

# Top 10 Relief Pitchers in 2026

Chris Callender

December 30, 2025

## 1 Abstract

In the previous edition of "Top 10 Players in MLB" we examined the top 10 starting pitchers. Now let's look at relievers.

## 2 Introduction

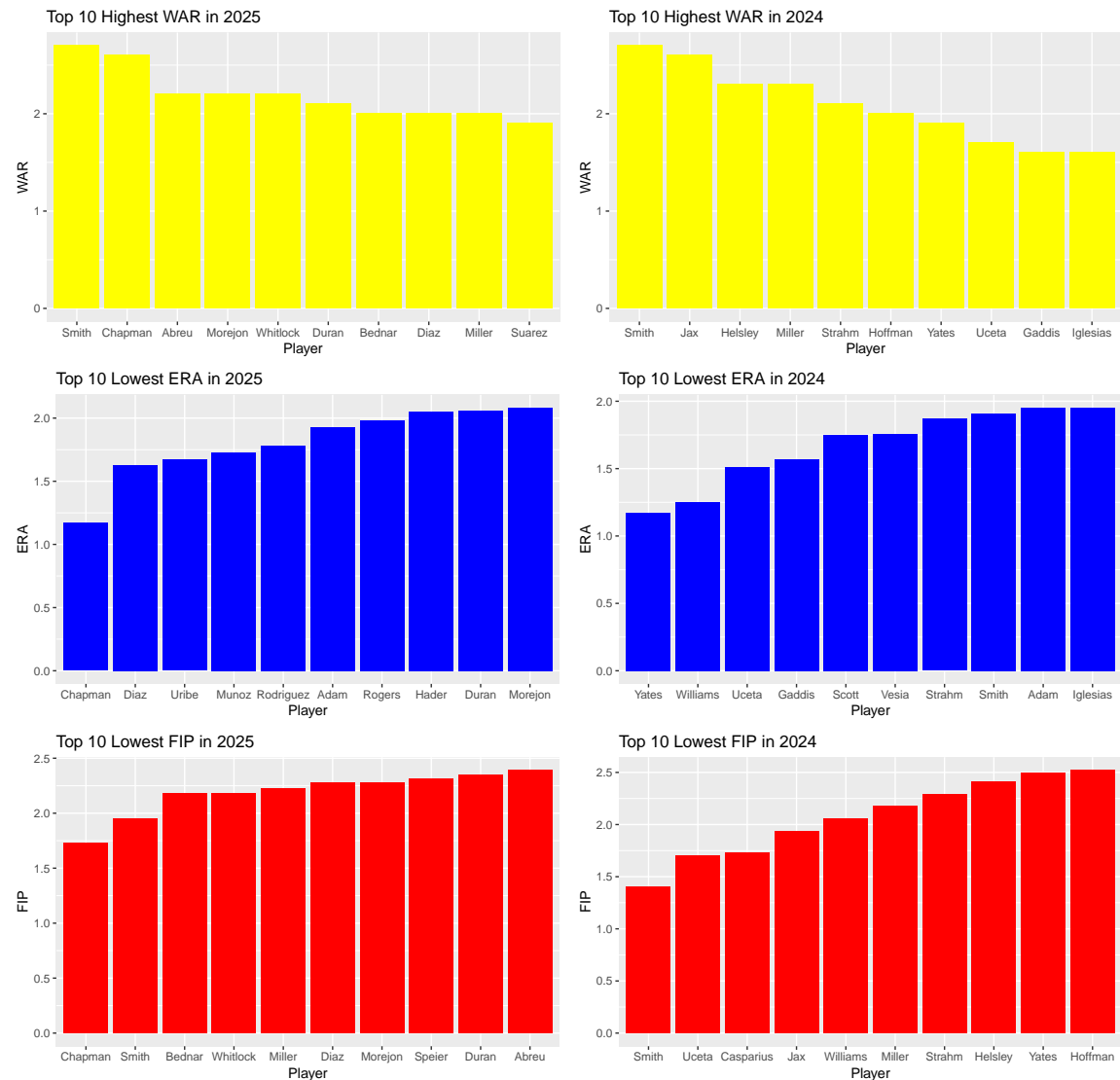
Top 10 RP in 2026:

1. Cade Smith
2. Mason Miller
3. Aroldis Chapman
4. Jhoan Duran
5. Devin Williams
6. Garrett Whitlock
7. Edwin Diaz
8. Bryan Abreu
9. David Bednar
10. Adrian Morejon

### 3 Explanation

*Note:* For WAR, we will use fWAR, unless it specifically states bWAR.

