

Los Angeles Angels to Consider Trade Offers for Shohei Ohtani, the Best Player in MLB



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[Shohei Ohtani](#) first landed on the radar of baseball scouts as a dual threat, hitter and pitcher, during a five-year stint in what many consider the second-best professional baseball association in the world—Japan's Nippon Professional Baseball league. His stellar performance in the batter's box and on the pitcher's mound earned him awards and a comparison to the mighty New York Yankees' slugger, Babe Ruth. Naturally, once Ohtani fulfilled his contractual obligations to the Hokkaido Nippon-Ham Fighters in Nippon Professional Baseball (NPB), it ignited one of the most significant international free-agent pursuits since Ichiro Suzuki left the NPB for Major League Baseball nearly two decades prior. Ichiro went on to become a 10-time MLB All-Star with the Seattle Mariners, and Ohtani almost joined him in 2018, but ultimately he decided to sign with the Los Angeles Angels, Seattle's rival in the AL West Division.

Ohtani's inaugural season with the Angels came during a time when the team's batting order featured the best player in the MLB, [Mike Trout](#), a three-time American League MVP at the apex of his career. Ohtani won the "Rookie of the Year," but he did not become an All-Star until 2021 when injuries began to plague Trout. So, technically, although Ohtani and Trout have been teammates for nearly five seasons, the two cornerstones of the Angels' franchise have only played one full season together, where they were both fully healthy and in their prime. Unlike legendary MLB duos of the past, such as David Ortiz and Manny Ramirez, during their championship run with the Red Sox in the 2000s, Trout and Ohtani might not even get the chance to reach their full potential over the course of multiple seasons together.

In September 2021, Ohtani stated that re-signing with the Angels would be predicated on their ability to build a title contender, but his teams have never made the playoffs, and time is running out because his contract with the team expires at the end of the 2023 season.

Mike Trout's annual salary with the Angels is \$37.12 million, while Ohtani only makes \$5.5 million per MLB (and international) signing rules. However, once the 2021 American League MVP hits the open market on November 10th, he's expected to command at least \$700 million (over ten years) from potential suitors such as the Los Angeles Dodgers, New York Yankees, San Francisco Giants, and New York Mets.

As the Angels (45-46) headed into the All-Star break, seven games out of first place, rumors began to swirl that the team would trade Ohtani for a bundle of prospects rather than allow him to walk as a free agent for nothing. Several pundits, such as Alex Rodriguez, have publically made the suggestion. Nevertheless, the prospect of trading away a once-in-a-lifetime superstar who's currently the front-runner to win MVP and an All-Star pitcher is a daunting task that could land the Angels on the wrong side of history, similar to the Boston Red Sox when they traded [Babe Ruth](#) away to the New York Yankees for \$100,000 back in 1920. The trade deadline is less than three weeks away, and the Angels' playoff hopes this year have dwindled since Mike Trout was placed back on the disabled list due to a fracture in his left hand. Earlier today, Jon Morosi, a sports writer with the *MLB Network*, revealed that the Angels are finally exploring trade options for their star hitter/pitcher. If he's moved before August 1st, the Angels could receive a substantial haul of young players that could help solidify their rosters for the next decade and beyond.