

Baseball

NOTEBOOK

Bagwell May DH, Taveras Might Sit

By JORGE ARANGURE JR.
Washington Post Staff Writer

CHICAGO, Oct. 21 — Houston Astros Manager Phil Garner has not yet announced his final World Series roster or his lineup for Saturday's Game 1 against the Chicago White Sox. It's uncertain whether Jeff Bagwell will be the team's designated hitter for the games here, but he will be on the roster.

"I am excited to no end that Bagwell is with us now," Garner said. "We'll be able to utilize Baggy and I'm happy for him."

It's also uncertain whether center fielder Willy Taveras, recently named the Sporting News rookie of the year, will start. Taveras started Games 1, 2 and 6 of the National League Championship Series, but was on the bench for Games 3, 4 and 5.

"It was a little different," Taveras said. "Usually I play every day but then I wasn't in the lineup. It didn't affect me because I couldn't do anything about it. I could only watch and be ready to play."

Big Week for Konerko

White Sox first baseman Paul Konerko said he missed Thursday's workout because his wife had the couple's first baby.

"I think it's a good thing that we had it this week because there was a chance that if we waited it out, something could have happened next week," Konerko said. "I didn't want that to happen because obviously we have this thing going on and there would be a question of whether I could even get home for that."

Lidge Is Recovering

Houston closer Brad Lidge has had four days off since allowing Albert Pujols's game-winning home run in Game 5 of the NLCS on Monday. Lidge had previously pitched in four of the first five games of that series.

"I'm definitely enjoying the days off," Lidge said. "For me, it's nice to have some recovery time."

Lidge said he would like to have pitched in Game 6 on Wednesday, but was happy his team won.

"It didn't matter as much to me," Lidge said. "I would have enjoyed pitching in that game but I had pitched in four of the past five games."

Yankees Eye Cooper

After guiding the White Sox pitching staff to a 3.61 ERA in the regular season — tied for first in the American League — Don Cooper has emerged as one of the leading candidates to replace Mel Stottlemyre as the New York Yankees' pitching coach.

With the White Sox about to start the World Series, the Yankees have not yet asked permission to speak to Cooper. But that will likely change shortly after Chicago's season ends. Cooper's late father was a Yankees fan.

"He'd be excited about it," Cooper said. "But his focus would be where mine is, on trying to win a world championship."

'El Duque' on Roster

White Sox Manager Ozzie Guillen said he will not make any changes to his postseason roster, meaning Orlando "El Duque" Hernandez will remain on the team in place of rookie Brandon McCarthy.

"I've got to go with the same people it was in the" first and second rounds of the playoffs, Guillen said. "Hopefully the people we pick help us to get to the next level to win this thing."

Staff writer Dave Sheinin contributed to this report.



Houston Astros vs. Chicago White Sox



World Series Matchup

By Dave Sheinin

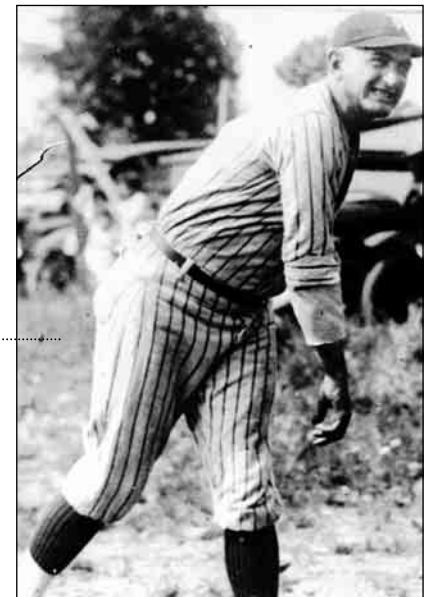
Chicago White Sox 99-63 (American League Central champion) vs. Houston Astros 89-73 (National League wild-card winner)

Head-to-head: They have not met in interleague play since 2000, and they've never met in the World Series.

