season from becoming shorter. With one-fifth of the season about to disappear, there was no harmless series left on the board.

THE WEEK Two clubs refused to wait. The Mets swept Washington and Philadelphia, while Atlanta won four straight, including two extra-inning games against Pittsburgh: Marcell Ozuna ended one with a walk-off Grand Slam and Ronald Acuña Jr. ended the next with a walk-off single. Both New York and Atlanta finished 7-1. Philadelphia suffered the opposite experience. Miami came into Citizens Bank Park 0-4 and swept the Phillies, then the Mets did the same; a presumed contender was suddenly 1-7. St. Louis found a thunderbolt in Tyler O'Neill, who drove in eight with three HR, while Boston kept winning behind J.D. Martinez and Rafael Devers. Pitching was even louder: Ian Anderson threw a 1-hit complete-game shutout, Johnny Cueto a 3-hit shutout, and Félix Hernández another complete-game zero. Eight games are already one-fifth of the regular season, making every sweep feel less like a hot streak and more like ground somebody else must spend weeks recovering.

THE STAKES The league now has its first real hierarchy. New York and Atlanta are 7-1; Kansas City, Cincinnati, Boston and San Diego are 6-2. Oakland has quietly taken the AL West lead at 5-3, while Philadelphia's 1-7 start has turned every upcoming series into something close to an emergency. Week 3 wastes no time testing the leaders: the Mets go directly to Atlanta, the Yankees visit Boston, the Dodgers travel to San Diego, and Philadelphia heads to Washington trying to discover whether its season can still be rescued. Eight games are enough to create distance. They are not enough to make it safe.

TOP OF TABLE NYM / ATL • 7-1	PERFECT WEEK NYM / ATL • 4-0	EARLY CRISIS PHI • 1-7	WALK-OFFS ATL • 2 in extras
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WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK GOLD TYLER O'NEILL • STL <i>3 HR • 8 RBI • Grand Slam</i> SILVER J.D. MARTINEZ • BOS <i>2 HR • 4 RBI • Boston keeps rolling</i> BRONZE RAFAEL DEVERS • BOS <i>Grand Slam • 5 RBI across the week</i>	PITCHER OF THE WEEK GOLD IAN ANDERSON • ATL <i>CG SHO • 1 H</i> SILVER JOHNNY CUETO • SFG <i>CG SHO • 3 H</i> BRONZE FÉLIX HERNÁNDEZ • SEA <i>CG SHO • 5 H</i>
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MLBC — WEEK 3

GAMES 9-12 • THE COUNTERPUNCH

A WEEK OF REVERSALS

Philadelphia wakes up, Seattle surges, and the early leaders finally feel resistance.

THE LEAD The Mets and Braves entered Week 3 at 7-1 and immediately met in Atlanta, the first collision between the league's two fastest starters. Boston, Kansas City, Cincinnati and San Diego followed at 6-2. At the other end, Philadelphia arrived at 1-7 with almost no margin left, while the Dodgers were still trying to look anything like the preseason favorite. In a 40-game season, this was already the point where a bad week could stop looking temporary. The schedule offered no shelter: Yankees-Red Sox, Dodgers-Padres and Mets-Braves all arrived before anyone could hide behind a soft stretch.

THE WEEK The week belonged to the teams that answered pressure. Philadelphia went 4-0, opening with a 12-0 win in Washington behind Zack Wheeler's 3-hit, zero-walk shutout and finishing by sweeping Pittsburgh. Seattle also went 4-0, with Ken Griffey Jr. starring in three wins while the staff stacked shutouts and climbed into first in the AL West. The Mets and Braves split their showdown, but New York then stumbled in San Diego as the Padres pushed to 9-3. Boston reached 9-3 after Chris Sale beat Gerrit Cole 1-0 with a complete-game shutout. Chicago went into Dodger Stadium and swept Los Angeles, deepening a season-long unease there. Tampa Bay found its own reversal as Austin Meadows erupted for 12 total bases and seven RBI in a sweep of Kansas City, while Trevor Story drove in seven for Colorado after entering the week without a HR or RBI. The first standings had finally been challenged from every direction.

THE STAKES San Diego, Atlanta and Boston now share the league's best record at 9-3. Seattle has surged to 8-4, and the Mets, Cincinnati and Oakland remain within striking distance. Philadelphia is only 5-7, but 4-0 feels radically different from 1-7; the season has not been saved, but it has been reopened. Week 4 brings the Subway Series, San Diego into Atlanta, Boston into Atlanta, Cleveland and Chicago continuing their Central fight, and Seattle carrying its new confidence into a difficult road week. The first two weeks created separation. Week 3 proved none of it was permanent. One clean week can still rescue a club, but the window for doing it is already shrinking.

TOP OF TABLE BOS / ATL / SDP • 9-3	SURGE SEA • 4-0	REBORN PHI • 4-0	GAME OF WEEK BOS 1 • NYY 0
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WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK GOLD AUSTIN MEADOWS • TBR 12 TB • 7 RBI • 2 HR SILVER TREVOR STORY • COL 2 HR • 7 RBI BRONZE MANNY MACHADO • SDP two 3-run HR • 6 RBI	PITCHER OF THE WEEK GOLD ZACK WHEELER • PHI CG SHO • 3 H • 0 BB SILVER NOAH SYNDERGAARD • NYM CG SHO • 4 H • 1 BB • 10 K BRONZE CHRIS SALE • BOS CG SHO • 1-0 rivalry win over NYY
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MLBC — WEEK 4

GAMES 13-16 • FAULT LINES

THE RACES TAKE SHAPE

New York roars, Cleveland seizes control, and the league reaches its first real fault lines.

THE LEAD Three teams entered Week 4 at 9-3: Boston, Atlanta and San Diego. Seattle had charged to 8-4, Philadelphia had just gone 4-0, and the Mets were trying to recover from their first uneven week. The schedule offered exactly the kind of collisions that could reorder everything: Mets-Yankees, Padres-Braves, Red Sox-Braves, Dodgers-Brewers, and Seattle against a White Sox club desperate to rejoin the AL Central race. Sixteen games in, the standings were beginning to look less like an opening snapshot and more like territory worth defending.

THE WEEK San Diego made the week's strongest statement. The 9-3 Padres went into Atlanta against a 9-3 Braves club and swept it, 5-2 and 9-5, with Yu Darvish controlling the opener and Manny Machado, Dave Winfield and Fernando Tatis Jr. driving the attack. The Yankees chose the same week to become dangerous, going 4-0 and sweeping the Mets after Aaron Judge ended a 15-inning Subway Series opener with a 2-run walk-off HR. Cleveland and the White Sox also ran perfect weeks. Franmil Reyes hit three HR and drove in seven as the Guardians swept the Angels, while Chicago stopped Seattle's seven-game winning streak cold. Washington supplied another road statement by sweeping St. Louis behind Max Scherzer's complete-game shutout and Stephen Strasburg. Félix Hernández authored the sharpest pitching line of all, a 2-hit complete-game shutout of Detroit.

THE STAKES Boston and San Diego are now 12-4, Cleveland is 11-5, and a dense pack of contenders sits at 10-6. San Diego has done more than keep pace; it has beaten a fellow leader on the road and made its contender status impossible to dismiss. The Yankees have transformed a 6-6 start into a legitimate run, while the Mets and Braves have both been pulled toward the crowd. The next four games take everyone to the halfway mark. Rivalry baseball arrives in Chicago, Milwaukee visits New York, the Yankees go to Anaheim, and Atlanta heads west to Colorado before Cincinnati comes to Georgia. The midpoint will tell us which early advantages are real and which were merely borrowed.

TOP OF TABLE
BOS / SDP • 12-4

PERFECT WEEK
NYY / CLE / CHW • 4-0

STREAK SNAPPED
CHW sweeps SEA

ROAD SWEEP
WSH sweeps STL

WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK

GOLD FRANMIL REYES • CLE

3 HR • 7 RBI • Grand Slam

SILVER RYAN BRAUN • MIL

2 HR • 6 RBI

BRONZE CARLOS GONZALEZ • COL

Grand Slam + 2-run HR • 6 RBI

PITCHER OF THE WEEK

GOLD FÉLIX HERNÁNDEZ • SEA

CG SHO • 2 H

SILVER MAX SCHERZER • WSH

CG SHO • 4 H

BRONZE JOSÉ BERRÍOS • MIN

CG SHO • 7 H • 10 K

MLBC — WEEK 5

GAMES 17-20 • HALFWAY

HALFWAY, NOTHING SETTLED

Twenty games in, Atlanta leads baseball while the middle of the league becomes a traffic jam.

THE LEAD The midpoint arrived with Boston and San Diego at 12-4, Cleveland at 11-5, and six more clubs at 10-6. No one had created safety. Week 5 would close the first half and turn hot starts into actual position, or ordinary starts into second-half emergencies. Atlanta had to survive Colorado and Cincinnati; the Yankees went west to face the Angels; Oakland and Seattle were fighting for the AL West; and the middle of the standings had become so crowded that one sweep could change a club's entire summer. The week would measure depth as much as star power because every club had to survive two different opponents before the midpoint.

THE WEEK Atlanta made the strongest statement, going 4-0 to reach 14-6 and take the best record in MLBC. Oakland matched the perfect week and joined Boston, Cleveland, San Diego and Seattle at 13-7. The Yankees went the other direction, getting swept in Anaheim as Shohei Ohtani homered twice and the Angels climbed back to .500. Seattle kept pace in emphatic fashion, sweeping Minnesota on the road as Julio Rodríguez broke loose, scoring seven runs in the series and helping the Mariners score in eleven of eighteen innings. Toronto supplied the week's absurd scoreline, unloading 18 runs on Houston after dropping the opener and finishing the first half at 10-10. The pitching performances were almost unfair: Ian Anderson struck out 16 in a 2-hit complete-game shutout of Cincinnati, Wade Miley allowed one hit in a shutout of Washington, and Kyle Hendricks struck out 14 in a 1-0 complete-game shutout of the White Sox.

THE STAKES Atlanta owns the midpoint at 14-6. Boston, Cleveland, Oakland, San Diego and Seattle are 13-7, but seven different clubs sit exactly 10-10. That is the season in miniature: half the schedule gone, yet enough traffic remains that one strong week can still redraw a division. The second half opens with Boston visiting the Angels and then Oakland, the Yankees hosting Oakland and Cleveland, Atlanta traveling through Los Angeles and San Francisco, and Seattle carrying its share of first place into Tampa Bay. Twenty games are gone. From here forward, every four-game block consumes ten percent of the season.

TOP OF TABLE
ATL • 14-6

PERFECT WEEK
ATL / OAK • 4-0

HALFWAY PACK
7 clubs • 10-10

OUTBURST
TOR 18 • HOU 2

WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK

GOLD BARRY BONDS • SFG

2 HR • 7 RBI

SILVER MIKE ZUNINO • TBR

3 HR • 5 RBI

BRONZE SHOHEI OHTANI • LAA

2 HR • 5 RBI in the NYY sweep

PITCHER OF THE WEEK

GOLD IAN ANDERSON (2) • ATL

CG SHO • 2 H • 16 K

SILVER WADE MILEY • CHC

CG SHO • 1 H

BRONZE KYLE HENDRICKS • CHC

CG SHO • 5 H • 14 K

MLBC — ALL-STAR BREAK

20 GAMES COMPLETE • MIDSEASON CLASSIC

THE AMERICAN LEAGUE OWNS THE CLASSIC

Two showcase games, two American League wins, and a clean hinge at the midpoint.

THE STAGE The regular season paused after twenty games for a two-game All-Star showcase, and the first half had supplied no shortage of stars. Chris Sale and Jacob deGrom opened Game 1 with the league's most intimidating possible pitching matchup, but the National League struck first: Carlos Gonzalez singled, Freddie Freeman doubled him home, Barry Bonds moved Freeman to third, and Manny Machado's sacrifice fly made it 2-0. Marcus Semien answered with a solo HR in the 3rd and Lourdes Gurriel tied it in the 5th. From there, the night became a parade of elite relievers and missed chances.

THE SERIES Game 1 stayed 2-2 all the way to the 11th. Jim Thome finally singled against Kirby Yates, and Salvador Perez followed with the swing of the night, a game-winning 2-run HR that gave the American League a 4-2 victory. Game 2 took a different route. Andy Van Slyke doubled home the first run and scored on Lenny Dykstra's RBI 1B, but the AL answered after Stephen Strasburg lost the zone. José Ramírez singled, then Joe Mauer, Ken Griffey Jr., Matt Olson and Kyle Tucker drew walks through the rally, with Hunter Renfroe's sacrifice fly pushing the AL ahead. Félix Hernández took over from there, striking out seven across three scoreless innings. Mauer added an RBI 1B later, and Renfroe's solo HR finished a 5-2 win.

THE HINGE The American League leaves the intermission with a 2-0 sweep, one extra-inning classic and one pitching showcase. Perez owns the signature swing; Hernández owns the signature mound performance. None of it changes the standings, which is precisely why the break works as a hinge instead of a conclusion. Twenty regular-season games are complete, twenty remain, Atlanta leads baseball at 14-6, five clubs sit one game back, and seven more are exactly 10-10. The first half established contenders. The second half will decide which of them can survive the shrinking runway.

SERIES	GAME 1	GAME 2	MIDPOINT
AL • 2-0	AL 4 • NL 2 • 11 INN	AL 5 • NL 2	20 GAMES COMPLETE

ALL-STAR MOMENTS

GAME 1 SALVADOR PEREZ • AL <i>11th-inning game-winning 2-run HR • Star of the Game</i>	GAME 2 FÉLIX HERNÁNDEZ • AL <i>3 scoreless IP • 7 K</i>
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MLBC — WEEK 6

GAMES 21-24 • SECOND HALF

BOSTON BREAKS AWAY

The Red Sox go 4-0, J.D. Martinez detonates, and the second half acquires a favorite.

THE LEAD The second half began with Atlanta at 14-6 and five teams sitting one game back at 13-7. Seven clubs were 10-10. Almost everybody could still tell themselves a hopeful story, but only twenty games remained to prove it. Boston drew a road week against the Angels and first-place Oakland; the Yankees hosted Oakland and Cleveland; Atlanta headed through Los Angeles and San Francisco; and Seattle carried the AL West lead into Tampa Bay. The standings were still crowded, but the calendar had stopped being patient. The second half began with every division receiving a direct test.

THE WEEK Boston did not merely pass the test. It flattened it. The Red Sox went 4-0, swept the Angels and Oakland on the road, and J.D. Martinez produced the week's most violent line: five HR and twelve RBI, including two 3-run HR in a 15-1 win and a Grand Slam in Oakland. Chicago also went 4-0, pulling even with Cleveland at 15-9 in the AL Central. The Yankees went 3-1 and began looking like the club everyone expected. San Francisco joined that 15-9 tier after splitting in New York and then sweeping Atlanta at home, with Logan Webb shutting out the league leader on 3 hits before Johnny Cueto held the Braves to two hits the next game. Tampa Bay, meanwhile, swept first-place Seattle in two dramatic games, including an 11th-inning comeback. Max Scherzer supplied the ace performance, throwing a 2-hit shutout with 15 strikeouts in Pittsburgh. Boston's separation mattered because it came entirely on the road and against two clubs that began the week with legitimate first-half standing.

THE STAKES Boston exits at 17-7, alone with the best record in baseball. Atlanta is 16-8; Chicago, Cleveland, San Diego and San Francisco are 15-9. The Yankees are back above .500 at 13-11, and the second half suddenly feels less forgiving for everyone chasing. Week 7 turns personal: Yankees-Mets, White Sox-Cubs and Cardinals-Royals all renew rivalries, while St. Louis visits Atlanta, Cincinnati goes to San Diego, and the Dodgers face Miami with their season near the edge. Sixteen games remain. The standings have stopped being interesting trivia and started becoming deadlines.

TOP OF TABLE
BOS • 17-7PERFECT WEEK
BOS / CHW • 4-0AL CENTRAL
CHW / CLE • 15-9TAMPA TURN
TBR sweeps SEA

WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK

GOLD J.D. MARTINEZ • BOS

5 HR • 12 RBI

SILVER CARLOS CORREA • HOU

3-run HR • 6 RBI in the KCR series

BRONZE GIANCARLO STANTON • NYY

2 HR • 5 RBI • Grand Slam

PITCHER OF THE WEEK

GOLD MAX SCHERZER • WSH

2 H • 15 K • shutout

SILVER GARRETT RICHARDS • LAA

CG SHO • 3 H • 1 BB

BRONZE TREVOR ROGERS • MIA

CG SHO • 4 H • 12 K

MLBC — WEEK 7

GAMES 25-28 • THE SURGE

THE CONTENDERS ARRIVE

Five clubs go 4-0 as the Angels, Astros, Padres, Giants and Cardinals all surge together.

