

2025 Annual International Baseball Arbitration Competition

Jarren Duran v. Boston Red Sox

Submission on Behalf of the Boston Red Sox

Service time: 2.155 (1TE)

Club filing: \$3,500,000

Player filing: \$4,500,000

Midpoint: \$4,000,000

Submission by Team 43

I. Introduction

This brief evaluates the contributions and performance of Jarren Duran (referred to as "The Player" or "Mr. Duran") to establish his appropriate compensation for the 2025 season with the Boston Red Sox ("the Club" or "the Red Sox"). The hearing will adhere to the guidelines outlined in the Major League Baseball ("MLB") Collective Bargaining Agreement ("CBA"), which specifies the criteria for determining the Player's award. The arbitration panel will consider the following factors under the CBA criteria: (1) the quality of the Player's contribution to his Club during the past season (including but not limited to his overall performance, special qualities of leadership and public appeal), (2) the length and consistency of his career contribution, (3) the record of the Player's past compensation, (4) comparative baseball salaries, (5) the existence of any physical or mental defects on the part of the Player, and (6) the recent performance record of the Club including but not limited to its League standing and attendance as an indication of public acceptance.¹

As a first-year arbitration-eligible player with 2.155 years of Major League service time, Mr. Duran filed for a salary of \$4,500,000, and the Red Sox filed for \$3,500,000, creating a midpoint of \$4,000,000. While Mr. Duran has demonstrated flashes of excellence, significant concerns regarding (1) his ability to sustain this level of performance, (2) his lack of career consistency, and (3) his history of physical injuries warrant a more conservative approach to his compensation. Accordingly, the Club asserts that Mr. Duran's appropriate salary for the 2025 season is not worth a dollar more than the \$4,000,000 midpoint.

¹ MLB Collective Bargaining Agreement. "2022-2026 Basic Agreement," Article VI(E) § 10(a)-(b), pp. 20-21.

II. Length and Consistency of Career Contributions (2021-2024)

A. Jarren Duran - Platform Year (2024)

	WAR	G	PA	H	HR	RBI	SB	BA	OBP	SLG	OPS	OPS+
Duran	8.7	160	735	191	21	75	34	0.285	0.342	0.492	0.834	129

B. Jarren Duran - Career Totals (2021-2024)

	WAR	G	PA	H	HR	RBI	SB	BA	OBP	SLG	OPS	OPS+
2021	-0.7	33	112	23	2	10	2	0.215	0.241	0.336	0.578	53
2022	-0.1	58	223	45	3	17	7	0.221	0.283	0.363	0.645	78
2023	2.1	102	362	98	8	40	24	0.295	0.346	0.482	0.828	121
2024	8.7	160	735	191	21	75	34	0.285	0.342	0.492	0.834	129
Career Totals	10.0	353	1432	357	34	142	67	0.272	0.326	0.457	0.782	113

C. Evaluating Career Impact: Jarren Duran's Consistency and Longevity

While Mr. Duran has shown improvement, his overall body of work reflects significant gaps in performance and a late rise to relevance. For most of his career, Mr. Duran struggled to establish himself in the Major Leagues, with subpar performances in 2021 and 2022 that failed to meet the expectations of a heralded prospect.² It was not until 2023 and 2024 that he began to demonstrate the potential the Red Sox hoped for, relying heavily on just two seasons of solid—though not elite—production.

The 2024 season, in particular, appears to be an outlier rather than an indication of sustained excellence. His career totals highlight potential but lack evidence of consistent elite

² Bill Koch, *Jarren Duran Has Matured from Minor League Prospect to Red Sox Star*, PROVIDENCE J. (July 22, 2024), <https://www.providencejournal.com/story/sports/2024/07/22/jarren-duran-has-matured-from-minor-league-prospect-to-red-sox-star/74488959007/>.

production.³ A two-year stretch of strong performance does not conclusively demonstrate that he has reached a sustainable level of excellence. Furthermore, Mr. Duran's breakout 2024 season appears to be the peak of his performance rather than an indication of his long-term capabilities. His statistical accomplishments—while impressive—are unlikely to be replicated, as sustaining such levels of production is historically rare. For instance, his on-base percentage, WAR, and stolen base metrics significantly exceeded his career averages, suggesting that regression to the mean is likely in 2025.⁴ The Club should not base its compensation on an anomalous season.

