



# 2026 SEASON PREVIEW



# STAR POWER

**ROMAN ANTHONY**  
**A RARE COMBINATION OF TALENT AND MATURITY**

**CORA: RED SOX 'READY TO GO'**

**OFFSEASON FOCUS: ARMS**

**2026 SCHEDULE**

GREG M. COOPER/Associated Press



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# Cora, for now, must lead 2026 Red Sox

**Bill Burt**



The Boston Red Sox lost more than a third baseman, a Top 25 slugger and oodles of big-time

postseason experience when Alex Bregman signed his free agent deal with the Chicago Cubs.

They lost their leader.

Crazy. A new guy comes to town, to a big market franchise, and immediately, at least until June 15 when Rafael Devers was dealt away to the San Francisco Giants, becomes “The Guy.”

It started in spring training and became official, official when Devers was sent across the country.

Because of their roster, laden with five potential starters all 25 years old or younger, establishing a leader in the clubhouse was crucial.

Bregman not only embraced it, he all but bear-hugged his role on the Red Sox. His conversations with the younger players, be it in the batting cages, running drills, fielding balls during batting practice or the clubhouse, bordered on epic.

“Just talking baseball, getting inside his head ... I

**March/April**

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
				CIN 4:10		CIN 4:10
CIN 1:40	HOU 8:10	HOU 8:10	HOU 2:10		SD 2:10	SD 4:10
SD 1:35	MIL 6:45	MIL 6:45	MIL 1:35		STL 8:15	STL 7:15
STL 2:15	MIN 7:40	MIN 7:40	MIN 1:40		DET 7:10	DET 4:00
DET 1:35	DET 11:10 AM	NYN 6:45	NYN 6:45	NYN 6:10	BAL 7:05	BAL 4:05
BAL 1:35	TOR 7:07	TOR 7:07	TOR 3:07			

**May**

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					HOU 7:10	HOU 4:10
HOU 1:35	DET 6:40	DET 6:40	DET 6:40	TB 7:10	TB 4:10	TB 4:10
TB 1:35		PHI 6:45	PHI 6:45	PHI 6:45	ATL 7:15	ATL 7:15
ATL 1:35	KC 7:40	KC 7:40	KC 7:40	MIN 7:10	MIN 4:10	
MIN 1:35	ATL 6:45	ATL 6:45	ATL 4:10	CLE 7:10	CLE 4:10	
CLE 1:40						

**June**

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		BAL 6:45	BAL 6:45	BAL 1:35	NYN 7:05	NYN 7:35
NYN 1:35	TB 6:40	TB 6:40	TB 1:10		TEX 7:10	TEX 4:10
TEX 7:20		TOR 6:45	TOR 6:45	TOR 1:35	SEA 10:10	SEA 10:10
SEA 4:10	COL 6:40	COL 6:40	COL 3:10	NYN 7:10	NYN 7:10	NYN 1:10
NYN 7:20	WSH 7:10	WSH 7:10				

**July**

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			WSH 1:35		LAA 9:30	LAA 9:30
LAA 9:30		CWS 7:40	CWS 7:40	CWS 2:10	NYM 7:10	NYM 4:10
NYM 1:40	★ ALL-STAR BREAK ★				TB 7:10	TB 4:10
TB 1:35	BAL 7:10	BAL 7:10	BAL 7:10		TOR 7:10	TOR 4:10
TOR 1:35	ATH 9:40	ATH 9:40	ATH 9:40	ATH 9:40	LAD 10:10	

**August**

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
						LAD 9:10
LAD 7:20		CWS 7:10	CWS 7:10	CWS 7:10	ATH 7:10	ATH 4:10
ATH 1:35	TOR 7:07	TOR 7:07	TOR 7:07	TOR 3:07	PIT 6:40	PIT 4:40
PIT 1:35	AZ 7:10	AZ 7:10	AZ 6:40		SF 7:10	SF 5:10
SF 3:10	MIA 6:40	MIA 6:40	MIA 6:40		NYN 7:05	NYN 7:15
NYN 1:35	SEA 6:45					

**September**

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		SEA 6:45	SEA 6:45	BAL 6:35	BAL 7:05	BAL 7:15
BAL 1:35	LAA 1:35	LAA 6:45	LAA 6:45		KC 7:10	KC 4:10
KC 1:35		TEX 8:05	TEX 8:05	TEX 8:05	TB 7:10	TB 4:10
TB 1:40		CLE 6:45	CLE 7:10	CLE 6:45	CHC 7:10	CHC 7:15
CHC 3:05						

■ Home □ Away

never experienced anything like it,” said then-rookie Roman Anthony. “We’d be next to each other watching (during live at bats) and he predicted almost every pitch that was coming,” Anthony said. “I love being around him. He’s so intelligent about this sport.”

