STADIUM & STREET

THE 2027 ROSTER PROJECT / HOUSTON ASTROS

The Astros must make the staff earn the outs

Buy control. Protect the lineup. Make every inning count.

81	-32	3
WINS	RUN MARGIN	COSTED PATHS

An independent review of the roster, defense, pitching, farm system and financial choices.

A preferred plan. Two tested alternatives. A clear account of what could go wrong.

Richard Brown | November 3, 2026

Completed 2026 regular season. Roster and market checks November 3.

Independent analysis. Proposed prices and workloads are scenarios.

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READING GUIDE

Start with the decision. Then test the evidence.

The opening brief states the recommendation and its price. The main analysis tests the roster and the alternatives. The back of the report preserves the player register, definitions and sources.

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A single public edition is suitable for forwarding. The analysis makes no claim of club affiliation or access to private baseball information.

ANALYSIS / 01

The decision

Houston scored 48 more runs in 2026 and allowed 101 more. That is the offseason in two numbers. Yordan Alvarez supplied an extraordinary offensive season, but a pitching staff that walked 650 batters kept giving opponents additional chances. The Astros need a more dependable route from the first pitch to the final out before another expensive hitter becomes the priority.

The preferred plan signs Nick Martinez for two years and $26-30 million and retains free agent Steven Okert for two years and $16-20 million. With a separate $6-8 million depth reserve, annual additions are $27-33 million. Martinez receives 30 starts and 165 innings; Okert receives 60 relief innings. Those are S&S negotiating ceilings and planning workloads. Neither agreement exists.

Plan B replaces Martinez with Sonny Gray at one year and $20-24 million. Annual additions rise to $34-42 million, while the shorter starter contract lowers total new commitment. Plan C buys neither pitcher and redistributes every inning internally. It is a complete roster scenario, but it exposes more young pitchers and uncertain recoveries to meaningful workloads.

The corrected existing-roster envelope is $229.18-233.18 million before additions, benefits or tax. Plan A reaches $256.18-266.18 million. The report assigns 6,200 plate appearances, 162 starts at each position and 1,440 pitching innings. Houston can spend less than the preferred plan, but the savings have specific consequences for who must pitch and how often.

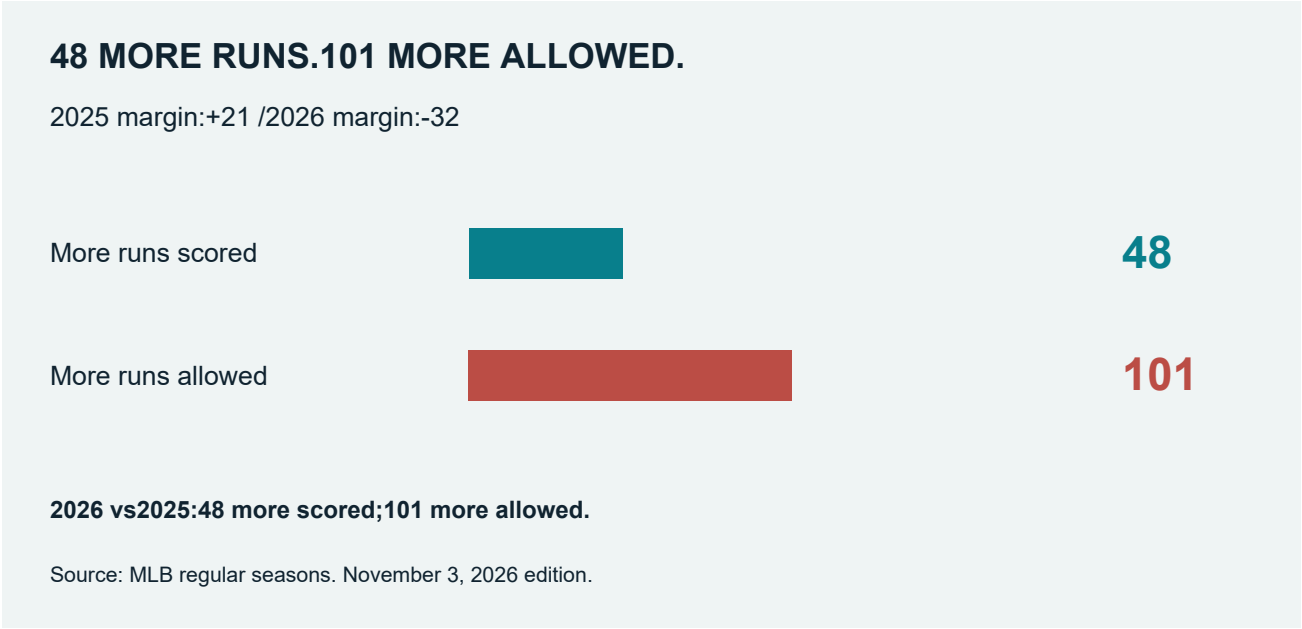
ANALYSIS / 02

A division winner with a narrowing margin

The Astros won 88 games in 2024, 87 in 2025 and 81 in 2026. Their run margin deteriorated from plus-91 to plus-21 to minus-32. The 2026 offense recovered from the previous season, raising team OPS from .714 to .732. Run prevention moved in the other direction, with team ERA increasing from 3.86 to 4.45. [1,2]

Season	Record	Runs for / against	Margin	OPS / ERA
2024	88-73	740 / 649	+91	.740 / 3.74
2025	87-75	686 / 665	+21	.714 / 3.86
2026	81-81	734 / 766	-32	.732 / 4.45

The postseason supplied little insulation from that trend. Chicago won the two Wild Card games in Houston: White Sox 6, Astros 3 on September 29 and White Sox 7, Astros 3 on September 30. Those are postseason results, kept separate from the regular-season tables and workload calculations. A two-game series cannot explain a whole roster, but it ended the season before Houston could resolve its deeper pitching problem. [3]



The relevant comparison is not whether one more timely hit could have changed a playoff game. It is whether the retained pitchers can reduce the sustained pressure created by walks and short starts. In 2026, starters supplied 774 2/3 innings with a 4.81 ERA. Relievers carried 662 1/3 innings with a 4.08 ERA. The proposed staff shifts more work into the rotation without assuming every recovering starter returns at full strength.

ANALYSIS / 03

Start with the actual roster

The dated official roster contains 39 names. November moves include the additions of Roddery Munoz and Cesar Salazar and the acquisition of Evan Reifert. The current team transaction account also resolves two incomplete API records: Jake Meyers elected free agency after being outrighted, and Ryan Weiss became a free agent after his option was declined. Neither is retained in the workload plan. [4,5]