After debuting in 2021, Mr. Duran posted a disappointing .215 average with a .597 OPS in his first 33 games.⁵ His struggles continued into 2022, with inconsistent at-bats, defensive lapses, and difficulty adjusting to Major League pitching. These early challenges cast doubt on his ability to translate raw talent into consistent results at the highest level. In 2023, Mr. Duran began to show signs of the player he was projected to become, delivering an impressive season before toe surgery prematurely ended his year after 102 games.⁶ His performances in 2023 and 2024 were encouraging, yet they represent just two strong seasons in a four-year Major League career. This limited stretch of success does not fully overshadow the inconsistency of his earlier years or guarantee he has turned a corner in his development. Consistency is critical in justifying a significant salary increase, and Mr. Duran's career thus far presents a mixed picture. While his recent performance has been promising, the Red Sox must assess his entire body of work. His rocky progression to the big leagues and relatively short window of sustained success suggests

³ Baseball Reference, *Jarren Duran Stats*, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <https://www.baseball-reference.com/players/d/duranja01.shtml> (last visited Jan. 2, 2025).

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ R.J. Anderson, *Jarren Duran Injury Update: Red Sox Center Fielder Undergoes Surgery for Turf Toe, Out for Rest of 2023 Season*, CBS SPORTS (Aug. 30, 2023), <https://www.cbssports.com/mlb/news/jarren-duran-injury-update-red-sox-center-fielder-undergoes-surgery-for-turf-toe-out-for-rest-of-2023-season/>.

that it is too early to determine whether he has truly established a new baseline of performance or if his recent success is a temporary peak.

III. Record of the Player’s Past Compensation⁷

Year	Age	Team	Salary	Status
2018	21	Boston Red Sox	\$189,800	Signing Bonus
2021	24	Boston Red Sox	\$570,500	Base Salary
2022	25	Boston Red Sox	\$700,000	Optioned to the Minors
2023	26	Boston Red Sox	\$720,000	Extension Contract
2024	27	Boston Red Sox	\$760,000	Extension Contract
2025	28	Boston Red Sox	Midpoint: \$4,000,000	Arbitration

V. Injury History Overview

Jarren Duran’s 2024 season highlighted his exceptional speed and offensive contributions. However, his heavy reliance on speed raises significant concerns about sustainability. At 28 years old and with a history of foot injuries, Mr. Duran’s explosiveness—the cornerstone of his game—is likely to decline, as is common for speed-reliant players.⁸ His most notable injury occurred in 2023 when he underwent surgery for turf toe, which prematurely ended a promising season.⁹ Although he returned in 2024 and delivered his best statistical

⁷ Spotrac, *Jarren Duran*, <https://www.spotrac.com/mlb/boston-red-sox/jarren-duran/> (last visited Jan. 2, 2025).

⁸ Tony Blengino, *Red Sox CF Jarren Duran Builds His Game Around His Above-Average Speed*, FORBES (July 15, 2024), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tonyblengino/2024/07/15/red-sox-cf-jarren-duran-builds-his-game-around-his-above-average-speed/>.

⁹ *Jarren Duran Injury Update: Red Sox Center Fielder Undergoes Surgery for Turf Toe, Out for Rest of 2023 Season*, CBS SPORTS (Aug. 22, 2023),

performance, the risk of recurring injuries, particularly those affecting his speed and explosiveness, remains a significant concern. His performance toward the end of 2024, when he appeared fatigued, further emphasizes the risk that his peak production may not be sustainable. Any loss of speed would significantly diminish his effectiveness both offensively and defensively. He frequently takes inefficient routes to balls, a flaw he compensates for with speed. Should this asset diminish, his defensive value will likely decline, potentially creating liabilities in the outfield. For a player whose game is built on mobility, any compromise to his legs could critically impact his overall value. Historical examples illustrate the risks of overvaluing players whose games are built on speed.¹⁰ The Red Sox's decision to avoid a similar long-term commitment proved wise, and similar caution should be applied when evaluating Mr. Duran. The Club must carefully weigh the risks of overcompensating him based on a skillset prone to regression. For the Red Sox, a cautious approach is essential when assessing his long-term value and compensation, as concerns about his sustained performance persist, particularly regarding the potential recurrence of injuries.

