

NATIONAL LEAGUE CONTENDERS

Atlanta Braves
New York Mets
Philadelphia Phillies
Milwaukee Brewers
St. Louis Cardinals
Los Angeles Dodgers
San Diego Padres
San Francisco Giants

AMERICAN LEAGUE CONTENDERS

New York Yankees
Toronto Blue Jays
Boston Red Sox
Tampa Bay Rays
Minnesota Twins
Cleveland Guardians
Chicago White Sox
Houston Astros

STILL NEEDS FOUR WEEKS

Texas Rangers
Los Angeles Angels
Seattle Mariners

SELLERS

Miami Marlins
Washington Nationals
Pittsburgh Pirates
Chicago Cubs
Cincinnati Reds
Arizona Diamondbacks
Colorado Rockies
Baltimore Orioles
Kansas City Royals
Detroit Tigers
Oakland Athletics

New York Mets:

Fangraphs Playoff Odds: 96.9%

Baseball Ref Playoff Odds: 96.1%

Strengths: High contact lineup, overall pitching depth, quality bench/platoon matchups

Needs: Catcher, LH Reliever, 5th Starter

Perfect Fit: Willson Contreras, Catcher, Cubs

Overview: The Mets have had a really good first half and have used their high contact, work counts philosophy to consistently put pressure on teams (6th in wRC+). They are 4th in batting average and tied for 2nd in OBP. The Mets have only gotten 8 starts between Max Scherzer and Jacob deGrom but both will be back in July. If they are healthy, the Mets pitching staff should be good to go even with the backend having injuries as well. They could use a left handed reliever in their pen. Joely Rodriguez and Chasen Shreve aren't really answers from the left side, but their RH pen options are good. If the rotation gets healthy they can move David Peterson to the pen. The biggest need for the Mets is at catcher. Tomas Nido and James McCann have a combined 44 OPS+. That won't get it done. Willson Contreras isn't the strongest defender but he's an elite offensive catcher with a .235 ISO and .400 wOBA this year. Adding a catcher who provides a ton of power is perfect for the Mets. They are 20th in ISO right now so another power bat would be useful. However expect a bidding war for the top catcher on the market. The Mets still have a decent farm system so they should pony up for Contreras. He would really help their team.

Atlanta Braves

Fangraphs Playoff Odds: 92.4%

Baseball Reference Playoff Odds: 85%

Strengths: Powerful Lineup, Strong Starting pitching, Defense

Needs: Power RH reliever, 5th Starter, Infield depth

Perfect Fit: Daniel Bard, RH Reliever, Rockies

Overview: The Braves don't need a lot and have multiple players that should come back from injury to boost the team in Eddie Rosario, Tyler Matzek, Mike Soroka and Kirby Yates (with Ozzie Albies projected back in September). If the Braves get all those players back by September, they will be loaded. The Braves will probably look at grabbing another infielder (preferably from the left side) to help at 2nd base (currently 13th in WAR at 2nd) and they could use another 5th starter, although I expect Atlanta to look from within if Ian Anderson can't figure it out. With Luke Jackson out for the year and Kirby Yates not having pitched since August 2020, the Braves could use a power arm from the right side. The Braves bullpen has still been great (1st in reliever WAR, 3rd in xFIP). But Collin McHugh and Jesse Chavez are control pitchers. Daniel Bard is having a monster season in Colorado with a 3.26 xFIP and 30% strikeout rate. He averages 98 MPH on his fastball and his slider should play even better with the Braves. Giving

AJ Minter a counterpart to man the 8th inning and play better matchups with Bard would be a huge benefit for Atlanta. He's cheap and a 37 year old rental as well so it won't cost really anything prospect wise for Atlanta.

