

SWING + APPROACH ANALYSIS

Nick Castellanos

2017 → 2026

An audit of the swing and the approach, with
recommended next steps.

Right-handed hitter • RF / 1B / DH
Regular season through May 31, 2026

Prepared by Kevin Rogers • October 2026 • Private



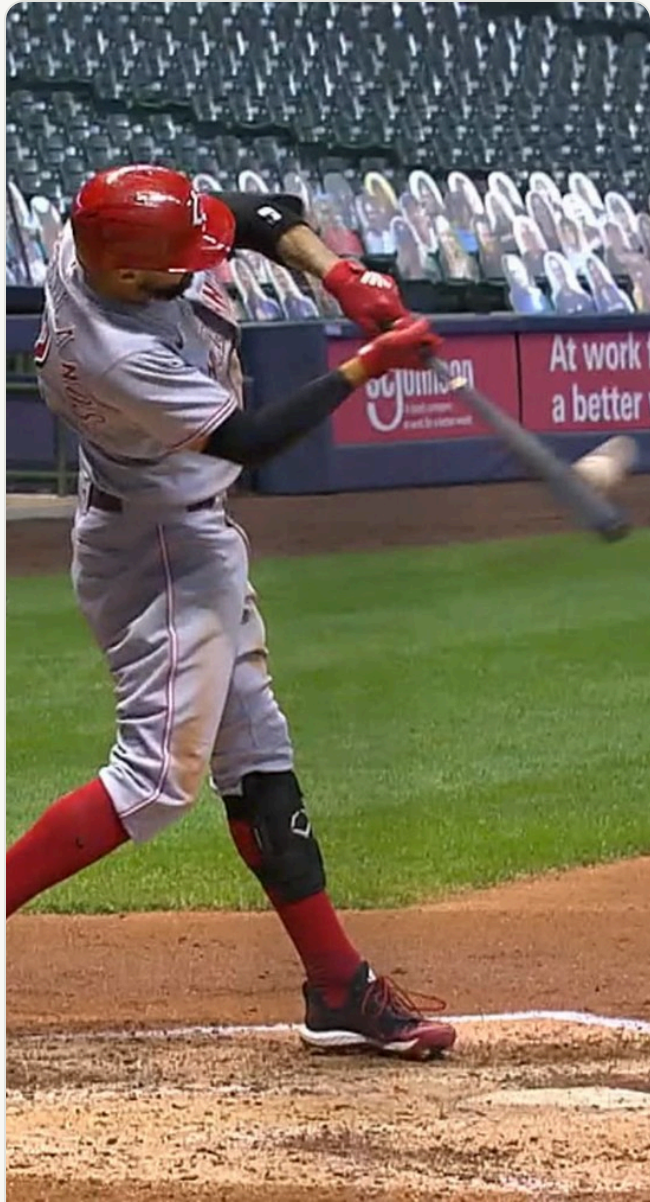
Ten seasons studied, five clubs



 **Detroit**
2017-19



 **Chicago (NL)**
2019



 **Cincinnati**
2020-21



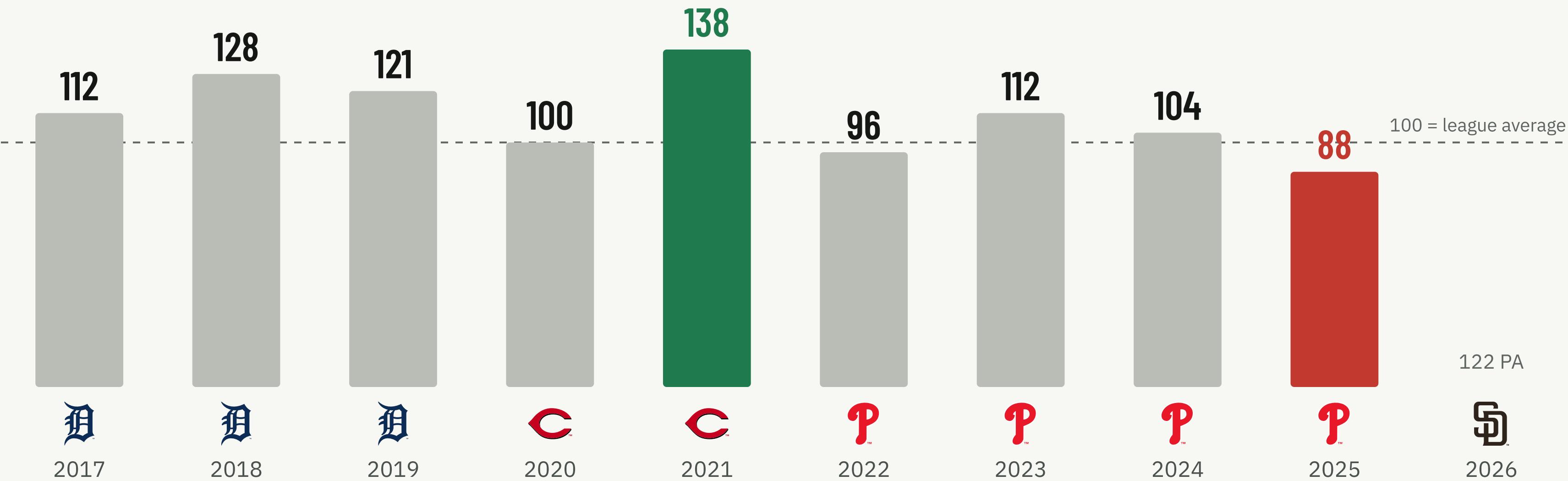
 **Philadelphia**
2022-25



 **San Diego**
2026

From 2017 to 2021 the bat was league average or better every season

OPS+ by season. 100 is league average. The 2021 season was the career high: a 138 OPS+ and 34 home runs.



Baseball-Reference. 2020 was a 60-game season. 2026: 122 plate appearances with San Diego (.191/.221/.339) before the June 5 release.

START HERE

What held up

Four parts of the 2021 swing are still there in 2026.

0.21 s

Front foot down

after the pitcher's release, every season since 2017.

Closed

At foot down

Chest still turned in, number showing to the center-field camera.