THE LEAD Boston carried the league's best record into Week 7 at 17-7, Atlanta followed at 16-8, and four clubs sat at 15-9. The schedule was built for movement. The Yankees and Mets met again, the White Sox crossed town to Wrigley, St. Louis went to Atlanta, and a desperate Dodgers club faced Washington and Miami. With sixteen games left, a sweep could now change a division race in forty-eight hours. Houston traveled through Minnesota and Texas, Cleveland went to Texas, and the Angels hosted Baltimore before Atlanta came to Boston. The schedule put division leaders, Wild Card hopefuls and clubs near the edge into the same narrow four-game window.

THE WEEK Five teams delivered perfect weeks. Houston, the Angels, San Diego, San Francisco and St. Louis all went 4-0. Mark McGwire was the week's wrecking ball, hitting five HR and driving in ten as St. Louis swept Atlanta and moved to 18-10. The Braves supplied the week's strangest reversal, sweeping Boston at Fenway, only to come home and be swept by the Cardinals. Shohei Ohtani homered three times in two wins over Tampa Bay while the Angels continued their climb. San Diego and San Francisco both reached 19-9, matching Boston for the best record. The Yankees swept the Mets and completed a 4-0 season series against their crosstown rival. Toronto stole two games late on Teoscar Hernández 2-run HRs, while the Dodgers finally showed a pulse, sweeping Miami to move within a game of the final NL Wild Card position. Dustin May's 3-hit complete-game shutout finished that Los Angeles sweep.

THE STAKES Three clubs now sit at 19-9: Boston, San Diego and San Francisco. St. Louis and Atlanta are 18-10, Houston is 17-11, and the Angels have surged to 16-12. Only twelve games remain. Houston's perfect week has pushed another contender into the upper tier at exactly the moment the AL West is tightening. The Dodgers have made themselves relevant; the Angels have turned a middling first half into a real run; and the NL West now has two teams tied for baseball's best record. Week 8 brings Atlanta into Milwaukee and Philadelphia, the Mets into St. Louis, San Diego into Dodger Stadium, and Boston through Minnesota and Toronto. The season is no longer waiting for contenders to identify themselves. They just did.

TOP OF TABLE BOS / SDP / SFG • 19-9	PERFECT WEEK 5 clubs • 4-0	RIVALRY NYN • 4-0 vs NYM	RESCUE ACT LAD • back in the race
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WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK GOLD MARK MCGWIRE • STL 5 HR • 10 RBI SILVER SHOHEI OHTANI • LAA 3 HR • 4 RBI BRONZE TEOSCAR HERNÁNDEZ • TOR two late 2-run HR • both game-winners	PITCHER OF THE WEEK GOLD DUSTIN MAY • LAD CG SHO • 3 H SILVER MIKE CLEVINGER • SDP CG SHO • 5 H BRONZE CHRIS FLEXEN • SEA CG SHO • 6 H
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MLBC — WEEK 8

GAMES 29-32 • EIGHT TO GO

SAN FRANCISCO TAKES THE WHEEL

The Giants go 4-0, Los Angeles finally catches fire, and the playoff field begins to tighten.

THE LEAD Boston, San Diego and San Francisco entered Week 8 tied at 19-9, with Atlanta and St. Louis only a game behind. Behind them, the races had begun to tighten in different directions. Chicago was surging, while Seattle was dropping. Milwaukee was clinging, while Toronto was sliding. Twelve games remained, and almost every series carried standings consequences. The Dodgers were finally alive and headed into St. Louis before hosting San Diego. Atlanta had Milwaukee and Philadelphia. The Mets traveled to St. Louis. One week later, only eight games would remain. Boston opened against Minnesota before traveling to Toronto, while the Yankees hosted Texas and Cleveland drew Seattle. In the National League, Pittsburgh faced San Diego, Miami went to San Francisco.

THE WEEK San Francisco seized the moment. The Giants went 4-0 to reach 23-9 and take the best record in MLBC, while Boston and San Diego settled at 22-10. The Dodgers finally looked like the preseason favorite, winning six straight at one point and pitching four shutouts in five games. Clayton Kershaw's 3-hit, 12-strikeout shutout helped anchor the surge. The Mets swept St. Louis and pulled even with Atlanta at 19-13 in the NL East. Ryan Howard produced the week's loudest individual game: an RBI single, a Grand Slam and a 3-run HR for eight RBI in only five innings of a 13-0 Philadelphia win over Atlanta. Arizona supplied the shock by walking into New York and beating Jacob deGrom and the Mets 13-0. Fernando Tatis Jr. supplied a walk-off winner for San Diego. Six different clubs finished 19-13.

THE STAKES Eight games remain. San Francisco controls the league at 23-9; Boston and San Diego are 22-10. Behind them, Atlanta, Chicago, Cleveland, Houston, the Mets and Yankees are all 19-13. Milwaukee has climbed to 17-15, while the Dodgers and Washington are 16-16 and still breathing. Week 9 begins the true stretch run: San Diego goes to Houston, Washington goes to Atlanta, Milwaukee goes to Philadelphia, and the Dodgers draw Arizona. San Francisco created separation at the top, but almost everything beneath the Giants became more congested. The margin between a bye, a Wild Card and an empty October has become very thin indeed.

TOP OF TABLE
SFG • 23-9TRAFFIC
6 clubs • 19-13SHOCK
ARI 13 • NYM 0DODGER RUN
LAD • 6 straight

WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK

GOLD RYAN HOWARD • PHI

2 HR • 8 RBI in 5 innings

SILVER MICHAEL CONFORTO • NYM

Grand Slam + 2-run HR • 7 RBI

BRONZE FERNANDO TATIS JR. • SDP

2 HR • 5 RBI • walk-off winner

PITCHER OF THE WEEK

GOLD CLAYTON KERSHAW • LAD

CG SHO • 3 H • 12 K

SILVER JAKE ARRIETA • CHC

CG SHO • 3 H

BRONZE COLE HAMELS • PHI

CG SHO • 4 H

MLBC — WEEK 9

GAMES 33-36 • STRETCH RUN

THE STRETCH RUN ERUPTS

Four games remain, Atlanta collapses, and the Wild Card races become a traffic jam.

THE LEAD The final eight games began with San Francisco at 23-9, Boston and San Diego at 22-10, and six clubs stacked at 19-13. Philadelphia sat below .500 at 15-17 but remained on the fringe of the race. Every division still contained meaningful pressure, and the Wild Card races had almost no breathing room. Houston hosted San Diego, Washington went to Atlanta, Milwaukee went to Philadelphia, and the Mets and Nationals met with both the NL East and Wild Card picture in play. Baltimore opened in Boston, the Yankees went to Tampa Bay and Minnesota visited Toronto. Seattle and Oakland met in a direct AL West test.

THE WEEK Houston, Minnesota and Philadelphia all went 4-0. The Astros swept San Diego and Seattle to reach 23-13 and seize control of the AL West. Philadelphia swept Milwaukee and Miami, moving from 15-17 to 19-17 and straight into the NL scrum. Atlanta suffered the opposite fate: Washington crushed the Braves 8-1 and 13-0, then the Cubs swept them in Chicago. A club that had led much of the season finished 19-17 after losing nine of ten. The AL Cy Young race changed shape too. Baltimore battered Chris Sale for seven runs, while Tyler Glasnow answered by shutting out the Yankees 10-0 and moving to the front of the contemporary conversation. Luis Severino responded the next day with a 2-hit, 12-strikeout shutout, and Justin Verlander added another 2-hit zero for Houston. Even the award race was being compressed by the same late pressure as the standings.

THE STAKES Four games remain. San Francisco owns a 26-10 record and a three-game NL West lead. Boston is 24-12; Houston and San Diego are 23-13. The NL has become beautiful disorder: Atlanta, Cincinnati, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Washington are all 19-17, while the Mets and Cardinals sit at 21-15. The final schedule could not be better designed: Philadelphia goes to the Mets and then hosts Washington; Milwaukee visits St. Louis before hosting Cincinnati; San Diego visits San Francisco; and the Dodgers finish in San Francisco. In the AL, Minnesota, Cleveland, Chicago, Seattle and the Angels remain entangled. Four games will decide almost everything.

TOP OF TABLE SFG • 26-10	PERFECT WEEK HOU / MIN / PHI • 4-0	NL GRIDLOCK 5 clubs • 19-17	COLLAPSE ATL • 9 losses in 10
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WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK GOLD MIGUEL SANÓ • MIN 3 HR • 7 RBI • <i>Grand Slam</i> SILVER YORDAN ALVAREZ • HOU 3 HR • 6 RBI BRONZE JOSH HAMILTON • TEX 2 HR • 6 RBI	PITCHER OF THE WEEK GOLD LUIS SEVERINO • NYY CG SHO • 2 H • 12 K SILVER JUSTIN VERLANDER • HOU CG SHO • 2 H • 10 K BRONZE TYLER GLASNOW • TBR CG SHO • 5 H
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MLBC — WEEK 10

GAMES 37-40 • FINAL WEEK

THE FINAL FOUR GAMES

Division titles flip, seasons end by inches, and Philadelphia completes an eight-game charge.

THE LEAD Four games remained, and almost nothing was settled. San Francisco held the best record and a three-game lead in the West. Boston led the AL East at 24-12. Houston and San Diego were 23-13. The AL Central still had Chicago at 21-15, Cleveland at 20-16 and Minnesota at 19-17. The NL East belonged to the Mets at 21-15, but five clubs sat at 19-17 behind the broader playoff line. St. Louis led the NL Central by two games. Every scoreboard mattered. There was no scoreboard a contender could safely ignore.

THE WEEK Then the standings detonated. Philadelphia swept the Mets in Queens and Washington at home, finishing the season on an eight-game winning streak. Ryan Howard drove in nine during the week and ended Game #40 with a walk-off, division-clinching 2-run HR. Milwaukee was just as ruthless, sweeping St. Louis and Cincinnati; Jonathan Lucroy's 9th-inning walk-off 2B clinched the NL Central. Cleveland and Chicago finished tied at 22-18, with the Guardians taking the division on the tiebreaker after Kansas City swept the White Sox in Chicago. The sweep was damaging as Chicago needed a win and watched a division title slip away. Houston supplied another late escape against Texas to win 7-5, and secured the AL West title the game after. The Angels won three of four, including Shohei Ohtani's 3-hit, 12-strikeout shutout in Seattle, then clinched the final AL spot in Oakland. Even eliminated Pittsburgh found one last note to keep, sweeping Chicago for its first sweep of the season. San Francisco finished 28-12, Boston 27-13 and Houston 25-15.

THE STAKES The regular season is over, and October finally has names. Boston and Houston earn the American League byes; San Francisco and Philadelphia earn them in the National League. The Wild Card round sends the Angels to New York, the White Sox to Cleveland, St. Louis to San Diego and the Mets to Milwaukee. The Padres are 25-15 yet must start in the Wild Card round because San Francisco took the West. Philadelphia, once 1-7, is now the NL East champion and the hottest team in baseball. Forty games did not merely produce a bracket. They produced four elimination series with arguments already attached to every one.

BEST RECORD SFG • 28-12	FINISH PHI • 8 straight	CLINCHERS Howard / Lucroy	PLAYOFF FIELD 12 clubs remain
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WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK GOLD RYAN HOWARD (2) • PHI 3 HR • 9 RBI • <i>division-clinching walk-off</i> SILVER ONEIL CRUZ • PIT 3 HR • 7 RBI BRONZE HUNTER RENFROE • TBR 2 HR • 5 RBI in the finale	PITCHER OF THE WEEK GOLD SHOHEI OHTANI • LAA CG SHO • 3 H • 12 K SILVER MADISON BUMGARNER • SFG CG SHO • 4 H • 11 K BRONZE JOHN MEANS • BAL CG SHO • 3 H • <i>no-hitter into the 8th</i>
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MLBC — WILD CARD ROUND

GAMES 41-43 • BEST-OF-THREE

OCTOBER OPENS WITH CHAOS

Four series go the distance, and two unlikely sluggers become instant postseason legends.

THE FIELD Boston and Houston waited with American League byes; San Francisco and Philadelphia waited in the National League. Everyone else started with no room for a bad series. The Angels went to Yankee Stadium, the White Sox visited Cleveland for the true tiebreaker of their 22-18 seasons, St. Louis traveled to San Diego, a team that won 25 games but did not earn a bye, and the Mets went to Milwaukee after watching the NL East slip away in the final week. After 40 games of positioning, every matchup was now a best-of-three. Every matchup could erase an entire regular season with the smallest of margins. And every matchup reached a pivotal Game #3. The four series arrived with four different kinds of pressure.

THE ROUND The Angels shocked New York 2-1, and the deciding game became the Jared Walsh Game. Walsh, a .150 regular-season hitter with two HR all year, hit three HR in Game #3 alone and drove the Yankees into the offseason. Chicago and Cleveland traded wins before the White Sox took the decider 5-2 behind Lance Lynn and a late Tim Anderson HR. St. Louis survived San Diego when Mark McGwire hit three consecutive HR in Game #3. Milwaukee produced the wildest escape: the Brewers trailed the Mets 10-4 in the 6th inning of the winner-take-all finale, erased the deficit, then won 12-10 on Lorenzo Cain's walk-off 2-run HR. The round needed all twelve possible games to eliminate four clubs. Forty regular-season games had been reduced to a handful of swings.

THE STAKES Four road teams entered the round, and three advanced. The Angels move on to face top-seeded Boston after Jared Walsh became a postseason legend. Chicago gets Houston after defeating Cleveland, while Milwaukee's reward for surviving a comeback for the ages is going to Philadelphia, where the rested Phillies are holding an eight-game winning streak. St. Louis draws the league's best regular-season team in San Francisco, earning the right after Mark McGwire's three-HR eruption. The postseason has already changed reputations: Walsh, McGwire and Cain own elimination-game moments that will survive the season, while New York, Cleveland, San Diego and the Mets are gone after forty games of work and three games of judgment. October has already shown that reputation does not travel automatically. The clubs that survived did it by answering the exact moment in front of them.

UPSET	HERO	COMEBACK	ELIMINATION
LAA def. NYY • 2-1	Walsh • 3 HR in G3	MIL • down 10-4	4 series • 4 Game 3s

ROUND RESULTS

AMERICAN LEAGUE	NATIONAL LEAGUE
LAA def. NYY, 2-1 <i>Jared Walsh: 3 HR in the deciding game</i>	STL def. SDP, 2-1 <i>Mark McGwire: 3 consecutive HR in Game #3</i>
CHW def. CLE, 2-1 <i>Central rivals require the full three games</i>	MIL def. NYM, 2-1 <i>Lorenzo Cain ends a 12-10 comeback classic</i>

THE FAVORITES BLEED

The Angels topple Boston, Houston survives five, Philadelphia sweeps, and San Francisco steadies.

THE FIELD The four bye teams finally entered. Boston had been the American League's best club at 27-13; Houston had won the West at 25-15. San Francisco owned baseball's best record at 28-12, while Philadelphia arrived on an eight-game winning streak. Across from them stood four clubs already sharpened by elimination games: the Angels after Jared Walsh's three-HR decider in New York, the White Sox after settling their Cleveland tiebreaker, the Cardinals behind Mark McGwire's three-HR Game #3, and the Brewers after erasing a 10-4 deficit with its season on the line. The matchups placed regular-season authority against October momentum. Boston and San Francisco had led their leagues, Houston had controlled the AL West and Philadelphia had closed with eight straight wins, but their opponents all come in having survived elimination.

THE ROUND The Angels delivered the round's largest upset. Shohei Ohtani opened the Boston series by throwing a 1-hitter with 12 strikeouts while also homering, and Los Angeles eventually won Game #5 at Fenway after Jared Walsh's bases-clearing 3-run 2B flipped a 3-1 deficit. Houston had to survive even more directly: Chicago took a 2-1 series lead before the Astros won Games #4 and #5, with Joe Musgrove holding the White Sox to one run over seven innings in the decider. Philadelphia never faced an elimination game. Bryce Harper walked off Milwaukee in Game #1, then hit a walk-off Grand Slam in the 15th inning of a scoreless Game #2 before the Phillies completed a 3-0 sweep. San Francisco lost its opener to St. Louis, then won three straight, highlighted by Logan Webb's 3-hit complete-game shutout. Boston learned the bye's danger most brutally; Houston survived the same five-game distance only by proving it could win twice with elimination staring directly at it.

THE STAKES The league is down to four. Houston will host the Angels, whose postseason has become a study in refusing the expected ending. San Francisco will host Philadelphia, which has now won eleven consecutive games counting the regular season and postseason. Boston, the AL's best regular-season team, is gone. So is a White Sox club that held Houston at 2-1. The two championship series offer opposite questions: can the Angels keep extending a miracle, and can anyone interrupt Philadelphia's momentum before it becomes history? Philadelphia and San Francisco advanced by different routes, but both leave the round carrying something more valuable than seeding: proof that their best baseball still works under elimination pressure.

