Moneyball Weekly:
The Boston Red Sox have the potential to be frightening in 2027

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There are various ways that a team or the end of its season can bring fans anguish. Some years it's a devastating loss in the World Series when it seemed like everything was going right, others it's a 100-loss season.

For the Boston Red Sox and New York Yankees, the worst possible outcome is losing to each other in the postseason.

That nightmare has become a reality for Boston sports fans two straight seasons now. Both defeats came primarily at the hands of two Massachusetts natives, Cam Schlittler and Ben Rice, just to add insult to injury.

The Sox have a real chance for a get-back in 2027. Their framework is one of the best in the league, needing just a few pieces to complete their roster.

The pitching side is of little concern for Boston. The team's 3.00 ERA and 3.78 xFIP from relievers both ranked first in bullpen rankings, and their high-leverage arms all have consistent pedigrees despite being in one of the most volatile position groups in sports. For lack of a better phrase, their bullpen is disgusting.

The starting arms had a total ERA of 3.92 and xFIP of 3.85, good enough for eighth leaguewide. This was without Garrett Crochet, one of the league's best pitchers in 2025 who missed a majority of the season this year. With Payton Tolle and Jake Bennett looking promising, the rotation appears very positive for the team.

The one hiccup is Sonny Gray. The Cy Young candidate has a $30 million mutual option this offseason which he may decline, though the Sox aren't ruled out if he does. Gray will have interest all around the league, and at age 37, it's likely he'll go to whoever gives him the most security. The return of Crochet could offset his departure, but it's in Boston's best interest to retain him.

The offense was the main issue, specifically in the power field. The team ranked No. 19 in OPS leaguewide, and while some of the issues were due to injuries, there are still fixes to be made.

Most of the lineup should be set, as the outfield, first base and catcher positions have solidified names heading into the year. Curtis Mead will also occupy an infield spot, though whether that is second or third remains to be seen, and he has yet to play meaningful minutes in Boston.

Roman Anthony's return from injury will be a big help, though there is lingering concern about his injury due to a reaggravation in the playoffs. Catcher Adley Rutschman's struggles in Boston also raise some concern, but at his worst, he is a playable catcher.

Shortstop will likely be occupied by the MLB's number two prospect Franklin Arias, whose excellent minor league season and Trevor Story's awful major league season give Arias a great chance to take the role.

Second or third base is one of the spots the team could improve. The free agency options are incredibly thin, which leaves a trade for Houston's Isaac Paredes as the best option. Paredes has excelled in Houston due to the Crawford Boxes in left field, which is similar to Fenway's Green Monster. Outside of Paredes, few options make sense in the infield.

The DH role is where the team will be best suited to improve. Randy Arozarena and Seiya Suzuki look like the best options with both slated to hit free agency. Both have all-around hitting ability and bring the power that Boston needs to truly round out their lineup.