Trevor Story is a candidate, having four years of service here and a former

all-star who had a big rebound season in 2025 – 157 games played, .263 ave., 25 HRs, 96 RBI, 31 SBs – after three injury-riddled seasons.

But Story’s injury history may have him balking a bit. And he lost a best friend when Bregman left as the duo was together often off the field too.

Which brings us to the

elephant in the room.

How about Alex Cora being the leader of the team?

While teams led by coaches might work more in football, due to the control needed and complexities involved, every great baseball team has a great player or two leading it.

Cora is beloved and respected by his players. Very few in that sport can

work a franchise, top to bottom, like Cora can.

Because of the combination of being born and raised in Puerto Rico and attending college at the University of Miami to improve his baseball stock, he can communicate and, more importantly, relate to nearly all players in the sport.

A 14-year veteran as a player, his baseball acumen

is also elite, spending about a four seasons as an everyday player and the rest as a utility star. He has experienced almost every possibility on the baseball diamond and he has the wherewithal to find a way to get more out of his players.

Cora’s role today sort of reminds me of Joe Torre in the early days of his Yankees run when he took over in 1996, with a rookie named Derek Jeter at shortstop, winning the first of four World Series that year.

In due time, Jeter, Jorge Posada and Bernie Williams, among others, were able to run their clubhouse as the dynasty took hold.

I asked Cora about the possibility of Roman Anthony, who turns 22 on May 13, if he was ready to lead a championship major league team (see our cover story).

Let me put it this way: he didn’t say no.

Cora has two years remaining on the three-year, \$21 million extension he signed at the 2024 All-Star break in July, putting him among the top three managers in salary.

Well, he’s got a good team, potentially a very good team, and he will have to earn it more now than ever.

You can email Bill Burt at [bburt@northofboston.com](mailto:bburt@northofboston.com).

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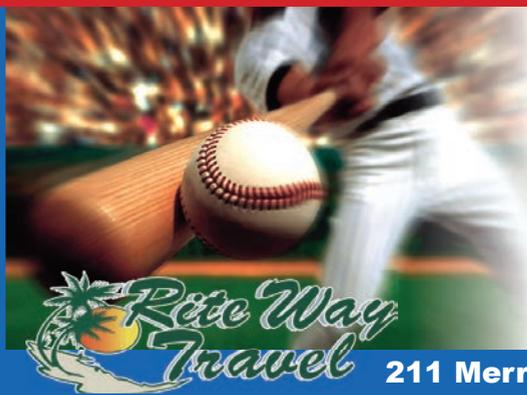
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# ROMAN'S EMPIRE

## Bigger than big expectations for Red Sox youngster

By Bill Burt

bburt@northofboston.com

Red Sox president of baseball operations Craig Breslow had the resources – salary cap and prospects – to find a much-needed big bopper/30-homer guy.

And as luck would have it a few were available with two names, Pete Alonso and Kyle Schwarber – in that order – appearing to be the best options.

But Breslow and his minions, apparently kicking the tires on both with offers, decided to pass for whatever reason be it age, years and/or defense.

While the Red Sox did add a formidable hitter/starter via a trade with the St. Louis Cardinals for Wilson Contreras, a 20-homer guy in five of his last six full seasons (not including the 2020 Covid season), they may have sent a message.

They are betting on 21-year-old Roman Anthony. And betting big.

And as of right now, coming off an MVP-caliber performance for Team USA – being awarded David Ortiz's first "My Dawg" T-shirt after the 2-1 semi-final win in the WBC over the Dominican Republic, it might be a safe bet.

Is Anthony going to have a breakout sophomore campaign after hitting eight homers in 71 games before losing the last month and postseason due to an oblique injury?

Good question.

While he may not club 30-plus homers, there are few people in the sport that doubt his presence in the Red Sox lineup.

"He's going to be a star in

this sport, I have no doubt," said Alex Bregman, Anthony's former Red Sox teammate. "He's different, so mature as a player and hitter for his age. From the first time I met him until now, he's improved so much every day he's been here."

That was last July.

A few weeks ago while taking batting practice before a Team USA game – Bregman and Anthony, an injury replacement chosen by manager Mark DeRosa, were teammates again – the former Sox third baseman took it a step further.