84%

Swings at heart pitches

The same rate as 2021.

77.6

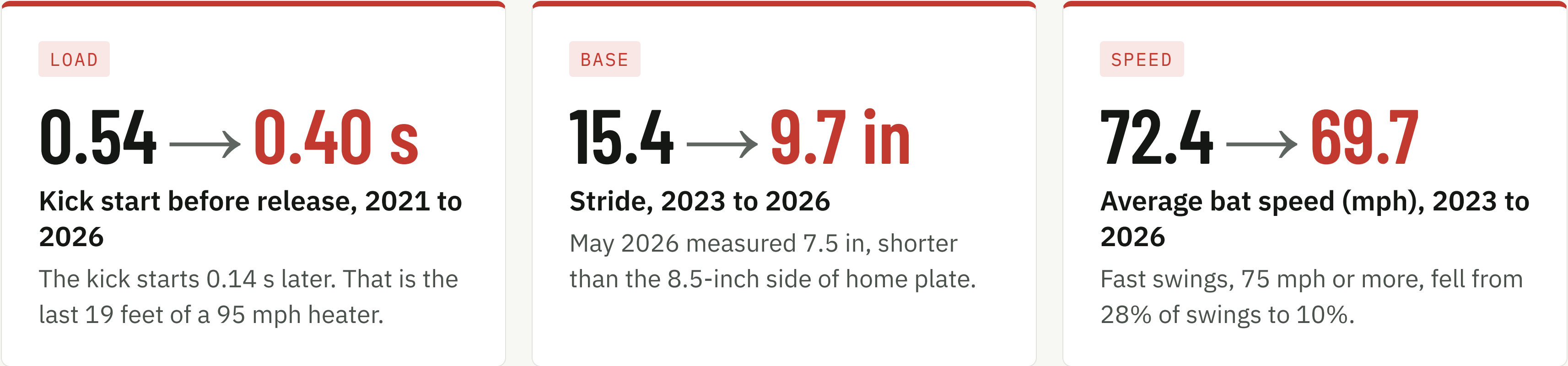
mph, top gear