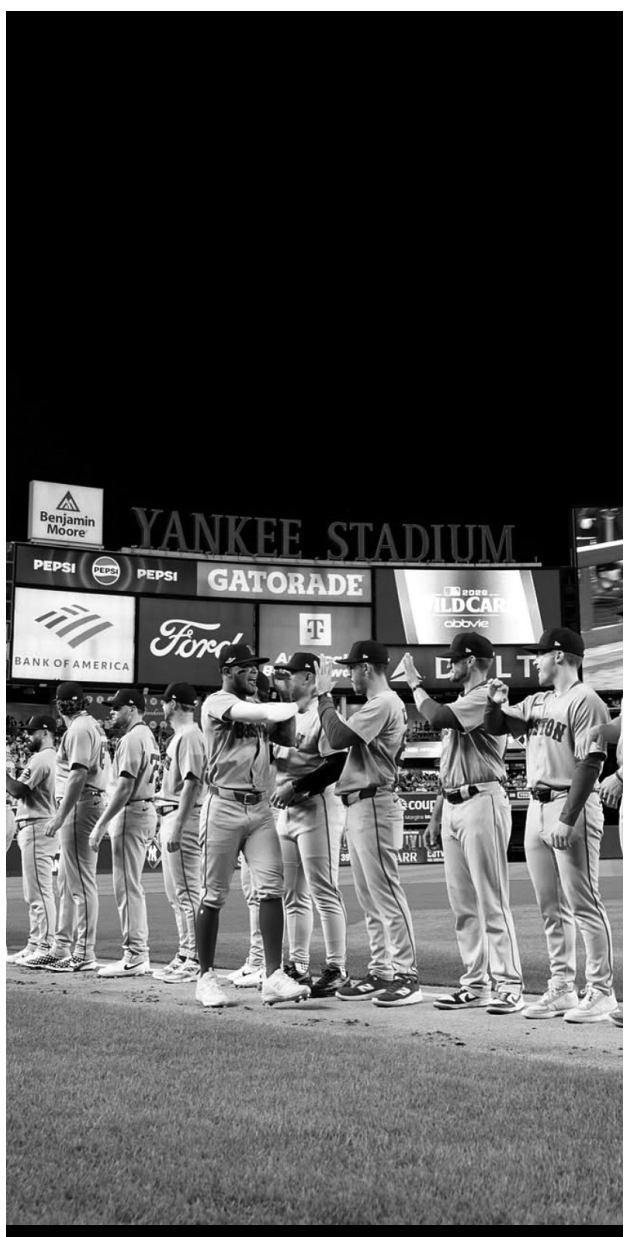
Suzuki is a better hitter but also brings one slight issue — he has been known to not want to be a full-time DH. Boston would have to get creative if they were to bring him in, likely rotating certain outfielders in the DH spot. The alternative would be to move Ceddanne Rafaela to second, but the sacrifice of his center field defense is less than ideal.

Arozarena avoids this issue but has less history and support from metrics to support his performance. However, he would also be cheaper.

Either option likely results in the team moving on from Jarren Duran, who had a very poor season. This could occur regardless, however.

Boston cannot look at this past season and use injuries as an excuse or reason to not add to their roster. If a few injuries can derail a season like they did this year, it can certainly happen again, especially with lingering concern on Anthony's.

Health provided, Boston is on the cusp of being a team that is second to none in the American League. The only team with more potential than them are their Bronx rivals, but with the amount of money they have tied up, the opportunity is there for Boston to pounce and get their revenge.



The Boston Red Sox players during the singing of the national anthem at Yankee Stadium before a game. The Sox lost 2-9 against the New York Yankees on Sept. 30, 2026.
PHOTO COURTESY OF @REDSOX ON INSTAGRAM

Sports Spectrum:
NBA PLAYOFF BLUNDERS

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Jarrett Allen of the Cleveland Cavaliers going for a two-pointer during a game against Orlando Magic. The Cavaliers won 119-105 against Magic on Oct. 11, 2026.
PHOTO COURTESY OF @CAVS ON INSTAGRAM

Mistakes are often a normal part of life. In sports, they can shift momentum or cost you games. In recent history, mistakes of this caliber lead to losing an important series or even the championship game.

In the sense of basketball, things like this have happened all the time, with the most notable of them being J.R. Smith holding the ball during Game 1 of the 2018 Finals. However, this year, there's a play that seemed to play its inverse, as the San Antonio Spurs proceeded to blow the largest lead in NBA Finals history.

Multiple factors contributed to this blown lead: defensive mismanagement from the coaching staff, a team offense that scored only 30 points in the second half and your best players, De'Aaron Fox and Victor Wembanyama, combining for 15-41 from the field. To top it off, a play in the final seconds left many in the basketball world confused and angry.

With under 15 seconds left, the Spurs led by one as Fox ran across the court to attempt a layup, only for OG Anunoby to block it and spark a fast break that ended with Anunoby's game-winning tip-in with 1.2 seconds left.