UPSET	SURVIVAL	SWEEP	ACE GAME
LAA def. BOS • 3-2	HOU def. CHW • 3-2	PHI def. MIL • 3-0	Ohtani • 1 H / 12 K

SERIES RESULTS

AMERICAN LEAGUE	NATIONAL LEAGUE
LAA def. BOS, 3-2 <i>Walsh flips Game #5; Ohtani dominates Game #1</i>	PHI def. MIL, 3-0 <i>Two Harper walk-offs, then a road clincher</i>
HOU def. CHW, 3-2 <i>Astros erase a 2-1 series deficit</i>	SFG def. STL, 3-1 <i>Three straight wins after dropping Game #1</i>

MLBC — CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES

GAMES 49-54 • BEST-OF-SEVEN

TWO PENNANTS, TWO DIFFERENT ROADS

Houston overwhelms the Angels while Philadelphia climbs out of a 2-0 hole and never looks back.

THE MATCHUPS Houston entered the ALCS with the deeper bullpen, the stronger regular-season record and home field against an Angels team that had already survived New York and Boston. The NLCS offered a different contrast: top-seeded San Francisco against the hottest team in baseball. Philadelphia had won eleven straight entering the round. The Giants had won 28 regular-season games and looked built to stop a streak. No club remaining had arrived by quite the same route: Houston with structure, Los Angeles with survival, San Francisco with the league's best record and Philadelphia with momentum that had already outlived several elimination threats. One series matched structure against survival; the other matched the league's best record against a club that had forgotten how to lose.

THE ROUND Houston never allowed its series to become a question. The Astros won the first two at home, took Game #3 in eleven innings on Alex Bregman's 2-run 1B, then broke a 1-1 tie in the 9th inning of Game #4 when Carlos Correa hit a series-clinching Grand Slam. The Angels were swept 4-0, ending a remarkable run. The NLCS turned the other direction. San Francisco won Games #1 and #2, then led Philadelphia 7-2 in Game #3 and stood on the edge of a 3-0 series lead. Mike Schmidt changed the season: a 2-out, game-tying 3-run HR in the 9th, then a walk-off 3-run HR in the 11th. The Phillies won 10-7 and never lost again, outscoring the Giants 17-2 over the final three games. Houston's route was almost clinical. Philadelphia needed one of the defining performances of the season simply to keep its route alive.

THE PENNANTS Houston is the American League champion. Philadelphia is the National League champion. The Astros arrive in the World Series after a clean 4-0 championship series, with their pitching lined up and almost no October damage. The Phillies arrive by the stranger route: 1-7 after eight games, eight straight wins to end the regular season, a Division Series sweep, then four straight victories after falling behind San Francisco 0-2. The first MLBC pennants have been claimed. Houston looks inevitable. Philadelphia looks impossible. One series remains. Correa's Grand Slam removed any final doubt for Houston, while Philadelphia's last three wins came after Schmidt rescued Game #3 from the edge of defeat.

AL PENNANT
HOU • 4-0NL PENNANT
PHI • 4-2TURNING POINT
Schmidt • Game #51CLOSING RUN
PHI • 4 straight

LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

HOUSTON ASTROS

Swept Los Angeles 4-0 in the ALCS

Series seal

Carlos Correa Grand Slam, Game #52

NATIONAL LEAGUE

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES

Won four straight after falling behind 0-2

Series turn

Mike Schmidt: two 3-run HR in Game #51

MLBC — WORLD SERIES

GAMES 55-59 • THE FALL CLASSIC

PHILADELPHIA FINISHES THE STORY

The team that began 1-7 beats Houston in five and becomes the first champion in MLBC history.

THE STAGE Houston hosted Game #1 as the American League champion and the more conventional favorite. Philadelphia carried something less measurable: a season that had spent weeks refusing to end. The Phillies had closed the regular season with eight straight wins, swept Milwaukee, then recovered from an 0-2 NLCS deficit by winning four straight. Zack Wheeler opened against Justin Verlander with the first MLBC championship on the line. Houston had the cleaner route; Philadelphia had the longer memory of survival. Houston had swept the ALCS and could arrange its rotation cleanly; Philadelphia arrived after four straight wins with Wheeler, Nola and a bullpen that had repeatedly protected narrow leads.

THE SERIES Philadelphia stole both games in Houston. Wheeler and the bullpen held Game #1 to 2-1; in Game #2, J.T. Realmuto's 2-out, 3-run HR in the 1st gave Aaron Nola all the room he needed in a 4-2 win. Houston answered in Philadelphia behind Jeff Bagwell, Alex Bregman and Kyle Tucker, but the response lasted one night. The road team had won the first three games before Philadelphia finally held home field in Game #4. The Phillies built a 6-0 lead in Game #4, survived Houston's charge to 6-5, and won 7-5. Back in Houston for Game #5, the Astros led 2-0 early. Philadelphia finally broke through in the 6th, took the lead on Bryson Stott's RBI 2B, then Ryan Howard sealed the season with a 2-out, 3-run HR in the 9th. Jonathan Papelbon got the final outs of a 7-3 clincher. Winning the first two in Houston changed the geometry of the matchup; surviving Game #4 made the return trip feel like an appointment rather than a hope.

THE CHAMPIONS Philadelphia wins the World Series 4-1. J.T. Realmuto is the official World Series MVP after batting .421 with a 1.132 OPS; Aaron Nola is the official runner-up. Houston's season ends one step short despite an AL pennant and a dominant ALCS. The Phillies leave Houston as the first champions in league history, and the defining image is impossible to separate from where they began: a 1-7 team holding the trophy after winning the games that mattered most. By the time Ryan Howard's final HR disappeared, every early-season flaw had become part of the championship story. Philadelphia, you are the 2022 MLBC champions, forever.

SERIES PHI def. HOU • 4-1	ROAD START PHI wins first 2 in HOU	FINAL BLOW PHI • 3-run 9th	CLINCHER PHI 7 • HOU 3
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WORLD SERIES HONORS

CHAMPIONSHIP PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES <i>2022 MLBC World Series Champions</i> Series result <i>Defeated Houston, 4-1</i>	OFFICIAL HONORS WORLD SERIES MVP • J.T. REALMUTO <i>.421 AVG • 1.132 OPS</i> RUNNER-UP • AARON NOLA <i>Official World Series MVP runner-up</i>
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MLBC — SEASON IN REVIEW

2022 • INAUGURAL SEASON

THE SEASON MLBC BECAME REAL

Forty games created the races. Forty-four postseason games turned the first season into history.

THE SEASON The inaugural season began with Justin Verlander throwing a no-hitter and Jacob deGrom striking out 20, then spent forty games refusing to settle into one shape. Boston emerged as the American League's best regular-season club at 27-13. San Francisco went 28-12 to lead all of MLBC. J.D. Martinez won the AL MVP; Barry Bonds won the NL MVP. Tyler Glasnow took the AL Cy Young and Max Scherzer the NL Cy Young. Around them, the short schedule did exactly what it promised: slumps became emergencies, sweeps changed divisions, and almost every final-week scoreboard mattered.

THE TURN No team embodied the season's volatility more completely than Philadelphia. The Phillies fell to 1-7 after being swept at home by Miami and then by the Mets. They recovered to 10-10 at the midpoint, kept hanging around, then closed with eight straight wins to take the NL East at 23-17. October amplified the pattern. Philadelphia swept Milwaukee, fell behind San Francisco 0-2, then won four straight to take the pennant. Against Houston, the Phillies won the World Series 4-1. A club that looked finished after eight games became the first champion.

THE LEGACY The postseason produced its own heroes. Jared Walsh, a .150 regular-season hitter, became the official Playoff MVP after a seven-HR run that began with three HR in the Wild Card decider at Yankee Stadium. Mike Schmidt finished runner-up after changing the NLCS with two 3-run HR in Game #3. J.T. Realmuto became World Series MVP, with Aaron Nola runner-up. The first MLBC season did more than produce standings and awards. It established a baseball logic: enough structure for excellence to matter, enough volatility for a 1-7 club to keep believing, and enough pressure for every four-game week to feel like a chapter.

AL MVP
J.D. MARTINEZ

NL MVP
BARRY BONDS

AL CY YOUNG
TYLER GLASNOW

NL CY YOUNG
MAX SCHERZER

POSTSEASON HONORS

PLAYOFF AWARDS

PLAYOFF MVP • JARED WALSH

LAA • 1.183 postseason mark

RUNNER-UP • MIKE SCHMIDT

PHI • 0.821 postseason mark

WORLD SERIES AWARDS

WORLD SERIES MVP • J.T. REALMUTO

PHI • .421 AVG / 1.132 OPS

RUNNER-UP • AARON NOLA

PHI • official World Series runner-up

PENNANTS & CHAMPIONSHIP

AMERICAN LEAGUE CHAMPION
HOUSTON ASTROS

NATIONAL LEAGUE CHAMPION
PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES

2022 MLBC WORLD SERIES CHAMPION

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL CARDS

THE LEAGUE RETURNS

MLBC SEASON TWO

2023 GAME LOG



SEASON PREVIEW

MLBC returns with history attached to every expectation. Philadelphia owns the first championship and the target that comes with it. Houston remembers reaching the World Series and stopping one step short. San Francisco won twenty-eight games before losing a two-game NLCS lead; Boston carried the American League's best regular-season record into October and never reached the pennant. The Dodgers and Yankees still look built for larger stages, while Toronto, Atlanta, St. Louis, San Diego and the rest now understand exactly how little room a forty-game season gives them. Season One proved that a terrible start can be rescued, a great record can disappear in a weekend, and reputation guarantees nothing once elimination arrives. Season Two begins with everybody wiser and nobody safer. The league has a past now, which means every new game can answer an old question, reopen an old wound or create the next piece of history. A championship exists to defend. A standard exists to chase. And for thirty clubs, the clock starts again.

Because three of the best words in sports are...

It's Opening Day!

MLBC — WEEK 1

GAMES 1-4 • OPENING WEEK

SAN FRANCISCO STARTS PERFECT

Season Two opens with one unbeaten club, a shelf of ace performances, and no shortage of late drama.

THE LEAD Season Two opened with Philadelphia defending the first MLBC championship and Houston carrying the memory of a World Series loss, but nobody carried a standing into Opening Week. The schedule immediately supplied heavyweight tests: Boston at New York, Atlanta at the Mets, San Francisco across the Bay against Oakland, and Toronto opening against Baltimore. Minnesota debuted a reshaped club, Texas arrived in Anaheim with major additions, and the Dodgers began another season trying to make their talent match the expectation. Four games were enough to establish urgency without establishing certainty.

THE WEEK San Francisco made the cleanest statement, going 4-0. Buster Posey erased a 4-1 deficit against Oakland with a Grand Slam, then won the same game with a 2-run HR in the 12th. The Yankees and Red Sox opened by trading blows in New York, splitting a series in which each team scored 14 runs. Toronto opened behind Alek Manoah's 3-hit shutout with 12 strikeouts, only to be swept by the Yankees later in the week. Jacob deGrom answered with a 2-hit, zero-walk shutout and 13 K, while Spencer Strider struck out 14 in 7½ scoreless innings. Colorado supplied the first true surprise, starting 3-1 behind Jon Gray's shutout of Los Angeles. Philadelphia avoided an ugly opening when Kyle Schwarber turned a 4-1 deficit into a 5-4 win with one huge Slam. Texas scored 22 runs in two games at Anaheim, Cincinnati swept the Cubs, and late drama seemed to be everywhere before the standings had even learned their shape.

THE STAKES The Giants leave the first four games alone at 4-0. Nine clubs sit at 3-1, including the Yankees, Twins, White Sox, Rangers, Phillies, Brewers, Cardinals, Rockies and Dodgers. Detroit, Chicago and Arizona are already 0-4, a dangerous place in a forty-game season. Toronto's 2-2 start contains both a dominant opening sweep and a sobering Yankees answer; Colorado's 3-1 says the same thing in reverse about preseason assumptions. Week 2 sends Cleveland into Yankee Stadium, Toronto through Tampa Bay and Chicago, the Dodgers into San Diego, and San Francisco home to Colorado before traveling to San Diego. Four games cannot prove a season. They can absolutely establish what needs proving next.

TOP OF TABLE
SFG • 4-0CHASE PACK
9 clubs • 3-1EARLY TROUBLE
DET / CHC / ARI • 0-4ONLY PERFECT
SFG • 4 straight

WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK

GOLD WILLIE STARGELL • PIT

3 HR • 6 RBI

SILVER KYLE SCHWARBER • PHI

2 HR • 6 RBI • Grand Slam

BRONZE BUSTER POSEY • SFG

Grand Slam • walk-off 2-run HR

PITCHER OF THE WEEK

GOLD JACOB deGROM • NYM

CG SHO • 2 H • 0 BB • 13 K

SILVER ALEK MANOAH • TOR

CG SHO • 3 H • 12 K

BRONZE SPENCER STRIDER • ATL

7½ scoreless IP • 14 K

MLBC — WEEK 2

GAMES 5-8 • EARLY SEPARATION

THE FIRST SEPARATION

St. Louis and San Francisco reach 7-1 while Toronto, the Angels and the Cardinals all sweep the week.

THE LEAD San Francisco entered Week 2 as the league's lone 4-0 club, with nine teams tucked behind at 3-1. Toronto had Tampa Bay and the White Sox, the Dodgers went to San Diego, St. Louis moved through Pittsburgh and Milwaukee, and the Giants hosted Colorado before heading south to San Diego. At the bottom, Detroit, Chicago and Arizona needed proof that Opening Week had not already become a hole. The second four-game block was the first chance for an early surprise to become position.

THE WEEK Toronto, the Angels and St. Louis all went 4-0. Bo Bichette powered the Blue Jays with four HR, while the Angels answered their opening disappointment by sweeping Houston and then the Dodgers. Patrick Sandoval shut out the Astros, Shohei Ohtani helped beat Justin Verlander in extra innings, and Los Angeles finished the week with a 10th-inning win at Dodger Stadium. San Francisco split with Colorado, then swept San Diego to finish 3-1 and match St. Louis at 7-1. St. Louis had needed some late theater of its own during a perfect week. Atlanta found Chipper Jones in spectacular fashion: after an 0-for-20 start, Jones went 8-for-10 against Miami and hit three HR in a 17-run eruption. Dylan Cease threw his second 1-hit shutout in two starts, Blake Snell blanked the Dodgers with 10 strikeouts, Steven Kwan hit for the cycle in a loss, and Seattle needed seventeen innings to finish a home win over Texas. Week 2 did not simply reward the fast starters; it introduced several different ways to recover.

THE STAKES St. Louis and San Francisco now share the best record at 7-1. Toronto and Minnesota are 6-2, and the Blue Jays own the early AL East lead. The AL West is already compressed, with Seattle and the Angels at 5-3. The Dodgers have fallen to 3-5 after being swept in San Diego and then twice by the Angels, while Houston's offense has opened quietly enough to create its first question. Week 3 brings Boston to Toronto, Minnesota to Cleveland, Cincinnati through Milwaukee and Atlanta, and San Francisco into Dodger Stadium before hosting St. Louis. Eight games are enough to create distance. They are also enough to show which teams can answer when the first version of their season goes wrong.

TOP OF TABLE STL / SFG • 7-1	PERFECT WEEK TOR / LAA / STL • 4-0	AL EAST TOR • 6-2	ROUGH WEEK LAD / PIT • 0-4
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WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK GOLD CHIPPER JONES • ATL <i>8-for-10 • 3 HR • 7 RBI</i> SILVER BO BICHETTE • TOR <i>4 HR • 7 RBI</i> BRONZE LARS NOOTBAAR • STL <i>3 HR • 6 RBI</i>	PITCHER OF THE WEEK GOLD DYLAN CEASE • CHW <i>CG SHO • 1 H</i> SILVER CORBIN BURNES • MIL <i>CG SHO • 3 H</i> BRONZE BLAKE SNELL • SDP <i>CG SHO • 4 H • 10 K</i>
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MLBC — WEEK 3

GAMES 9-12 • TWO AT THE TOP

TWO TEAMS TAKE THE TOP

Toronto and San Francisco reach 10-2 while four perfect weeks scramble both leagues beneath them.

THE LEAD St. Louis and San Francisco started Week 3 at 7-1, Toronto and Minnesota at 6-2, and the middle of the standings remained broad enough for one sweep to change a division. Toronto drew Boston and Texas, Cleveland saw Minnesota and Boston, Cincinnati had Milwaukee and Atlanta, and San Francisco hosted St. Louis after a trip to Dodger Stadium. The Dodgers were already 3-5 after entering the season with enormous expectations, while Houston's quiet opening had created its first real question after a World Series appearance. The Cubs entered at 2-6 and Boston at 4-4, already close to the point where a bad week could become an identity.

THE WEEK Toronto, Tampa Bay, Cleveland and the Cubs all went 4-0. The Blue Jays climbed to 10-2 and San Francisco matched them, taking a road split from the Dodgers before sweeping St. Louis. Chicago supplied the sharpest reversal: the Cubs swept St. Louis and Washington to climb from 2-6 to 6-6, while the Cardinals fell from 7-1 to 7-5. Cleveland swept Minnesota and Boston, scoring 20 runs in the Minnesota set before taking two more at Fenway. Anthony Santander won consecutive games against the White Sox with 11th-inning walk-off HRs, Jesse Winker drove in seven for Cincinnati, and Buster Posey homered in three straight games. Jacob deGrom worked nine scoreless innings before the Mets won in the 11th; Drew Rasmussen threw a 2-hit shutout. Boston, Texas, Miami and St. Louis all went 0-4, proof that one week could still rearrange an entire quarter of the table.