"Roman is like a brother to me. I loved playing with him last year," said Bregman. "He is, hands-down, going to be a superstar in this league. Offensively, it's electric; the power from line to line. The plate discipline's crazy. He's a good defender as well; runs the bases well."

"He's a smart player. He's not afraid to fail. And that's difficult for a lot of young players in this game," he added. "He's gonna be one of the best players for a long time."

The Red Sox committed to Anthony early last August with an eight-year, \$130 million deal which could max out to \$230 million if he's an annual MVP candidate, like Bregman predicts.

So basically saving the Red Sox from paying \$150 million to a slugger who will complete their contract in their late to mid-30s, the Red Sox doubled down their bet on Anthony by letting his actions on the field play out.

New Red Sox third baseman Caleb Durbin only played a few weeks and a few spring training games



STEPHANIE SCARBROUGH

Roman Anthony watches a home run against the Baltimore Orioles last August.

with Anthony, but already noticed what he had heard.

"Just seeing him in the batting cages is different," said Durbin. "The ball just explodes off his bat; everything is 100 (mph)-plus; everything. It's pretty impressive."

While several noted baseball computer "experts" have predicted Anthony will hit just under 20 homers, based on his experience, eyesight is another barometer that has people predicting much, much more in his power category in 2026.

Two ESPN baseball "experts" had Anthony

topping 30 and 40 homers respectively, considering the mini-shows he put on for Team USA in the World Baseball Classic.

"I'm not really focused on numbers," said Anthony. "My goal is to help (the Red Sox) win games ... hopefully a lot of them."

Anthony has already been penciled in as the Red Sox leadoff hitter, at least to the start the season, with short-stop Trevor Story slated to bat second and Jarren Duran in the three-hole.

While he appears to have more pop for most leadoff hitters, his ability to get on

base – he had 40 walks in 71 games last year, elite for a rookie – makes it a decent place for him to start his first full season.

His plate discipline is what has impressed most baseball people, particularly at this level and for his relative inexperience as a professional.

Cora pinpointed an eight-pitch bat against then-Twins closer Johan Duran in which Anthony ripped a 3-2 single to right center of a 3-3 game to give the Red Sox the lead in the top of ninth, later to lose in the bottom of the inning.

"When he was playing we were one of the best offenses in the league," said Red Sox manager Alex Cora in a podcast in January. "That's the reality of it ... Righties, lefties ... the home run in Yankee Stadium, the guy is legit."

"The way he controls the strike zone; very similar to Juan Soto, when he came," said Cora, "without the flare."

That's wild.

As for batting first, Anthony has accepted that plan.

"Felt really comfortable at leadoff last year," Anthony said after it was announced by Cora that he would open the season batting first in the Red Sox lineup. "If that's what (Alex Cora) feels like, is just the best chance to win, then I'm all in. Ultimately I'll do whatever the team needs me to do to win."

Getting on base, especially early in games is one thing, leading the Red Sox at age 21 – he turns 22 on May 13 – on and possibly off the field is another.

With veterans like Contreras and Story having been part of leadership groups for their respective franchises before this season, there could be a leadership void.

Could be ... unless "the kid" is ready for that role, too.

"We saw him a few years ago when he used to come here and just talk baseball and wants to keep getting better, and nothing has changed except his bank account.

"He's obviously young," said Cora. "But the way he talks a game? Yeah. He loves the game. He talks game, he understands it. So, you know, why not?"

# Arms over home runs

## Sox top offseason focus was pitching

By Bill Burt

› [bburt@northofboston.com](mailto:bburt@northofboston.com)

The Boston Red Sox were expected to make some big splashes this offseason.

Two key “wants” among the Fenway Faithful were home runs (see Pete Alonso) and a return of their leader (Alex Bregman).

Combined, the duo, or some facsimile thereof, would cost the team about \$300 million.

Fine. Do it. Let’s have some fun.

Not so fast.

Instead, Red Sox President of Baseball Operations, Craig Breslow shifted.

While he didn’t necessarily spend the \$300 million – not even close – he definitely moved the microscope for 2026.

To pitching.

While the Red Sox pitching staff, rotation and bullpen included, was among the major league leaders in ERA – fifth overall, 3.70 – other metrics weren’t to its liking, including 10th in total runs allowed and 16th overall in strikeouts.

There was pitching depth, particularly starters, most were decent with high ceilings as potential top of the rotation guys.

The two “kids” (see Page S10) were thought to be possibilities, but not in Boston.

And rather than hoist Brayan Bello into a top of the rotation role before he was officially ready, and after some disappointing season and early postseason exits, Red Sox brass needed certitude.