Player / MLB ID	Latest relevant transaction	Treatment
Spencer Arrighetti / 681293	2026-09-28: Toronto Blue Jays recalled RHP Spencer Arrighetti from FCL Blue Jays.	No retained work; Okert separately proposed for purchase
Lance McCullers Jr. / 621121	2026-07-26: Milwaukee Brewers released RHP Lance McCullers Jr..	No retained work; Okert separately proposed for purchase
Bryan Abreu / 650556	2026-10-29: RHP Bryan Abreu elected free agency.	No retained work; Okert separately proposed for purchase
Enyel De Los Santos / 660853	2026-10-29: RHP Enyel De Los Santos elected free agency.	No retained work; Okert separately proposed for purchase
Steven Okert / 595345	2026-10-29: LHP Steven Okert elected free agency.	No retained work; Okert separately proposed for purchase
Daulton Varsho / 662139	2026-10-29: CF Daulton Varsho elected free agency.	No retained work; Okert separately proposed for purchase
Christian Vázquez / 543877	2026-10-29: C Christian Vázquez elected free agency.	No retained work; Okert separately proposed for purchase
LaMonte Wade Jr. / 664774	2026-10-29: 1B LaMonte Wade Jr. elected free agency.	No retained work; Okert separately proposed for purchase
Jake Meyers / 676694	2026-11-02: Official Astros injury/transactions page confirms free agency; correction to incomplete API record.	No retained work; Okert separately proposed for purchase
Ryan Weiss / 680802	2026-10-30: Official Astros injury/transactions page confirms free agency; correction to incomplete API record.	No retained work; Okert separately proposed for purchase
Nelson Velázquez / 676369	2026-10-27: Houston Astros released LF Nelson Velázquez.	No retained work; Okert separately proposed for purchase
Colton Gordon / 676467	2026-10-08: Milwaukee Brewers recalled LHP Colton Gordon from Biloxi Shuckers.	No retained work; Okert separately proposed for purchase
Jason Alexander / 669920	2026-10-02: RHP Jason Alexander elected free agency.	No retained work; Okert separately proposed for purchase
Dustin Harris / 687957	2026-08-24: San Diego Padres selected the contract of LF Dustin Harris from El Paso Chihuahuas.	No retained work; Okert separately proposed for purchase
Daniel Johnson / 669288	2026-08-07: Caliente de Durango activated CF Daniel Johnson from the reserve list.	No retained work; Okert separately proposed for purchase

Spencer Arrighetti was traded to Toronto during the season. Colton Gordon also moved to Milwaukee. Their Houston and Sugar Land innings remain part of the historical performance evidence, but they are unavailable as internal 2027 depth. Jason Alexander is a free agent. Dustin Harris and Daniel Johnson likewise cannot be carried forward merely because they appear in Houston's 2026 batting totals.

Okert is a proposed retention purchase, not a pitcher already under team control. The same distinction applies to Daulton Varsho and the other departing veterans considered later. Current organizational affiliation, an old team stat line and an executable contract are different things. Any signing or minor-league selection must fit the actual roster when it occurs; the 39-name snapshot is not a promise that a place will remain open.

ANALYSIS / 04

Alvarez is the foundation

Alvarez produced 42 home runs, 109 walks and a 1.033 OPS in 692 plate appearances. His .429 wOBA and .442 expected wOBA support the conclusion that this was elite offensive production, rather than a season built on fortunate placement of ordinary contact. The expected slugging figure was also above his actual result. [1,6]

Player / MLB ID	HOU PA	AVG / OBP / SLG	HR	BB / K
Yordan Alvarez / 670541	692	.316 / .432 / .601	42	109 / 120
Isaac Paredes / 670623	659	.262 / .360 / .447	25	71 / 88
Christian Walker / 572233	635	.226 / .299 / .427	29	51 / 147
Jose Altuve / 514888	573	.250 / .306 / .395	16	41 / 114
Cam Smith / 701358	568	.210 / .279 / .390	21	44 / 148
Jeremy Peña / 665161	483	.277 / .325 / .477	22	24 / 116
Yainer Diaz / 673237	361	.285 / .313 / .459	14	12 / 57
Taylor Trammell / 666211	289	.192 / .285 / .341	8	29 / 93
Christian Vázquez / 543877	266	.207 / .261 / .322	7	18 / 53
Brice Matthews / 694728	233	.201 / .255 / .332	7	16 / 74
Nick Allen / 669397	162	.283 / .327 / .393	3	10 / 32
Daulton Varsho / 662139	161	.172 / .224 / .311	5	10 / 36
Jake Meyers / 676694	153	.213 / .268 / .326	3	10 / 31
LaMonte Wade Jr. / 664774	146	.205 / .308 / .346	4	19 / 36
Carlos Correa / 621043	141	.279 / .369 / .418	3	18 / 26
Joey Loperfido / 694388	121	.214 / .311 / .330	1	14 / 32
Braden Shewmake / 669699	83	.256 / .272 / .423	3	2 / 13
Zach Dezenzo / 701305	82	.213 / .280 / .307	1	7 / 31

The planning challenge is that Houston cannot safely require another 692 plate appearances from its best hitter. Alvarez had only 199 in 2025. The preferred roster assigns 650 and protects much of his workload at designated hitter. It does not use his left-field availability as the solution to every other player's playing-time problem.

Isaac Paredes and Jeremy Pena give the lineup additional substance. Paredes combined 25 home runs with 71 walks and only 88 strikeouts. Pena hit 22 home runs with an .802 OPS in 483 plate appearances. Both provide a better starting point than a plan that depends on Walker and Altuve returning to their strongest previous seasons.

ANALYSIS / 05

The older core needs realistic jobs

Altuve's OPS fell from .789 in 2024 to .771 in 2025 and .701 in 2026. Walker moved from .803 to .718 to .726. These are full MLB seasons, not selectively chosen stretches. Walker still hit 29 home runs in 2026, but the power did not produce an all-around offensive season comparable to the best hitters on this roster. [1,2]

Hitter	2024 MLB PA / OPS	2025 MLB PA / OPS	2026 MLB PA / OPS
Yordan Alvarez	635 / .959	199 / .797	692 / 1.033
Isaac Paredes	641 / .739	438 / .810	659 / .807
Christian Walker	552 / .803	640 / .718	635 / .726
Jose Altuve	682 / .789	654 / .771	573 / .701
Cam Smith	No MLB season	493 / .670	568 / .669
Jeremy Peña	650 / .702	543 / .840	483 / .802
Yainer Diaz	619 / .766	567 / .701	361 / .772
Brice Matthews	No MLB season	47 / .674	233 / .587
Carlos Correa	367 / .905	584 / .734	141 / .787

The response should be a defined workload rather than a demand that the lineup keep the same familiar shape. Altuve receives 500 plate appearances and 105 starts at second base. Walker receives 550 plate appearances, 120 starts at first base and 15 at DH. That leaves room for Paredes and the younger players while retaining the contracts in the payroll calculation.

Correa receives 350 plate appearances, with 50 starts at third base, 25 at shortstop and five at DH. This is a deliberately limited planning role following ankle surgery. It gives Houston a way to use a productive Correa without displacing Pena for a full season or pretending that four veteran infielders can all receive uninterrupted everyday work.