His fastest 5% of swings in 2026.

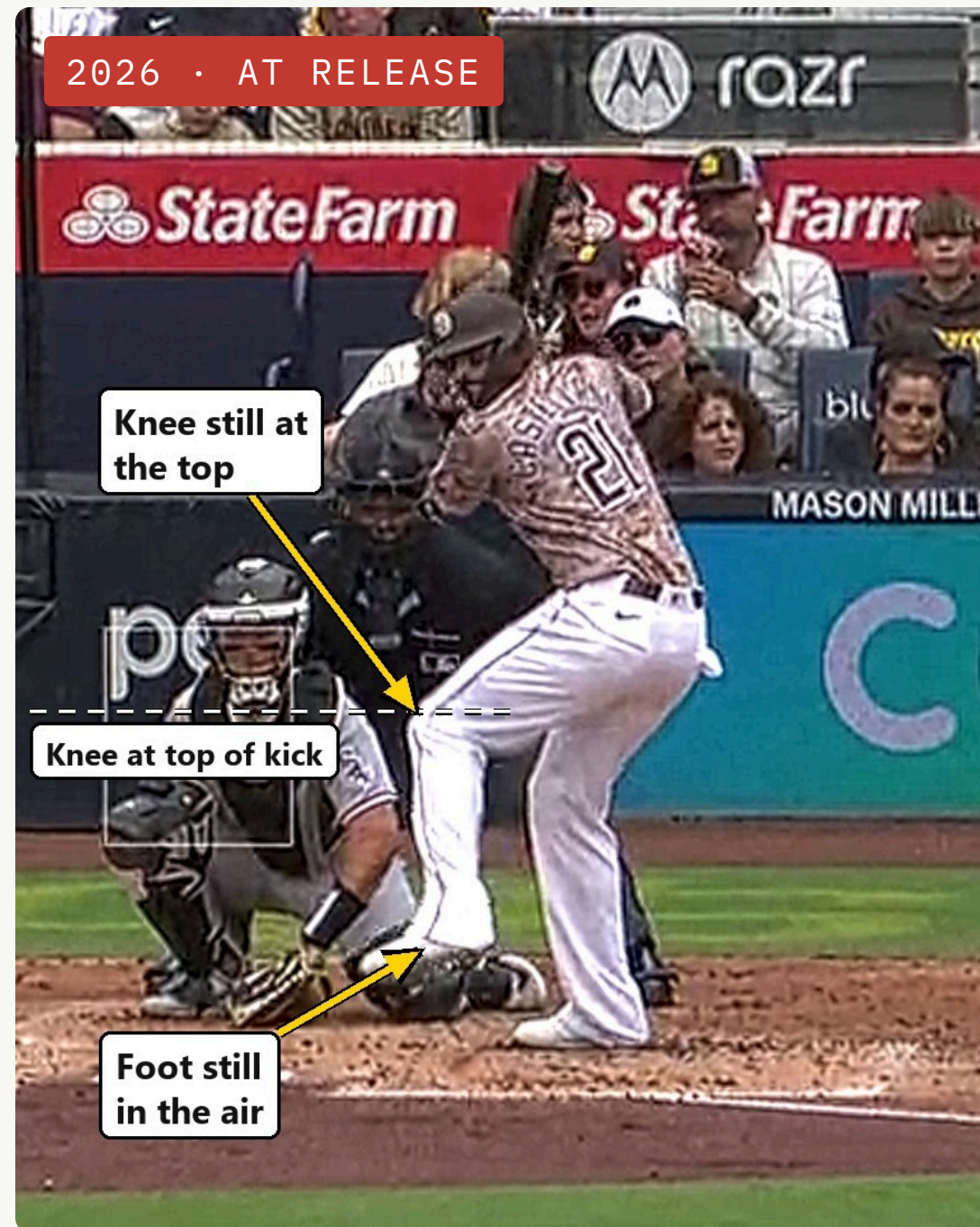
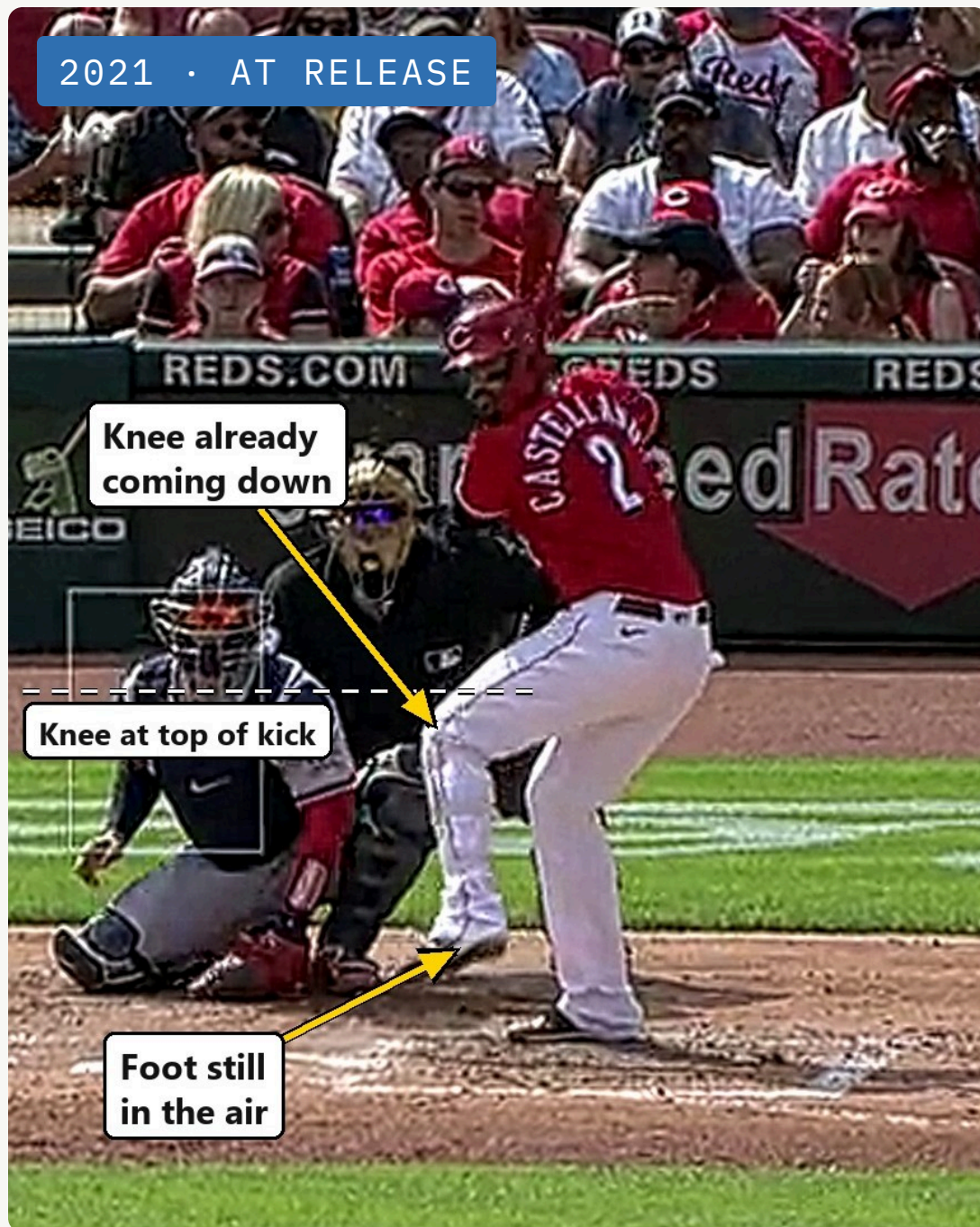