The Red Sox big-money acquisition this winter was former Philadelphia Phillies left-hander Ranger Suarez.

The money and prospects available that many of us predicted were meant for the likes of Alonso and Bregman instead went to the pitching mound.

Enter Ranger Suarez, Sonny Gray and Johan Oviedo, the three newest entries to the Red Sox starting rotation.

Suarez got most of Alonso’s money – five years, \$130 million – and Gray picked up a partial chunk expected what Bregman was to get.

With Gray and Suarez appearing to be in the running to follow ace Garrett Crochet – manager Alex Cora named Gray to start the season at No. 2 – and Oviedo as talented a No. 5 starter, the Red Sox strength starts and end with its rotation.

Beyond that potentially elite group, the Red Sox have Kutter Crawford and Patrick Sandoval returning from

injury. Connelly Early and Payton Tolle, both of whom will start in AAA, give the Red Sox a very good bench when injuries arrive ... and they always do.

Breslow’s focus on run prevention emphasizes pitching depth, elite defense, and a contact-oriented offense – baseball computers don’t have any Red Sox players hitting 20-plus HRs – rather than high home run numbers.

The last four Red Sox World Series wins, not coincidentally had some high-powered offenses – see David Ortiz, Manny Ramirez & Co. – had high-end pitching staffs, particularly at the top of their rotations.

While most of the iconic parts of Fenway Park – The Green Monster, Ted Williams red seat and the Pesky Pole – have connotations related to offense, pitching is where the Red Sox are paying and betting.



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# ALEX CORA UNPLUGGED!

## Sox manager 'It's not my team, it's our team!'

By Bill Burt

» [bburt@northofboston.com](mailto:bburt@northofboston.com)

(Editor's note: Bill Burt had a one-on-one interview with Red Sox manager Alex Cora in Lakeland, Fla. talking about this year, expectations, some of his top players and of course living and working in Red Sox Nation.)

**Q: A year ago, I think I said you finally had your team, with legit expectations of competing for not only a playoff spot but a World Series ring. What about this year, with a few changes?**

**Cora:** "It's not my team, it's our team. We made some decisions based on what benefited the organization, and we lived with that. And that's the reality of it. But I think the offseason was a good one. I know everybody was down for what happened that Saturday during Fan Fest (when it was announced Alex Bregman had signed with the Cubs), but then that week we pivot, and we got a good pitcher in Ranger Suarez. We made a great trade with the Brewers, I believe, and ironic enough, we have a more complete team now than what we had last year at the end of the season, which is good. It's refreshing, and we are just ready to go."

**Q: Can you talk about the mix of veterans and younger players, some of whom are established?**

**Cora:** "I do believe that there's conversations that are player-driven, and should be that way in this game. There's the coaches; we do our good job. We've tried to put them in situations to be successful, and we help them to keep growing. But there's nothing better than (Aroldis) Chapman talking to (Luis) Guerrero right now. Chapman



DAVID J. PHILLIP/AP photo

**Red Sox manager Alex Cora is heading into 2026 with the team he wants and, he believes, Red Sox fans will want to follow.**

talking too (Connelly) Early, because he's lived it. And for how much experience I have as a manager, as a player, it's a different ball game now. They're the ones that have experienced it the last five or six years, and it's always good to have that relationship. It is a nice mix. But we won't know how nice until the real games begin."

**Q: What does having a true ace in Garrett Crochet, who can not only lead a rotation but take the ball in Game 1 of a World Series and you expect to win ... against anybody?**

**Cora:** "We're talking (Tarik) Skubal; we're talking Crochet; we're talking (Gerit) Cole. The expectations are up there, and he's still young, which is a great thing. What I appreciate is he wants to keep learning. As far the player and the ability to get people out? He's one of the best pitchers in the game. The good ones, they expect to be great. They don't want to be good. And that's what we got last year.

"He wanted to be part of a winning organization, a big market team, and be 'The Guy.' That was the thing he wanted. And one trade, he got it right away. Then obviously he made a commitment, or it was a commitment by both sides, that he was going to be here for a while. And the reasons, all of the above, like the leader, the preparation, the discipline — that's what comes with it. You cannot be lazy if you sign \$150 million to \$200 million contract. You have to lead by example. You have to be the voice in that clubhouse. And in that trade, we got it all. And he proved it."