Philadelphia Phillies

Fangraphs Playoff Odds: 34.7%

Baseball Ref Playoff Odds: 45%

Strengths: Power lineup, Elite top end Starters, Middle Relief

Needs: Defense, Infield offense, #3 Starter

Perfect Fit: Brandon Drury, INF, Reds

Overview: After a torrid June, the Phillies are back in playoff contention. They won't win the division but with the expanded playoffs and the amount of money Philly has tied up they will try and make a move or 2 to get that 6th playoff spot. Zach Wheeler and Aaron Nola are elite starters and while the 3-5 starters have been okay (the rate stats are better than the results), a really good third starter could benefit the Phillies. Despite this, they are 2nd in SP WAR. And the bullpen has been solid, 9th in reliever WAR despite not having a huge name. They also could use a really good center fielder to help their defense. The issue is the Phillies don't have much in the farm system and their young MLB players haven't performed. They will most likely make 2-3 small moves to improve the overall depth of the team. The offense should be fine if J.T.

Realmuto and Nicholas Castellanos improve to where they normally are offensively (even with Bryce Harper and Jean Segura out for the next 8 weeks). The Phillies really need an infielder to help out at third or second (19th and 24th in WAR respectively). Brandon Drury is having a career year. He's very good defensively and has a 131 wRC+ this year. His .348 wxOBA shows he's hitting the ball well this year despite the inconsistent offense in his career. At the very least he gives you great defense at third and is an improvement over Alec Bohm once Segura comes back.

Milwaukee Brewers

Fangraphs Playoff Odds: 86%

Baseball Ref Playoff Odds: 66.9%

Strengths: Great bullpen, Strong platoon options, Excellent Starters (when healthy)

Needs: Lack of pop, LH reliever, Starting pitcher depth

Perfect Fit: Ramon Laureano, CF, Athletics

Overview: The Brewers are a weird team. Their entire infield except SS is a platoon, their starters outside of Corbin Burnes have either disappointed or currently injured and defensively they are hit or miss. But they still have the lead in the NL Central and they are going to try and defend their NL Central crown. If Aaron Ashby and Adrian Houser can come back healthy and

throw like they did last year they should be fine. Thanks to Corbin Burnes, they are still 9th in SP WAR. They need Brandon Woodruff to get back to his 2021 form and give them that legit #2 starter he has shown to be (though his rate stats look great, with a 3.37 FIP). Getting Freddy Peralta back will help if he can get healthy. One more LH reliever with gas could give them the best bullpen in the NL, already 6th in WAR and 4th in xFIP. But they really need a CF, where they are bottom 5 in WAR and wRC+. Tyrone Taylor is fine but he's better as a platoon OF against lefties. I really like Ramon Laureano for the Brewers. Oakland is on a fire sale and Laureano still has three years of team control after 2022. He's average defensively but a good offensive player (109 wRC+ but underperforming his wxOBA by 29 points). He will cost a lot and Milwaukee's farm is average but he would be worth it, giving them a legitimate every day CF they sorely need.

St. Louis Cardinals

Fangraphs Playoff Odds: 46.8%

Baseball Ref Playoff Odds: 85.7%

Strengths: Excellent infield, overall team depth, Outfield defense

Needs: Hard throwing starter, Bullpen arm, Catcher

Perfect Fit: Frankie Montas, SP, Athletics

Overview: The Cardinals are in a good position considering what they've gone through this year. They've had injuries to their starting pitching. Their outfield was the best in baseball last year and has underperformed. Also shortstop was a disaster the first six weeks of the season. However, the Cardinals are still in a great position to win the Central and make the playoffs. The outfield really struggled, but Dylan Carlson heating up and excellent depth in Juan Ypez and Brendan Donovan has covered that issue, giving them a respectable 13th in OF WAR. Shortstop was a major concern the first few weeks but moving Tommy Edman to short and calling up Nolan Gorman to play second has worked wonderfully. That combination will work moving forward. The bullpen is okay, currently 19th in WAR but bottom ten in xFIP. Jordan Hicks going back to the bullpen will help. Catching is their biggest problem but they won't move or bench Yadi Molina. The Cardinals don't have a strikeout pitcher and could cause problems in the playoffs. Adam Wainwright, Miles Mikolas and Dakota Hudson eat innings and get outs. Currently St. Louis is 22nd in SP WAR and 27th in K rate however. The overall lack of great stuff from the starters is a concern and the #4-5 spots have been a disaster. Frankie Montas fixes that. Montas has a career 25% K rate and throws 96 MPH on average with his fastball. He is a top 25 starting pitcher in the game right now and is under team control through 2023. The Cardinals don't have a star prospect but overall good farm system depth. Montas fits their window and gives the Cardinals a legitimate #1 starter they sorely need.