THE STAKES Toronto and San Francisco now share baseball's best record at 10-2. Cleveland and Cincinnati are 8-4, while Atlanta, the Mets and Philadelphia sit together at 7-5 in the NL East. Boston has fallen to 4-8 and St. Louis has tumbled all the way from 7-1 to 7-5. Chicago, meanwhile, has turned 2-6 into .500 before the season's first quarter can harden into a verdict. Week 4 brings Boston to Houston and Atlanta, the Angels into Yankee Stadium, the Dodgers to the Mets, San Francisco to Chicago and Milwaukee, and a Subway Series in Queens. The fast starters still own the top. The more important development is how many clubs have already demonstrated that the table can move violently underneath them.

TOP OF TABLE TOR / SFG • 10-2	PERFECT WEEK 4 clubs • 4-0	NL EAST ATL / NYM / PHI • 7-5	REVERSAL STL • 0-4
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WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK GOLD JESSE WINKER • CIN <i>3 HR • 7 RBI</i> SILVER EDGAR MARTINEZ • SEA <i>2 HR • 6 RBI</i> BRONZE BUSTER POSEY • SFG <i>3 HR • 4 RBI</i>	PITCHER OF THE WEEK GOLD JACOB deGROM (2) • NYM <i>9 scoreless IP • 4 H</i> SILVER DREW RASMUSSEN • TBR <i>CG SHO • 2 H</i> BRONZE YORDANO VENTURA • KCR <i>CG SHO • 7 H</i>
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MLBC — WEEK 4

GAMES 13-16 • COMPRESSION

THE RACES COMPRESS

Nobody goes 4-0, the Subway Series turns blue and orange, and three clubs leave tied for the league lead.

THE LEAD Toronto and San Francisco entered Week 4 at 10-2, with Cleveland and Cincinnati two games back and the NL East packed at 7-5. This was the first week without much room for a soft landing. Boston had Houston and Atlanta. The Angels went to New York. The Dodgers met the Mets. San Francisco faced a surging Cubs club and then Milwaukee. The Yankees and Mets closed the week against each other at 7-7, one rivalry series carrying two seasons that still lacked definition. Behind the leaders, the season had begun producing genuine danger zones: Boston was already 4-8 and St. Louis had fallen from 7-1 to 7-5.

THE WEEK Nobody went 4-0, but that did not make the week quiet. The Mets supplied the loudest local statement, sweeping the Yankees in Queens and scoring 24 runs in two games as Pete Alonso hit three HR. San Francisco finally gave ground: the Giants were swept at Wrigley, including a 14-inning loss, then split in Milwaukee to finish 1-3 and fall back toward the field. Houston went into Toronto and swept the 11-3 Blue Jays, another reminder that the defending AL champion's slow start had not erased its weight. Baltimore kept climbing behind Grayson Rodriguez's 3-hit shutout and Adley Rutschman's power. Evan Longoria drove in eight for San Francisco despite the losing week, while Spencer Strider threw a 3-hit, 13-strikeout shutout in San Diego. Philadelphia swept Pittsburgh to move into first in the NL East, and the Dodgers briefly found momentum before Washington swept it away.

THE STAKES Toronto, San Francisco and Cincinnati all exit at 11-5. Cleveland and Philadelphia are 10-6, and eight more clubs remain within two games of that line. The AL West has Seattle and Houston tied at 9-7; the NL East has Philadelphia one game ahead of Atlanta and the Mets. San Francisco's 1-3 week matters because the first real cushion at the top disappeared without anyone else needing to dominate. Week 5 takes everyone to the halfway checkpoint, with Baltimore visiting Houston, the Angels going to Toronto, Minnesota visiting Seattle, Los Angeles heading to Philadelphia, and Atlanta drawing Pittsburgh before a trip to Los Angeles. Sixteen games have produced leaders. None has produced safety.

TOP OF TABLE TOR / SFG / CIN • 11-5	NO PERFECT WEEK every club takes a loss	NL EAST PHI • 10-6	SUBWAY SERIES NYM sweeps NYY
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WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK GOLD EVAN LONGORIA • SFG 2 HR • 8 RBI SILVER PETE ALONSO • NYM 3 HR • Subway sweep BRONZE ADLEY RUTSCHMAN • BAL 2 HR • 4 RBI	PITCHER OF THE WEEK GOLD SPENCER STRIDER • ATL CG SHO • 3 H • 13 K SILVER WALKER BUEHLER • LAD CG SHO • 2 H BRONZE CHARLIE MORTON • ATL 8 scoreless IP
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MLBC — WEEK 5

GAMES 17-20 • HALFWAY

TORONTO OWNS THE MIDPOINT

The Blue Jays reach 15-5, four clubs sweep the week, and the halfway standings finally show real distance.

THE LEAD The midpoint arrived with Toronto, San Francisco and Cincinnati tied at 11-5 and a crowded layer of contenders directly behind them. Four games remained before every team could look at exactly half a season. Toronto had the Angels and Kansas City, Baltimore drew Houston and Washington, Atlanta saw Pittsburgh and Los Angeles, and the Yankees faced Texas and Minnesota. Boston entered 6-10 before beginning the week's work, close enough to the edge that a turnaround had to become visible immediately.

THE WEEK Toronto, Baltimore, Boston and Atlanta all went 4-0. The Blue Jays reached 15-5 and became the first club to create real distance over the field, with Alek Manoah moving to 5-0 with a 1.70 ERA and Bo Bichette reaching ten HR. Baltimore surged to 13-7 behind two more wins over Washington, including Cal Ripken Jr.'s 11th-inning walk-off HR, and Atlanta swept Pittsburgh and Los Angeles to reclaim the NL East. Boston completed the week on a five-game winning streak, climbing from 5-10 to 10-10 and turning a near-collapse into a second-half invitation. San Francisco and Cincinnati held at 14-6. Max Fried threw a 2-hit complete-game shutout, Kodai Senga a 3-hit shutout, and Jacob deGrom a 1-hitter. Houston, the Angels and Arizona went 0-4. At the midpoint, the league finally had a leader and several equally convincing examples of how quickly a season could still reverse.

THE STAKES Toronto owns the halfway line at 15-5. San Francisco and Cincinnati are 14-6; Atlanta and Baltimore are 13-7; Tampa Bay, the Mets, Cleveland and the Cubs sit at 12-8. Boston has dragged itself back to 10-10. Meanwhile, the Yankees reach the break at 9-11 and last in the AL East. The AL West remains the opposite of separation, with Seattle first at only 11-9. Week 6 opens the second half with Toronto at Cleveland, the Yankees visiting Oakland and Seattle, Atlanta hosting San Francisco after its Boston series, the White Sox crossing town to Wrigley, and the Mets finishing the week in Colorado after San Francisco. Twenty games remain. From here, a four-game sweep no longer changes only the standings; it consumes one-fifth of the schedule that is left.

TOP OF TABLE TOR • 15-5	PERFECT WEEK TOR / BAL / BOS / ATL	NL CHASERS SFG / CIN • 14-6	AL WEST SEA • 11-9
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WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK GOLD MIGUEL CABRERA • DET <i>2 HR • 5 RBI • Grand Slam</i> SILVER MATT OLSON • ATL <i>2 HR • 5 RBI</i> BRONZE MIGUEL SANÓ • MIN <i>2 HR • 4 RBI</i>	PITCHER OF THE WEEK GOLD MAX FRIED • ATL <i>CG SHO • 2 H</i> SILVER KODAI SENGU • NYM <i>CG SHO • 3 H</i> BRONZE JACOB deGROM • NYM <i>1-hitter • one run allowed</i>
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MLBC — ALL-STAR BREAK

20 GAMES COMPLETE • MIDSEASON CLASSIC

THE STARS TRADE SHUTOUTS

A 1-0 American League classic, a 4-0 National League answer, and a split at the midpoint.

THE STAGE The first showcase opened with one of the season’s best possible pitching pairings: star rookie Spencer Strider for the National League against unbeaten Alek Manoah for the American League. Strider arrived at 4-0 with a 0.95 ERA and 60 strikeouts in 38 innings; Manoah was 5-0 with a 1.70 ERA for the 15-5 Blue Jays. Both delivered three dominant innings, and the game stayed scoreless while Félix Hernández, Jacob deGrom, Grayson Rodriguez, Clayton Kershaw, Gerrit Cole and Max Scherzer turned the middle innings into a parade of aces.

THE SERIES Game 1 finally moved when Salvador Perez doubled off Scherzer and Robinson Cano drove him home with an RBI 1B. The 1-0 lead reached rookie Jhoan Duran in the 9th, and Duran survived Eric Davis and Ryan Braun reaching base before striking out Buster Posey for the final out. Perez was named All-Star Game MVP for the second straight year. The National League answered immediately in Game 2. Nolan Arenado and Sammy Sosa produced first-inning RBI, Mike Yastrzemski homered in the 3rd and later singled, and Will Smith added another run. Luis Castillo opened with three scoreless innings, the NL defense turned a highlight-reel double play behind Yu Darvish, and the bullpen completed a 4-0 shutout. Shohei Ohtani appeared as both a hitter and pitcher, striking out two during his mound work.

THE HINGE The two leagues leave the break even at one game apiece and with completely different versions of an All-Star win: the American League surviving a 1-0 pressure game, the National League controlling a 4-0 answer from the opening inning forward. Twenty regular-season games are complete and twenty remain. Toronto owns the best first-half record at 15-5, but the showcase underlined how much elite pitching sits throughout both leagues. The break does not move a single club in the standings. It does something more useful for the story of the season: it draws a line. Everything before it is now the first half. Everything after it has half the runway.

SERIES 1-1 SPLIT	GAME 1 AL 1 • NL 0	GAME 2 NL 4 • AL 0	MVP SALVADOR PEREZ
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ALL-STAR MOMENTS

GAME 1 SALVADOR PEREZ • AL <i>MVP for the second straight year • double before the winning run</i>	GAME 2 MIKE YASTRZEMSKI • NL <i>solo HR + 1B in the 4-0 National League win</i>
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MLBC — WEEK 6

GAMES 21-24 • SECOND HALF

THE CUBS BREAK THROUGH

Chicago owns the only perfect week, Toronto stays clear, and the second half rearranges the National League.

THE LEAD Toronto began the second half at 15-5, with San Francisco and Cincinnati one game behind and Atlanta and Baltimore at 13-7. The Cubs have crawled to 12-8 from 0-5. The schedule immediately put the leaders into traffic: Toronto visited Cleveland, the Yankees headed west, Atlanta hosted San Francisco after opening against Boston, the White Sox crossed town to Wrigley, and the Mets moved through San Francisco before finishing the week in Colorado. Twenty games had created a hierarchy. Week 6 asked how much of it could survive contact with the second half.

THE WEEK Chicago supplied the only perfect answer. The Cubs went 4-0, climbed to 16-8 and completed a remarkable transformation from their 0-5 opening, winning sixteen of nineteen after that start. Toronto went 3-1 and remained comfortably first at 18-6; Baltimore also reached 16-8, while the Mets moved into first in the NL East at 15-9 after sweeping the Giants. Shohei Ohtani produced one of the season's most complete individual games, striking out 14 while also hitting two HR and driving in five. Adam Jones authored a different kind of history for Baltimore, going 6-for-6 and extending a run to ten consecutive at-bats with hits. Eric Chavez drove in six runs with a triple and two HR in Oakland's 7-6 loss to Boston, an extraordinary performance that still was not enough to win. Justin Verlander answered on the mound with a 5-hit, 11-strikeout shutout, while Brandon Woodruff and Blake Snell also threw complete-game zeroes.

THE STAKES Toronto leaves Week 6 at 18-6, two games clear of San Francisco, Chicago and Baltimore at 16-8. The Mets, Cleveland and Cincinnati are 15-9. Seattle still leads the AL West at 13-11, the only club in that division above .500. The Cubs have changed the NL Central without waiting for Cincinnati to collapse; Baltimore is no longer simply a surprise; and Toronto continues to make everybody chase the same moving target. Week 7 turns toward rivalry and pressure: Mets-Yankees, Minnesota-Houston, Cleveland-Cincinnati, Seattle-Boston, Philadelphia-San Francisco, Cubs-White Sox and Seattle-Toronto. Sixteen games remain. The standings are no longer a snapshot. They are a clock.

TOP OF TABLE
TOR • 18-6

ONLY 4-0
CHC • 16-8

NL EAST
NYM • 15-9

AL WEST
SEA • 13-11

WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK

GOLD ERIC CHAVEZ • OAK

2 HR • 8 RBI

SILVER MATT WILLIAMS • ARI

3 HR • 7 RBI

BRONZE SHOHEI OHTANI • LAA

3 HR • 7 RBI

PITCHER OF THE WEEK

GOLD JUSTIN VERLANDER • HOU

CG SHO • 5 H • 11 K

SILVER BRANDON WOODRUFF • MIL

CG SHO

BRONZE BLAKE SNELL • SDP

CG SHO • 5 H • 10 K

MLBC — WEEK 7

GAMES 25-28 • TORONTO BREAKS AWAY

TORONTO PULLS AWAY

The Blue Jays reach 22-6 while Atlanta and Boston surge and the AL West sinks into a four-team scramble.

THE LEAD Sixteen games remained, and Toronto owned the one luxury nobody else had: room. The Blue Jays entered 18-6, while San Francisco, Baltimore and Chicago sat two games behind. After that group, the Mets led Atlanta by only 1 game and Cleveland led Minnesota by 3. Rivalries dominated the week. The Yankees and Mets renewed the Subway Series, the Cubs and White Sox met across Chicago, Cleveland and Cincinnati fought for position, and Seattle faced both Boston and Toronto. The second half had reached the point where a four-game week could no longer be described as merely good or bad. It could materially decide October.

THE WEEK Toronto kept separating. Alek Manoah and Kevin Gausman remained unbeaten at a combined 11-0, Jordan Romano continued converting late leads, and the Blue Jays reached 22-6. The Yankees supplied the week's loudest reversal. After being humiliated by the Mets earlier in the season, New York swept the return Subway Series by a combined 18-5, even getting to Jacob deGrom as the rivalry swung completely the other direction. Boston continued its resurrection behind Rafael Devers, whose move down to seventh in the order preceded another offensive response and helped keep the Red Sox in the Wild Card chase. Around the league, the contenders kept trading position rather than conceding it. Toronto's advantage was not simply that it kept winning; its rotation and bullpen were making ordinary comeback windows disappear.

THE STAKES The Blue Jays are now 22-6 and have created the first truly imposing record of Season Two. Everything beneath them remains much less settled. Nowhere is that stranger than the AL West, where the Mariners and the Angels are tied for 1st at 13-15. San Francisco is still controlling the National League race, Chicago has turned its early disaster into a division lead, and Boston and the Yankees have both recovered enough to keep the AL East from becoming a one-team story beyond Toronto's dominance. Twelve games remain after this week. Week 8 is the last full block before the final eight, and the Wild Card positions are beginning to matter as much as the division races. Toronto has built room. Everyone else is running out of it.

TOP OF TABLE TOR • 22-6	PERFECT WEEK TOR / BOS / ATL • 4-0	NL EAST ATL • 18-10 • +1	AL WEST SEA / LAA • 13-15
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WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK GOLD SALVADOR PEREZ • KCR 4 HR • 14 RBI SILVER BYRON BUXTON • MIN 2 HR • 5 RBI BRONZE WILLIE STARGELL • PIT 2 HR • 5 RBI	PITCHER OF THE WEEK GOLD CARLOS CARRASCO • CLE CG SHO • 14 K SILVER DREW RASMUSSEN • TBR CG SHO • 4 H • 11 K BRONZE CARLOS RODON • SFG 7⅓ scoreless IP
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MLBC — WEEK 8

GAMES 29-32 • EIGHT TO GO

THE WILD CARD RACES IGNITE

Six clubs go 4-0, Boston and Los Angeles charge, and eight games remain with nearly every race still moving.

THE LEAD Twelve games remained, with Toronto holding the league's best record and almost every race underneath it compressed. San Francisco and Chicago controlled the National League's strongest positions, Boston and the Mets were surging, Seattle was trying to create a real AL West lead, and the Dodgers had finally worked themselves back toward relevance. Atlanta had just surged to 18-10 and taken the NL East by a game over the Mets. Week 8 arrived as the last chance to make a major move before the schedule shrank to single digits.