**Q: Was adding pitching depth, in the top of the rotation and bullpen, the most important factor this offseason?**

**Cora:** "It's a good pitching staff. We still are trying to find out who the next wave is, because, as you know, people get hurt. I think as far as the rotation, we're



BILL BURT PHOTO

**Two proud Puerto Ricans, Hall of Famer Carlos Beltran and Red Sox manager Alex Cora. Beltran is GM of the Puerto Rican team in the World Baseball Classic.**

deep enough that if somebody goes down, we're going to have quality arms in Triple-A. We still try and figure out 'Who's the next guy?' If something happens at the big-league level with the relievers, who's going to come in and do the job? Again, on paper it looks better than ever here, at least over recent years. But we will see."

**Q: A year ago it was three "kids" — Roman Anthony, Marcelo Mayer and Kristian Campbell — and this year you have two young pitchers, Connelly Early and Payton Tolle, in that that category. From experience last year, how do you work those rookies in?**

**Cora:** "We play in a in a bubble, that everybody put these kids on a pedestal right away. I get it. Fans are excited. And this happened before, with guys like Dustin Pedroia and Jacoby Ellsbury (in 2007). There's been stories that didn't work out right, and we have to be very careful how we set the bar for them. But they're very talented. Last year's guys and Tolle and Early. Everyone's path is different. Look at last year's group. But at the end, the cool thing about them is they want

to get better. Their will to win is there, which is very important."

**Q: You've gone out of your way this spring, without being prompted, talking about defense. Why?**

**Cora:** "We sucked the last four years. We've been leading the league in errors four years in a row, or whatever it is. That's not acceptable. So we talking more about defense. We just got to keep working at it. We got some pitchers that are going to make the opposition hit the ball on the ground and we have to turn ground balls into outs. It's not lack of work the last few years or lack of message, we just haven't executed. So we'll know when we get to Cincinnati and see how it goes."

**Q: One veteran who doesn't get a lot of chatter is Trevor Story, who played 157 games last year, tying a career high. Can you talk about your expectations for Story?**

**Cora:** "When he's healthy and playing his game, we are a better team. Last year was his first healthy offseason since we signed him. He's had some bad luck with injuries, but what impressed me the most was the way he finished up last year. He finished strong. He's a great player and great hitter. He was able to do things in the cage last year that he was unable to do for like two and a half years. He's also made some great plays in the field; that diving play against the Yankees (in spring training) was great to see. That was the same play he hurt his shoulder in 2024. I expect big things from Trevor. And I'm happy for him."

**Q: I know he was here only a few weeks before he was added to Team USA in the WBC. What strikes you about him entering his second season?**

**Cora:** "Roman is taking his job very seriously, which is no different than last year and really all of the times we've seen him in the organization. We envision the same guy. Remember, we were one of the best offenses in the league when he was in the lineup. We have decided to start the season with him leading off. He was good in that spot last year. Everybody knows how good he is and how good he can be."

**Q: Can you talk about living and working in Boston, having experienced it as a World Champion as a player and manager?**

**Cora:** "Every day is full of energy. The expectations are similar to what I expect from myself when I get up in the morning, not only on the field, but off the field with the family. It's cool. What people don't understand is Boston is not a big city. It's not. New York City is really big. What I love about it is that it has a small town vibe."

**Q: As for the expectations, it really is 'big city' isn't it?**

**Cora:** "Absolutely. It's like New York with the Yankees. We know the history of the franchises, the willingness to not accept the high expectations. A bad season is a bad season. A good season is when you win the World Series. Anything less is a problem. I'm OK with that mentality. I believe it too."

"Both fan bases are tough. They both demand winning championships. I got a lot of friends our Yankee fans; some of them are happy about the offseason, some of their upset, just like our fans. But at the end of the day, you know they're in the dance; just get into dance and then see what happens. We like our team ... our team!"

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# New Kids On The Block II

## Rookie Red Sox pitching duo enjoying ride ... together

By Bill Burt

bburt@northofboston.com

Where have we seen this before, a few of the Boston Red Sox top prospects walking around the team's Fort Myers, Fla. complex like best buddies in a candy store?

Well, how about a year ago, when Roman Anthony, Marcelo Mayer and Kristian Campbell, all top-five Red Sox prospects, roaming around the facility, mostly together, with ear to ear grins.

The 2026 version, Payton Tolle and Connelly Early, are a tad different. Both pitchers. And both left-handed.

Like the trio from a year ago, they have been together

for two years, oftentimes roommates.

Tolle, in most rankings, is the No. 1 Red Sox prospect and Early is No. 3. Both have "top of the rotation" talent, according to the experts that rank them.

In another, mid-major city, one or both may have been penciled into a 2026 starting rotation based on their end of the season performance last fall.