Three things changed

Each one shows up on video or on Hawk-Eye, and each one has been better before.



Video study: 325 home-feed center-field swings, 2017-26. Stride and bat speed: Hawk-Eye via Baseball Savant (2023 = second half).



LOAD · THE VIDEO

At release, the 2021 kick was already coming down

Same pitch, same camera. In 2021 the knee was on the way down when the ball left the hand. In 2026 it was still at the top.

0.54 s

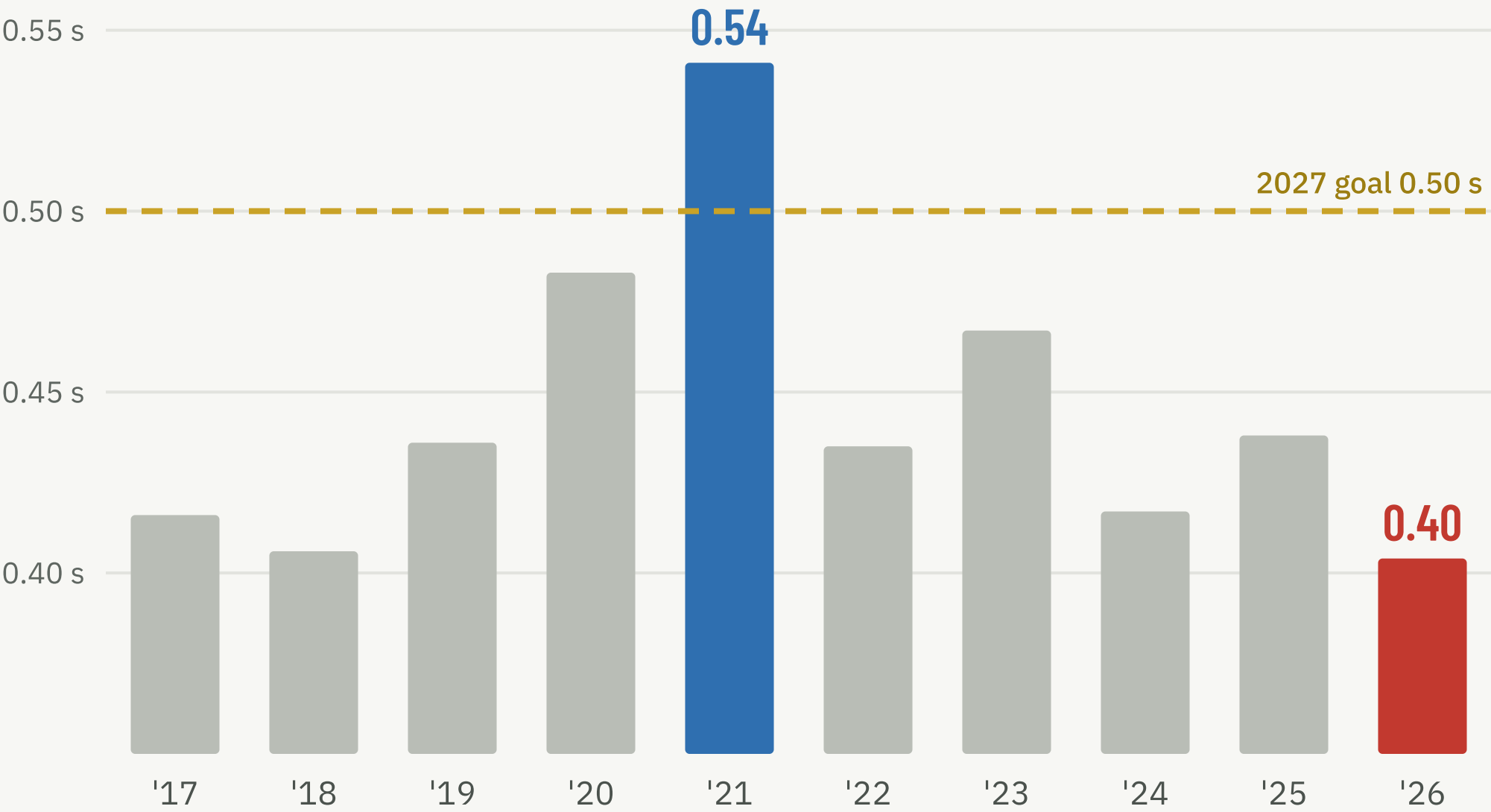
2021 kick start, before release

0.40 s

2026

96 mph four-seamers, home-feed center-field camera, frame of the pitcher's release. Season medians from the 325-swing video study.

When the kick starts, 2017 to 2026



0.54

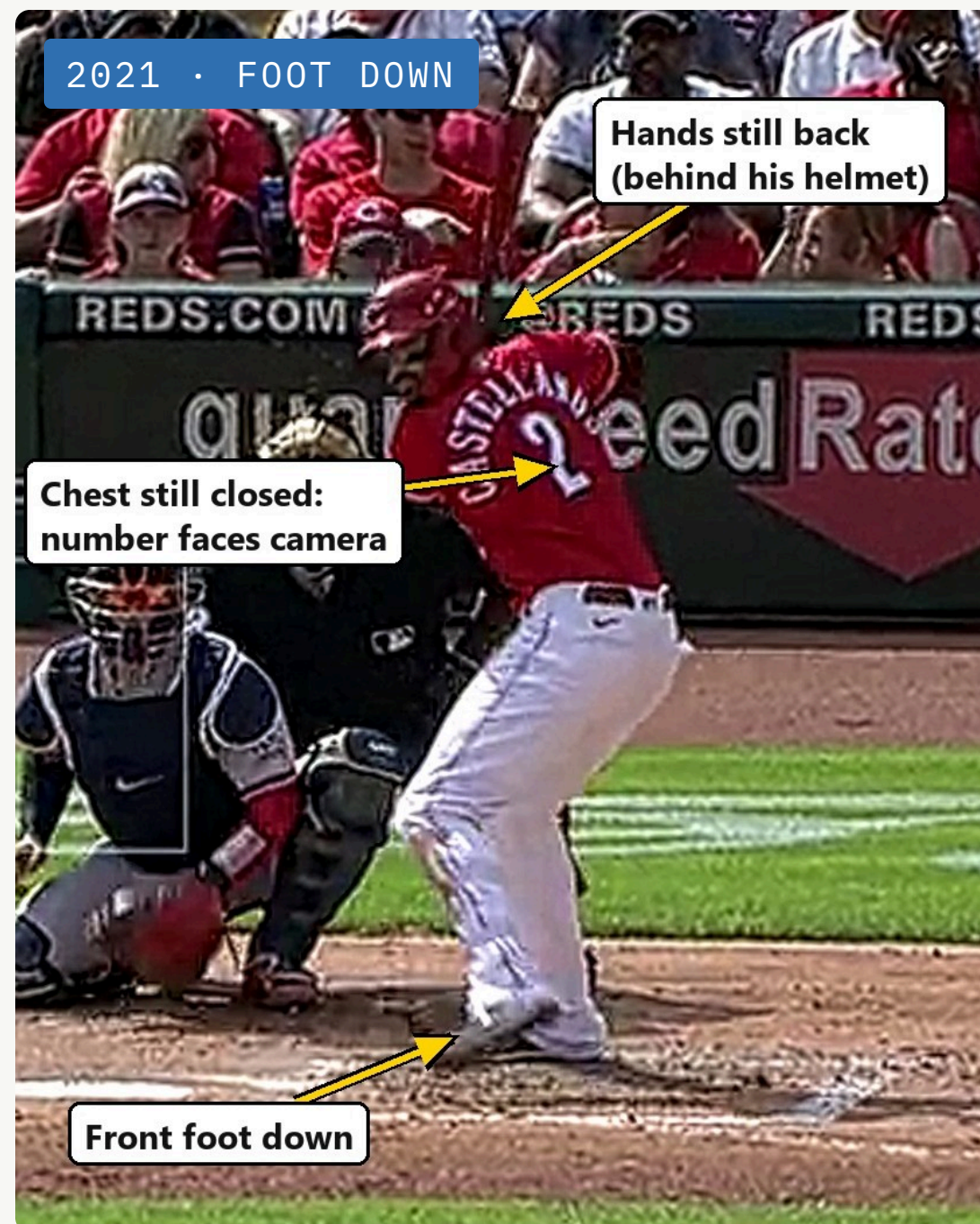
2021 kick start, seconds before release

0.40

2026

Foot down holds at about 0.21 s after release every year, so a late start squeezes the whole load into less time. When the load starts late, everything happens at once.