ANALYSIS / 06

Contact quality sets the expectations

Expected statistics sharpen the argument against solving every problem through the veteran lineup. Altuve's .308 wOBA exceeded his .271 expected mark. Walker's .316 exceeded .305. Paredes also outperformed his expected figure, .355 to .323, although his plate discipline provides a separate source of value. These gaps are evidence to investigate, not automatic amounts to subtract from next year's production. [6]

Full MLB season	wOBA	xwOBA	SLG / xSLG
Yordan Alvarez	0.429	0.442	0.602 / 0.636
Isaac Paredes	0.355	0.323	0.447 / 0.373
Christian Walker	0.316	0.305	0.427 / 0.396
Jose Altuve	0.308	0.271	0.395 / 0.325
Cam Smith	0.293	0.316	0.390 / 0.420
Jeremy Peña	0.347	0.326	0.477 / 0.431
Yainer Diaz	0.334	0.312	0.459 / 0.416
Taylor Trammell	0.280	0.283	0.341 / 0.360
Christian Vázquez	0.258	0.233	0.322 / 0.267
Brice Matthews	0.260	0.261	0.332 / 0.338
Nick Allen	0.316	0.246	0.393 / 0.273
Daulton Varsho	0.281	0.283	0.355 / 0.354
Jake Meyers	0.265	0.256	0.326 / 0.316
LaMonte Wade Jr.	0.296	0.268	0.346 / 0.286
Carlos Correa	0.347	0.364	0.418 / 0.459
Joey Loperfido	0.287	0.294	0.330 / 0.334
Braden Shewmake	0.296	0.294	0.424 / 0.411
Zach Dezenzo	0.262	0.248	0.303 / 0.294

Cam Smith presents a different case. His .293 wOBA trailed a .316 expected mark, and his .390 slugging percentage trailed .420 expected slugging. He also supplied 21 home runs. Houston should preserve the opportunity for improvement while asking why similar headline OPS results in 2025 and 2026 have not yet turned better contact into broader production.

The smaller samples deserve even less certainty. Lucas Spence's .826 Houston OPS came in 63 plate appearances, while his expected wOBA was below the actual result. Zach Cole's brief MLB line points the opposite way. Neither sample settles an everyday job. Both belong in a competition with a specified amount of opportunity and a practical replacement route.

ANALYSIS / 07

Handedness should change the lineup selectively

The table uses full-season MLB splits so traded players are not represented by only their Houston stretch. The useful question is whether a split can improve a particular assignment, not whether every left-handed or right-handed hitter should become a platoon player. The smaller samples should carry less influence than the overall record. [7]

Batter / full MLB season	LHP PA / OPS	RHP PA / OPS
Yordan Alvarez	184 / .825	508 / 1.114
Isaac Paredes	159 / .779	500 / .815
Christian Walker	145 / .769	490 / .714
Jose Altuve	138 / .793	435 / .672
Cam Smith	147 / .670	421 / .668
Jeremy Peña	113 / .690	370 / .836
Yainer Diaz	96 / .806	265 / .760
Brice Matthews	86 / .611	147 / .572
Carlos Correa	48 / 1.099	93 / .636
Taylor Trammell	43 / .376	246 / .669
Cedric Mullins	119 / .565	383 / .647
Trent Grisham	136 / .691	348 / .708
Kyle Higashioka	54 / .841	132 / .610

Alvarez remains a central hitter against either side. Houston should not reduce his opportunities merely to create a tidy platoon chart. The more useful decisions involve the final outfield places, backup catching and how frequently Altuve, Correa and Walker rest. A lineup can gain value by making those choices deliberately while keeping its best hitters in their primary jobs.

The same discipline applies to external candidates. Grisham's on-base profile, Mullins' range and Higashioka's catching experience solve different problems. None becomes the preferred acquisition simply because his handedness fits an empty box. The price, actual position, displaced innings and quality of the internal replacement must all agree.

ANALYSIS / 08

Range is an independent problem

Houston has several reasons to protect the pitching staff with better range. Altuve recorded minus-nine Outs Above Average in 2026 after minus-five in 2025 and minus-nine in 2024. Pena moved from plus-eight in 2025 to minus-six in 2026. One reversal does not establish a permanent decline, but it makes an automatic defensive rebound an unsafe foundation for the staff plan. [8]

Fielder	2024 OAA	2025 OAA	2026 OAA	2026 opportunities
Jose Altuve	-9	-5	-9	398
Jeremy Peña	-2	+8	-6	371
Carlos Correa	+4	+0	+1	97
Isaac Paredes	-1	-4	-2	423
Christian Walker	+13	+2	+3	408
Cam Smith	No row	+1	+6	338
Brice Matthews	No row	+0	+6	167
Jorge Barrosa	+1	+4	+6	128
Taylor Trammell	-1	+1	+0	192
Yordan Alvarez	-7	-1	-3	44
Zach Cole	No row	-1	+0	40
Trent Grisham	+2	-2	-6	280
Cedric Mullins	+2	+4	+11	342
Daulton Varsho	+15	+9	+7	345

Smith and Matthews each recorded plus-six OAA. Matthews' 167 opportunities were far fewer than Smith's 338, and his work covered multiple positions. Barrosa's plus-six came in 128 opportunities across his full MLB season. That is useful evidence for a defensive role, not proof that either player can sustain the same rate over an entire season in center field.

Walker remained positive at first base. Moving him freely around the diamond would sacrifice a defined contribution to solve an unrelated playing-time problem. Paredes and Correa should share the corners and shortstop relief within a coherent arrangement, while Matthews supplies genuine second-base flexibility. The defensive plan has to be workable before any run-prevention improvement is entered into the argument.

ANALYSIS / 09

Center field is a development choice

The principal plan allocates 85 center-field starts to Matthews, 55 to Barrosa and 22 to Trammell. Matthews started 32 Houston games there in 2026 and ten at second base. Barrosa had only three Houston center-field innings, so the full-season range number must not be described as a large Astros center-field sample. [8,9]

Fielder	2026 HOU position	Starts / innings
Jorge Barrosa	LF	3 / 32.0
Jorge Barrosa	CF	0 / 3.0
Carlos Correa	SS	20 / 180.1
Brice Matthews	2B	10 / 109.0
Brice Matthews	LF	14 / 143.0
Brice Matthews	CF	32 / 270.0
Isaac Paredes	1B	5 / 58.0
Isaac Paredes	2B	3 / 25.0
Cam Smith	CF	0 / 2.0
Jose Altuve	2B	127 / 1061.2
Cam Smith	RF	139 / 1259.2
Isaac Paredes	3B	135 / 1167.0
Carlos Correa	3B	12 / 92.0
Jorge Barrosa	RF	0 / 2.0
Brice Matthews	3B	0 / 9.0

This is the largest everyday-position risk in the preferred roster. Matthews hit .587 OPS in 233 plate appearances, while Barrosa's full MLB season produced a .616 OPS in 174. Their gloves can help, but Houston would be accepting a weak offensive floor at an important position. The benefit is preserving money for the staff and receiving a meaningful evaluation of players already controlled.

The alternative is explicit. A 500-plate-appearance, 145-start center fielder displaces 300 plate appearances and 85 starts from Matthews, 150 and 55 from Barrosa, and 50 and five from Trammell. The additional purchase cannot be presented as free improvement while those internal players retain their original workloads.

ANALYSIS / 10

Catching requires more than a batting line

Yainer Diaz hit .772 OPS with 14 home runs in 361 plate appearances. His offensive contribution should not obscure the receiving evidence: minus-4.18 framing runs and minus-5.17 total catching runs in the full-season Statcast records. The categories are related and should not be added as separate penalties. [1,8]

Catcher	2026 HOU catching IP	Full MLB framing	Full MLB catching value
Yainer Diaz	694.0	-4.18	-5.17
César Salazar	62.0	+0.96	Unknown
Collin Price	28.0	+0.29	Unknown
Kyle Higashioka	No HOU sample	-1.70	Unknown

The main plan gives Diaz 110 catching starts and 500 total plate appearances. Salazar takes 32 starts, Price 20. Salazar's positive framing result came in a limited sample; Price's was smaller still. Their recent Sugar Land performance is more informative about batting depth than their combined 35 MLB plate appearances, but it does not guarantee major-league receiving or offense.