THE WEEK Six clubs went 4-0, and the standings moved with them. Toronto reached 24-8. Seattle's sweep week pushed the Mariners to 17-15 and made them the first AL West club in weeks to stand clearly above .500. Minnesota swept Cleveland and tightened the Central; Boston beat the Yankees twice, including an extra-inning game won by David Ortiz, and kept climbing after its terrible opening. Sammy Sosa delivered the week's signature eruption, hitting four HR in one game and six across the week. Mickey Tettleton nearly matched the spectacle in a different form, hitting three HR, a game-tying double and totaling fourteen bases in one enormous performance. Brandon Lowe drove in ten for Tampa Bay, while Nick Castellanos piled up seventeen total bases in one Cincinnati series. Carlos Rodon threw a 3-hit, 12-strikeout shutout; Shohei Ohtani a 5-hit, 13-strikeout shutout; and Gerrit Cole struck out sixteen while allowing one run.

THE STAKES Toronto is 24-8. San Francisco and Chicago are 21-11, with the Mets and Boston at 20-12 and five more clubs sitting 19-13. Seattle leads the AL West at 17-15. The Dodgers have surged to 19-13, only two games from the NL West lead, and San Diego remains close enough to threaten the Wild Card field. Eight games remain. Week 9 brings Tampa Bay to Baltimore, Toronto to New York, Houston through Oakland and Seattle, Philadelphia to the Mets, Chicago through Atlanta and Cincinnati, and San Diego to San Francisco. At this point a sweep can create a playoff position, erase one, or turn a routine head-to-head series into the most important baseball a club has played all year.

TOP OF TABLE
TOR • 24-8

PERFECT WEEK
6 clubs • 4-0

NL TOP
SFG / CHC • 21-11

DODGER SURGE
LAD • 19-13

WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK

GOLD SAMMY SOSA • CHC*6 HR • 9 RBI***SILVER BRANDON LOWE • TBR***3 HR • 10 RBI***BRONZE NICK CASTELLANOS • CIN***3 HR • 17 TB in one series*

PITCHER OF THE WEEK

GOLD CARLOS RODON • SFG*CG SHO • 3 H • 12 K***SILVER SHOHEI OHTANI • LAA***CG SHO • 5 H • 13 K***BRONZE GERRIT COLE • NYY***16 K • one run allowed*

MLBC — WEEK 9

GAMES 33-36 • STRETCH RUN

ATLANTA MAKES ITS MOVE

The Braves go 4-0, the Central races tighten, and every remaining game acquires postseason weight.

THE LEAD Eight games remained. Toronto stood above the league at 24-8, while San Francisco and Chicago were 21-11 and a large collection of clubs remained packed between nineteen and twenty wins. Cleveland led Minnesota by one, while Seattle held a 2-game lead over Houston. The Dodgers had won seven of eight to surge back into the postseason picture, but San Diego remained only a game behind them for the final NL Wild Card spot. The final two weeks would decide almost everything underneath the Blue Jays: the AL Central, the AL West, the NL East, the National League Wild Cards and the order of October itself.

THE WEEK Kansas City became an unexpected force in the AL Central race by stealing two ninth-inning wins from Minnesota, results that kept the Twins from taking sole possession of first place. Spencer Strider continued turning his rookie season into something larger, reaching 104 strikeouts even in a game Atlanta needed thirteen innings to win. Chicago stumbled twice in Atlanta, then answered by sweeping Cincinnati, a perfect example of how quickly a bad opening to the week could still be rescued. The Cubs entered Atlanta on a three-game winning streak, and their recovery afterward kept the Central in their hands. Toronto continued adding victories without drama, while San Francisco remained positioned for the National League's top seed. Every late result now carried two meanings: what it did for the club that won and what it quietly did to somebody else's bracket.

THE STAKES Four games remain after this week. Toronto has all but removed suspense from the AL East, but the rest of the postseason field is still being assembled in public. Minnesota and Cleveland remain entangled in the Central. Seattle still has to finish the AL West. Atlanta and the Mets are separated by almost nothing in the East, while the Dodgers' late surge has made the National League even tighter, as they now hold a Wild Card position. The final week will not be about trends. It will be about ownership: who owns a division, who owns a Wild Card, who owns a bye and who has to watch October begin without them.

TOP OF TABLE TOR • 26-10	ONLY 4-0 ATL • 23-13	AL CENTRAL CLE / MIN • 20-16	NL WILD CARD LAD 21-15 • SDP 20-16
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WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK

GOLD EUGENIO SUÁREZ • CIN

4 HR • 10 RBI

SILVER WILLIAM CONTRERAS • ATL

4 HR • 6 RBI

BRONZE ALBERT PUJOLS • LAA

2 HR • 7 RBI • Grand Slam

PITCHER OF THE WEEK

GOLD TYLER GLASNOW • TBR

CG SHO • 1 H • 1 BB

SILVER JUSTIN VERLANDER • HOU

CG SHO • 1 H

BRONZE JOHNNY CUETO • SFG

CG SHO • 13 K

MLBC — WEEK 10

GAMES 37-40 • FINAL WEEK

THE FIELD IS SET

Toronto sets the wins record, San Francisco secures the NL's top seed, and the last four games choose October.

THE LEAD Four games remained. Toronto needed only to finish its record-setting regular season. San Francisco still had to hold off Los Angeles for the NL West and the league's top National League seed. Atlanta led the Mets by one game. Cleveland and Minnesota were tied in the AL Central, with the Twins also fighting the Yankees and Tampa Bay for the final Wild Card. Seattle still had an AL West title to secure. The Dodgers had won six of eight to turn the NL West into a final-week chase. The schedule had reached its cleanest form: almost every game either clinched something, eliminated something or changed somebody else's path.

THE WEEK Toronto won three of four to finish 29-11 and set a new MLBC wins record. The Blue Jays' 28th victory matched San Francisco's previous high; number twenty-nine moved the record forward. San Francisco stumbled once in Colorado, but Johnny Cueto ended the suspense with a 3-hit, 11-strikeout shutout and the Giants secured the NL's #1 seed at 26-14. Atlanta won the NL East after the Mets were swept in Miami, including Jesús Luzardo's 2-hit shutout. Cleveland took the AL Central, Seattle held the West and Chicago won the NL Central. Minnesota captured the final AL Wild Card when Byron Buxton hit a playoff-clinching Grand Slam, his record twentieth HR. Gerrit Cole finished his Cy Young closing argument with a third consecutive 2-hit complete game, this one a 14-strikeout shutout of Baltimore. The save race had its own late exchange: Garrett Whitlock and Jordan Romano reached fourteen, Whitlock moved to fifteen, and Romano answered by matching fifteen.

THE STAKES The regular season is complete. Toronto and Cleveland receive the American League byes; Boston hosts Baltimore and Seattle hosts Minnesota. San Francisco and Atlanta receive the National League byes; Los Angeles hosts the Mets and Chicago hosts Cincinnati. Toronto owns the best record in MLBC history at 29-11. San Francisco owns the National League at 26-14. Byron Buxton's final-week Grand Slam is the difference between a record-setting individual season ending at forty games and continuing into October. The standings have finished their work. From here forward, only series scores matter.

BEST RECORD
TOR • 29-11

NL #1 SEED
SFG • 26-14

FINAL AL BERTH
MIN • 21-19

PLAYOFF FIELD
12 clubs remain

WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK

GOLD BYRON BUXTON • MIN
2 HR • 5 RBI • *clinching Grand Slam*

SILVER RYAN ZIMMERMAN • WSH
6 RBI • *late-week surge*

BRONZE HOWIE KENDRICK • WSH
6 RBI • 3-run HR in finale

PITCHER OF THE WEEK

GOLD GERRIT COLE • NYY
CG SHO • 2 H • 14 K

SILVER JESÚS LUZARDO • MIA
CG SHO • 2 H • 1 BB • 11 K

BRONZE JOHNNY CUETO • SFG
CG SHO • 3 H • 11 K

MLBC — WILD CARD ROUND

GAMES 41-43 • BEST-OF-THREE

OCTOBER OPENS ON THE EDGE

Three series reach a deciding game, Cincinnati sweeps a rival, and late swings decide who gets to keep playing.

THE FIELD Boston hosted Baltimore, Seattle hosted Minnesota, Los Angeles hosted the Mets, and Chicago hosted Cincinnati. Toronto and Cleveland waited with American League byes, while San Francisco and Atlanta watched from the National League side. The short series left no room to settle in. The Mets brought Jacob deGrom to Los Angeles, while Cincinnati and Chicago turned a season-long division fight into a best-of-three rivalry series. Seattle entered with a division title, Chicago with 25 wins, and Boston with momentum, but forty games of position had only earned a playoff matchup, not immunity. Three of the four series immediately became elimination tests.

THE ROUND Boston survived Baltimore 2-1. Jason Varitek repeatedly helped Boston answer Baltimore's scoring in the decider, and Xander Bogaerts ended the series with a 9th-inning walk-off RBI double. Minnesota recovered from an 8-1 opening loss in Seattle, forced Game #3 and broke the decider open with Miguel Sanó's Grand Slam. The Mets won the opener in Los Angeles behind Jacob deGrom, but the Dodgers answered with a twelve-run eruption and then survived an extraordinary scoreless Game #3 until Joc Pederson hit a 12th-inning walk-off HR. Cincinnati never needed a decider. Luis Castillo carried eight shutout innings in the opener, and the Reds followed with a 1-0 win to sweep Chicago.

THE STAKES Eight teams remain. Boston moves on to Cleveland. Minnesota gets the largest assignment in the league: Toronto and its 29 wins. Los Angeles advances to Atlanta after twelve scoreless innings with its season hanging on every pitch. Cincinnati heads to San Francisco. Seattle had a division title; Chicago had 25 wins; the Mets had deGrom. None guaranteed another round. October has already stripped away the comfort of the regular-season résumé. The four survivors advance carrying four different kinds of momentum: a walk-off, a comeback from an 8-1 opening loss, a twelve-inning escape and the round's only sweep. The bye teams now enter against opponents who have already had to survive the thing they were waiting to feel.

AL DECIDER BOS def. BAL • 2-1	AL COMEBACK MIN def. SEA • 2-1	NL WALK-OFF LAD def. NYM • 2-1	ONLY SWEEP CIN def. CHC • 2-0
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ROUND RESULTS

AMERICAN LEAGUE BOS def. BAL, 2-1 <i>Bogaerts: walk-off RBI 2B in Game #3</i> MIN def. SEA, 2-1 <i>Sanó: Grand Slam in the deciding game</i>	NATIONAL LEAGUE LAD def. NYM, 2-1 <i>Pederson: 12th-inning walk-off in Game #3</i> CIN def. CHC, 2-0 <i>Reds win the clincher, 1-0</i>
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MLBC — DIVISION SERIES

GAMES 44-48 • BEST-OF-FIVE

TORONTO REFUSES TO GO HOME

The Blue Jays escape 0-2, Boston sweeps, and both National League series become tests of ace pitching.

THE FIELD The four bye teams finally entered. Toronto had set the MLBC wins record at 29-11. Cleveland had survived the AL Central. San Francisco owned the National League's #1 seed, and Atlanta had taken the East. Their opponents arrived already sharpened by elimination baseball: Minnesota, Boston, Cincinnati and Los Angeles. Toronto entered carrying the league's 29-win record, but Minnesota arrived having already survived an 8-1 Wild Card loss and a winner-take-all comeback in Seattle. Boston had already played a three-game series against Baltimore and then drew Cleveland, while Cincinnati arrived as the only Wild Card club that had not needed a deciding game.

THE ROUND Boston never let Cleveland settle, winning twice on the road before Alex Verdugo's Grand Slam helped finish a 3-0 sweep at Fenway. Toronto faced the exact opposite experience. Minnesota stunned the Blue Jays twice in Toronto, 5-0 and 5-2, and the best regular-season team in league history suddenly stood one loss from becoming a footnote. Toronto answered 9-4 and 5-1 in Minnesota, with Bo Bichette and José Bautista at the center of the offensive response, then returned home and won Game #48, 6-4. Three straight elimination wins erased the 0-2 hole. Los Angeles beat Atlanta 3-1, closing with a 1-0 victory. San Francisco survived Cincinnati 3-2; Madison Bumgarner stacked fifteen scoreless innings across the series before the Giants won the decider 7-0. Wilmer Flores supplied the exclamation point in that decider, coming off the bench to hit a series-clinching Grand Slam in the eighth inning.

THE STAKES Four teams remain. Toronto gets Boston after surviving the first true crisis of its season. Boston arrives rested by a sweep and already knows it can win inside the AL East. San Francisco gets the rivalry that has been sitting behind the entire second half: Los Angeles, with the pennant attached. Boston enters the ALCS having won five of six postseason games, while Los Angeles reaches the NLCS after surviving two elimination rounds and now gets the opponent it spent the season chasing. Toronto's comeback changes the meaning of its 29-win season. The record no longer looks like insulation from pressure. It looks like the foundation that allowed the Blue Jays to survive when every ounce of insulation disappeared.

SWEEP BOS def. CLE • 3-0	ESCAPE TOR def. MIN • 3-2	NL ROAD WIN LAD def. ATL • 3-1	DECIDER SFG def. CIN • 3-2
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SERIES RESULTS

AMERICAN LEAGUE BOS def. CLE, 3-0 <i>Red Sox score 23 runs in the sweep</i> TOR def. MIN, 3-2 <i>Blue Jays win three straight facing elimination</i>	NATIONAL LEAGUE LAD def. ATL, 3-1 <i>Dodgers close the series with a 1-0 win</i> SFG def. CIN, 3-2 <i>Bumgarner: 15 scoreless IP in the series</i>
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MLBC — CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES

GAMES 49-53 • BEST-OF-SEVEN

THE #1 SEEDS CLAIM THE PENNANTS

Toronto turns its escape into an AL title while San Francisco finally gets past Los Angeles and reaches the World Series.

THE MATCHUPS Top-seeded Toronto came out of its five-game escape against Minnesota and immediately met Boston, a club that had swept Cleveland and spent the second half recovering from its own disastrous start. Toronto survived three consecutive elimination games. In the National League, the season's most natural collision finally arrived: San Francisco and Los Angeles, rivals separated by two regular-season games, with the pennant on the line. Both #1 seeds had home field. Neither series felt safe enough to trust it.

THE ROUND Toronto won the first two at home, Hyun-Jin Ryu carrying a shutout deep into Game #49 and Vladimir Guerrero Jr. hitting a 3-run HR in the 1st inning of Game #50. Boston stole an 11-inning classic in Game #51 on late heroics from David Ortiz and Alex Verdugo, but George Springer hit two HR in Game #52 and Toronto closed the series 4-1 in Game #53. San Francisco and Los Angeles split the first two before the Giants took both games at Dodger Stadium: Mike Yastrzemski delivered a 2-out RBI single in the 9th of Game #51, and LaMonte Wade's 2-run HR helped win Game #52. Back home, Brandon Belt, Brandon Crawford and Wade went back-to-back-to-back in the clincher. San Francisco also won the series 4-1. Both #1 seeds ultimately turned home-field advantage into pennants, though Boston did force Toronto to answer an extra-inning loss, while Los Angeles made San Francisco win twice at Dodger Stadium before the Giants could finish the rivalry at home.

THE PENNANTS Toronto is the American League champion. San Francisco is the National League champion. The Blue Jays arrive after setting the wins record and then surviving three consecutive elimination games. The Giants arrive one year after letting an NLCS lead disappear, this time beating the Dodgers in the rivalry series that had shadowed their season. Both #1 seeds have reached the World Series, but by very different emotional routes. Toronto has already survived catastrophe. San Francisco has finally finished unfinished business. Now the two best regular-season teams play for the championship. The result is the World Series matchup the season had been pointing to all along.

AL PENNANT TOR • 4-1	NL PENNANT SFG • 4-1	AL TURN Springer • 2 HR in G52	NL CLINCHER SFG • 3 straight HR
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LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

AMERICAN LEAGUE TORONTO BLUE JAYS <i>Defeated Boston, 4-1</i> Series seal <i>Toronto wins Game #53 at home</i>	NATIONAL LEAGUE SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS <i>Defeated Los Angeles, 4-1</i> Series seal <i>Three consecutive HR in Game #53</i>
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MLBC — WORLD SERIES

GAMES 54-58 • THE FALL CLASSIC

TORONTO FINISHES THE CLIMB

The league's winningest team beats San Francisco in five and becomes the second champion in MLBC history.

THE STAGE The World Series put the two #1 seeds together. Toronto entered with the best regular-season record in MLBC history, a 29-11 mark that had survived an 0-2 Division Series deficit. San Francisco had won the NL West, the National League's top seed and finally the pennant after stopping one round short the year before. One year earlier, Toronto had missed the postseason at 19-21 while San Francisco won 28 games only to lose a two-game NLCS lead. Madison Bumgarner faced Kevin Gausman in Toronto with the entire season reduced to one best-of-seven series.