How they got here: White Sox beat the Boston Red Sox in three games in the Division Series, defeated the Los Angeles Angels in five games in the ALCS. Astros defeated the Atlanta Braves in four games in the Division Series, defeated the St. Louis Cardinals in six games in the NLCS.

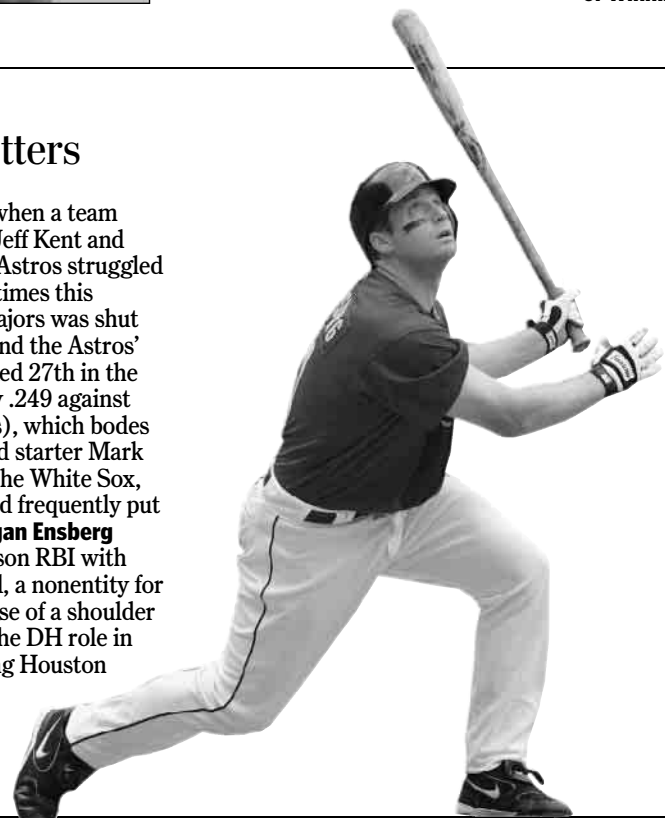


Houston Astros		Chicago White Sox	
1962	Franchise Started	1901	
None	World Series Titles	Two	
None	Previous World Series Appearances	Four	
		1906: Beat Chicago Cubs, 4-2	
		1917: Beat N.Y. Giants, 4-2	
		1919: Lost to Cincinnati, 5-3	
		1959: Lost to L.A. Dodgers, 4-2	
Nolan Ryan	Most Famous Player	Shoeless Joe Jackson	
Original Colt .45s logo included smoking gun.	Black Eye	Black Sox Scandal from the 1919 World Series.	
Rainbows and jerseys are a dangerous combination.	Worst Uniform	Mid-1970s Bermuda Shorts. Nuff said.	
\$76,779,000 (12th)	2005 Payroll (Rank)	\$75,178,000 (13th)	
20-1	Spring Training Odds of Winning World Series	22-1	



