Daily SPORTS

Moneyball Weekly:

The aftermath of the Texas Rangers' one-year wonder

by Jack Yadlon
CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT
HE/HIM/HIS
ptf24003@uconn.edu

The 2023 Texas Rangers have cemented their place as one of the strangest teams in sports history. After missing the playoffs and finishing under .500 for six straight seasons, the Rangers went 90-72, made the playoffs and eventually won the World Series.

That alone is not too bizarre. While the jump from a 68-win season to a 90-win year is jarring, it is not unheard of for a team to see their rebuild end suddenly and drastically.

The part of the Texas Rangers that makes this so strange is the years following their victory. While they've hovered more around .500 than the years prior to 2022, the team has now missed the playoffs for a third straight year. The Texas Rangers have missed the playoffs for nine of the last ten years, with the only season they qualified culminating in a World Series victory.

The 2023 Rangers' pitching was solid, but their forte was the potent offense. Led by Marcus Semien, Adolis García and Corey Seager, the team was strong in every spot in the lineup, especially down the stretch.

The list of good hitters consisted of a lot of surprises, with players like Semien and catcher Mitch Garver renewing past success and players like García and catcher Jonah Heim having breakout years. Combined with Seager having the best year of his storied career, Texas was not a lineup to be messed with.

The team also had a young kick to it, with Josh Jung having a successful rookie campaign and the emergence of outfielder Evan Carter down the stretch being the final piece to round out the lineup in October. Top prospect Wyatt Langford was also expected in 2024, and with him he brought a lot of promise.

Most of the talent would be returning for 2024, along with a young core being established alongside the old regime which had just come off a world series. The team had also won without Jacob deGrom, and the sky seemed to be the limit for the Rangers with him set to return in 2024.

But, for whatever reason, the season where everything went right directly preceeded one where everything went wrong.

Garver left in free agency and Seager saw his production dip from superstar to regular star. Langford didn't excel, Jung couldn't replicate his rookie year and Carter became entirely unplayable.

The biggest problem came from three of the main members of the championship cast: García, Heim and Semien all dropped from above average bats to well below it. The frightening offense disappeared without a trace and Texas missed the playoffs at 78-84.

Fans hoped that 2024 was the fluke but over time it has become clear that 2023 instead was the fluke year. The 2025 season wasn't kind to the Rangers either, as they'd miss the playoffs again. Despite their pitching being one of the best starting units in the league, the offense only got worse.

Change became necessary for the team. García and Heim both were non-tendered in the offseason, and Semien's massive contract was moved for Brandon Nimmo. Despite the changes, the Rangers couldn't find a way to make it back to the dance in 2026 either. To add insult to injury, Seager's injury problems only got worse and his production tailed off with it.

With a window that may have already closed years ago, Texas could be looking to ship pieces off. Evan Grant reported that the team could choose to shed one or multiple of Seager, deGrom and Nathan Eovaldi to try and cut payroll. All three are valuable players, though the bulky contracts and the ages may steer teams away from paying top-end trade prices.

The original youth movement hasn't gone to plan but is far from dead. Jung returned to production in 2026 and while Langford hasn't been the expected talent, he has been a good bat. Texas also currently has three top-100 prospects, headlined by MLB's eighth overall Sebastian Walcott, who could be ready in 2027. The other two are earlier in their development.

The pitching staff has some potential within, consisting of two young talents yet to find success in Jack Leiter and Kumar Rocker, along with southpaw MacKenzie Gore, who struggled in his first season in Texas but has had past success.

Texas seems to have come to terms with the fact that the year of success has long past, though there could be enough left in the tank for one last gasp should they choose to try it.

No matter what happens from here on out, nobody can take away the fact that the Texas Rangers were World Series champions.



Brandon Nimmo of the Texas Rangers walks on the field with a bat. The Rangers lost 3-6 against the New York Jets on Sept. 22, 2026.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @RANGERS ON INSTAGRAM

Elliot's Saturday Slate:

More records shattered in another week of college football mayhem

by Elliot Koplas
STAFF WRITER
HE/HIM/HIS
ejk23008@uconn.edu

For the fifth straight week, the AP No. 1 or No. 2 team has fallen, tying the record set in 2007. We have now seen seven losses by the top two teams this season, and we still have three more weeks of the regular season. These last three weeks, paired with conference championship games, only grow in significance with the 12-team playoff bracket this season.

The College Football Playoff and ESPN agreed to a five-year, nearly $1.7 billion deal that expands the playoff format to 24 teams in the 2027 season, according to ESPN.

This change eliminates the Power Four conference championship games, which were huge money makers for organizations. The expansion leaves fans with many mixed opinions, with more games being played in the final weekends, but now the regular season matchups seem less substantial.

The teams of the Southeastern Conference (SEC) also broke a record of their own when Vanderbilt defeated Mississippi State, officially completing "the circle of chaos." This refers to the 16-team circle the SEC forms, where every team has now beaten the next in a combined chain.

The continuing upsets also tied the record for the most top 14 losses in a single week since college football rankings began in 2014. All this football frenzy, and there are still three more regular season weeks of it.

Starting off with the biggest game in Utah State history, No. 3 Utah continued their unbeaten streak, knocking off No. 7 BYU, 28-20. The win surged Utah into the No. 2 slot in the AP poll, achieving their highest-ever ranking. As for the Cougars, they slid five spots into No. 12 and face elimination from the playoff rankings.

No. 11 Ohio State was routed by Oregon for their second straight loss and first home loss since 2024. The Buckeyes continue to struggle on offense without quarterback Julian Sayin and ultimately saw their chances of making the postseason squashed in front of their eyes.

Lane Kiffin and No. 15 LSU fell in another SEC battle, this time to No. 9 Alabama. The Tide routed the Tigers 31-13, sending the squad down nine spots to No. 24. Alabama rose two spots to No. 7 facing Vanderbilt on the road next weekend, still in the hunt for an SEC championship appearance.

In another SEC battle, No. 16 Tennessee blew out No. 8 Kentucky, 34-6, preventing the Wildcats from scoring a touchdown. Kentucky fell to No. 13 and the Volunteers rose to No. 9. For the third team to fall as the undefeated Hurricanes fell 31-24 to No. 4 Notre Dame. Miami had claimed the No. 1 spot for the previous three weeks, but the eventual loss placed the Hurricanes down to No. 5. Still the only undefeated team in the ACC, Miami is still the favorite to win the conference and claim a top spot in the College Football Playoff.



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF @GATADATA88 ON X

Looking ahead to next weekend's matchups, more teams face do-or-die situations standing on the edge of elimination.

Utah faces a ranked Arizona side hoping to remain undefeated. No. 22 Arizona stands at (7-2) on the season with both losses coming to ranked Big 12 opponents. The Utes could finish their program's eighth undefeated season and first since 2008. They end the season against unranked TCU and West Virginia.

Georgia hosts Missouri after reclaiming the top spot and still stands atop the SEC. The Bulldogs are the only one-loss program in the SEC with two harder games to end the season, including the Tigers next week. Georgia quarterback Gunner Stockton is coming off a five-touchdown performance with four through the air. Missouri still has a chance to squeeze into the playoffs if they upset Georgia this week along with a ranked Kentucky the following game.

Kentucky fell following their loss, but they have a chance to re-enter with a matchup against Florida. The Gators have impressive wins over Ole Miss and Texas so far, however, they come into this week following two losses to Georgia and Oklahoma. Florida was outscored 15-50 in the last two weeks, needing a statement win on Saturday.

Another hectic week comes to a close as fans prepare for the next Saturday of college football bedlam.