VI. Comparative Baseball Salaries

When judged against comparable first-year arbitration-eligible players, Mr. Duran's performance does not justify a salary above the \$4,000,000 midpoint.

<https://www.cbssports.com/mlb/news/jarren-duran-injury-update-red-sox-center-fielder-undergoes-surgery-for-turf-toe-out-for-rest-of-2023-season/>.

¹⁰ Bleacher Report, *How Quickly Do Speed Guys Truly Decline After 30 Years Old?*, BLEACHER REPORT (Mar. 27, 2013), <https://bleacherreport.com/articles/1577127-how-quickly-do-speed-guys-truly-decline-after-30-years-old>.

A. Nathaniel Lowe

Jarren Duran and Nathaniel Lowe - Platform Year (Duran 2024, Lowe 2022)

	WAR	G	PA	H	HR	RBI	SB	BA	OBP	SLG	OPS	OPS+
Duran	8.7	160	735	191	21	75	34	0.285	0.342	0.492	0.834	129
Lowe	3.2	157	645	179	27	76	2	0.302	0.358	0.492	0.851	139

In 2022, for Lowe's platform year, he posted an impressive .302 batting average, 27 home runs, 76 RBI, and an OPS of .851 over 157 games. His consistent offensive contributions earned him a salary of \$4,050,000, just above the midpoint of his arbitration case. Lowe's higher batting average and superior run production compared to Mr. Duran demonstrate a clear performance gap, especially in power metrics, where Lowe significantly outperformed Mr. Duran in both home runs and RBI.

Jarren Duran and Nathaniel Lowe - Career Total (Duran 2021-2024, Lowe 2019-2024)

	WAR	G	PA	H	HR	RBI	SB	BA	OBP	SLG	OPS	OPS+
Duran	10.0	353	1432	357	34	142	67	0.272	0.326	0.457	0.782	113
Lowe	11.5	686	2821	673	89	329	14	0.272	0.356	0.433	0.789	120

Over his career to 2022, Lowe had accumulated 63 home runs and 197 RBI with an OPS of 0.801, showcasing a more sustained level of productivity than Mr. Duran's 0.782 career OPS. Jarren Duran had an impressive platform year; however, he has yet to demonstrate the consistency that Lowe maintained throughout his platform year, as evidenced by the disparity in their career stats.

B. Austin Riley

Jarren Duran and Austin Riley - Platform Year (Duran 2024, Riley 2021)

	WAR	G	PA	H	HR	RBI	SB	BA	OBP	SLG	OPS	OPS+
Duran	8.7	160	735	191	21	75	34	0.285	0.342	0.492	0.834	129
Riley	6.3	160	662	179	33	107	0	0.303	0.367	0.531	0.898	135

Riley’s 2021 platform season was nothing short of elite. He hit 0.303 with 33 home runs and 107 RBI, finishing with an OPS of 0.898 over 160 games. These numbers earned Riley a \$3,950,000 salary in arbitration (a Club win). Riley’s ability to consistently drive in runs and his league-leading power metrics far surpass anything Mr. Duran has produced in his platform or career seasons. Riley also won similar awards to Mr. Duran both being top 10 in MVP voting in their platform seasons.