Median time from the first frame the front foot rises to the pitcher's release frame. 325 swings, 19 to 48 per season. Gold line: the 2027 goal, 0.50 s.



LOAD • FOOT DOWN

At foot down, both years look the same

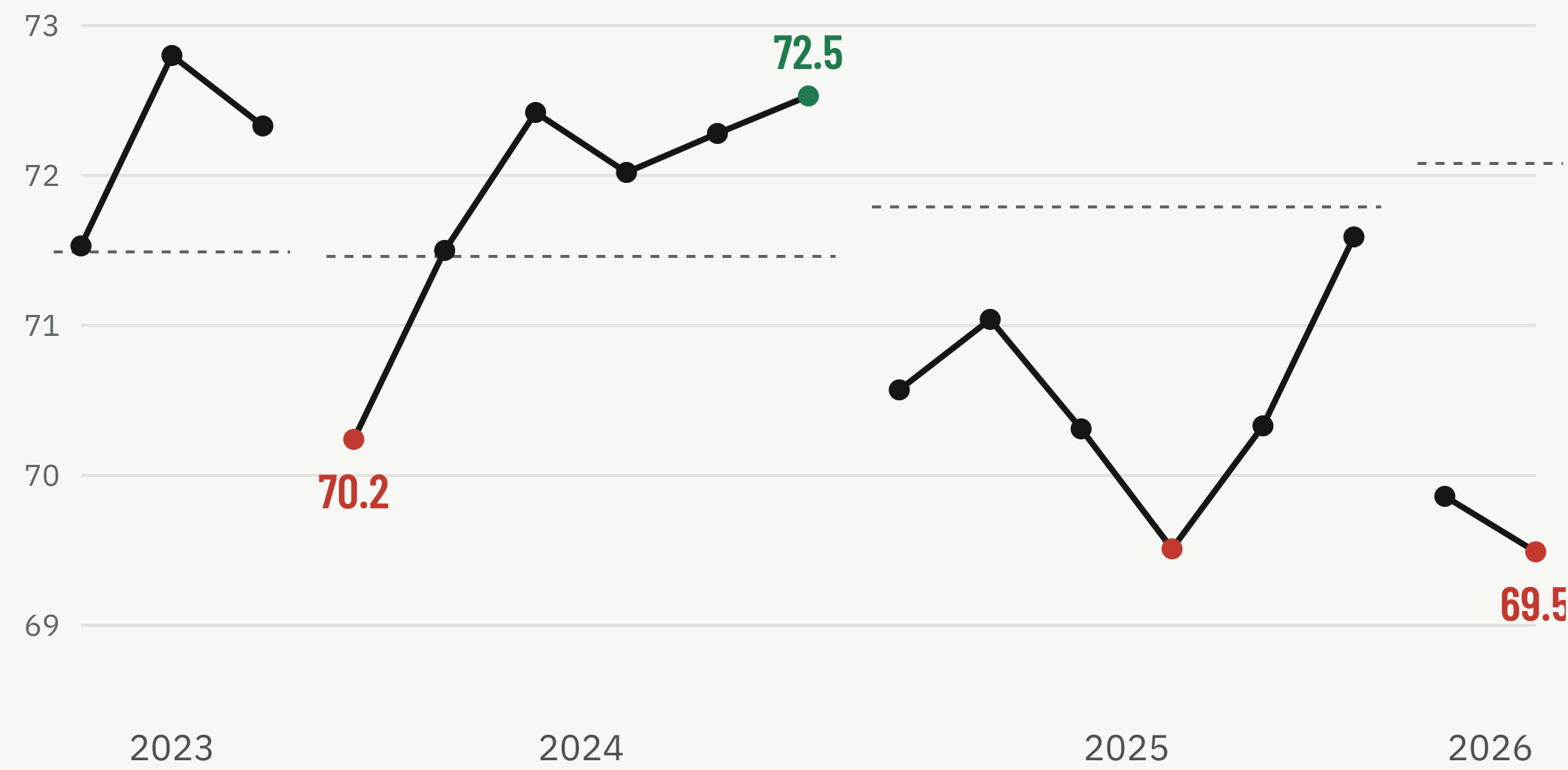
Hands back, chest closed, front foot down about 0.21 s after release. The difference comes earlier, in when the kick starts.

Home-feed center-field broadcast, June 26, 2021 and May 3, 2026.

Nick Castellanos • Swing + Approach Analysis

Bat speed has come back once already

Average bat speed by month. The dashed line is the league average.



+2.3 mph

April to September 2024, from 70.2 to 72.5.