Higashioka is a priced contingency at one year and $3-4 million, with 180 plate appearances and 45 catching starts. He replaces 100 plate appearances and 25 starts from Salazar and 80 and 20 from Price. His own 2026 framing figure was negative, so this would be an experience and depth purchase, not a demonstrated receiving upgrade. The money is additional to the depth reserve.

ANALYSIS / 11

The rotation must reduce free bases

The staff's 650 walks represented 4.07 per nine innings over 1,437 innings. Starters issued 378 walks in 774 2/3 innings; relievers issued 272 in 662 1/3. More strikes alone will not solve every matchup, but this much traffic makes it difficult to preserve starters' pitch counts, control innings and keep the bullpen in favorable roles. [1,2]

Pitcher / MLB ID	GS / HOU IP	ERA / full MLB xERA	K / BB / HR	Planning treatment
Hunter Brown / 686613	20 / 107.1	3.19 / 3.32	124 / 55 / 11	28 starts/155 IP
Peter Lambert / 663567	29 / 155.2	3.82 / 3.70	154 / 59 / 17	28/150
Hayden Wesneski / 669713	11 / 61.0	3.25 / 3.81	46 / 20 / 4	24/130; recovery/workload review
Cristian Javier / 664299	12 / 63.0	5.14 / 4.76	59 / 28 / 10	18/95

Pitcher / MLB ID	GS / HOU IP	ERA / full MLB xERA	K / BB / HR	Planning treatment
Tatsuya Imai / 837227	15 / 76.2	4.93 / 4.60	97 / 51 / 9	18/95; command requirement
Mike Burrows / 681347	17 / 94.2	5.99 / 4.82	75 / 35 / 21	8/40; medical review
Miguel Ullola / 699044	2 / 16.2	2.16 / 2.49	16 / 5 / 2	4/20 plus 25 relief
Ethan Pecko / 814490	5 / 34.1	3.93 / 4.42	23 / 14 / 5	4/20 plus 30 relief
Ronel Blanco / 669854	5 / 33.2	6.68 / 4.89	29 / 16 / 9	No principal innings; recovery depth
Brandon Walter / 687888	0 / 0	No MLB sample / No row	0 / 0 / 0	No principal innings; TJ recovery
Spencer Arrighetti / 681293	17 / 88.0	4.60 / 5.30	87 / 50 / 12	Traded to Toronto; zero retained
Lance McCullers Jr. / 621121	8 / 39.1	6.86 / 4.60	43 / 22 / 7	Departed; zero retained

Brown remains the best retained starting foundation, with a 3.19 ERA and 3.32 xERA in 107 1/3 innings. Lambert supplied 155 2/3 innings with a 3.82 ERA and 3.70 xERA. The plan asks for 155 and 150 innings respectively, rather than treating Brown's shorter season as proof of 200-inning availability or Lambert's strong year as an unlimited workload.

Javier, Imai and Burrows require distinct scrutiny. Imai walked 51 batters in 76 2/3 innings. Burrows allowed 21 home runs in 94 2/3. Javier finished with a 5.14 ERA and 4.76 xERA. Their salaries and potential are reasons to work on the problems, not evidence that the problems have already been corrected.

ANALYSIS / 12

Build a bullpen with usable middle innings

Hader's 1.01 ERA and 1.93 xERA in 44 2/3 innings supplied a dominant result over a limited workload. The plan uses 55 innings and retains a medical review of his biceps history. It does not require him to absorb an entire departed reliever's workload on top of his own. [1,6,10]

Pitcher	HOU IP	ERA / full MLB xERA	K / BB	Treatment
Josh Hader	44.2	1.01 / 1.93	55 / 15	55 IP; biceps history requires review
AJ Blubaugh	96.0	3.66 / 4.27	94 / 42	85 relief IP
Bryan King	60.2	5.19 / 4.09	51 / 23	60 IP
Bennett Sousa	30.0	6.00 / 4.15	32 / 18	45 IP
Kai-Wei Teng	73.2	4.76 / 4.95	73 / 33	65 IP; multi-inning role
Alimber Santa	15.1	1.17 / 2.97	9 / 6	40 IP
Logan VanWey	12.2	1.42 / 2.70	9 / 1	40 IP

Pitcher	HOU IP	ERA / full MLB xERA	K / BB	Treatment
Roddery Muñoz	4.0	15.75 / 9.40	6 / 6	25 IP; small MLB sample
Steven Okert	67.2	2.13 / 3.13	68 / 14	Free agent; proposed 60 IP
Bryan Abreu	62.2	3.73 / 4.12	80 / 41	Free agent; no retained IP
Enyel De Los Santos	71.1	4.79 / 3.42	67 / 20	Free agent; no retained IP

Blubaugh is important because he can cover more than three outs. His 96 innings included 42 walks, however, and the 3.66 ERA was below his 4.27 xERA. King and Sousa also need careful interpretation: both had expected ERAs below their actual results, but that does not make every difficult inning a product of bad luck. The next staff needs improvement in execution and role selection.

Reifert adds strikeout potential, having struck out 81 in 58 Durham innings. He also walked 34. A 2.48 Triple-A ERA is not sufficient evidence to assign him immediate high-leverage MLB work. His 40-inning principal role is an opportunity with a command condition. Santa and VanWey likewise receive useful work without their very small MLB samples being projected as established full-season performance.

ANALYSIS / 13

Health belongs in the workload calculation

The dated team update lists Correa after ankle tendon repair, Loperfido after hip surgery and Walter after Tommy John surgery. Burrows had elbow neuritis and shoulder inflammation; the current account says he was available by the postseason. These are dated recovery facts, not an examination or a guarantee of future availability. [10]

Loperfido and Walter receive no principal workload. Blanco also remains outside the main pitching allocation. Their salaries or roster positions are not removed to make the plan appear cheaper. A successful return would create a genuine choice about who loses playing time, rather than an extra layer of production added to an already complete season.

Wesneski receives 130 innings after 61 MLB innings in 2026. That is an aggressive progression requiring current medical and workload judgment. Brown, Javier, Imai, Burrows and Hader also need current review. The combined failure case removes Javier and Imai after the no-purchase plan, then reallocates all 40 starts and 210 innings. Individual hitter contingencies remain separate; several concurrent absences would require a fresh lineup rather than mechanically adding every branch together.

