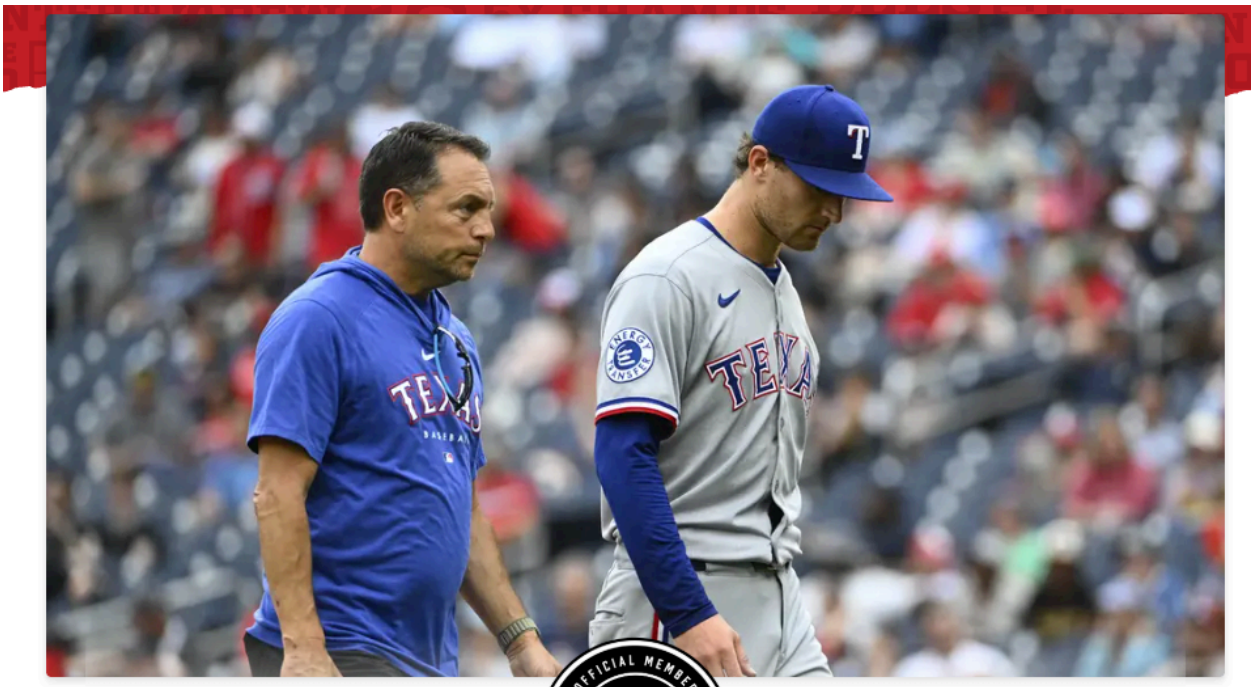
Texas Rangers' focus on health paying early dividends

JEFF WILSON – APRIL 5, 2026



The Texas Rangers are hoping to see less of athlethic[illegible] the field this season tending to player injuries, as he did here in 2025 wi[illegible]lls-Imagn Images).

ARLINGTON — The best development from Texas Rangers spring training this year — and it really isn't close — can be summed up by looking at their season-opening injured list. Only one player came away from Arizona with a fresh injury.

Cody Freeman started aching early in camp, and doctors found a stress fracture in his lower back. He's on the 10-day IL. Left-hander Cody Bradford is there, too, and Jordan Montgomery is on the 60-day IL, but the Rangers already knew they needed more time.

The fact is that the Rangers are almost fully healthy, and president of baseball operations Chris Young said he was floored by the positive medical report after witnessing past spring camps in which key contributors were felled by injuries.

Some had been freakish injuries, like Josh Jung's torn labrum in 2022 and Jon Gray's broken wrist last spring. Bradford's woes started a year ago with a sprained elbow ligament that required internal brace surgery. Wyatt Langford was another player who was slowed last spring, by the first of four 2025 oblique injuries.

The injuries continued during the season, just as they had for a few years running. While the Rangers knew there was no way to prevent every injury, like Evan Carter's broken wrist late last season, they entered the offseason dead set on limiting them.

It was such a priority that Skip Schumaker mentioned it during his introductory press conference as the new manager, less than two weeks after the 2025 season ended.

What followed was a full audit of how players prepared in the offseason and how much they worked during spring training. The Rangers addressed players' chronic issues, like Langford's obliques and Corey Seager's legs. The medical staff was as hands-on as it could be during the offseason, finding the sweet spot between helpful and annoying.