THE SERIES Game #54 stayed 1-1 into the bottom of the 9th, when Teoscar Hernández opened the World Series with a walk-off solo HR. San Francisco answered violently: Logan Webb threw a 4-hit complete-game shutout and Barry Bonds hit a Grand Slam in an 8-0 Game #55 win. Toronto took the series west and seized control. Alek Manoah carried a no-hitter into the 7th in a 5-1 Game #56 victory. In Game #57, Bonds turned a 3-1 deficit into a Giants lead with a 3-run HR, but Toronto answered in the 7th and Jordan Romano closed a 6-4 win. Back in Toronto for Game #58, Webb protected a 1-0 lead until George Springer hit a 2-run HR in the 6th. It was Springer's first hit of the World Series, arriving at the exact moment Toronto needed one swing to turn a deficit into a championship lead. Romano handled the final three outs of the 2-1 championship clincher. The 4-1 series score makes the final look easier than it was; four games turned on one swing, one late inning or one ace protecting almost nothing.

THE CHAMPIONS Toronto wins the World Series 4-1. Bo Bichette is the official World Series MVP, adding the championship award to an October in which the Statbook also recognizes him as Playoff MVP. Romano completes the postseason without allowing a run in twelve appearances, the quiet backbone beneath Toronto's October survival. San Francisco's season ends one round short, but the Giants finally claimed the pennant they missed a year earlier. Toronto's achievement is different: the league's regular-season giant entered October, nearly fell immediately, then proved it could win after its margin for error had completely disappeared. Season Two did not crown an underdog. It crowned the favorite after the favorite learned how to survive. Toronto, you are the 2023 MLBC champions, forever.

SERIES TOR def. SFG • 4-1	OPENING DRAMA TOR • walk-off G54	GIANTS ANSWER SFG 8 • TOR 0	CLINCHER TOR 2 • SFG 1
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WORLD SERIES HONORS

CHAMPIONSHIP TORONTO BLUE JAYS <i>2023 MLBC World Series Champions</i> Series result <i>Defeated San Francisco, 4-1</i>	OFFICIAL HONORS WORLD SERIES MVP • BO BICHETTE <i>Official MLBC Statbook award</i> POSTSEASON MARK • JORDAN ROMANO <i>12 appearances • 0 runs allowed</i>
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MLBC — SEASON IN REVIEW

2023 • SEASON TWO

THE SEASON TORONTO FINISHED

Forty games produced a new wins record. Forty-three postseason games turned it into a championship.

THE SEASON Toronto set the league's regular-season standard. The Blue Jays reached 10-2 after twelve games, 15-5 at the midpoint, 22-6 after Week 7 and finally 29-11, setting the MLBC wins record. San Francisco finished 26-14, claiming the NL's #1 seed. Byron Buxton won AL MVP after a record-setting 20-HR season with 43 runs and 128 total bases; Evan Longoria won NL MVP after leading the league with 33 RBI and 30 runs. Gerrit Cole won AL Cy Young after a dominant finish; rookie Spencer Strider won NL Cy Young and NL Rookie of the Year.

THE TURN Toronto's championship came through October danger. The Blue Jays lost the first two Division Series games at home to Minnesota and stood one loss from turning a record season into trivia. They won twice in Minnesota, then completed the escape at home in Game #48. They took the first two ALCS games from Boston, won the pennant in five and met San Francisco in a World Series between #1 seeds. The Giants broke through by beating the rival Dodgers 4-1 after falling one round short the year before. Season Two changed the standard again: regular-season dominance mattered because Toronto found another identity when dominance stopped protecting it.

THE LEGACY Toronto won the World Series 4-1, clinching on George Springer's 2-run HR and Jordan Romano's scoreless 9th in Game #58. Bo Bichette won official Playoff and World Series MVP; Romano allowed no runs in twelve postseason appearances. San Francisco's lone win paired Logan Webb's 4-hit shutout with Barry Bonds's Grand Slam. Season One crowned a 1-7 survivor; Season Two crowned the giant that nearly fell. MLBC now had two champions and two paths for future contenders to inherit.

AL MVP
BYRON BUXTON

NL MVP
EVAN LONGORIA

AL CY YOUNG
GERRIT COLE

NL CY YOUNG
SPENCER STRIDER

POSTSEASON HONORS

PLAYOFF AWARDS

PLAYOFF MVP • BO BICHETTE*TOR • official MLBC Statbook award***POSTSEASON MARK • JORDAN ROMANO***TOR • 12 appearances / 0 runs allowed*

WORLD SERIES AWARDS

WORLD SERIES MVP • BO BICHETTE*TOR • official MLBC Statbook award***CLINCHING SWING • GEORGE SPRINGER***TOR • 2-run HR in Game #58*

PENNANTS & CHAMPIONSHIP

AMERICAN LEAGUE CHAMPION
TORONTO BLUE JAYS

NATIONAL LEAGUE CHAMPION
SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS

2023 MLBC WORLD SERIES CHAMPION

TORONTO BLUE JAYS

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL CARDS

A NEW CHAMPION TO CHASE

MLBC

SEASON THREE

2024 GAME LOG



SEASON PREVIEW

Two seasons have turned MLBC expectations into history, pressure and unfinished business. Toronto begins Season Three with the trophy after surviving the brink in October and finishing its climb against San Francisco. The Giants return with a pennant and the memory of how close the final step felt. Houston remains dangerous, Atlanta brings the reigning NL Cy Young winner, and the Dodgers and Yankees enter another short season with no appetite for leaving their promise unfinished. The Mets have made the loudest move of all, pairing Max Scherzer with Jacob deGrom and turning anything short of a deep October run into disappointment before Opening Day even arrives. Boston must replace important offense, Cleveland is trying to own its division for a third straight year, Seattle wants another chance after a first-round exit, and St. Louis begins again with Albert Pujols back in the middle of the story. Forty games leave no room for ceremony. Every sweep moves a race, every ace start can tilt a week, and every slow opening threatens to become a season before anyone is ready. The trophy belongs to Toronto. The next story belongs to whoever takes it.

Because three of the best words in sports are...

It's Opening Day!

MLBC — WEEK 1

GAMES 1-4 • OPENING WEEK

MINNESOTA RUNS THE TABLE

One perfect club, a no-hitter, and a league that immediately refuses to ease into Season Three.

THE LEAD Season Three opened with Toronto defending the championship, San Francisco carrying the National League pennant, and every club reset to 0-0. The first four games offered immediate measuring sticks: Toronto returned to Boston for an ALCS rematch, the Yankees opened in Tampa Bay, the Mets unveiled the deGrom-Scherzer pairing in Miami, and Atlanta began with Spencer Strider trying to build on a record-setting rookie season. Boston was already replacing Xander Bogaerts and J.D. Martinez, San Francisco had entered the post-Bonds era, and both Miami and Oakland arrived with waves of rookies. The league had history now.

THE WEEK Minnesota made a clean start, going 4-0 and becoming the only unbeaten club. Miami supplied the first thunderbolt when Sandy Alcantara came within one walk of a perfect game and no-hit the Mets. Atlanta answered with Strider's 4-hit, 14-strikeout complete-game shutout, while Ozzie Albies drove in eight across the week. Houston won its first two games while scoring only three total runs because Justin Verlander and Framber Valdez scarcely allowed anything. Colorado and Seattle produced the week's strangest finish: the Rockies scored six in the 11th, Seattle answered with five, and Carlos Gonzalez's relay through Trevor Story cut down the tying run at the plate. The Yankees stole two late games in Tampa Bay, Toronto opened with a road sweep in Boston, and Baltimore, Chicago, Cincinnati, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Toronto and Atlanta all finished 3-1. Detroit and Arizona never found a win.

THE STAKES Minnesota leaves Opening Week alone at 4-0, but nine clubs are only one game behind and eleven more sit 2-2. The defending champion looks good without looking untouchable; the Mets have already seen both the promise and volatility of their super-rotation; and Houston has reminded the league that elite pitching can make a quiet offense feel sufficient. Week 2 begins the first sorting: Boston goes to Baltimore, Toronto visits Yankee Stadium, San Francisco goes into Dodger Stadium, and Philadelphia gets the Mets before New York turns to Washington. Detroit and Arizona already need an answer. Four games have not created a favorite. They have created urgency.

TOP OF TABLE
MIN • 4-0CHASE PACK
9 clubs • 3-1EARLY TROUBLE
DET / ARI • 0-4ONLY PERFECT
MIN • 4 straight

WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK

GOLD OZZIE ALBIES • ATL2 HR • 8 RBI • *Grand Slam***SILVER** IVAN RODRIGUEZ • TEX

2 HR • 6 RBI

BRONZE DAVID WRIGHT • NYM

3 HR • 4 RBI

PITCHER OF THE WEEK

GOLD SANDY ALCANTARA • MIA

NO-HITTER • 1 BB

SILVER SPENCER STRIDER • ATL

CG SHO • 4 H • 14 K

BRONZE LOGAN GILBERT • SEA

CG SHO • 3 H

MLBC — WEEK 2

GAMES 5-8 • EARLY SEPARATION

FOUR CLUBS SHARE THE FRONT*The Mets sweep the week, Seattle explodes, and the first layer of the standings begins to separate.*

THE LEAD Minnesota entered Week 2 as the only 4-0 club, with nine teams immediately behind at 3-1. Detroit and Arizona were already 0-4, while several contenders faced early measuring sticks: Toronto went to Yankee Stadium, San Francisco visited the Dodgers, Minnesota went to Tampa Bay, Atlanta met Washington before St. Louis, and Philadelphia entered New York at 1-3 with deGrom and Scherzer waiting. Eight games are only one-fifth of the schedule, but in MLBC that is enough for a rough opening to start looking structural.

THE WEEK The Mets were the only club to go 4-0, sweeping Philadelphia and Washington to reach 6-2. Seattle supplied the week's eruption. Julio Rodriguez followed a 4-for-4 game by going 6-for-6 in Anaheim, finishing the series 10-for-10 and scoring six times in the second game. Ken Griffey Jr. went 4-for-6 with two HR, two doubles, twelve total bases and nine RBI in Seattle's 18-run outburst. Albert Pujols answered with twelve total bases and eight RBI in one game for St. Louis. The Yankees swept the defending champions 15-4 across two games, while San Francisco swept the Dodgers on the road and later finished the week 6-2 overall. Washington handed Spencer Strider the first loss of his MLBC career with a three-run ninth-inning comeback. Arizona escaped its 0-4 start by sweeping Colorado, Boston scored 28 runs in Kansas City, and Cleveland swept Minnesota to climb back into a race that had nearly disappeared.

THE STAKES Houston, the Mets, Yankees and Giants now share the best record at 6-2, with six more clubs at 5-3. Minnesota has already gone from the league's only perfect team to part of the chase pack; Toronto has gone from champion's confidence to 4-4; and the Mets have transformed a 2-2 opening into the league's only perfect week. Week 3 brings Mets-Braves, Yankees-Red Sox, Dodgers-Padres and White Sox-Twins. Eight games have produced leaders, not safety. The most important development may be how many different clubs have already demonstrated that two games can completely change the meaning of the previous six.

TOP OF TABLE HOU / NYM / NYY / SFG • 6-2	PERFECT WEEK NYM • 4-0	CHASE PACK 6 clubs • 5-3	SEATTLE OUTBURST 18 runs • 22 hits
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WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK GOLD KEN GRIFFEY JR. • SEA <i>2 HR • 2 2B • record 9 RBI</i> SILVER ALBERT PUJOLS • STL <i>12 TB • 8 RBI in one game</i> BRONZE LUIS ROBERT • CHW <i>8-for-10 series • 17 TB</i>	PITCHER OF THE WEEK GOLD CARLOS RODON • SFG <i>7 scoreless IP • 3 H</i> SILVER ADAM WAINWRIGHT • STL <i>7 scoreless IP • 16 straight</i> BRONZE GERRIT COLE • NYY <i>7 scoreless IP vs. TOR</i>
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MLBC — WEEK 3

GAMES 9-12 • THE FIRST BREAKAWAY

THE METS MAKE THEIR MOVE

New York reaches 10-2, Tampa Bay storms back into relevance, and three clubs suffer a lost week.

THE LEAD Houston, the Mets, Yankees and Giants entered Week 3 tied at 6-2, and the schedule immediately forced the top of the table into confrontation. New York went to Atlanta, the Yankees visited Boston, Los Angeles went to San Diego, and Chicago met Minnesota with the AL Central already carrying real weight. Boston had just climbed from 1-4 to 4-4 after a record setting 28 runs in their two game sweep of the Royals. The Mets had spent the offseason building a rotation meant for this exact kind of separation. Now they had a chance to create it.

THE WEEK The Mets seized the week, sweeping Atlanta before taking two more at home to reach 10-2 and stand alone with MLBC's best record. Tampa Bay also went 4-0, turning a 3-5 start into 7-5. Chicago's week contained the season's wildest endurance test: the White Sox beat Minnesota 9-8 in nineteen innings, then started four fresh bench players the next day and watched all four homer, including Jake Burger's 3-run shot and four-RBI debut. Minnesota's perfect opening vanished into six consecutive losses. Bryan Reynolds won consecutive Pittsburgh games with late singles, first in the 16th and then in the 9th. Philadelphia continued its own recovery from 1-5 behind Ryan Howard's four HR, while Justin Verlander threw a 1-hit, 13-strikeout shutout and Zac Gallen a 3-hit, zero-walk shutout. The Mets' breakaway mattered, but the week's deeper theme was reinvention: Tampa Bay, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh all found ways to keep their seasons from hardening into their worst early versions.

THE STAKES The Mets stand 10-2. The Yankees and Giants are 9-3; Chicago and Houston are 8-4. Minnesota, the Angels and St. Louis all went 0-4 and suddenly have much less runway. A four-game skid consumes ten percent of the MLBC schedule, making it a costly misstep. New York has created the season's first real platform at the top, but the White Sox have also discovered something unusually valuable in a short season: depth that can win games when the everyday lineup rests. Week 4 sends the Mets to Dodger Stadium, the Yankees to Anaheim, Minnesota to Houston and Seattle to Chicago. Twelve games have produced the first breakaway. The question is whether anybody can make New York look back.

BEST RECORD
NYM • 10-2

PERFECT WEEK
NYM / TBR • 4-0

CHASERS
NYY / SFG • 9-3

LOST WEEK
MIN / LAA / STL • 0-4

WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK

GOLD AUSTIN MEADOWS • TBR

3 HR • 8 RBI

SILVER PETE ALONSO • NYM

3 HR • 7 RBI

BRONZE RYAN HOWARD • PHI

4 HR • 5 RBI

PITCHER OF THE WEEK

GOLD JUSTIN VERLANDER • HOU

CG SHO • 1 H • 1 BB • 13 K

SILVER ZAC GALLEN • ARI

CG SHO • 3 H • 0 BB

BRONZE WALKER BUEHLER • LAD

CG SHO • 5 H

MLBC — WEEK 4

GAMES 13-16 • FAULT LINES

THE AL RACES TIGHTEN*Baltimore and Cleveland go perfect while the Mets keep a firm hand on the league's best record.*

THE LEAD The Mets entered Week 4 at 10-2, with the Yankees and Giants at 9-3 and Chicago and Houston at 8-4. New York had created separation, but the American League remained unstable enough for one perfect week to reorder an entire division. Boston went to Cleveland, Seattle visited the White Sox, Toronto faced Chicago, and Minnesota traveled to Houston trying to stop a six-game collapse. In the National League, Philadelphia and San Francisco met with the Phillies attempting to turn a disastrous opening into an actual playoff position.

THE WEEK Baltimore and Cleveland delivered the only 4-0 weeks. The Orioles climbed into a tie with the Yankees at 11-5 atop the AL East, while Cleveland completed an extraordinary recovery from 1-5 by winning seven straight and pulling even with Chicago at 10-6 in the Central. The White Sox remained one of the league's most unusual stories: Jake Burger took over third base from Yoan Moncada after exploding off the bench, while Chicago's reserves had supplied eight of the club's thirty HR through fourteen games. Philadelphia kept climbing too. The Phillies swept San Francisco, including a Game #15 ending when Camilo Doval threw a bases-loaded wild pitch, and finished the week having won eight of ten since falling to 1-5. Albert Pujols drove in six in one game for St. Louis, while Spencer Strider, Jack Flaherty and Michael Wacha all threw complete-game shutouts. Minnesota's nightmare continued, reaching ten consecutive losses.

THE STAKES The Mets still own the league at 13-3. Baltimore, Houston, the Yankees and San Francisco sit 11-5; Chicago and Cleveland are 10-6. Two American League races that looked orderly have been compressed into direct fights, while Philadelphia has transformed itself from crisis story to Wild Card threat. Minnesota and Cincinnati have moved the other direction and now live in the danger zone. Week 5 takes everyone to the halfway point, with Cleveland visiting the Yankees, Tampa Bay going to Houston, San Francisco visiting Atlanta and Seattle facing Baltimore. Sixteen games have drawn the fault lines. The midpoint will tell us which ones widen.