-2.7 mph

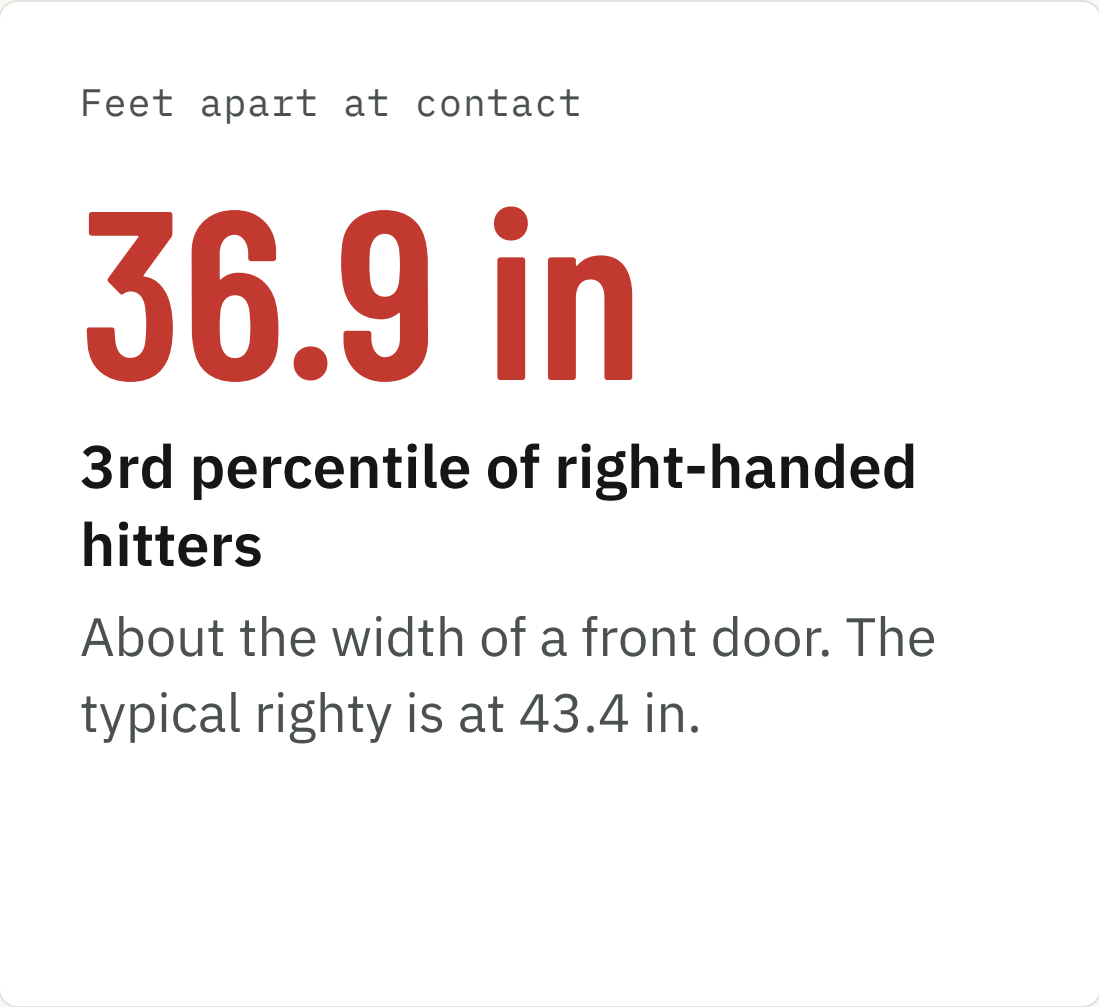
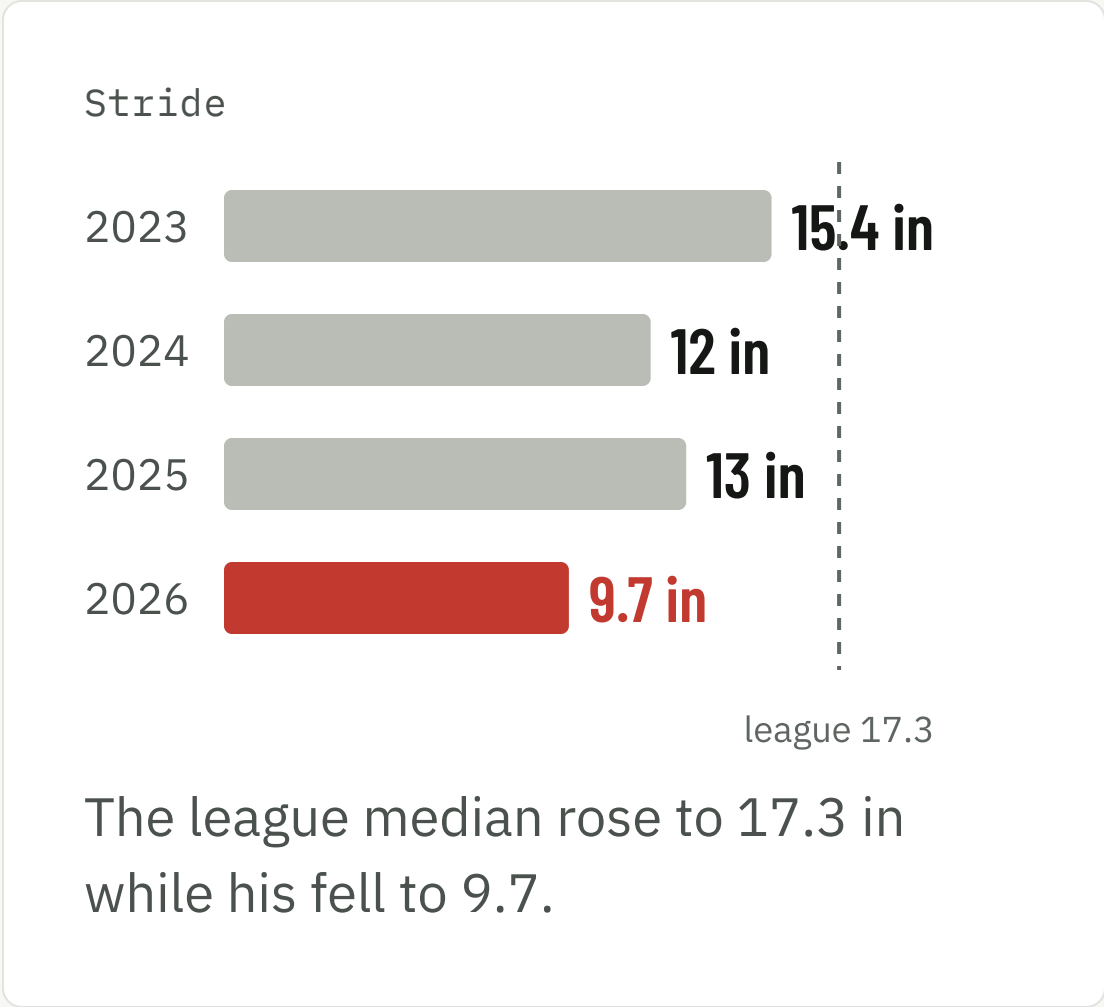
2023 to 2026, the biggest drop of 55 tracked hitters aged 30 to 35. On a squared-up fly ball that is about 15 feet of carry, the width of the warning track.

28% → 10%

Share of swings at 75 mph or more. The top gear is still there and shows up less.

Hawk-Eye bat tracking via Baseball Savant, competitive swings. March folded into April. Bat tracking starts July 2023.

A shorter stride, a narrower base, a steep path



Hawk-Eye batting stance and bat tracking via Baseball Savant. 2026 values, regular season through May 31.