Los Angeles Dodgers

Fangraphs Playoff Odds: 97.7%

Baseball Ref Playoff Odds: 99.5%

Strengths: Superstar offensive players, Pitching depth, Outfield defense

Needs: One more starter, RH reliever, RH bat

Perfect Fit: Trey Mancini, 1B/DH, Orioles

Overview: When evaluating the Dodgers, they really don't need that much considering their talent. They are top 6 in position player, starting and reliever WAR. Despite injuries their starting pitching has been great and the offense keeps producing despite disappointing seasons from multiple players. The Dodgers always have a good bullpen and are usually able to produce arms in house. The Dodgers have top end starters by stats, but there are questions. Clayton Kershaw struggles to stay healthy. Los Angeles hopes Walker Buehler will be back by September but it's not guaranteed. If those two are healthy the Dodgers should be fine at starting pitching. Julio Urias, Tony Gonsolin and Tyler Anderson have been incredible but Anderson was a reclamation project. I wouldn't trust him as my third playoff starter. Third base has disappointed but Max Muncy/Justin Turner should be able to handle it and have been better lately (still 25th in 3B WAR). Edwin Rios got off to a hot start but cooled considerably. Trey Mancini doesn't quite provide the positional flexibility that the Dodgers like but he crushes the baseball (.393 xwOBA) and would provide depth and consistency to their lineup that they need. He would be a rental so they won't have to dip too much in their farm that they are trying to preserve. Mancini can play against both lefties and righties and gives them an extra offensive weapon they can use.

San Diego Padres

Fangraphs Playoff Odds: 86.4%

Baseball Ref Playoff Odds: 58.5%

Strengths: Starting pitching depth, Quality offensive depth, Infield defense

Needs: CF, LH Reliever, LH bench bat

Perfect Fit: Andrew Chafin, LH Reliever, Tigers

Overview: The biggest thing the Padres need is a healthy Fernando Tatis Jr. He is hoping to be back by late July or early August and once he is added he can either take over SS or play the OF, which he says he is open to. If he can play the OF and one of Hae-Seong Kim or C.J. Abrams can hit at the SS position, the Padres offense should be good to go (especially if Trent Grisham can find his offense from 2020-2021). The Padres need Grisham (4.4 WAR in 2020-2021 in 191 games compared to 0.5 this year) to perform better and if he doesn't they might get a CF. The Padres have a solid bullpen (7th in RP WAR) but right now don't have a good middle relief option from the left side. Drew Pomeranz is hoping to pitch this year and is throwing. Pomeranz coming back will really help that. But having that second lefty would really improve their depth. Andrew Chafin has been a career nightmare for left handed batters. He has a 30% K rate this year and 2.85 xFIP. He would be a rental (there is a 2nd year player option) so he won't cost very

much. If Cedric Mullins or Bryan Reynolds becomes available, San Diego will probably pounce. But since that's a long shot, I'd expect San Diego to make smaller moves.

