New York Yankees at Boston Red Sox

Contributed by Steve Hasting
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The best rivalry in sports gets underway again this weekend as the Yankees and Red Sox begin their final series of the regular season. The way the year has gone the two teams may meet again in the playoffs. The Yankees still believe they have a chance to catch the Red Sox in the American League East but this weekend’s series will decide if that is still the case but the Yankees are still leading the Wild Card race. New York sends Andy Pettitte in the opener on Friday while Boston goes with Daisuke Matsuzaka. SBG Global reports that early betting has the public taking the favored Yankees on the Road.

New York Yankees at Boston Red Sox
Friday, 7:05 pm Eastern – ESPN
SBG Global Opening Line: Yankees -120, Total 10 Over (-115)

Dice K has not pitched well of late for Boston. He is 1-4 with a 9.57 ERA in his past four starts but the Red Sox are still confident when he pitches. "We're very excited to watch him pitch," Red Sox manager Terry Francona said. "He's had a rough go of it, at times. There's a reason to get excited when all your guys pitch, and it's Daisuke's turn."

The Red Sox are trying to win their first American League East title since 1995 and break the Yankees’ run of nine straight titles. Depending upon what happened on Thursday night with the Yankees game in Toronto the Red Sox will lead by either 4.5 or 5.5 games. "All we have to do is play and try to win games and not worry about the situation that happened [last year]," said David Ortiz, "Right now, we're focused on winning as many games as we can against those guys."

SBG Global Current Line: Yankees -122, Total 10 Flat

The Red Sox have dropped seven of their last nine against the Yankees and are 7-8 in the season series. "I think that's a different scenario now," Red Sox closer Jonathan Papelbon said. "You're coming into Fenway Park and playing on our turf and the last series of the season, and that's a big difference instead of us going there. Hopefully, we can get our home fans behind us and play with a little intensity in our home park."

The matchups in the series are great. Pettitte and Dice K go on Friday with Josh Beckett going against Chien-Ming Wang on Saturday and Curt Schilling and Roger Clemens set for Sunday. It all begins on Friday with Dice K who is 2-1 against New York this season but has an ERA of 6.98 against them. Dice K gave up six hits and eight runs in 2 2/3 innings in his last start against Baltimore. Pettitte was great again in his last start as he allowed just two runs in 6 1/3 innings against Kansas City. Pettitte is 9-2 in 12 second-half starts and has allowed three earned runs or fewer 11 times. Pettitte is 2-1 with a 4.75 ERA in six games, five starts, against the Red Sox this season.

Here were the betting statistics heading into Thursday’s action. The Yankees are 5-0 in their last 5 road games. The Yankees are 6-1 in their last 7 vs. a team with a winning record. The Yankees are 6-2 in their last 8 vs. the American League East. The Yankees are 19-7 in their last 26 road games vs. a right-handed starter. The Yankees are 4-10 in their last 14 games as a road underdog. The Yankees are 4-0 in Pettitte's last 4 road starts. The Yankees are 38-16 in Pettitte's last 54 starts vs. the American League East. The Yankees are 3-8 in Pettitte's last 11 starts as an underdog. The Yankees are 15-6 in Pettitte's last 21 starts vs. the Red Sox. The Yankees are 9-4 in the last 13 meetings in Boston between the two teams.

The Red Sox are 6-2 in their last 8 games as a home favorite. The Red Sox are 9-3 in their last 12 vs. the American League East. The Red Sox are 5-2 in their last 7 games vs. a left-handed starter. The Red Sox are 2-5 in their last 7 vs. a team with a winning record. The Red Sox are 8-3 in Matsuzaka's last 11 home starts. The Red Sox are 1-5 in Matsuzaka's last 6 starts overall. The Red Sox are 1-6 in Matsuzaka's last 7 starts vs. the American League East.

The Over is 21-6-3 in the Yankees last 30 games as an underdog. The Under is 6-2 in the Yankees last 8 vs. the American League East. The Under is 9-3 in the Yankees last 12 games vs. a right-handed starter. The Over is 4-0 in Pettitte's last 4 starts as a road underdog. The Under is 4-0 in Pettitte's last 4 starts vs. the American League East. The Under is 7-2 in Pettitte's last 9 starts overall. The Under is 9-4 in Pettitte's last 13 road starts. The Over is 5-1 in Pettitte's last 6 starts vs. the Red Sox.

The Under is 5-0 in the Red Sox last 5 home games vs. a left-handed starter. The Under is 7-3 in the Red Sox last 10 games vs. a left-handed starter. The Over is 4-1 in Matsuzaka's last 5 starts as a favorite. The Under is 7-2 in Matsuzaka's last 9 starts vs. a team with a winning record. The Over is 26-8 in the last 34 meetings in Boston between the two teams.