As former player Charles Barkley put it, "That was a [poor] play. He did not have to shoot that ball."

It wasn't the first time the Knicks were in a situation like that. A similar thing happened in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference Finals, when the Cleveland Cavaliers blew a 20-point lead, then ran 44-11 across the fourth quarter and overtime.

This was a historic collapse at the time, completing the largest 4th-quarter comeback in Conference Finals history in the play-by-play era. Entering that night, teams trailing by 22+ points in the 4th quarter or later were 1-594 in the playoffs since 1997.

Cavs head coach Kenny Atkinson, despite having a timeout, didn't call one until the final 3:30 of the fourth quarter. By that point, the Knicks had already unleashed a devastating, lightning-fast 18-1 run, slicing the Cavaliers' comfortable lead down to a fragile 94-89 edge.

In the playoffs, things like this happen. Tensions are high and emotions often run hot, like in Game 2 of the 2023 Eastern Conference Finals.

The Boston Celtics were comfortably controlling the game against the No. 8 seed Miami Heat. Boston was up by 9 points in the fourth quarter when Celtics forward Grant Williams hit a three-pointer right in Jimmy Butler's face.

Williams became entirely overwhelmed by adrenaline and infamously began chirping and trash-talking directly into Butler's face while walking back down the court. This backfired into a 22-9 run, in which Butler targeted and hunted Williams on every single possession. After stealing that game on Boston's home floor, the Celtics went on to lose the series in a massive upset.

Upsets in the NBA can happen in all sorts of ways. Usually, when someone holds a series lead, momentum is often in their favor, such as when the Suns led the Dallas Mavericks 3-2 in the Western Conference semifinals. Luka Doncic announced, "Everyone's tough when they're up," and then walked them down so badly in Game 7 that the Suns issued an apology letter.

This Game 7 gave birth to the "Chris Paul hits a huge three to cut the lead to 42" meme you might've seen whenever athletes score in garbage time. At halftime, the score was 57-27, with Doncic's 27 points matching the total the Suns had scored through then.

The Suns were highly favored to return to the Western Conference Finals but that return was cut short by a star point guard against draftmate DeAndre Ayton, who was picked two spots ahead of him in the 2018 draft.

However, in the 2021 Eastern Semis, what Ben Simmons didn't do might have had generational consequences for the Sixers franchise.

At that point, the 76ers were title favorites, especially after getting their hearts broken in 2019 when Kawhi Leonard hit a dagger that bounced off the rim four times. They were the No. 1 seed in the Eastern Conference with a stellar 49-23 record. This was the pinnacle of the Joel Embiid-Ben Simmons era and they had a wide-open path to the NBA Finals.

The 76ers faced the No. 5 seed Atlanta Hawks, a young team nobody expected to be there. Entering Game 7, Philly was a massive 7-point home favorite. Vegas and the entire basketball world expected them to cruise to the Eastern Conference Finals. The powerhouse Brooklyn Nets, with Kevin Durant, James Harden and Kyrie Irving, had just been knocked out by Milwaukee the night before.

Going into that series, Simmons was a 3-time All-Star and the Runner-Up for Defensive Player of the Year. He was the co-star of a championship contender.

So what does he do in a Game 7, season on the line, when he spins baseline and has a clear, uncontested path to dunk or lay up over a much smaller Trae Young? He passed the ball backward and the 76ers went on to lose that series.

"I thought he was going to foul me," Young admitted on the Club 520 podcast.

Simmons was shooting an anemic 34.2% from the free-throw line in the playoffs. After that, Joel Embiid threw him under the bus, Doc Rivers openly doubted him and Simmons never played another minute for Philly.

In public memory, blunders and historic collapses often linger more than the opposing team's success. Sports are games of nerves and an opponent's nerve often wins out.

For the most part, players and teams can recover from these moments in the offseason by adding key depth and star pieces: Boston went on to win a championship, the 76ers got Jaylen Brown and LeBron James, and San Antonio still has a bright young core.