



Los Angeles Angels vs. Boston Red Sox

Angels 100-62, AL West champions; Red Sox 95-67, AL wild-card winners
2008 head-to-head: Angels won eight of nine meetings



■ **Red Sox' Top Two Starters:** RHP Josh Beckett and LHP Jon Lester. Beckett is the clear No. 1, and the dominant figure in last year's postseason, but he's being pushed to Game 3 because of a strained oblique. If he's fine, this is no big worry: Lester is a deserving substitute, and Daisuke Matsuzaka an excellent No. 2.

■ **Angels' Top Two Starters:** RHP John Lackey and RHP Ervin Santana. Lackey gets the honor largely on tenure; Santana has been the more dominant pitcher, and the Red Sox beat Lackey in Game 1 of last year's first round.

■ **Red Sox' Secret Weapon:** RHP Manny Delcarmen has been brilliant down the stretch, allowing only nine hits, nine walks and one earned run in his past 18 appearances (0.40 ERA).

■ **Angels' Secret Weapon:** RHP Jose Arredondo is a fairly unknown rookie with filthy stuff (opponents batted .190 with a .533 OPS against him) and the ability to pitch up to two innings.

■ **Prediction:** Red Sox in five.



David Ortiz

GAME 1

at Los Angeles,
10:07 tonight

Jon Lester (16-6, 3.21) vs.
John Lackey (12-5, 3.75)

GAME 2

at Los Angeles,
9:37 p.m. Friday

D. Matsuzaka (18-3, 2.90)
vs. E. Santana (16-7, 3.49)

GAME 3

at Boston,
Sunday, TBA

Joe Saunders (17-7, 3.41) vs.
Josh Beckett (12-10, 4.03)

GAME 4*

at Boston, Monday, TBA

GAME 5*

at L.A., Oct. 8, TBA

* if necessary; all games on TBS



Tampa Bay Rays vs. Chicago White Sox

Rays 97-65, AL East champions; White Sox 89-74, AL Central champions
2008 head-to-head: Rays won six of 10 meetings



■ **White Sox' Top Two Starters:** LHP Mark Buehrle and RHP Gavin Floyd. The White Sox played two extra games for the Central crown, so Buehrle and Floyd would pitch on short rest if they get the ball for Games 1 and 2.

■ **Rays' Top Two Starters:** RHP James Shields and LHP Scott Kazmir. Shields has been a rock down the stretch (5-1, 3.34 ERA since Aug. 1); Kazmir hasn't pitched into the seventh since July 21.

■ **White Sox' Secret Weapon:** LHP Clayton Richard. Despite his numbers (2-5, 6.04 ERA), the rookie has been solid since moving to the bullpen in mid-September; his ability to induce ground balls could prove valuable.

■ **Rays' Secret Weapon:** LHP David Price. The Rays were expected to go up until the day-of-game deadline to decide whether to include Price, the No. 1 overall draft pick in 2007, on their roster. But if they do, he's trouble — a big (6-6) lefty with a 95-mph fastball and a 1.93 ERA in September.

■ **Prediction:** Rays in three.



James Shields

GAME 1

at Tampa Bay,
2:37 p.m. tomorrow

J. Vazquez (12-16, 4.67) vs.
James Shields (14-8, 3.56)

GAME 2

at Tampa Bay,
6:07 p.m. Friday

M. Buehrle (15-12, 3.79) vs.
Scott Kazmir (12-8, 3.49)

GAME 3

at Chicago,
Sunday, TBA

TBA vs.
TBA

GAME 4*

at Chicago, Monday, TBA

GAME 5*

at Tampa Bay, Oct. 8, TBA

* if necessary; all games on TBS