But in Boston, which added three starting pitchers – one via free agency, Ranger Suarez; and two via trade, Sonny Gray and Johan Oviedo – there is no waiting on "the kids." and both will start their 2026 seasons in Triple-A Worcester.

That's a discussion for another day,

Tolle and Early are prepared to wait it out a bit, probably together.

"It definitely helps to have a guy, a good friend, who is like-minded," said Tolle, whose fastball topped 100 mph several times this spring. "I feel like we both have a really good perspective on where we're at; both of us are very grateful for the opportunity."

While both are left-handed, they are much different pitchers.

Tolle is an imposing giant at 6-foot-6 and 250 pounds. His "game" is power.

Early is more in the low 90s, with a terrorizing slider that moves in to right-handed batters.

Here's how each describes the other:

"Connelly is crafty. He's going to get you off-balance," said Tolle. "He's trying to get hitter to bait. And he's got five or six pitches that are all going to be in the zone. He is a real pitcher."

Early started smiling before his breakdown of Tolle.

"He's got that 'attack' mentality," said Early. "He's not trying to really fool hitters. He's coming at you with his best stuff. I love watching him get in a groove, absolutely going at hitters. He has so much fun out there."

Off the field they are together a lot, be it restaurants or golf courses. And their personalities apparently play well there, too.

"It's become more than just the baseball, and that's what makes it more fun in the baseball world," said Tolle. "We can go outside of here, have a good time, go play golf, or do whatever. We laugh a lot together."

They started getting close two off-seasons ago when both spent a lot of time working out with other pitchers in Fort Myers. Then they both ended up playing in AA Portland in 2024 and Worcester in 2025.

Tolle was called up to the Red Sox in late August. Early was called up about 12 days later.

"When he got there, it was awesome because I had someone close that I could connect with," said Tolle. "I could be a kid again, with Connelly there. It was exciting for both us, the entire time we were there. Our families came to Boston, too. It was another notch on our belts, together."

Both of their Red Sox debuts were, well, magical. Tolle struck out eight batters in 5.1 innings, allowing two runs. Two weeks later,



BILL BURT/Staff photo

Two of the top Red Sox pitching prospects Payton Tolle, on left, and Connelly Early, on right are expected to start their 2026 seasons in AAA Worcester.

Early trumped Tolle going five shutout innings and striking out 11 against the Athletics.

Off the field, the pitching prospects, like the methods on the mound, are different.

Tolle is, well, the life of the party. And Early's actions speak louder than his opinions do.

"Payton loves being around people. He loves being around the guys," said Early. "Every single day he gets a laugh out of the guys, including me."

There is no timetable for their eventual, respective places in Boston. It appears Tolle has "closer" written all over him, while Early, if he gets off to a good start in

Worcester, might be the first addition if one of the top-five starters goes down with an injury.

Both would be on a short list of desired players if the Red Sox were to make a trade for any top level addition.

"This is a business. We both realize that," said Tolle, who admitted he heard some of the off-season trade talk that included both he and his pal. "But we both love Boston and Fenway Park. It's our kind of place. We've both come up in the system and we've had a taste of being there. To do it someday, hopefully soon, together would be something."

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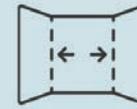
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# 5

## GUYS

Some key acquisitions you should know

By Bill Burt

» [bburt@northofboston.com](mailto:bburt@northofboston.com)

The Red Sox have some key new faces, some not as well-known as others. Here are five key additions and what they potentially bring to the 2026 Red Sox.

### GALEB DURBIN, 3B

► **How acquired:** In a six-player deal with Milwaukee along with Andruw Monasterio, Anthony Seigler in exchange LHP Kyle Harrison, INF David Hamilton, and LHP prospect Shane Drohan.

► **Key notes:** Finished third in 2025 NL Rookie of the Year voting. Was called up in mid-April and immediately became full-time starter, mostly at third base. Hit .276 in nine postseason games last October, including .308 in the National League Championship Series against the Dodgers.

► **Expected role:** Manager Alex Cora has said Durbin will start at third base and primarily bat sixth in the Red Sox lineup.

► **Alex Cora comment:** "I've seen a lot of third basemen with cannons at third base, but their footwork is not great. This kid has a great arm and great footwork."



PHOTO COURTESY OF BOSTON RED SOX

Newly acquired Caleb Durbin, on right, is expected to take over at third base, replacing Alex Bregman.

### JOHAN AVIEDO, STARTING PITCHER

► **How acquired:** In a four-player trade with Pittsburgh with Tyler Samaniego (LHP), Adonys Guzman (C) for Jhostynxon Garcia (OF) and Jesus Trivieso (RHP).