In 2025, only one regular saw fewer fastballs

59% → 44.5%

Share of pitches that were fastballs, 2018 to 2025. The league median is 55%.

62%

Of breaking balls, the swing was early in 2026, against a 43% median. Out front on spin in every tracked year.

8 to 10 in

On missed breaking balls, the contact point sits that much farther out front, pulled 13 to 17° more. The misses are a lunge.

Baseball Savant pitch data and pitch-arsenal leaderboard (220 hitters in 2025); Hawk-Eye bat tracking, 2023-26.

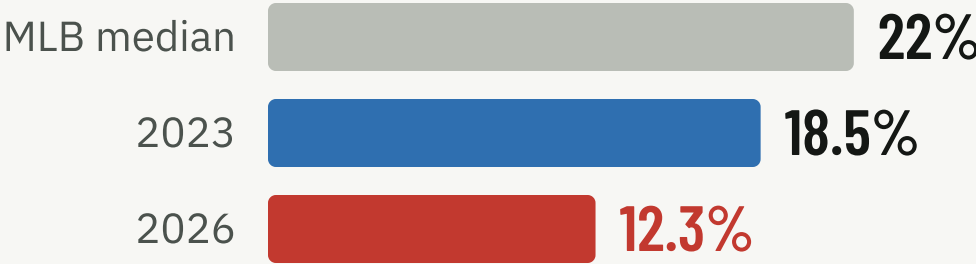


The barrel gets to the ball early

Statcast's swing timing compares where the barrel met the ball with the best spot to hit it.

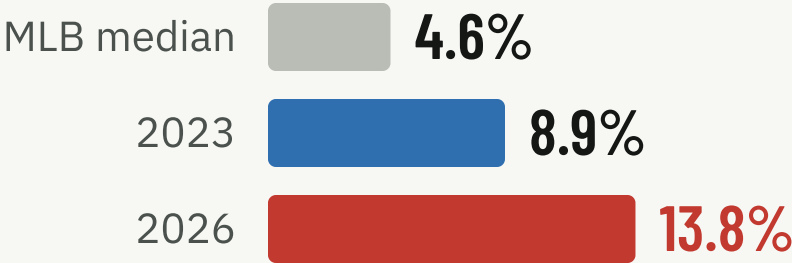
Late on the heater

The ball reached the hitting spot before the barrel.
Low: the swing starts early to get there.



Topped the heater

On time, with the barrel over the top of the ball.
Three times the MLB median in 2026.



Out front on spin

The barrel reached the spot before the breaking ball did.
Above the median in every tracked year.



Baseball Savant swing timing, share of swings. MLB median = hitters with 100+ swings on that pitch group.

The chase rises when the bat slows

Across 2023-26, his slowest months were his heaviest chase months.

April 2024

39.7%

chase • 70.2 mph bat

The highest chase month of 2024.

September 2024

36.0%

chase • 72.5 mph bat

Faster bat, less chase.

July 2025

45.7%

chase • 69.5 mph bat

The slowest month of 2025.

Big spots

Late and close with runners in scoring position, he chased 44% in 2022-26, against 38% with the bases empty. In 2017-21 it was 36.8% against 35.2%.

First pitch

First-pitch swings went from 41.7% in 2021 to 56.4% in 2025.

Statcast pitch data and Hawk-Eye bat speed by month. Correlation between monthly chase and bat speed, 2023-26: -0.32.



JUNE 2024

The fix has worked once already

The Phillies staff put a good swing and a struggling swing side by side on video.

The good swing

A flatter bat, grounded feet, and an earlier arrival in the hitting position.

The fix

An earlier start, staying in the legs, and early outdoor batting practice.

.590 → .747
OPS, May 24 to June 19, 2024

38% → 43%
Hard-hit rate, same span

Philadelphia Inquirer, June 20, 2024. Bat speed that season went from 70.2 mph in April to 72.5 mph in September.

Three priorities, one at a time, in this order

1

Load

Start the kick earlier

Now

Goal

Best

0.40 s

0.50 s

0.54 s (2021)

Feel

Start earlier, flow with the pitcher

Drill

Live BP and the velocity machine, with the kick starting as the pitcher's hands break

Measure

240 fps video: kick start against the release frame

2

Base

Land longer and wider

Now

Goal

Best

9.7 in

13+ in

15.4 in (2023)

Feel

Gain ground

Drill

Tee and front toss to a landing mark set at 13 in

Measure

A landing mark on the cage floor, then Hawk-Eye feet

3

Speed

More fast swings

Now

Goal

Best

69.7 mph

70.7 mph

72.4 mph (2023)

Feel

Whippiness

Drill

Overload and underload bats, then A swings on the sensor

Measure

Bat sensor against his own baseline

Short cage blocks, one purpose each, the same key points every day. Extra swings without a purpose turn into tinkering.

How the work runs

- 1

Get the club tracking data

Request Hawk-Eye body tracking, bat-tracking detail and club video through the agent from the Reds (2020-21), Phillies (2022-25) and Padres (2026).
- 2

Record where the swing is now

One session: high-speed video from two angles and a tracked cage. Same checkpoints as the video study.
- 3

Work load, base, speed

One at a time, each with one number, one feel and one drill.
- 4

Show a swing clubs can verify

A tracked round of batting practice plus 95 mph machine or live pitches, sent to Miami and any club with a right-handed opening.

LEAVE THESE ALONE

Foot down about 0.21 s after release

Staying closed when the foot lands

Swinging at heart-of-the-zone pitches

See ball, hit ball

The labor agreement expires December 1, 2026, so dates stay open. The showcase should be ready to run on short notice.

Miami needs a right-handed bat for the days a lefty starts

.684

Team OPS vs lefties

24th of 30. Against righties: .743.

36

HR off lefties, 2026

Tied for the fewest in MLB.

3

HR in 218 PA vs lefties

Stowers, Conine and Caissie combined.

.846

Castellanos career OPS vs lefties

77 HR in 1,766 PA.

Projected 2027 starters

Spot	Starter	Bats	OPS vs lefties
1B	Kyle Stowers	L	.675
LF	Heriberto Hernández	R	.801
RF	Griffin Conine	L	.575
DH	Owen Caissie	L	.590

New hitting coach Dillon Lawson, named October 12. His approach is summed up as hit strikes hard.