ANALYSIS / 14

The farm can supply choices, not a complete rescue

The upper-minors evidence is mixed. Spence had a .748 OPS at Sugar Land and .804 at Corpus Christi before his brief Houston success. Price produced .758 at Triple-A, Salazar .778, and Ferreras .837. Those are usable development signals with different ages, positions and sample sizes, not interchangeable projections of MLB offense. [11,12]

Player / MLB ID	2026 team-level sample	Readiness decision
Collin Price / 805672	AAA Sugar Land: 364 PA, .758 OPS; 51 BB / 104 K	150 PA/22 starts; catching review
César Salazar / 663967	AAA Sugar Land: 222 PA, .778 OPS; 31 BB / 36 K	160 PA/32 C starts
Lucas Spence / 828599	AAA Sugar Land: 214 PA, .748 OPS; 31 BB / 56 K	300 PA/65 LF starts; modest MLB sample
Zach Cole / 805904	AAA Sugar Land: 252 PA, .655 OPS; 23 BB / 99 K	80 PA and corner depth
Zach Dezenzo / 701305	AAA Sugar Land: 235 PA, .723 OPS; 40 BB / 49 K	100 PA; corners
Pascanel Ferreras / 814299	AAA Sugar Land: 307 PA, .837 OPS; 20 BB / 75 K	SS/2B depth after selection
Shay Whitcomb / 694376	AAA Sugar Land: 320 PA, .758 OPS; 27 BB / 83 K	No main PA; corner reserve
Jason Schiavone / 828395	AA Corpus Christi: 339 PA, .785 OPS; 49 BB / 112 K	AA sample; no principal MLB PA
Walker Janek / 801075	AA Corpus Christi: 243 PA, .643 OPS; 15 BB / 84 K	AA development, no rushed MLB assignment
Josh Hendrickson / 681973	AAA Sugar Land: 113.2 IP, 4.75 ERA; 106 K / 27 BB	Internal-plan 4 starts/25 IP
Miguel Ullola / 699044	AAA Sugar Land: 66.1 IP, 4.21 ERA; 90 K / 42 BB	45 total MLB IP; command review
Ethan Pecko / 814490	AAA Sugar Land: 74.2 IP, 4.94 ERA; 71 K / 28 BB	50 total MLB IP
Bryce Mayer / 809343	AA Corpus Christi: 69.0 IP, 2.61 ERA; 100 K / 34 BB	Combined failure reserve;25 IP
Jackson Nezuh / 694545	AAA Sugar Land: 37.2 IP, 3.58 ERA; 44 K / 24 BB	Emergency innings, no main IP
Evan Reifert / 682126	AAA Durham: 58.0 IP, 2.48 ERA; 81 K / 34 BB	40 MLB relief IP; walks constrain role

The pitching depth has similar tradeoffs. Ullola struck out 90 in 66 1/3 Sugar Land innings but walked 42. Hendrickson offered 113 2/3 innings and 27 walks, with a 4.75 ERA. Mayer's 2.61 Corpus Christi ERA and 100 strikeouts in 69 innings support an emergency development path, while his additional Triple-A work must also be considered before promotion.

Janek and Schiavone remain development cases rather than automatic answers to the MLB catching problem. Neyens, Hughes and Radel occupy longer-horizon prospect slots. The preferred plan does not bring them forward to satisfy a numerical shortage in 2027. Promoting a player should follow demonstrated readiness and an actual job, not the need to make a roster spreadsheet balance.

ANALYSIS / 15

Correct the contractual starting point

The payroll source's 2027 guaranteed-contract headline omits the exercised Imai and Paredes options. Adding $18 million and $13.35 million raises the eight-contract allocation to $183.417 million. The Paredes top-ten MVP mutual-option provision remains a release-date check, with award voting still pending. [13,14,15]

Player / MLB ID	2027 allocation	Basis
Carlos Correa / 621043	$31.833M	30.5 base +1.333 bonus allocation; credits below
Jose Altuve / 514888	$33.000M	30 base +3 bonus allocation
Christian Walker / 572233	$20.000M	Final guaranteed year 2027
Yordan Alvarez / 670541	$26.833M	26 base +0.833 bonus allocation
Josh Hader / 623352	$19.000M	Through 2028
Tatsuya Imai / 837227	$18.000M	2027 exercised;2028 option separate
Cristian Javier / 664299	$21.400M	21 base +0.4 bonus allocation; final 2027
Isaac Paredes / 670623	$13.350M	Exercised option; top 10 MVP mutual-option condition pending
TOTAL	$183.417M	Allocation, not cash or tax AAV

These amounts are annual allocations. Correa's figure includes a prorated bonus, and the separate credits include the corresponding offset plus $10 million from Minnesota. Altuve and Alvarez also have bonus allocations. Treating the displayed allocation as the exact amount of checks written during the calendar year would mix different accounting bases.

Walker and Javier reach the end of their guaranteed terms after 2027. Imai's later option is separate from his now-retained 2027 season. Those future decisions affect flexibility, but they do not reduce today's requirement to fund the roster. A possible trade also creates no usable savings until there is an actual counterparty, salary allocation and acceptable return.

ANALYSIS / 16

Arbitration and the full roster cost

Nine retained arbitration estimates total $38.6 million. Paredes' exercised option replaces his earlier arbitration estimate, and Meyers' departure removes him from the retained arbitration group. The estimates are not agreements. Blanco's salary remains included despite the absence of a principal workload. [13,16]

Player	Estimate, $M	Treatment
Peter Lambert	4.60	Unsigned estimate; retained salary even with zero main workload
Jeremy Pena	13.10	Unsigned estimate; retained salary even with zero main workload
Hunter Brown	6.80	Unsigned estimate; retained salary even with zero main workload
Yainer Diaz	6.30	Unsigned estimate; retained salary even with zero main workload
Hayden Wesneski	1.80	Unsigned estimate; retained salary even with zero main workload
Nick Allen	1.80	Unsigned estimate; retained salary even with zero main workload
Bennett Sousa	1.30	Unsigned estimate; retained salary even with zero main workload
Taylor Trammell	1.50	Unsigned estimate; retained salary even with zero main workload
Ronel Blanco	1.40	Unsigned estimate; retained salary even with zero main workload
TOTAL	38.60	Nine retained estimates; Paredes option replaces estimate; Meyers departed

Component	Annual allocation	Definition
Eight contracts	$183.417M	Includes 31.35M in exercised options
Arbitration estimates	$38.6M	Unsigned; no assumed non-tender savings
Correa credits	-$11.333M	10M Minnesota payment and 1.333M bonus offset
Weiss buyout	$0.5M	Declined option
Pre-arb, minors, callups	$18-22M	S&S pool;2027 minimum and costs unresolved
Existing-roster envelope	$229.18-233.18M	Benefits and tax excluded
RR 2027 headline	$179.833M	Omits 31.35M options and complete roster pool
RR 2026 player estimate	$239.898M	Historical estimate, not an approved budget

Component	Annual allocation	Definition
2028 guaranteed net	$78.833M	90.167M allocations less 11.333M credits;18M Imai option additional

The bridge adds an $18-22 million pool for pre-arbitration players, minor-league depth and callups, plus the identifiable Weiss buyout, then applies the Correa credits. It produces $229.18-233.18 million before acquisitions. Benefits, tax, cash timing and any future collective-bargaining changes require separate treatment. The assumed roster pool is not a claim that the 2027 minimum salary is already known.

The prior-year player-payroll estimate of approximately $239.90 million gives scale, not permission. Plan A would exceed it. Houston therefore faces a real decision: authorize a higher proposed allocation, remove salary through a justified transaction, or accept the additional internal workload. This report credits none of those possibilities before it occurs.