► **Key notes:** Considered a pitcher with high potential but inconsistent results, known for electric stuff, high strikeouts and a good whiff rate, but plagued by a high walk rate and control issues. Returned from Tommy John surgery (2024). Has been in majors since 2020.

► **Expected role:** Appears to be penciled in as Sox fifth starter giving team a right-handed hard thrower. Has several pitchers knocking at his door if he struggles. But will get shot.

► **Alex Cora comment:** "I don't want to say he's a work in progress, but there's a lot of things we can help him to accomplish and have the total package. But right now who he is good enough to be a good big leaguer."



AP PHOTO

The Red Sox acquired the hard-throwing Johan Oviedo in a trade with the Pittsburgh Pirates.

### SONNY GRAY, STARTING PITCHER

► **How acquired:** In a trade with St. Louis Cardinals for prospect Brandon Clarke (LHP) and right-hander Richard Fitts, also receiving \$20 million to help cover Gray's salary.

► **Key notes:** A strikeout pitcher, the 36-year-old Gray is coming off two good seasons with the Cardinals, 27-17 and just over 4.00 ERA. Has been top of rotation guy most of his career with postseason experience. He rescinded his no-trade clause to come to Boston.

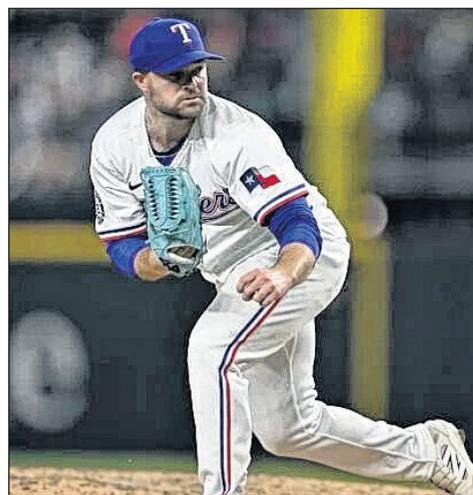
► **Expected role:** With addition of free agent Ranger Suarez (from Phillies), Gray will begin season the No. 2 starter, a role he seems suited for at this point of his career. Noted for going at least six innings in most starts.

► **Alex Cora comment:** "(He's been) impressive so far, not only with us (on the field), but with his peers. There's a reason he's pitched so long in the big leagues, and he's been successful."



COURTESY OF BOSTON RED SOX

The Red Sox named Sonny Gray their No. 2 starter to open the 2026 season.



AP PHOTO

Red Sox acquired left-handed reliever Danny Coulombe recently to bolster their bullpen against left-handed hitters.

### DANNY COULOMBE, RELIEF PITCHER

► **How acquired:** Veteran left-hander signed a one-year, \$1 million on March 12.

► **Key notes:** Journeyman entering 12th seasons, finished 2025 with a 2.30 ERA across 43 innings with the Twins and Rangers. He is a strikeout-per-inning reliever.

► **Expected role:** Pretty simple, get left-handed batters out. Has experience in high-leverage situations in late innings. Could be a key pickup based on price and time of year.

► **Alex Cora comment:** "He's a guy that had a great season last year. He's able to spin the ball, avoids damage from the left side. Been there, done that. So, happy with the way we went about it, and happy that he's here with us."



AP PHOTO

Red Sox new utility infielder Isiah Kiner-Falefa gives the team a top-flight addition as a backup hitter, fielder and baserunner.

### ISIAH KINER-FALEFA, UTILITY INFILDER

► **How acquired:** A free agent signed to a one-year deal.

► **Key notes:** Arguably, the best utility infielder in the game, having defensive success at both shortstop, second base and third base. Red Sox will be his sixth stop since 2022. A career .263 hitter who rarely strikes out. Very well-liked in clubhouse and noted for relationships with young players. A key contributor on Toronto's World Series run last year.

► **Expected role:** Will play a lot, possibly at second base until that position becomes certain. Can play shortstop every day, in a pinch. If Durbin struggles, could help at third base, too.

► **Alex Cora comment:** "Solid defensively, good baserunner. Efficient. When he takes off, he's safe."