MLB Stats API splits (Oct 18, 2026), Baseball-Reference, FanGraphs RosterResource depth chart, MLB.com.

What stands in the way

The 2026 line. .191/.221/.339 in 122 plate appearances before the Padres released him June 5. A club will want to see the change on its own tracking.

2025 against lefties. A .680 OPS, below the .846 career mark. The platoon case rests on the career line and on 2023-24 (.930 and .830).

Right-handed competition. Heriberto Hernández starts in left (.801 OPS vs lefties). Kemp Alderman, a Triple-A outfielder with 18 home runs, is expected in 2027.

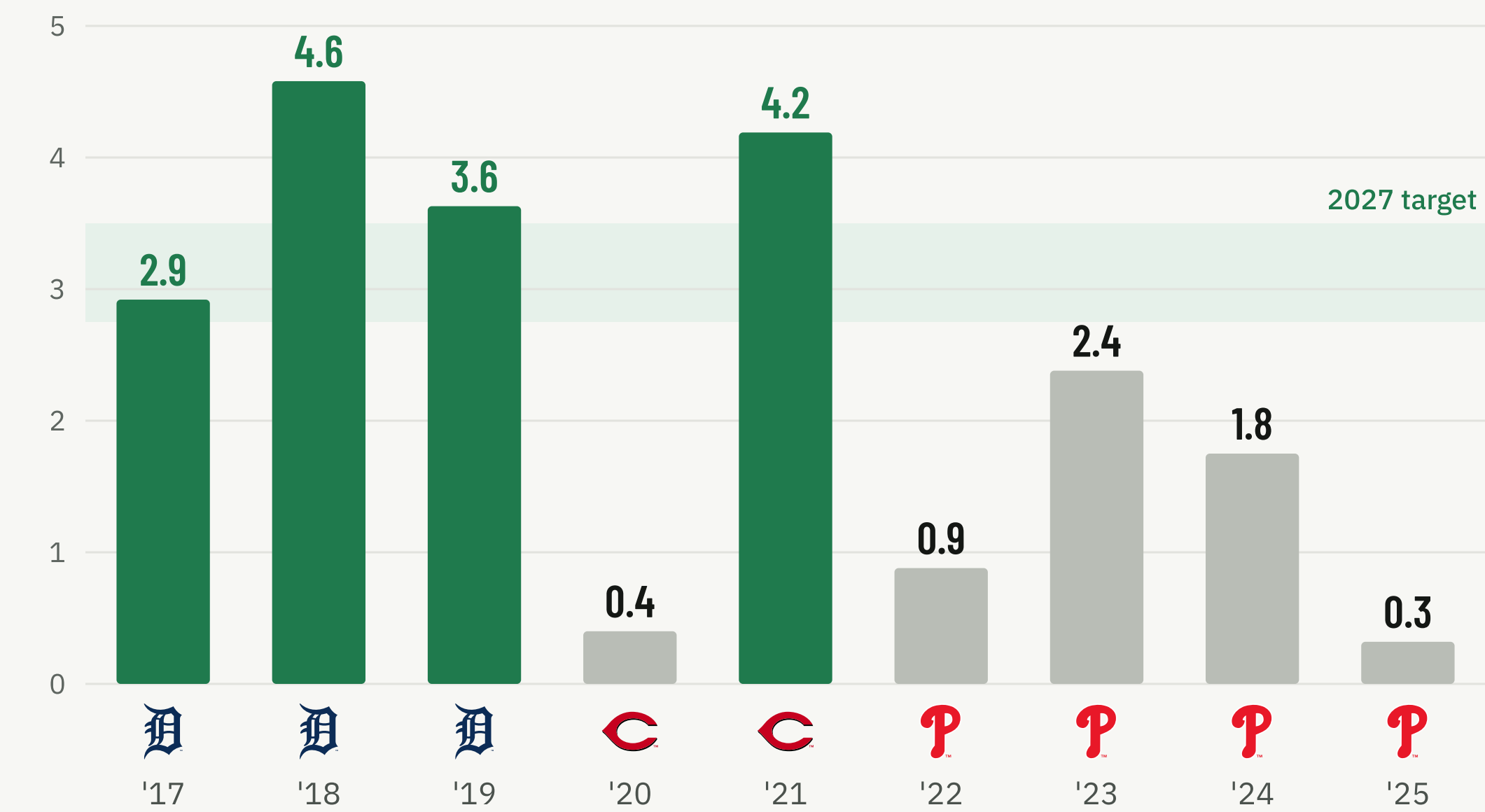
Money and timing. Miami spends little, so a small deal is the realistic ask. The labor agreement expires December 1.



THE 2027 TARGET

2.75 to 3.5 oWAR, a level he has reached four times

Offensive WAR by season. The band is the 2027 target.



119 to 129

OPS+ needed as a right fielder over 600 PA

+0.8

oWAR from playing right field or first base instead of DH, at the same bat

Baseball-Reference WAR file. oWAR includes the positional adjustment and leaves out fielding runs. 2026 not shown (122 PA).

Load. Base. Speed.

Start the kick earlier, land longer and wider, and let the top gear out more often. The foot already lands on time, and the best swings still reach 77 to 78 mph.

SOURCES

Where the numbers come from

Video study. 325 home-feed center-field swings, 2017-26, timed from the pitcher's release frame. Kick start, knee top and foot down from a pose model's front-ankle track; hands and contact by frame review.

Baseball Savant. Statcast pitch data, Hawk-Eye bat tracking and batting stance, swing timing, pitch-arsenal leaderboard. Pulled October 2026.

Baseball-Reference. OPS+, oWAR, 2026 Marlins batting and platoon splits.

MLB Stats API. Career and team splits against left-handed pitching, pulled October 18, 2026.

Reporting. Philadelphia Inquirer (June 20, 2024), MLB Trade Rumors, MLB.com, FanGraphs RosterResource, Fish On First, Razzball.

Photos. Press and broadcast images of Nick Castellanos, used for private review only. Team logos are the property of their clubs.