Jarren Duran and Austin Riley - Career Totals (Duran 2021-2024, Riley 2019-2024)

	WAR	G	PA	H	HR	RBI	SB	BA	OBP	SLG	OPS	OPS+
Duran	10.0	353	1432	357	34	142	67	0.272	0.326	0.457	0.782	113
Riley	20.8	719	3042	742	152	429	5	0.272	0.338	0.502	0.840	124

By the end of his 2021 platform season, Riley had amassed 59 career home runs and 183 RBI with a career OPS of .827. This level of productivity and consistency highlights Riley’s elite status compared to Mr. Duran, who remains a step below in nearly all major offensive categories. Riley was more consistent in the years before his platform season and just as good as Mr. Duran during it, however, Riley lost a similar arbitration case leading him to make \$3,950,000 million. The precedent has been set that players at Mr. Duran’s level and position make less than the midpoint of 4 million dollars in arbitration one.

C. Tyler O’Neill

Jarren Duran and Tyler O’Neill - Platform Year (Duran 2024, O’Neill 2021)

	WAR	G	PA	H	HR	RBI	SB	BA	OBP	SLG	OPS	OPS+
Duran	8.7	160	735	191	21	75	34	0.285	0.342	0.492	0.834	129
O’Neill	6.1	138	537	138	34	80	15	0.286	0.352	0.560	0.912	148

In 2021, O’Neill recorded a 0.286 batting average with 34 home runs, 80 RBI, and an OPS of 0.912 over 138 games. His platform season demonstrated an elite combination of power and speed, as evidenced by his 15 stolen bases. Despite these stellar numbers, O’Neill received a salary of \$3,400,000 in arbitration (a Club win), well below the midpoint. Mr. Duran’s platform year pales in comparison, with fewer home runs, RBI, and a lower OPS. O’Neil also won similar awards to Mr. Duran being top 10 in MVP voting and winning a Golden Glove.

Jarren Duran and Tyler O’Neill - Career Total (Duran 2021-2024, O’Neill 2018-2024)

	WAR	G	PA	H	HR	RBI	SB	BA	OBP	SLG	OPS	OPS+
Duran	10.0	353	1432	357	34	142	67	0.272	0.326	0.457	0.782	113
O’Neill	12.6	590	2109	462	109	278	44	0.246	0.322	0.469	0.792	116

By 2021, O’Neill had accumulated 55 career home runs and 138 RBI with a career OPS of 0.821. O’Neill’s demonstrated ability to contribute consistently over the years up to his platform season highlights the gap between him and Mr. Duran. Again, it is shown that outfielders on Mr. Duran’s level with similar awards make less than the midpoint of \$4,000,000 in arbitration one.

D. Summary of Mr. Duran's Standing Among Comparative Players

Mr. Duran's 2024 platform season featured a respectable 0.834 OPS, but his limited power output (21 HR, 75 RBI) falls short of his counterparts. Additionally, his career totals lack the consistency and elite metrics seen in players like Riley and O'Neill. This disparity underscores that Mr. Duran does not merit a salary exceeding the midpoint. By comparison, Tyler O'Neill and Nathaniel Lowe entered their arbitration years with more well-rounded career resumes. Both players demonstrated consistency and superior power metrics across multiple seasons. Mr. Duran's late development and inconsistent production place him below these comparators.

VII. Conclusion

Jarren Duran's 2024 season demonstrated solid contributions, but his performance does not align with the standards of elite players. His 21 home runs and 0.278 batting average are respectable but do not place him among baseball's top-tier players. Concerns about (1) his ability to sustain this level of performance, (2) his lack of career consistency, and (3) his history of injuries highlight the need for a more conservative approach to his compensation. In arbitration, precedent matters. And the precedent here is clear: comparable players like Nathaniel Lowe (\$3.75M), Austin Riley (\$3.95M), and Tyler O'Neill (\$3.4M)—who outperformed Mr. Duran in key metrics—received salaries below \$4,000,000. The arbitration panel must consider the fleeting nature of Mr. Duran's success, recognizing that a single standout season does not justify an overvaluation of his future contributions. Comparisons to other speed-reliant players, serve as cautionary tales for overcompensating players whose primary skill is often the first to decline. While the Red Sox value Mr. Duran's potential, the risks associated with his profile warrant

caution. Therefore, the Boston Red Sox respectfully requests that Mr. Duran's compensation for the 2025 season reflect his current standing as a promising, yet unproven, player, below the \$4,000,000 midpoint.