ANALYSIS / 17

Compare the jobs before repeating the names

Martinez is preferred because 26 walks in 180 innings directly address Houston's traffic problem. His 109 strikeouts and 3.98 xERA also explain the limit on the bid. The 3.10 ERA is not the only figure in the evaluation. He replaces the additional starts otherwise assigned to Burrows, Ullola, Pecko and Hendrickson, plus small increases for four retained starters. [1,6,17]

Candidate / MLB ID	Full 2026 MLB evidence	S&S decision
Nick Martinez / 607259	180.0 IP, 3.10 ERA, 3.98 xERA; 109 K/26 BB	A:2/$26-30M;30 starts/165 IP
Steven Okert / 595345	67.2 IP, 2.13 ERA, 3.13 xERA; 68 K/14 BB	A/B retention:2/$16-20M;60 relief IP
Sonny Gray / 543243	169.0 IP, 2.72 ERA, 3.87 xERA; 149 K/46 BB	B:1/$20-24M;30/165 replaces Martinez
Foster Griffin / 656492	172.2 IP, 3.60 ERA, 4.35 xERA; 158 K/45 BB	Alternative 2/$28-32M; same 30/165, not additive
Tyler Mahle / 641816	149.0 IP, 3.99 ERA, 3.95 xERA; 137 K/46 BB	Alternative 2/$28-32M;149 IP in 2026
Michael Soroka / 647336	116.0 IP, 3.41 ERA, 4.12 xERA; 114 K/29 BB	1/$8-10M;116 IP, insufficient one-for-one volume
Taylor Clarke / 664199	73.0 IP, 2.96 ERA, 4.42 xERA; 45 K/14 BB	1/$4-6M fallback for 60 IP;4.42 xERA limits bid
Raisel Iglesias / 628452	60.0 IP, 2.55 ERA, 3.50 xERA; 64 K/17 BB	Costlier late-inning alternative; no main purchase
Daulton Varsho / 662139	526 PA, .636 OPS, 12 HR; 0.281/0.283 wOBA/xwOBA	Conditional return inquiry 1/$8-10M;500 PA replaces internal CF work
Cedric Mullins / 656775	502 PA, .628 OPS, 15 HR; 0.281/0.264 wOBA/xwOBA	Alternative 1/$8-10M;500 PA CF, weak contact value

Candidate / MLB ID	Full 2026 MLB evidence	S&S decision
Trent Grisham / 663757	484 PA, .703 OPS, 18 HR; 0.311/0.337 wOBA/xwOBA	2/$18-22M;500 PA alternative, not a range upgrade
Kyle Higashioka / 543309	186 PA, .676 OPS, 7 HR; 0.303/0.295 wOBA/xwOBA	1/$3-4M;180 PA/45 C starts if internal catchers fail
Harrison Bader / 664056	111 PA, .556 OPS, 5 HR; 0.238/0.272 wOBA/xwOBA	SF contract; no assumed free-agent availability
Randal Grichuk / 545341	280 PA, .880 OPS, 15 HR; 0.37/0.335 wOBA/xwOBA	1/$6-8M; corner platoon, does not solve CF

The same $26-30 million two-year ceiling appears in other S&S dossiers. Here it purchases a control-oriented 165-inning role. Washington's broader rotation construction and Detroit's alternative-starter job are different contexts, and neither proposal reserves Martinez for Houston. Griffin at $28-32 million is a distinct alternative with more strikeouts and a higher walk total, rather than a second signing added to Plan A.

Okert's $16-20 million two-year ceiling matches the recent Detroit and Washington planning basis. Houston's job is retention of 60 relief innings after other departures. The earlier Kansas City inquiry used $8-10 million for one year. Similar annual spending does not make the commitments equivalent: the second year is a real additional risk. Clarke is cheaper but comes with a 4.42 xERA, which argues against pricing him as interchangeable late-inning production.

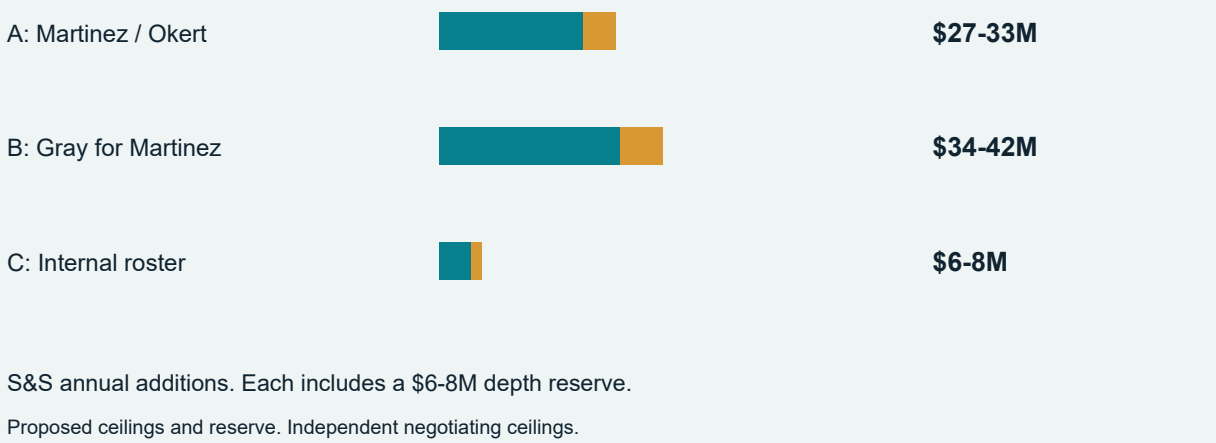
ANALYSIS / 18

Three funded plans and optional upgrades

Plan A's $27-33 million annual additions combine Martinez at $13-15 million per year, Okert at $8-10 million and the $6-8 million reserve. Total new commitment, including that one-year reserve, is $48-58 million. Plan B uses Gray at $20-24 million for one year, producing $34-42 million annual additions and $42-52 million total commitment. Plan C uses only the reserve. [18]

Plan	Annual additions	Total allocation	New commitment
A: Martinez / Okert	$27-33M	$256.18-266.18M	$48-58M
B: Gray for Martinez	$34-42M	$263.18-275.18M	$42-52M
C: Internal roster	$6-8M	$235.18-241.18M	$6-8M

THREE ANNUAL SPENDING PLANS



S&S annual additions. Each includes a $6-8M depth reserve.

Proposed ceilings and reserve. Independent negotiating ceilings.

The center-field inquiry is separately funded. Varsho or Mullins at one year and $8-10 million raises Plan A's annual additions to $35-43 million and its total allocation to $264.18-276.18 million. Grisham at two years and $18-22 million instead raises annual additions to $36-44 million and the total allocation to $265.18-277.18 million. None of these purchases is hidden inside the depth reserve.

Mullins brings the strongest recent OAA result of those three, but his .264 expected wOBA is a major offensive concern. Grisham's .337 expected wOBA offers a different argument, alongside minus-six OAA. Varsho's range helps, while his Houston and full-season batting lines justify a strict price limit. A qualifying offer, changed medical evidence or a more expensive market must be priced before an agreement, not appended afterward to an already strained budget.

ANALYSIS / 19

A full season of plate appearances

The 6,200-plate-appearance allocation is a season-long plan. It includes callups and substitutions rather than claiming that eighteen hitters fit on the Opening Day roster. It also avoids counting a full season for every veteran and prospect who could plausibly contribute. The amount of work assigned is the first constraint on any production argument.