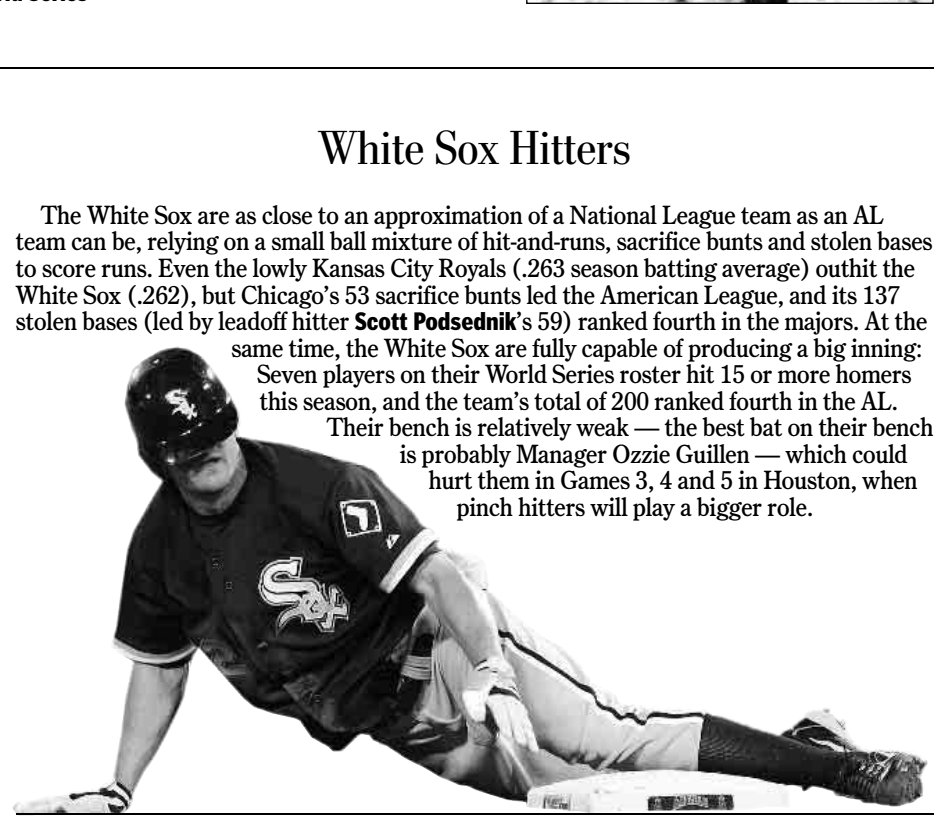
Astros Hitters

As might be expected when a team loses Carlos Beltran and Jeff Kent and fails to replace them, the Astros struggled mightily to score runs at times this season. No team in the majors was shut out as many times (17), and the Astros' .256 batting average ranked 27th in the majors. They also hit only .249 against lefties (29th in the majors), which bodes well for the White Sox and starter Mark Buehrle in Game 2. Like the White Sox, they excel at small ball and frequently put the game in motion. **Morgan Ensberg** leads the team in postseason RBI with nine. Veteran Jeff Bagwell, a nonentity for much of the season because of a shoulder injury, is expected to fill the DH role in Games 1, 2, 6 and 7, giving Houston one more deep threat.



White Sox Hitters

The White Sox are as close to an approximation of a National League team as an AL team can be, relying on a small ball mixture of hit-and-runs, sacrifice bunts and stolen bases to score runs. Even the lowly Kansas City Royals (.263 season batting average) outhit the White Sox (.262), but Chicago's 53 sacrifice bunts led the American League, and its 137 stolen bases (led by leadoff hitter **Scott Podsednik's** 59) ranked fourth in the majors. At the same time, the White Sox are fully capable of producing a big inning: Seven players on their World Series roster hit 15 or more homers this season, and the team's total of 200 ranked fourth in the AL. Their bench is relatively weak — the best bat on their bench is probably Manager Ozzie Guillen — which could hurt them in Games 3, 4 and 5 in Houston, when pinch hitters will play a bigger role.



Starters

In lieu of mystique and aura, this is where the World Series' "sexy" quotient resides this year: the deepest, most stacked rotations in baseball squaring off, with marquee matchups in the first three games: Contreras vs. Clemens, Buehrle vs. Pettitte, Garland vs. Oswalt. Those six pitchers won a combined 99 games this season. If there is an advantage here, it is in Game 4, where the White Sox will throw 14-game winner Freddy Garcia against Houston's Brandon Backe. The White Sox' rotation accounted for 44% of the possible 45 innings in the ALCS, including four straight complete games. But Houston's Oswalt has been the single most unhittable starter in this postseason, winning each of his three starts and holding opposing hitters to a .184 batting average.



Bullpen

It's hard to remember whether the White Sox even have a bullpen, so little has it been used of late. Only Neal Cotts (two-thirds of an inning) made an appearance in the ALCS. But this is a formidable bunch, and the White Sox are not afraid to use them — in the Division Series, their relievers pitched 7½ critical scoreless innings, including a pair of saves by closer Bobby Jenks. Meantime, Astros closer **Brad Lidge** lost some of his aura of invincibility by blowing a two-run lead in Game 5 of the NLCS. But he and Chad Qualls make up one of the best setup/closer combos in the game. The "wild card" here is Chicago's Orlando Hernandez, who is capable of taking over for a faltering starter and delivering several shutout innings in the middle of a game. Houston does not have a comparable safety net.