BEST RECORD NYM • 13-3	PERFECT WEEK BAL / CLE • 4-0	AL EAST BAL / NYY • 11-5	AL CENTRAL CHW / CLE • 10-6
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WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK GOLD ALBERT PUJOLS • STL 2 HR • 2-run 2B • 6 RBI in Game #16 SILVER JAKE BURGER • CHW 3 HR • 8 RBI BRONZE EDDIE MURRAY • BAL 3 HR • 8 RBI	PITCHER OF THE WEEK GOLD SPENCER STRIDER • ATL CG SHO • 3 H • 12 K SILVER JACK FLAHERTY • STL CG SHO • 3 H • 13 K BRONZE MICHAEL WACHA • STL CG SHO • 2 H
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MLBC — WEEK 5

GAMES 17-20 • HALFWAY

THE METS OWN THE MIDPOINT

New York reaches 17-3, three clubs sweep the week, and Chris Sale writes a no-hitter into the season.

THE LEAD The halfway week began with the Mets at 13-3 and the Yankees, Orioles, Astros and Giants just two games behind at 11-5. Chicago and Cleveland were three games back at 10-6. The AL East, Central and West were all compressed enough that one sweep could redraw them. New York had Cincinnati and San Francisco; Houston drew Tampa Bay and Kansas City; the Yankees had Cleveland and Oakland; Seattle had Baltimore and Boston; and Minnesota entered still trying to stop a losing streak that had consumed almost everything created by its 5-1 start.

THE WEEK The Mets did not blink, going 4-0 to reach 17-3. Kansas City and Seattle matched the perfect week. The Royals' rise was particularly dramatic: four one-run victories against Baltimore and Houston pushed them fully into the AL Central race. Minnesota's losing streak reached twelve before the Twins finally erupted with a sweep of Texas, turning one of the season's ugliest slides into at least the possibility of survival. Arizona authored an extraordinary pitching response against Chicago, with Zac Gallen and Merrill Kelly combining to help the Diamondbacks outscore the Cubs 22-0 across the series. Chris Sale supplied the week's permanent headline, throwing a no-hitter with two walks and 18 strikeouts. Adam Wainwright reached the midpoint with a 0.47 ERA, while Aaron Nola added a 2-hit shutout. The Mets' 17-3 record changed the psychology of the entire second half, but the week beneath them was full of clubs refusing to accept the shape their first sixteen games had given them.

THE STAKES At twenty games, the Mets own the first true cushion at 17-3. Houston, the Yankees and Seattle are 13-7; Atlanta, Chicago, Cleveland and the Dodgers are 12-8. Kansas City has forced itself into the Central conversation, while Minnesota has finally stopped the bleeding. The second half opens with the Subway Series, Cubs-White Sox, Padres-Phillies and Atlanta-Milwaukee. Half the schedule is gone. The remaining twenty games are enough for a comeback, but no longer enough for patience. Everyone beneath New York is now running two races at once: one against the Mets' record, and another against the traffic surrounding them.

MIDPOINT KING
NYM • 17-3

PERFECT WEEK
KCR / NYM / SEA •
4-0

AL WEST
HOU / SEA • 13-7

ROUGH WEEK
BAL / CHC / CIN / SFG
• 0-4

WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK

GOLD CECIL FIELDER • DET
2 HR • 7 RBI • *Grand Slam*

SILVER SHOHEI OHTANI • LAA
2 HR • 5 RBI

BRONZE YORDAN ALVAREZ • HOU
2 HR • 5 RBI

PITCHER OF THE WEEK

GOLD CHRIS SALE • BOS
NO-HITTER • 2 BB • 18 K

SILVER AARON NOLA • PHI
CG SHO • 2 H • 1 BB • 10 K

BRONZE ADAM WAINWRIGHT • STL
CG SHO • 0 R • 0.47 ERA

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL CARDS - 2024 - SEASON 3

MLBC — ALL-STAR BREAK

20 GAMES COMPLETE • MIDSEASON CLASSIC

THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OWNS THE BREAK

Pete Alonso turns Game 1 into a rout, then the National League steals Game 2 in extra innings.

THE STAGE The midpoint showcase opened with the American League scoring first, but the night quickly became Pete Alonso's. Season Three had already produced a parade of elite pitching performances and explosive individual weeks, and the All-Star break collected that talent into two games without removing the competitive edge. The first game became a power show. The second became a pressure game that needed extra innings.

THE SERIES Alonso hit a 2-run HR in the 4th and a Grand Slam in the 5th, driving in six as the National League rolled to a 9-2 Game 1 victory. Game 2 looked nothing like it. Gerrit Cole and Clayton Kershaw each threw three scoreless innings, and the American League built a 2-0 advantage. The National League finally answered in the 8th, with Chase Utley helping drive the comeback that tied the game. Neither side could break through in the 9th. In the 10th, Jake McCarthy tripled, turning one swing into immediate pressure, and Utley followed with the walk-off RBI single for a 3-2 win. Jake McCarthy was named All-Star MVP.

THE HINGE The National League leaves the break with a two-game sweep, one built through Alonso's overwhelming power and the other through an extra-inning comeback. Twenty regular-season games are complete and twenty remain. The showcase changes nothing in the standings, which is exactly why it works as a hinge. The first half belongs to the Mets at 17-3, but the second half begins with a crowded AL Central, a tied AL West race close behind Houston and Seattle, and an NL West still within reach of several clubs. One half has been preserved. The next twenty games have half the runway and twice the consequence.

SERIES NL SWEEP • 2-0	GAME 1 NL 9 • AL 2	GAME 2 NL 3 • AL 2	HEADLINER PETE ALONSO
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ALL-STAR MOMENTS

GAME 1 PETE ALONSO • NL 2 HR • 6 RBI • Grand Slam in the 9-2 win	GAME 2 CHASE UTLEY • NL RBI 1B in the 8th • walk-off RBI 1B in the 10th
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MLBC — WEEK 6

GAMES 21-24 • SECOND HALF

SAN DIEGO HITS THE GAS

The Padres post the only 4-0 week while Arizona's Corbin Carroll turns the second half into a personal showcase.

THE LEAD The second half opened with the Mets at a remarkable 17-3 and everybody else already calculating how much ground twenty remaining games could realistically recover. Houston, the Yankees and Seattle were 13-7. Atlanta, Chicago, Cleveland and Los Angeles sat 12-8, while San Diego and Arizona remained close enough to make the NL West immediately volatile. San Francisco had just gone 0-4 to fall from 11-5 to 11-9, while Kansas City had forced itself into the AL Central race with four straight one-run wins, with Chicago and Cleveland still one game ahead of Kansas City. The Padres opened in Philadelphia and then Cincinnati, needing more than a good week. They needed a move.

THE WEEK San Diego delivered the only 4-0 week in MLBC. Yu Darvish opened with a 2-hit complete-game shutout of Philadelphia, Blake Snell and the bullpen blanked the Phillies the next day, and the Padres followed those two shutouts with two comeback wins in Cincinnati to reach 14-10 and pull even with Los Angeles. The Mets still went 3-1 and reached 20-4, so nobody touched the leader, but the races beneath New York changed quickly. Corbin Carroll hit four HR and drove in eight for Arizona. Paul Skenes came within one out of his finest start, carrying a 2-0 shutout against the Dodgers into the 9th before Max Muncy, Adrian Gonzalez and Joc Pederson reached and Will Smith turned the game completely around with a 2-out Grand Slam. Chris Archer answered the next day by shutting out Los Angeles for eight innings in a 1-0 Pittsburgh win. Baseball supplied both sides of the lesson in forty-eight hours.

THE STAKES The Mets lead baseball at 20-4, but the races underneath them have become dense. Chicago and Kansas City share the AL Central at 14-10 with Cleveland one game back. Los Angeles and San Diego are tied at 14-10, while Arizona and San Francisco sit 13-11. The Padres have transformed the West without threatening New York's larger cushion. Week 7 brings Houston to Baltimore, Texas into Yankee Stadium, Arizona to New York and the Yankees into Houston. Sixteen games remain. New York is trying to protect history; almost everyone else is trying merely to survive the traffic.

BEST RECORD
NYM • 20-4

ONLY PERFECT
SDP • 4-0

AL CENTRAL
CHW / KCR • 14-10

NL WEST
LAD / SDP • 14-10

WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK

GOLD CORBIN CARROLL • ARI

4 HR • 8 RBI

SILVER VICTOR MARTINEZ • DET

2 HR • 5 RBI

BRONZE XANDER BOGAERTS • SDP

Grand Slam • 5 RBI

PITCHER OF THE WEEK

GOLD YU DARVISH • SDP

CG SHO • 2 H

SILVER YOSHINOBU YAMAMOTO • LAD

8 scoreless IP • 3 H • 1 BB

BRONZE JAKE ARRIETA • CHC

CG SHO • 10 K

MLBC — WEEK 7

GAMES 25-28 • TWELVE TO GO

NOBODY GETS A CLEAN WEEK

The leaders trade blows, Kansas City reaches first place, and not one club escapes the four-game block unbeaten.

THE LEAD New York entered Week 7 at 20-4, Houston at 16-8 and Atlanta, the Yankees and Seattle at 15-9. The top belonged to the Mets. Everything beneath them looked temporary. Chicago and Kansas City shared the Central, Los Angeles and San Diego shared the NL West, and Arizona and San Francisco remained within one sharp week of joining that race. The Giants entered having lost eight of ten, turning a division lead into a fight to stay alive in the playoff race. Twelve games would remain when this four-game block ended.

THE WEEK For the first time all season, nobody went 4-0. The Mets split and still reached 22-6. Atlanta and Houston moved to 18-10, while Kansas City climbed to 17-11 and took the AL Central lead after winning thirteen of seventeen following its poor opening. Bobby Witt Jr. had become more than the face of the recovery; he had become part of the league's MVP conversation. Toronto stayed alive with a road sweep of Seattle, Roberto Alomar helping drive a champion that refused to disappear quietly. Mookie Betts authored the loudest individual game, going 4-for-5 with two HR, a 2-run triple and five RBI. Luis Arraez went 5-for-5 with four doubles. Wilyer Abreu supplied Boston's most dramatic swing, a 12th-inning Grand Slam in an 8-4 road win at Seattle. Joe Musgrove carried a 1-hit shutout into the 9th against the Yankees. With no perfect club, every split mattered more.

THE STAKES The Mets remain miles ahead at 22-6. Atlanta and Houston are 18-10. Kansas City, Los Angeles, the Yankees and San Diego sit 17-11. Chicago and Cleveland are one game behind the Royals. The AL Central has become a true three-team sprint. Arizona and San Francisco remain close enough in the NL West that one strong series could still change the race. Twelve games remain. Week 8 sends Boston to Atlanta, Seattle into Cleveland and San Diego into Dodger Stadium, while Toronto and Texas both try to save seasons that have narrowed dangerously. The leaders are no longer trying to identify themselves. They are trying to protect what they have while the clubs behind them begin treating ordinary series like elimination rounds.

BEST RECORD
NYM • 22-6

NO PERFECTS
0 clubs • 4-0

AL CENTRAL
KCR • 17-11

NL WEST
LAD / SDP • 17-11

WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK

GOLD MOOKIE BETTS • LAD

2 HR • 2-run 3B • 5 RBI

SILVER LUIS ARRAEZ • MIA

5-for-5 • 4 2B • 3 RBI

BRONZE WILYER ABREU • BOS

12th-inning go-ahead Grand Slam

PITCHER OF THE WEEK

GOLD JOE MUSGROVE • HOU

1-hit shutout into 9th

SILVER JACOB deGROM • NYM

8 scoreless IP

BRONZE JARED JONES • PIT

8 scoreless IP • 3 H • 1 BB

MLBC — WEEK 8

GAMES 29-32 • EIGHT TO GO

BOSTON CRASHES THE EAST

The Red Sox go 4-0, Kansas City holds the Central, and the final eight games arrive with almost every race alive.

THE LEAD Twelve games remained with the Mets at 22-6 and nearly every meaningful race underneath them unsettled. Kansas City had taken the AL Central. Los Angeles and San Diego shared the NL West. The Yankees led the East, but Baltimore and Boston remained close enough for one four-game surge to turn a chase into a tie. Toronto had just swept Seattle to keep its title defense alive, making Boston's trip north a direct collision between two clubs fighting for the same shrinking ground. Houston and Seattle still had unfinished business, while Arizona and San Francisco remained close enough to stay alive.

THE WEEK Boston produced exactly the week it needed. The Red Sox swept Atlanta and then Toronto, went 4-0 and reached 18-14, pulling even with New York atop the AL East. Detroit created its own late-season jolt by sweeping the Yankees, with Tarik Skubal throwing a brilliant 3-hit, 15-strikeout complete-game shutout opposite Gerrit Cole before Casey Mize finished the two-game statement. Cincinnati also went 4-0 after spending much of the season buried. Kansas City reached 20-12 and kept its Central lead; Houston joined the Royals at 20-12. The Mets reached 24-8 even while dropping conspicuous games to Miami and Pittsburgh, one more reminder that their record no longer required perfection. In the NL West, Los Angeles and San Diego split two games in which every run came via the HR, a fittingly blunt exchange between clubs still tied at 19-13. Shohei Ohtani hit three HR and drove in six; Fernando Tatis Jr. matched the three-HR week.

THE STAKES Eight games remain. Boston and New York are tied in the AL East. Kansas City leads Cleveland by one. Houston leads Seattle by two. Los Angeles and San Diego remain dead even, with Arizona and San Francisco still close enough to matter. The Mets have essentially turned the top seed into a formality; everybody else is playing for position, survival and home field simultaneously. Week 9 sends Kansas City into Yankee Stadium, the Angels to Seattle, Atlanta to Miami and St. Louis into New York before the schedule turns toward rivalry-heavy second series. The standings are no longer forming. They are beginning to close doors.

AL EAST BOS / NYY • 18-14	PERFECT WEEK BOS / CIN • 4-0	AL CENTRAL KCR • 20-12	NL WEST LAD / SDP • 19-13
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WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK GOLD SHOHEI OHTANI • LAA 3 HR • 6 RBI SILVER FERNANDO TATIS JR. • SDP 3 HR • 5 RBI BRONZE YASMANI GRANDAL • CHW 6-for-8 • 3 HR • 4 RBI	PITCHER OF THE WEEK GOLD TARIK SKUBAL • DET CG SHO • 3 H • 1 BB • 15 K SILVER GEORGE KIRBY • SEA CG SHO • 3 H • 0 BB BRONZE LUIS CASTILLO • CIN CG SHO • 4 H • 9 K
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MLBC — WEEK 9

GAMES 33-36 • STRETCH RUN

THE RACES DETONATE

Four clubs go perfect, the Yankees reclaim the East, and every division reaches the final week with pressure attached.

THE LEAD Eight games remained. The Mets were 24-8. Houston and Kansas City sat 20-12, and Boston and New York were tied for the East. Los Angeles and San Diego were tied for the NL West. St. Louis led Milwaukee by one. San Francisco entered outside the playoff bracket, leaving no room for a quiet week. Meanwhile Detroit had climbed from 4-10 to 15-17, staying alive. Almost every important margin was a single game, which meant Week 9 could create as much movement as the first month had needed several weeks to produce.

THE WEEK Atlanta, Detroit, the Yankees and San Francisco all went 4-0. New York reclaimed the East at 22-14. Cleveland moved one game ahead of Kansas City in the Central, while the Royals suffered the season's sharpest late reversal: 20-12 became 20-16 after sweeps by the Yankees and Minnesota. Detroit reached 19-17 after once sitting 4-10, a remarkable rescue even if October remained uncertain. San Francisco made an even more dramatic positional jump. The Giants swept Oakland and San Diego, and Evan Longoria's 11th-inning HR in the final game helped move them from outside the bracket into a Wild Card spot with four games left. Houston reached 23-13; Los Angeles reached 22-14 and opened a two-game West lead. In the Central, Tyler O'Neill's extra-inning HR against Milwaukee helped St. Louis protect its narrow advantage. Eddie Murray hit three HR in Baltimore's enormous Boston series, while Spencer Strider authored a 4-hit, 16-strikeout shutout.

THE STAKES Four games remain. The Mets are 26-10; Atlanta and Houston are 23-13; Los Angeles and the Yankees are 22-14. The AL East, Central and every Wild Card slot still contain moving pieces. St. Louis is 19-17, one game ahead of Milwaukee. San Francisco has forced itself back into October position just in time for the schedule to become merciless. Yankees-Orioles. Red Sox-Yankees. Cleveland-Kansas City. Seattle-Houston. Atlanta-Mets. Philadelphia-Milwaukee. San Francisco-Arizona. Dodgers-Giants. The final four games are no longer about momentum. They are about possession.

BEST RECORD
NYM • 26-10

PERFECT WEEK
ATL / DET / NYY / SFG
• 4-0

AL EAST
NYY • 22-14

FINAL MARGIN
4 games remain

WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK

GOLD EDDIE MURRAY • BAL
5-for-9 • 3 HR • 4 RBI

SILVER RYAN BRAUN • MIL
3 HR • 7 RBI

BRONZE MAX MUNCY • LAD
3 HR • 7 RBI

PITCHER OF THE WEEK

GOLD SPENCER STRIDER (2) • ATL
CG SHO • 4 H • 1 BB • 16 K

SILVER PAUL SKENES • PIT
7 scoreless IP

BRONZE MERRILL KELLY • ARI
7 scoreless IP

MLBC — WEEK 10

GAMES 37-40 • FINAL WEEK

THE METS REACH THIRTY

A wins record, a seven-run comeback, division clinchers and one last scramble send twelve clubs into October.