Hitter	PA	Condition
Yainer Diaz	500	Health and performance; Correa limited to 350; Loperfido zero principal PA
Cesar Salazar	160	Health and performance; Correa limited to 350; Loperfido zero principal PA
Collin Price	150	Health and performance; Correa limited to 350; Loperfido zero principal PA
Christian Walker	550	Health and performance; Correa limited to 350; Loperfido zero principal PA
Yordan Alvarez	650	Health and performance; Correa limited to 350; Loperfido zero principal PA
Jose Altuve	500	Health and performance; Correa limited to 350; Loperfido zero principal PA

Hitter	PA	Condition
Isaac Paredes	600	Health and performance; Correa limited to 350; Loperfido zero principal PA
Jeremy Pena	580	Health and performance; Correa limited to 350; Loperfido zero principal PA
Carlos Correa	350	Health and performance; Correa limited to 350; Loperfido zero principal PA
Cam Smith	550	Health and performance; Correa limited to 350; Loperfido zero principal PA
Brice Matthews	450	Health and performance; Correa limited to 350; Loperfido zero principal PA
Jorge Barrosa	300	Health and performance; Correa limited to 350; Loperfido zero principal PA
Taylor Trammell	250	Health and performance; Correa limited to 350; Loperfido zero principal PA
Lucas Spence	300	Health and performance; Correa limited to 350; Loperfido zero principal PA
Zach Dezenzo	100	Health and performance; Correa limited to 350; Loperfido zero principal PA
Zach Cole	80	Health and performance; Correa limited to 350; Loperfido zero principal PA
Nick Allen	80	Health and performance; Correa limited to 350; Loperfido zero principal PA
Raynel Delgado	50	Health and performance; Correa limited to 350; Loperfido zero principal PA
TOTAL	6200	Full season allocation, not Opening Day roster

Pos.	162-start allocation	Condition
C	Diaz 110; Salazar 32; Price 20	Season plan; current health and defensive reviews required
1B	Walker 120; Paredes 35; Diaz 5; Price 2	Season plan; current health and defensive reviews required
2B	Altuve 105; Matthews 40; Allen 17	Season plan; current health and defensive reviews required
3B	Paredes 100; Correa 50; Dezenzo 12	Season plan; current health and defensive reviews required
SS	Pena 137; Correa 25	Season plan; current health and defensive reviews required
LF	Spence 65; Trammell 40; Alvarez 30; Cole 15; Dezenzo 12	Season plan; current health and defensive reviews required
CF	Matthews 85; Barrosa 55; Trammell 22	Season plan; current health and defensive reviews required
RF	Smith 135; Barrosa 15; Cole 12	Season plan; current health and defensive reviews required
DH	Alvarez 115; Altuve 10; Walker 15; Diaz 10; Paredes 5; Correa 5; Smith 2	Season plan; current health and defensive reviews required

The infield balance is deliberate. Paredes gets 100 starts at third base and 35 at first; Correa gets 50 and 25 at third and short; Altuve gets 105 at second, with Matthews taking 40. Alvarez receives 115 DH starts and 30 in left. Walker keeps first base as his primary job. Each position totals 162 starts, and no individual receives more than 162.

There is a cost to this arrangement: Correa's expensive contract receives a reduced role, and the outfield asks young hitters to improve. A trade could eventually change the allocation, but an unspecified salary dump is not a roster plan. Until an acceptable transaction exists, the analysis should show the actual crowding and the choices it imposes.

ANALYSIS / 20

A full season of pitching

The preferred rotation supplies 870 innings across 162 starts, an average of 5.37 innings per start. Relievers receive the remaining 570 innings. This is a planning total of 1,440, not a prediction of precisely how many innings Houston will play; home losses, extra innings and shortened games affect actual totals. [18]

Pitcher	GS / IP	Condition
Hunter Brown	28 / 155	Health, workload and command review
Peter Lambert	28 / 150	Health, workload and command review
Nick Martinez	30 / 165	Proposed signing and medical review
Hayden Wesneski	24 / 130	Health, workload and command review
Cristian Javier	18 / 95	Health, workload and command review
Tatsuya Imai	18 / 95	Health, workload and command review
Mike Burrows	8 / 40	Health, workload and command review
Miguel Ullola	4 / 20	Health, workload and command review
Ethan Pecko	4 / 20	Health, workload and command review
TOTAL	162 /870	No principal innings from Blanco or Walter

Pitcher	IP	Condition
Josh Hader	55	Combined starting/relief workloads checked
Steven Okert	60	Proposed retention; current medical review
AJ Blubaugh	85	Combined starting/relief workloads checked
Bryan King	60	Combined starting/relief workloads checked
Bennett Sousa	45	Combined starting/relief workloads checked
Evan Reifert	40	Combined starting/relief workloads checked
Kai-Wei Teng	65	Combined starting/relief workloads checked
Alimber Santa	40	Combined starting/relief workloads checked
Logan VanWey	40	Combined starting/relief workloads checked
Roddery Munoz	25	Combined starting/relief workloads checked

Pitcher	IP	Condition
Miguel Ullola	25	Combined starting/relief workloads checked
Ethan Pecko	30	Combined starting/relief workloads checked
TOTAL	570	870 starting +570 relief =1,440 IP

Ullola's 20 starting innings and 25 relief innings are combined into a 45-inning MLB assignment. Pecko's 20 and 30 combine to 50. Blubaugh's 85 relief innings acknowledge an established multi-inning role without silently adding starts. These distinctions matter because the same prospect cannot be counted as a full rotation replacement and a full bullpen solution simultaneously.

The principal workload already asks for progression from several pitchers. Its value comes from reducing the size of those asks through one dependable external starter, not eliminating all development risk. If Martinez's price rises beyond the ceiling, Houston should compare the Gray branch and internal plan with current evidence instead of pretending that any available veteran supplies the same innings at the same quality.

ANALYSIS / 21

What happens when the plan fails

The internal plan redistributes all of Martinez's 30 starts and 165 innings and all 60 of Okert's relief innings. It preserves the same total season and payroll obligations. The combined no-purchase, no-Javier, no-Imai case then replaces a further 40 starts and 210 innings, using Brown, Wesneski, Burrows, Ullola, Pecko, Hendrickson and Mayer. [18]

Change from A	Removed workload	Named replacement
B: Gray for Martinez	30 starts/165 IP	Gray takes same workload; higher annual, shorter commitment
C: no Martinez	30 starts/165 IP	Lambert+2/10; Wesneski+2/10; Javier+2/10; Imai+2/10; Burrows+8/45; Ullola+6/35; Pecko+4/20; Hendrickson+4/25
C: no Okert	60 relief IP	King,Sousa,Reifert,Santa,VanWey,Teng +10 each
No Javier or Imai after C	40 starts/210 IP	Brown+2/10; Wesneski+4/20; Burrows+8/40; Ullola+8/40; Pecko+8/40; Hendrickson+6/35; Mayer+4/25
No Hader	55 relief IP	Blubaugh,King,Sousa,Santa,VanWey +10 each; Munoz+5
No Correa	350 PA;50 3B/25 SS/5 DH	Dezenzo+150PA/30 3B; Paredes+50/20 3B; Allen+100/25 SS; Delgado+50/5 DH
No Diaz	500 PA;110 C/5 1B/10 DH	Salazar+250PA/60 C; Price+250/50 C/5 1B/10 DH
No Alvarez	650 PA;30 LF/115 DH	Spence+150PA/30 LF; Paredes+50/15 DH; Walker+100/20 DH; Altuve+100/25 DH; Correa+100/25 DH; Diaz+100/25 DH; Price+50/5 DH
Conditional CF signing	500 PA;145 CF starts	Matthews -300PA/85 CF; Barrosa -150/55 CF; Trammell -50/5 CF; Varsho or Mullins replaces exactly;8-10M extra funded
Grisham alternative	Same 500 PA/145 CF	9-11M annual,18-22M commitment; range tradeoff explicit

Change from A	Removed workload	Named replacement
Conditional Higashioka	180 PA/45 C starts	Salazar -100PA/25 C; Price -80/20 C;3-4M extra, not charged to reserve
Multiple hitter failures	Combined replanning required	Individual branches not automatically additive; selection and workloads require review

The combined test balances numerically, but its competitive implications are severe. Burrows, Ullola and Pecko would take much larger roles, and Mayer would need a major-league opportunity before one has been assumed in the principal plan. The scenario demonstrates the dependence on depth. It does not demonstrate that the substitutes would match the removed pitchers' performance.