And, for the most part, it worked like a charm during a smooth spring training. The real test, though, is the 162-game regular season.

"It starts with the trust of the training staff and the player and what happened in this offseason with everything that they did and put together, as far as their training regimen," Schumaker said.

"Now, knock on wood. I hope it's over the course of the season as well. But there are a lot of guys who are happy with how they feel, how their body feels. A couple guys have had some nagging things, but it feels like they all pushed through whatever they needed to push through."

The health overhaul started in the offseason, Rangers vice president of performance Napoleon Pichardo said, but the bulk of the work was done in spring training. Players received individualized offseason programs or areas where they should place their focus heading into camp. Langford, for instance, said he did much more rotational work to combat the oblique issues.

Players were put through three days of evaluation and MRI exams at spring training to get a baseline for how to move forward. For the team's plan to work, the players had to buy into what club personnel — from the strength and conditioning group to the athletic trainers — was selling.

Pichardo oversees players performance, and the foundation is built by strength and conditioning coaches Logan Frandsen and Wade Lamont; athletic trainers Matt Lucero, Jacob Newborn and Sean Fields; and physical therapist Regan Wong. The line to see massage therapist Raul Cardenas can stretch out the door.

The buy-in was fairly easy. No one likes to be injured once during a season, let alone the three IL stints Langford, Carter, Seager, Jake Burger and Chris Martin each endured. The Rangers saw 23 players land on the IL over 38 separate stints, tied for the third-most in baseball.

The Rangers lost 1,312 games to injury, which was actually the ninth-fewest in baseball, but some key contributors missed signficant time. That can't happen to a team that is struggling offensively.

"If you look at the really good teams, the best players on their teams who have 500 at-bats or more are going to make or break your season," Schumaker said. "If our four or five [key] guys get 500 at-bats and they're healthy, most likely, we're going to be pretty good. So, that's the goal, just trying to get these guys on the field and stay on the field."

Seager tops the list of players who the Rangers want/need to stay healthy. His 2025 season ended early because of an appendectomy, which is an ailment no one can prevent, but his legs were an issue early in the season and have been an issue since 2023.

He traveled to the University of Wisconsin last season to hear from Dr. Brian Heiderscheit, a professor who specializes in running injuries. Seager said that the work he was doing before games wasn't enough, and he spent the rest of last season, a full offseason and spring training following Heiderscheit's recommendations.

Seager was told that his lateral hamstrings weren't firing long enough during exertion, and he worked on correcting that so diligently in the offseason that he has met or even exceeded Heiderscheit's goals. Seager believes the new leg regimen could transform his career.

"I was working in the sense of basically retraining them to fire as I was going through exercises and staying turned on pretty much the whole time," he said. "It's one of those things that you have pivotal points in your career. This is what I'm hoping is one of those things."

Pichardo, a former strength and conditioning coach, said that the Rangers called upon Heiderscheit and his team during spring training to evaluate each player's running. But a player's progress can't truly be measured until he steps on the gas.

The Rangers were holding their breath March 18 as Seager stretched a single into a double. He survived, which only adds to the confidence he has in his regimen.

"The No. 1 way to prevent sprinting injuries is you have to sprint," Pichardo said. "It's the five, six, seven days in a row you don't do a maximum sprint and then you go to do it, and that's when you get into trouble.

"But our strength and conditioning group here does a tremendous job, and those guys get on the line and run their sprints and monitor that workload stuff very closely."

To that end, some players could be spotted wearing a Catapult Sports Technology monitoring system, which tracked things like swing volume and time running. Langford, Brandon Nimmo and Jacob deGrom were on different build-up schedules than the rest of the team.

The Rangers tried to find the right amount of prep work without wearing out players before the season.

"If you look at the build-up, it's been really strategic," Pichardo said.

The monitoring continues now that the regular season has started. The Rangers are only eight games into the 162-game behemoth, and Schumaker said that he doesn't want to push players too much in April.

That's especially so with the pitching staff. The starters won't get to 100 pitches early on, and Schumaker wants to avoid using relievers more than two days in a row. Some teams are already getting beat up, but the Rangers have continued their run of good health.

Knock on wood.

"You look around the league, it feels like there's a lot of different injuries," Schumaker said. "It's been kind of eye-opening. Trying to keep our starting pitchers healthy is, obviously, key throughout our season. You try to monitor as much as you can, and then try to get the extra rest days when you can."

The Rangers feel like they have a good head start after a critical health-focused project over the offseason and in spring training.

"It was a monster," Pichardo said. "But it's worth it."