San Francisco Giants

Fangraphs Playoff Odds: 54.4%

Baseball Ref Playoff Odds: 61.8%

Strengths: Outfield, Two elite Starters, Platoon strengths

Needs: Backend Starting pitching, Defense, Infield offense

Perfect Fit: Josh Bell, 1B/DH, Nationals

Overview: The Giants are not repeating their 2021 success but are still in a good position to try and grab a wild card spot. Carlos Rodon and Logan Webb have been fantastic for the Giants this year (5th in SP WAR). But Alex Cobb and Alex Wood have not performed well as backend starters and San Francisco could use another starter. The Giants can probably patch their pitching enough to make it work. The bullpen has been average but I trust their organization to improve that from within. Their outfield is raking this year (114 wRC+ which is tied for 5th) using their platoon advantages. The overall defense has been atrocious (28 outs below average) this year and their infield offense has been inconsistent. Evan Longoria has been great in 40 games but it's been overall average from their infield after that (at 1B/DH, they are 22nd in wRC+). Josh Bell fixes that for the Giants. He can hit from both sides and has crushed the ball this year with a 151 wRC+. He has a career 11.7% walk rate which will fit well in San Francisco and can be their full time DH against righties and 1B against lefties (and opens Tommy La Stella to play 2B). The Giants can probably patch their pitching enough to make it work. Bell is only a rental so they won't need to unload the farm for him and he brings a great cleanup hitter that they need.

New York Yankees

Fangraphs Playoff Odds: 100%

Baseball Ref Playoff Odds: 99.9%

Strengths: High power/high walk rate offense 1-8, Deep Starting pitching, Elite Bullpen

Needs: LH outfield bat, LH reliever, catching depth

Perfect Fit: Andrew Benintendi, OF, Royals

Overview: The New York Yankees don't need much at all. Their starting pitching is elite, their bullpen has been absolute money and they mash the ball as well as anyone (2nd in position player WAR, first in overall pitching WAR). They currently are the best team in baseball. If the Yankees bring Aroldis Chapman as a middle reliever when he gets healthy that would answer their need for a LH reliever for their middle relief. Another catching option would be a nice addition but Jose Trevino has been really good this year. With the disappointment of Joey Gallo, along with being another high strikeout player in their lineup (without the results of other

players), they should look towards Andrew Benintendi. He's not a great fielder but his bat brings something the Yankees need: A left handed bat that gets on base. He has a 9.7% walk rate and 122 wRC+. He also can play against lefties as well so you don't need to platoon him. An outfield defense of Benintendi, Judge and Stanton in the playoffs would be concerning, but Hicks can take over late or Stanton can DH and Hicks starts in center. Benintendi is too good of a bat right now to worry about the defense however.

Toronto Blue Jays

Fangraphs Playoff Odds: 96.2%

Baseball Ref Playoff Odds: 95%

Strengths: RH bats, Deep Bullpen, Overall lineup depth

Needs: Consistent SP, LH bat, Power Reliever

Perfect Fit: Pablo Lopez, RH starter, Marlins

Overview: The Blue Jays absolutely rake and can mash against anyone on the offensive end (115 wRC+ overall). They don't have a hole on offense even if they are a little right handed heavy. They could probably use one more high strikeout reliever but they have enough depth to cover it (20th in K rate). The issue right now is the rotation. Hyun-Jin Ryu is out for the year. Jose Berrios and Yusei Kikuchi have been incredibly disappointing in 2022 and have bad rate stats. They have a fantastic top two in the rotation (Alek Manoah and Kevin Gausman) while Ross Stripling has been valuable this year, leading to 8th in SP WAR. They don't need a superstar pitcher but Pablo Lopez would be a great addition for the Blue Jays. They have quality position players everywhere which Miami needs and the Blue Jays need to add a starter. Lopez is under team control through 2024 and would cost a couple solid players (Gabriel Moreno and Cavan Biggio for Lopez maybe?) but Lopez has been high quality the last three years and has a 3.34 xFIP this year. He would be a great #3 option for Toronto.