The Correa, Diaz and Alvarez branches also name the removed plate appearances and starts. They are individual tests. Several simultaneous hitter failures would alter both the workload limits and the defensive arrangement, especially at catcher and shortstop. At that point, Houston would need a new combined roster and a newly priced acquisition decision rather than a stack of incompatible optimistic assumptions.

ANALYSIS / 22

The scale of improvement

Houston went 39-42 at home and 42-39 away. It scored 344 runs at home and 390 on the road, while allowing 375 and 391. These are observed splits, not a park-adjusted estimate of true talent. The road offense's stronger result is another reason to avoid explaining the entire season through a general claim about the home ballpark. [19]

Split	Record	Runs for / against	OPS / ERA
Home	39-42	344 /375	.721 /4.37
Road	42-39	390 /391	.744 /4.54

Illustration, not forecast	RS / RA	Margin	Simple run-ratio wins
2026 baseline	734 / 766	-32	77.5
Another 50 runs allowed	734 / 816	-82	72.5
Prevent 40 runs	734 / 726	+8	81.9
Score 20 more; prevent 40	754 / 726	+28	84.1
Alvarez loss illustration	674 / 766	-92	70.7

The sensitivity table uses the simple formula 162 times runs scored squared divided by the sum of runs scored squared and runs allowed squared. It shows the scale of possible changes, not a forecast or a price-to-wins conversion. Preventing 40 runs would materially alter the team's underlying margin. Losing a large amount of Alvarez's offense would move the same calculation sharply in the other direction.

Track walks, starter length, range and young-player usage alongside the record. April wins alone will not show whether those weaknesses have improved.

ANALYSIS / 23

The recommendation and dated roster

Randy Flores was introduced as general manager on November 2, with the managerial appointment still pending in the dated source. The roster recommendation does not depend on inventing a future manager's preferences. It depends on the existing contracts, the young players' actual opportunities and a staff that needs fewer walks and more dependable starts. [20]

Approve the Martinez and Okert negotiating ranges only if ownership accepts the corrected total allocation. Keep the Gray branch available as a different annual-cost and commitment decision. Preserve an explicit center-field inquiry, but do not quietly spend that money before deciding which internal development opportunity it replaces. Keep Loperfido, Walter and Blanco outside the principal workload until their individual cases support more.

Player / MLB ID	Pos.	Snapshot treatment
AJ Blubaugh / 805123	P	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Alimber Santa / 695001	P	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Bennett Sousa / 656986	P	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Brandon Walter / 687888	P	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Brice Matthews / 694728	CF	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Bryan King / 687911	P	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Cam Smith / 701358	RF	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Carlos Correa / 621043	SS	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Christian Walker / 572233	1B	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Collin Price / 805672	C	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Cristian Javier / 664299	P	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
César Salazar / 663967	C	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Ethan Pecko / 814490	P	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Evan Reifert / 682126	P	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation

Player / MLB ID	Pos.	Snapshot treatment
Hayden Wesneski / 669713	P	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Hunter Brown / 686613	P	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Isaac Paredes / 670623	3B	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Jeremy Peña / 665161	SS	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Joey Loperfido / 694388	LF	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Jorge Barrosa / 678489	CF	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Jose Altuve / 514888	2B	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Josh Hader / 623352	P	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Josh Hendrickson / 681973	P	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Kai-Wei Teng / 678906	P	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Logan VanWey / 701121	P	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Lucas Spence / 828599	CF	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Miguel Ullola / 699044	P	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Mike Burrows / 681347	P	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Nick Allen / 669397	SS	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Peter Lambert / 663567	P	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Raynel Delgado / 669384	2B	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Roddery Muñoz / 682610	P	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Ronel Blanco / 669854	P	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Tatsuya Imai / 837227	P	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Taylor Trammell / 666211	LF	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation

Player / MLB ID	Pos.	Snapshot treatment
Yainer Diaz / 673237	C	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Yordan Alvarez / 670541	DH	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Zach Cole / 805904	LF	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation
Zach Dezenzo / 701305	LF	39 names; any addition requires action-time roster reconciliation

The roster and market evidence is dated November 3, 2026. The November 3 review reconciles named-player status, observed options, unsigned arbitration estimates, medical reporting and competing candidate roles. The current recommendation is to buy control and usable innings, make the veteran infield fit honestly, and give the young outfield a defined test. Houston's next contender needs a more reliable pitching foundation beneath its best hitter.

[1] MLB: Astros regular-season statistics

Completed2024-26 seasons; club and full-league files saved separately.

Open source

[2] MLB: full-league statistics

Team totals and rankings; innings use outs rather than decimal arithmetic.

Open source

[3] MLB: Astros completed game log

162 regular-season finals; two Wild Card finals kept separate.

Open source

[4] MLB: dated Astros roster

39 current names; organizational minors checked separately.

Open source

[5] MLB: Astros transactions

Individual histories and current team update reconcile free agency and trades.

Open source

[6] Baseball Savant: expected statistics

2024-26 batter and pitcher files; full MLB season measures.

Open source

[7] MLB: handedness splits

Individual full-season splits also saved.

Open source

[8] Baseball Savant: defensive values

Three-year OAA, opportunities, catcher framing and fielding run value saved separately; overlapping measures not added.

Open source

[9] MLB: Astros fielding

Position-specific starts and innings; Barrosa full MLB fielding checked separately.

Open source

[10] MLB: Astros injuries and roster changes

Dated recovery evidence; Burrows return-year typo not propagated; administrative activation is not medical clearance.

Open source

[11] MLB: Sugar Land statistics

AAA batting, pitching, fielding and roster records. Durham Reifert record separately saved.

Open source

[12] MLB: Corpus Christi statistics

AA records and additional levels; current Pipeline list used for longer-horizon prospects.

Open source

[13] FanGraphs RosterResource: Astros payroll

Allocations, bonus offsets, Minnesota payment and arbitration aggregate.31.35M exercised options added to headline.

Open source

[14] MLB: Imai contract decision

2027 salary18M retained.

Open source

[15] MLB: Paredes option

13.35M exercise with MVP mutual-option condition.

Open source

[16] MLB Trade Rumors arbitration estimates

Nine retained estimates sum38.6M after Paredes option and Meyers departure.

Open source

[17] MLB: current free-agent and option register

Candidate histories reconciled individually; proposed acquisition is not ownership or market consent.

Open source

[18] Stadium & Street: cross-club analysis series

Cross-club comparisons by exact job, displaced workload, price ceiling and internal alternative. Shared candidates are competing scenarios.

Open source

[19] MLB: Astros home-road splits

Observed results, not park-adjusted projections.

Open source

[20] MLB: Flores introduction

November2 introduction; managerial selection pending at source date.

Open source

Research, roster and candidate checks were completed November 3, 2026. Individual source dates and statistical periods are preserved above.