Astros Statistics

Catchers	B/T	AB	R	H	HR	RBI	BB	SO	AVG.		
Brad Ausmus	R/R	387	35	100	3	47	51	48	.258		
Playoffs		40	6	11	1	2	3	10	.275		
Raul Chavez	R/R	99	6	17	2	6	4	18	.172		
Playoffs		1	0	0	0	0	1	0	.000		
Infielders	B/T	AB	R	H	HR	RBI	BB	SO	AVG.		
Jeff Bagwell	R/R	100	11	25	3	19	18	21	.250		
Playoffs		3	1	1	0	1	0	0	.333		
Craig Biggio	R/R	590	94	156	26	69	37	90	.264		
Playoffs		43	8	14	0	4	4	8	.326		
Eric Bruntlett	R/R	109	19	24	4	14	10	25	.220		
Playoffs		7	1	1	0	0	0	5	.143		
Chris Burke	R/R	318	49	79	5	26	23	62	.248		
Playoffs		23	6	8	2	4	2	3	.348		
Morgan Ensberg	R/R	526	86	149	36	101	85	119	.283		
Playoffs		39	3	10	0	9	4	5	.256		
Adam Everett	R/R	549	58	136	11	54	26	103	.248		
Playoffs		37	3	10	0	3	1	5	.270		
Mike Lamb	L/R	322	41	76	12	53	22	65	.236		
Playoffs		22	4	6	2	3	2	3	.273		
Jose Vizcaino	S/R	187	15	46	1	23	15	40	.246		
Playoffs		7	0	0	0	0	0	1	.000		
Outfielders	B/T	AB	R	H	HR	RBI	BB	SO	AVG.		
Lance Berkman	S/L	468	76	137	24	82	91	72	.293		
Playoffs		35	6	11	2	8	7	7	.314		
Jason Lane	R/L	517	65	138	26	78	32	105	.267		
Playoffs		38	4	9	2	6	3	7	.237		
Orlando Palmeiro	L/L	204	22	58	3	20	15	23	.284		
Playoffs		10	0	2	0	3	3	0	.200		
Luke Scott	L/R	80	6	15	0	4	9	23	.188		
Playoffs		2	1	0	0	0	1	1	.000		
Willy Taveras	R/R	592	82	172	3	29	25	103	.291		
Playoffs		28	3	10	0	0	2	2	.357		
Reg. Season Totals		5462	693	1400	161	654	481	1037	.256		
Playoff Totals		353	47	96	9	43	34	63	.272		
Pitchers	W-L	G	GS	IP	H	HR	BB	SO	ERA		
Brandon Backe	L	10-8	25	0	149.1	151	19	67	97	4.76	
Playoffs		0-0	3	2	11.0	8	1	6	10	4.91	
Roger Clemens	R	13-8	32	0	211.1	151	11	62	185	1.87	
Playoffs		2-1	3	2	14.0	13	1	5	7	4.50	
Mike Gallo	L	0-1	36	0	20.1	18	1	10	12	2.66	
Playoffs		0-0	5	0	2.1	1	0	1	0	0.00	
Brad Lidge	R	4-4	70	0	42.0	28	5	23	103	2.29	
Playoffs		0-1	7	0	3.0	8	1	6	12	4.00	
Roy Oswalt	R	20-12	35	35	0	241.2	243	18	48	1.84	
Playoffs		3-0	3	0	21.1	14	1	6	19	2.11	
Andy Pettitte	L	17-9	33	33	0	222.1	188	17	41	1.71	
Playoffs		-1-1	3	3	0	19.1	19	3	6	12.46	
Chad Qualls	R	6-4	77	0	79.2	73	7	23	60	3.28	
Playoffs		-1-0	6	0	7.2	5	0	2	5	2.35	
Wandy Rodriguez	L	10-10	25	22	0	128.2	135	19	53	80	5.53
Playoffs		0-0	1	0	0	1.0	1	0	2	3.00	
Russ Springer	R	4-4	62	0	59.0	49	9	21	54	4.73	
Playoffs		0-0	3	0	3.1	5	0	2	2	2.70	
Dan Wheeler	R	2-3	71	0	37.3	53	7	19	69	2.21	
Playoffs		0-0	6	0	7.0	6	0	3	7	1.29	
Reg. Season Totals		89-73			45	1443.0	1336	155	440	1164	3.51
Playoff Totals		7-3			3	97.0	80	8	37	78	3.43