Boston Red Sox

Fangraphs Playoff Odds: 81.1%

Baseball Ref Playoff Odds: 77.4%

Strengths: Top end offense, Good starting pitching depth, LH Relievers

Needs: Outfield bat, RH Bullpen arm, 1B

Perfect Fit: David Peralta, OF, Diamondbacks

Overview: Boston had a really rough start to the season, got hot in May and found solid footing in June. They have dealt with some injuries but their pitching and star bats (Rafael Devers, J.D. Martinez and Xander Boegarts) have carried them. Boston has injuries to their starting pitching and the questions about how long Michael Wacha and Rich Hill can last are fair. If Nathan Eovaldi and Garrett Whitlock come back (along with Chris Sale) they should have enough starting pitching however (currently 14th in SP WAR). They could use another legit SP or a RH

bullpen arm. But they need a consistent bat in the outfield, currently with their OF sporting a 90 wRC+. David Peralta can take over for Jackie Bradley Jr. in a corner outfield spot and improve it immediately. He's a quality defender and crushes RH pitching. He provides quality at bats and while not a star, they can use his .334 wOBA (.354 xwOBA) right now. That would then give a nice platoon option with Verdugo/Hernandez in the other corner spot if Jarren Duren continues to play well in center field.

Tampa Bay Rays

Fangraphs Playoff Odds: 50.4%

Baseball Ref Playoff Odds: 46.5%

Strengths: Bullpen, Young SP, Infield offense

Needs: Outfield Offense, Catcher, Innings eater SP

Perfect Fit: Ian Happ, OF, Cubs

Overview: If the Rays played in any other division (well except the NL West) then they might be leading their division. But alas this is life in the AL East. The Rays are still a solid team. They have quality pitching everywhere (9th in xFIP), they have really fun platoon options and they can get the ball on defense (10th in OAA). Right now the concern for Tampa is the offensive side, particularly the outfield with a 92 wRC+ on offense. Kevin Kiermaier still is solid on defense but the offense is questionable and not being able to have Manny Margot as a platoon option hurts. Right field has been a black hole since Margot got hurt. Ian Happ fixes that. He's having his best offensive season so far and the rate stats suggest it's real (.370 wOBA, .365 xwOBA). He is a solid switch hitter (though better as a lefty) and while the defense is below average, the Rays' shifting will help cover that. The Rays could use a top flight starter (like Castillo or Montas) but the Rays won't spend the prospect capital on it. Getting Happ (who has team control through 2023) would still be a great get. They have plenty of positional player prospects and should part with a couple for Happ.

Minnesota Twins

Fangraphs Playoff Odds: 59.5%

Baseball Ref Playoff Odds: 72.9%

Strengths: Infield, Starting pitching depth, Offensive depth

Needs: Bullpen arm, #1 Starter, Catcher

Perfect Fit: Luis Castillo, SP, Reds

Overview: The Twins retooled after a disappointing 2021 season and it worked. Despite some health concerns the Twins have used their offensive depth to cover those spots. Their infield has been lights out and despite not having a big name starter, they have four starters with an ERA under 3.08 (11th in SP WAR). They could use a true #1 starter and it would not be shocking if they contend for the previously mentioned SP options on the market.. Their lineup has absolutely

raked and they have 12 guys that can start (5th in wRC+). When everyone is healthy they are a super elite offense. The key is to get everyone healthy. However the bullpen is not a strength. 11th in xFIP right now and 16th in ERA, they need two relievers. But I believe a bigger need is a starter with strikeout stuff. Minnesota is 20th in K rate from their starters and rely on their defense to get outs. Luis Castillo has a career 26.1% K rate and career 3.50 xFIP. Getting him out of Cincinnati could be even better since he starts in a bandbox. Castillo isn't a true #1 but getting somebody that can get strikeouts in huge in the playoffs. Castillo would deepen their rotation and give them another legit starter.