# 2025 BOSTON RED SOX STATISTICS

## BATTING

Name	GP	R	HR	RBI	SB	AVG	OPS
Romy Gonzalez 1B	96	47	9	53	6	.305	.826
Nate Eaton 3B	41	16	1	4	9	.296	.731
Roman Anthony RF	71	48	8	32	4	.292	.859
Nathaniel Lowe 1B	34	14	2	16	0	.28	.790
Alex Bregman 3B	114	64	18	62	1	.273	.821
Rafael Devers DH	73	47	15	58	1	.272	.905
Rob Refsnyder RF	70	29	9	30	3	.269	.838
Masataka Yoshida LF	55	16	4	26	3	.266	.696
Trevor Story SS	157	91	25	96	31	.263	.741
Nick Sogard 1B	30	13	0	9	2	.26	.661
Jarren Duran LF	157	86	16	84	24	.256	.774
Ceddanne Rafaela CF	156	84	16	63	20	.249	.708
Wilyer Abreu RF	115	53	22	69	6	.247	.786
Carlos Narvaez C	118	51	15	50	1	.241	.726
Abraham Toro 1B	77	33	7	27	2	.239	.659
Marcelo Mayer 3B	44	20	4	10	0	.228	.674
Kristian Campbell 2B	67	24	6	21	2	.223	.664
David Hamilton 2B	91	27	6	19	22	.198	.590
Connor Wong C	63	16	0	7	2	.19	.500
Triston Casas 1B	29	5	3	11	0	.182	.580
Jhostynxon Garcia CF	5	0	0	0	0	.143	.619
Blake Sabol C	8	2	0	1	0	.125	.354
Ali Sanchez C	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>748</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>.254</b>	<b>.745</b>

## PITCHING

Name	W	L	SV	IP	BB	K	ERA
Garrett Crochet SP	18	5	0	205.1	46	255	2.59
Brayan Bello SP	11	9	0	166.2	59	124	3.35
Lucas Giolito SP	10	4	0	145	56	121	3.41
Walker Buehler SP	7	7	0	112.1	55	84	5.45
Garrett Whitlock RP	7	3	1	72	24	91	2.25
Greg Weissert RP	6	6	4	67	21	57	2.82
Aroldis Chapman RP	5	3	32	61.1	15	85	1.17
Hunter Dobbins SP	4	1	0	61	17	45	4.13
Brennan Bernardino RP	4	3	1	51.2	26	43	3.14
Justin Wilson RP	4	1	0	48.1	20	57	3.35
Richard Fitts SP	2	4	0	45	16	40	5.00
Tanner Houck SP	0	3	0	43.2	17	32	8.04
Sean Newcomb RP	0	4	0	41	17	41	3.95
Zack Kelly RP	1	3	0	35.1	12	35	4.58
Chris Murphy RP	3	0	0	34.2	20	30	3.12
Justin Slaten RP	2	4	3	34	10	25	4.24
Dustin May SP	1	4	0	28.1	13	26	5.40
Steven Matz RP	0	0	1	21.2	2	12	2.08
Connelly Early SP	1	2	0	19.1	4	29	2.33
Jordan Hicks RP	1	2	2	18.2	12	15	8.20
Cooper Criswell RP	1	0	1	17.2	5	9	3.57
Luis Guerrero RP	0	1	0	17.1	14	10	4.15
Payton Tolle SP	0	1	0	16.1	8	19	6.06
Jorge Alcala RP	0	0	0	16.1	8	18	3.31
Liam Hendriks RP	0	2	0	13.2	7	12	6.59
Kyle Harrison RP	0	0	0	12	5	13	3.00
Josh Winckowski RP	0	1	0	11.2	5	9	3.86
Isaiah Campbell RP	0	0	0	7.2	1	3	7.04
Jose De Leon RP	1	0	0	6.2	3	8	4.05
Nick Burdi RP	0	0	0	5.1	2	5	0
Jovani Moran RP	0	0	0	4	3	5	6.75
Michael Fulmer RP	0	0	0	2.2	2	2	10.13
Robert Stock RP	0	0	0	2.2	4	1	10.13
Abraham Toro 1B	0	0	0	1	1	0	18.0
Nate Eaton 3B	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>1448.1</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>1361</b>	<b>3.7</b>

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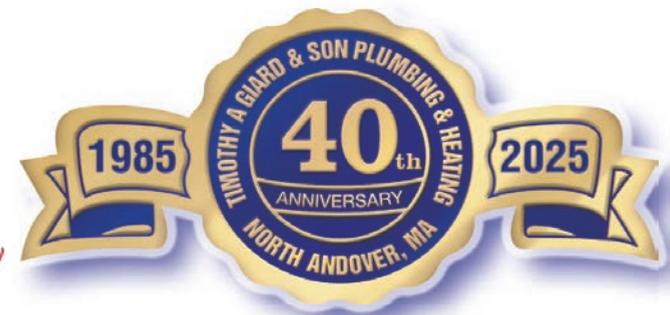
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