

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 3 HR • 8 RBI • <i>Grand Slam</i> SILVER J.D. MARTINEZ • BOS 2 HR • 4 RBI • <i>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 CG SHO • 1 H SILVER JOHNNY CUETO • SFG CG SHO • 3 H BRONZE FÉLIX HERNÁNDEZ • SEA CG SHO • 5 H
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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 NYY • 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 • *division-clinching walk-off*

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 • *no-hitter into the 8th*

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