Defense

While this series is short on Gold Glove winners, both teams are full of capable, unspectacular fielders who make the routine plays. Houston ranked second in the NL in defense; the White Sox finished fourth in the AL. Astros catcher Brad Ausmus, a two-time Gold Glove winner, may be the best defensive player on either team — a big factor, considering the way the White Sox like to put the game in motion. Astros second baseman Craig Biggio won four Gold Gloves, but the last was in 1997, and he is now considered a defensive liability who is often replaced late in games by Eric Bruntlett. The White Sox have made only four errors in the postseason, with two of them committed by pitchers, and their double-play combo of shortstop Juan Uribe and second baseman **Tadahito Iguchi** is better than their Astros counterparts.



Managers

Ozzie Guillen's biggest contribution to the White Sox thus far has been staying out of the way and letting his players play. Whereas some managers would have been tempted to over-manage the bullpen in the ALCS, Guillen trusted his starters to finish, with brilliant results. Meanwhile, Houston's Phil Garner has leaned heavily on his closer, Brad Lidge, often bringing him in for two innings at a time. He also has two bench weapons, Jeff Bagwell and Orlando Palmeiro, that the White Sox do not.



Fearless Prediction

White Sox in seven.

Schedule

All games on WTTG-5, WBFF-45

Game 1: Tonight
Astros (Andy Pettitte, 13-8, 1.87 ERA) at White Sox (Jose Contreras, 15-7, 3.61), 7:30

Game 2: Tomorrow
Astros (Andy Pettitte, 17-9, 2.39) at White Sox (Mark Buehrle, 16-8, 3.12), 7:30

Game 3: Tuesday
White Sox (Jon Garland, 14-8, 3.50) at Astros (Roy Oswalt, 20-12, 2.94), 8

Game 4: Wednesday
White Sox (Freddy Garcia, 14-8, 3.87) at Astros (Brandon Backe, 10-8, 4.76), 8

Game 5: Thursday
White Sox at Astros, 8 (if necessary)

Game 6: Oct. 29
Astros at White Sox, 7:30 (if necessary)

Game 7: Oct. 30
Astros at White Sox, 7:30 (if necessary)

White Sox Statistics

Catchers	B/T	AB	R	H	HR	RBI	BB	SO	AVG.
A.J. Pierzynski	L/R	460	61	118	18	56	23	68	.257
Playoffs		27	6	7	3	6	2	6	.259
Chris Wiggler	R/R	141	18	34	4	11	10	22	.241
Playoffs		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000
Infielders	B/T	AB	R	H	HR	RBI	BB	SO	AVG.
Geoff Blum	S/R	95	6	19	1	3	4	15	.200
Playoffs		1	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000
Joe Crede	R/R	432	54	109	22	62	25	66	.252
Playoffs		28	4	8	2	8	1	4	.286
Willy Harris	L/R	121	17	31	1	8	13	25	.256
Playoffs		1	0	1	0	1	0	0	.000
Tadahito Iguchi	R/R	511	74	142	15	71	47	114	.278
Playoffs		29	5	6	1	4	1	9	.207
Paul Konerko	R/R	575	98	163	40	100	81	109	.283
Playoffs		33	5	9	4	11	1	5	.273
Pablo Ozuna	R/R	203	27	56	0	11	7	26	.276
Playoffs									