THE LEAD Four games remained with the Mets at 26-10, Atlanta and Houston at 23-13, and Los Angeles and the Yankees at 22-14. Boston, Cleveland and Seattle were 21-15, with Cleveland and Kansas City separated by just one game. St. Louis held the NL Central by one over Milwaukee, while Philadelphia, San Francisco, Arizona, Baltimore, Kansas City and Detroit were still trying to force themselves into October. Nothing beneath the Mets felt secure.

THE WEEK New York and Philadelphia both went 4-0. The Mets finished 30-10, setting the MLBC wins record after falling behind 7-0 in Game #40, erasing the entire deficit and winning on Pete Alonso's walk-off HR. Philadelphia's perfect week did two jobs at once: it pushed the Phillies into the postseason and, by sweeping Milwaukee, helped preserve St. Louis's division title even while the Cardinals themselves went 0-4. Arizona briefly looked ready to steal the ending by sweeping San Francisco, then gave the advantage back by losing twice to Colorado. Kansas City won its final two games, but the damage from its previous six losses was too large to overcome. Toronto finally ended a nine-game losing streak in its last game, an oddly appropriate closing note for the defending champion's fall from the bracket. The Yankees took the East, Cleveland won a third straight Central, Houston took the West, Los Angeles took the NL West and San Francisco's two-year division reign ended outside October.

THE STAKES The regular season is complete. Houston and the Yankees earn the American League byes; the Mets and Dodgers earn them in the National League. Cleveland hosts Boston, Seattle hosts Baltimore, St. Louis hosts Philadelphia and Atlanta hosts San Diego. The Mets enter October with a record thirty wins. St. Louis enters as a division champion at 19-21. Seattle won twenty-four games and still has to play a Wild Card series. Forty games have frozen every argument the regular season can answer. The defending champion Blue Jays and the defending NL champion Giants are both already out. The bracket now asks the only question that matters: who can keep winning when the records stop protecting anybody?

MLBC RECORD
NYM • 30-10

PERFECT WEEK
NYM / PHI • 4-0

DIVISION CLINCHERS
NYY / CLE / HOU /
STL / LAD

PLAYOFF FIELD
12 clubs remain

WEEKLY HONORS

HITTER OF THE WEEK

GOLD PETE ALONSO • NYM

3 HR • 7 RBI • *record-clinching walk-off*

SILVER BO JACKSON • KCR

3 HR • 7 RBI

BRONZE AARON JUDGE • NYY

2 HR • 6 RBI

PITCHER OF THE WEEK

GOLD JACOB deGROM • NYM

CG SHO • 2 H • 1 BB • 17 K

SILVER TYLER GLASNOW • TBR

CG SHO • 2 H • 2 BB • 12 K

BRONZE PAUL SKENES • PIT

CG SHO • 2 H • 0 BB

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL CARDS - 2024 - SEASON 3

MLBC — WILD CARD ROUND

GAMES 41-43 • BEST-OF-THREE

OCTOBER STARTS WITH WALK-OFFS

Two sweeps, two deciding games and three late swings turn the first round into instant October.

THE FIELD The Astros and Yankees waited with American League byes; the Mets and Dodgers waited in the National League. Cleveland hosted Boston with a year-old score to settle after the Red Sox swept the Guardians out of the Division Series the season before. Seattle hosted Baltimore with both teams eager to outdo the prior season. St. Louis hosted Philadelphia after the Cardinals lost four straight and the Phillies won four straight, and Atlanta hosted San Diego in a matchup of the NL's top two Wild Card seeds with Spencer Strider looking to carry the Braves. Eight clubs had spent forty games earning these matchups. Now every one of them needed two wins before the other side found them first.

THE ROUND Cleveland and Baltimore never needed Game #3. José Ramírez ended Boston's season with a 2-run walk-off HR in the 10th inning of Game #42, while Baltimore swept twenty-four-win Seattle on the road after Kyle Bradish opened the series with eight scoreless innings on one hit. The National League needed both deciders, but only one ended on a series-clinching walk-off. St. Louis forced Game #3 when Brendan Donovan hit a 2-out, 3-run walk-off HR in Game #42. Philadelphia answered the next day on the road: Bryce Harper tied the game, Ryan Howard's 8th-inning 2-run HR gave the Phillies the lead, and they finished a 4-2 win. Atlanta and San Diego went deeper. Fernando Tatis Jr. put the Padres ahead in the 12th, then Marcell Ozuna answered in the bottom half with the 2-out, 2-run walk-off HR that sent Atlanta through.

THE STAKES Cleveland goes to Yankee Stadium. Baltimore goes to Houston. Philadelphia goes to Los Angeles. Atlanta gets the assignment nobody wanted: the 30-win Mets. Seattle is gone after twenty-four victories. Boston is gone after returning from its early-season trouble to win twenty-three. The Cardinals survived a losing regular-season record only to watch Philadelphia take the decider on their field. October has already separated standings achievement from postseason survival. The four bye teams now enter against clubs that have already played with their seasons balanced on individual pitches.

SWEEPS CLE / BAL • 2-0	ROAD SHOCK BAL sweeps SEA	DECIDERS PHI / ATL • 2-1	WALK-OFFS Ramírez / Donovan / Ozuna
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ROUND RESULTS

AMERICAN LEAGUE CLE def. BOS, 2-0 <i>Ramírez: 10th-inning clincher in Game #2</i> BAL def. SEA, 2-0 <i>Bradish: 8 scoreless / 1 H in Game #1</i>	NATIONAL LEAGUE PHI def. STL, 2-1 <i>Howard: deciding 2-run HR in Game #3</i> ATL def. SDP, 2-1 <i>Ozuna: 12th-inning walk-off in Game #3</i>
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THREE SERIES GO THE DISTANCE

Houston escapes an 0-2 hole, New York survives Cleveland, Los Angeles outlasts Philadelphia and Atlanta removes the 30-win Mets.

THE FIELD The four bye teams entered with rest and home field. The 24-16 AL East champion Yankees drew the three-time AL Central champion Guardians. The 25-15 AL West champion Astros drew a hot Baltimore team coming off a sweep of the 24-win Mariners in Seattle. The 25-15 NL West champion Los Angeles Dodgers drew a surging Philadelphia Phillies seeking their 2nd title. The Mets, owners of the best regular season in league history, drew the streaking Atlanta Braves, coming off a dramatic series against the Padres. Their opponents had already advanced through the Wild Card round. Three series would require every possible game.

THE ROUND New York and Cleveland traded control until the Yankees buried Game #48, 8-1, behind two 2-run HR from Giancarlo Stanton. Houston faced the deeper crisis. Baltimore won both games in Houston, putting the Astros down 0-2, before Houston answered with two road wins and returned home to win the decider 3-2 when Jeff Bagwell broke a late tie with a solo HR. Los Angeles and Philadelphia turned their series into a string of late-inning ordeals, including an eighteen-inning game, before the Dodgers finally took Game #48, 3-2, on Mookie Betts's go-ahead RBI 1B. Atlanta authored the round's defining upset. New York won Game #44, but the Braves took the next three. In the clincher, Spencer Strider beat Jacob deGrom 3-1 after Chipper Jones supplied the decisive 2-run HR. Thirty regular-season wins had earned the Mets home field, a bye and history. They had not earned immunity.

THE STAKES The Mets are gone. So are Cleveland, Baltimore and Philadelphia. New York and Houston now meet in the ALCS, the matchup their regular-season records had been threatening to produce. Atlanta heads to Los Angeles after eliminating the league's most dominant team. The Dodgers arrive after surviving a five-game series in which almost nothing came easily. Four teams remain, and every one has already had its postseason identity tested. Houston has escaped 0-2. Atlanta has removed history. Los Angeles has survived repeated late-game danger. New York is about to discover that its greatest danger has not happened yet.

COMEBACK HOU • down 0-2	DECIDER NYY 8 • CLE 1	FOUR THRILLERS LAD / PHI • 4 late finishes	TOP SEED OUT ATL def. NYM • 3-1
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SERIES RESULTS

AMERICAN LEAGUE NYY def. CLE, 3-2 <i>Stanton: two 2-run HR in Game #5</i> HOU def. BAL, 3-2 <i>Astros win three straight after 0-2 hole</i>	NATIONAL LEAGUE LAD def. PHI, 3-2 <i>Betts drives in the Game #5 winner</i> ATL def. NYM, 3-1 <i>Strider wins the deGrom showdown</i>
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MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL CARDS - 2024 - SEASON 3

MLBC — CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES

GAMES 49-55 • BEST-OF-SEVEN

NEW YORK DOES THE IMPOSSIBLE

The Yankees climb out of a 3-0 ALCS hole while the Dodgers beat Atlanta in six to claim the other pennant.

THE MATCHUPS Houston arrived as the #1 seed after surviving an 0-2 Division Series hole, while New York entered the ALCS coming off an elimination-game win. Both teams carried the two strongest American League records, but the Astros immediately seized the series and built a 3-0 lead. One more loss would send the Yankees home. The NLCS paired Atlanta, fresh from an epic elimination of the 30-win Mets, against a Dodger club that had survived Philadelphia in another elimination game. One series appeared nearly finished. The other could not decide what shape it wanted.

THE ROUND New York refused its ending. Luis Severino delivered a 6-0 win in Game #52. Gerrit Cole and the bullpen followed with a 1-0 Game #53. A seven-run 3rd inning powered the Yankees to an 8-2 Game #54 win and forced the impossible seventh game. Game #55 became an MLBC classic. Aaron Judge homered in the 8th, Yordan Alvarez answered in the bottom half, and Giancarlo Stanton preserved the season by throwing Jeremy Peña out at home in the 10th. In the 12th, Judge homered again. Hideki Matsui followed with a 2-run HR. New York won 7-4 and became the first MLBC team to erase a 3-0 postseason-series deficit. Los Angeles took a less theatrical but equally demanding route. Atlanta tied the NLCS 2-2 with a walk-off. The Dodgers then won twice, and the clincher became pure pitching: Walker Buehler carried a 1-0 shutout into the 8th before Kenley Jansen finished it.

THE PENNANTS The Yankees are American League champions. The Dodgers are National League champions. New York reaches the World Series after four consecutive victories with no margin for error. Los Angeles arrives after Buehler and Jansen turned the final game into a one-run lock. The Yankees bring October's historic comeback and Aaron Judge's eight postseason HR. The Dodgers bring home field and a rotation that has repeatedly shortened games as the stakes increased. Season Three has produced its final matchup. One side arrives through resurrection. The other arrives through pitching control.

AL COMEBACK NYY • down 0-3	GAME #55 NYY 7 • HOU 4 / 12 inn.	NL PENNANT LAD • 4-2	CLINCHER LAD 1 • ATL 0
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LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

AMERICAN LEAGUE NEW YORK YANKEES <i>Won four straight after falling behind 0-3</i> Series seal <i>Judge: 2 HR; Matsui: 2-run HR in 12th</i>	NATIONAL LEAGUE LOS ANGELES DODGERS <i>Defeated Atlanta, 4-2</i> Series seal <i>Buehler / Jansen finish a 1-0 clincher</i>
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LOS ANGELES FINISHES ON TOP

The Dodgers survive a 2-1 deficit, win three straight and beat New York in six for the Season Three championship.

THE STAGE Two seasons prior the Los Angeles Dodgers missed the playoffs after weighty expectations, and now they owned home field in the World Series. The New York Yankees arrived carrying the emotional force of the first 0-3 comeback in MLBC postseason history. Gerrit Cole opened against Clayton Kershaw. Aaron Judge entered with eight postseason HR. The Dodgers countered with the deepest remaining rotation and a lineup that had repeatedly found just enough offense to survive. The first two games would split in Los Angeles, sending the World Series east tied 1-1.

THE SERIES New York struck first behind Cole, winning Game #56, 5-1. Los Angeles answered immediately and violently, beating the Yankees 10-1 behind Walker Buehler in Game #57. New York reclaimed the lead in Game #58, a 5-4 walk-off after Will Smith tied the game in the 9th and DJ LeMahieu ended it with an RBI 2B. The Yankees' Game #58 walk-off looked like the series' emotional turning point; instead it was their final win of the season. Clayton Kershaw led a brilliant 3-0 shutout in Game #59, and Walker Buehler dominated eight innings in a 7-1 Game #60 victory. Back in Los Angeles with a 3-2 series lead, Yoshinobu Yamamoto gave the Dodgers eight strong innings while Freddie Freeman, Justin Turner, Trea Turner and Max Muncy built an 8-2 advantage. Kenley Jansen closed the 9th, and the Yankee miracle postseason run ended with three straight Dodger victories.

THE CHAMPIONS Los Angeles wins the World Series 4-2. Walker Buehler is the official World Series MVP and Playoff MVP after finishing the postseason 5-0 with a 1.66 ERA. Trea Turner is the official World Series MVP runner-up. New York's run ends two victories short after rewriting the league's comeback history. The Dodgers leave with something simpler and ultimately more valuable: the last three wins. Once Los Angeles fell behind 2-1, its rotation allowed the series almost no room to breathe. By Game #61, the Dodgers were no longer surviving New York's momentum. They were dictating how Season Three would end. Los Angeles, you are the 2024 MLBC champions, forever.

SERIES	TURNING POINT	CLOSING RUN	CLINCHER
LAD def. NYY • 4-2	LAD wins Games 4-5 in NY	LAD • 3 straight	LAD 8 • NYY 2

WORLD SERIES HONORS

CHAMPIONSHIP LOS ANGELES DODGERS <i>2024 MLBC World Series Champions</i> SERIES RESULT <i>Defeated New York, 4-2</i>	OFFICIAL HONORS WORLD SERIES MVP • WALKER BUEHLER <i>2 wins • dominant Games #57 / #60</i> RUNNER-UP • TREA TURNER <i>Official MLBC Statbook runner-up</i>
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MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL CARDS - 2024 - SEASON 3

MLBC — SEASON IN REVIEW

2024 • SEASON THREE

THE SEASON LOS ANGELES COMPLETED

A 30-win record ruled the regular season. A historic comeback and a dominant Dodger rotation ruled October.

THE SEASON Season Three spent forty games orbiting the Mets. New York reached 10-2, 17-3 at the midpoint and finally 30-10, setting a new MLBC wins record. Houston and Los Angeles finished 25-15; the Yankees, Cleveland, Seattle and Atlanta all reached twenty-four wins. The year also produced one of the strangest division races in league history, with St. Louis winning the NL Central tiebreaker at 19-21. Eddie Murray won the AL MVP, Albert Pujols the NL MVP, Gerrit Cole the AL Cy Young and Spencer Strider the NL Cy Young.

THE TURN October immediately refused to honor the standings. Baltimore swept twenty-four-win Seattle, then took a 2-0 Division Series lead on Houston before the Astros won three straight. Atlanta removed the 30-win Mets in four games. The Yankees went far into danger, falling behind Houston 3-0 in the ALCS before winning four straight. Aaron Judge hit two HR in the deciding game, Hideki Matsui supplied the 12th-inning blow, and Giancarlo Stanton's throw home preserved the comeback. Los Angeles survived Philadelphia in five, beat Atlanta in six and reached the World Series with its greatest strength still intact: starting pitching.

THE LEGACY The Dodgers finished the story. After trailing New York 2-1 in the World Series, Los Angeles won Games #59, #60 and #61 and took the championship 4-2. Walker Buehler became the official Playoff MVP and World Series MVP, finishing October 5-0 with a 1.66 ERA; Aaron Judge was the official Playoff MVP runner-up and Trea Turner the official World Series MVP runner-up. The Mets supplied the regular season's historic number. The Yankees supplied October's historic comeback. Los Angeles supplied the final three wins. Season Three widened MLBC history in every direction, but the championship still reduced all of it to the oldest truth in baseball: somebody eventually has to get the last out. Los Angeles, you are the 2024 MLBC champions, forever.

AL MVP
EDDIE MURRAY

NL MVP
ALBERT PUJOLS

AL CY YOUNG
GERRIT COLE

NL CY YOUNG
SPENCER STRIDER

POSTSEASON HONORS

PLAYOFF AWARDS

PLAYOFF MVP • WALKER BUEHLER

LAD • official MLBC Statbook award

RUNNER-UP • AARON JUDGE

NYN • official MLBC Statbook runner-up

WORLD SERIES AWARDS

WORLD SERIES MVP • WALKER BUEHLER

LAD • official MLBC Statbook award

RUNNER-UP • TREYA TURNER

LAD • official MLBC Statbook runner-up

PENNANTS & CHAMPIONSHIP

AMERICAN LEAGUE CHAMPION
NEW YORK YANKEES

NATIONAL LEAGUE CHAMPION
LOS ANGELES DODGERS

2024 MLBC WORLD SERIES CHAMPION
LOS ANGELES DODGERS