Cleveland Guardians

Fangraphs Playoff Odds: 45.4%

Baseball Ref Playoff Odds: 35%

Strengths: Elite bullpen, Infield, Athleticism

Needs: #2 Starter, Power Bat, Catcher

Perfect Fit: C.J. Cron, DH/1B, Rockies

Overview: The Guardians have been a nice surprise this year and that's in part to the development of their young hitters. Andres Gimenez, Steven Kwan and Amed Rosario all have stepped up their games, along with Jose Ramirez and Josh Naylor being elite at the corner infield spots. Their pitching has been a little disappointing. Shane Bieber has really been the only consistent starter. The other arms have been lacking this year but some have had better success in past year. The hope would be Zach Plesac and Tristan McKenzie can have better second halves and show their 2021 selves. Myles Straw has been a disappointment on offense in center field and they could use a better option in CF. But DH is a bigger concern, where they are 29th in wRC+ in all of baseball. C.J. Cron would be a great add. He only costs \$7.5M in 2023 and has a 2024 team option as well. He has a 128 wRC+ this year and he hits the ball hard, giving them RH power they can fit anywhere 2-5 in their lineup. The Guardians have a good farm system but Cron won't be too much with his age and being basically a full time DH. The Guardians should have enough money to make it work.

Chicago White Sox

Fangraphs Playoff Odds: 48.4%

Baseball Ref Playoff Odds: 21.4%

Strengths: RH power bats, Backend bullpen, Top 3 Starters

Needs: 2B, LH bat, RF

Perfect Fit: Joey Wendle, INF, Marlins

Overview: The key for the White Sox is getting healthy. Lance Lynn being back and Eloy Jimenez is already on rehab assignment give them hope for the second half. Their starting pitching has been in flux but Dylan Cease and Michael Kopech have been excellent. Getting

Lynn back and the reemerging Johnny Cueto gives them a very good starting rotation. If Yasmani Grandal and Yoan Moncada can return to what we have seen from them, that would improve the White Sox playoff chances. Those two being near unplayable this season has really hurt the White Sox. If Jimenez wasn't expected back I would imagine the White Sox would target an outfielder, but they need to focus on second base. It's been a weak spot for a few years now and they're currently 27th in WAR at 2B. Joey Wendle has played third in Miami but he can handle second. He would be a perfect player for Chicago, filling a hole at second and giving them a left handed bat. He has a 112 wRC+ and his high contact rate gives the White Sox a different dynamic they can use in their lineup. He could even leadoff with his .353 OBP in 2022 (.330 career OBP). The farm system is bottom five, so the White Sox cannot really afford to make a big move. Wendle has a mutual option for 2023 and only makes \$4.6M this season. The White Sox could easily afford him.

Houston Astros

Fangraphs Playoff Odds: 99.9%

Baseball Ref Playoff Odds: 99.9%

Strengths: Offensive firepower, deep Starting pitching, Bullpen

Needs: Catcher, LH Reliever, Proven #2 SP

Perfect Fit: Carson Kelly, Catcher, Diamondback

Overview: Houston is going to win their 5th straight full season division title. It's not going to be close, already 13.5 games ahead. They absolutely rake throughout the lineup, their starting pitching is deep with Justin Verlander returning from injury as a Cy Young contender with Framber Valdez and Cristian Javier being lights out (Houston is third in fWAR for starting pitchers. Lance McCullers is starting to throw and would give another excellent SP. Jeremy Pena is the AL rookie of the year right now at SS, Yordan Alvarez and Kyle Tucker are two of the five best left handed hitters in baseball and the usual suspects (Gurriel, Altuve and Bregman) are still hitting. Houston values defense and game calling at the catcher spot. Carson Kelly has struggled offensively and his durability is a question mark. He's been better on offense since coming back from his injury and he's very good defensively. Houston has been able to unlock offense for players and Kelly's upside is much higher than Martin Maldonado. Kelly might cost a little bit more than a rental because Arizona hasn't fully committed to Daulton Varsho at catcher and Kelly is still under team control through 2024. But I would take the chance if I was Houston. They need upside at catcher and Maldonado is too much of a black hole on offense in the playoffs.