Let's take a look at some graphs showing the WAR, ERA, and FIP leaders the past two seasons. Again, it is possible for the leaders on this list to not be the MLB leaders, since we are not looking at all players. We will just look at some of the best players.



### 3.1 Smith

After making it to the MLB in 2024, Smith has been one of the best relievers in baseball. In his first two MLB seasons he has a 2.42 ERA, 1.67 FIP, and 5.4 WAR. He led the MLB in WAR in both 2024 and 2025. The second highest WAR during the past two seasons is Mason Miller with 4.4, giving Smith a sizeable lead.

### 3.2 Miller

Mason Miller is a dominant power pitcher, with a 101 mph fastball and over 15 strikeouts per 9 innings last season. He had a sub 3 ERA, xERA, FIP, and xFIP in both 2024 and 2025, as well as a 2 WAR or greater in both seasons.

### 3.3 Chapman

Aroldis Chapman had one of the best seasons of his career in 2025, despite being 37 years old. He had a 1.17 ERA, 1.73 FIP, and 2.6 WAR, with a 12.47 K/9 and 2.2 BB/9. That was the lowest walk rate of his career. I do not know if he can continue the dominant success he had last season, but he proved that he is still a quality reliever. If Chapman can keep the walks down, he should have another great season.

### 3.4 Duran

After a bit of a down season in 2024, Duran bounced back with a great 2025 season. He had a 2.06 ERA, 2.35 FIP, and 2.1 WAR, with 10.29 K/9 and 70 innings pitched. Duran has a great 100 mph fastball, however his career BB/9 of 2.65 is on the high side.

### 3.5 Williams

Devin Williams was one of the best relievers in baseball for several years, but had a down year last season. From 2022-2024 Williams had a 1.67 ERA with 4.8 WAR in 141 innings pitched. His career 14.06 K/9 and .6 HR/9 are both great, however, he does struggle with command, having a 4.14 career BB/9. I think he should be able to perform at a high level again, given how great he was. That would not be the first example of a pitcher who struggles in New York, but finds success elsewhere. (Sonny Gray, for example).

### **3.6 Whitlock**

Whitlock has struggled as a starter in his career, but he has been great after moving to the bullpen full-time in 2025. He had a 2.25 ERA, 2.18 FIP, and 2.2 WAR in 72 innings pitched, with 11.38 K/9. However, he can struggle with walks, having a 3.0 BB/9.

### **3.7 Diaz**

Diaz has had ups and downs throughout his career, which prevents him from being in the top 5. However, when Diaz is good, he is very good. He had a great 2025 season with a 1.63 ERA, 2.28 FIP, and 2.0 WAR. Diaz strikes out many batters with a career 14.54 K/9. He can struggle at times with walks and home runs, but I do think he is a very good reliever.

### **3.8 Abreu**

Abreu had a great 2025 season with a 2.28 ERA, 2.39 FIP, and 2.2 WAR. His 2.2 WAR was 5th in MLB last season. He is very reliable, pitching at least 70 innings in each of the past three seasons.

### **3.9 Bednar**

David Bednar had a rebound season in 2025, after having a not so good season in 2024. He was great from 2021-2023 with a sub 3 ERA and FIP in all three seasons. He also had at least 1.0 WAR in all three seasons, with 2.3 WAR in 2023. He struggled in 2024, but with a 2.30 ERA, 2.18 FIP, and 2.0 WAR in 62.2 innings, it seems like he is back on track. Also, in 2025 he had the highest K/9 and lowest BB/9 of his career.

### **3.10 Morejon**

Morejon struggled early in his career, but he has been great the past two seasons. 2025 was the best season of his career, posting a 2.08 ERA, 2.28 FIP, and 2.2 WAR. He 2.2 WAR was 4th best among MLB relievers. He has been great the past two seasons, but his previous struggles and low projections for 2026 prevent him from being higher on this list.

## 4 Conclusion

This was another difficult list to make.

### Honorable Mentions:

- Abner Uribe
- Griffin Jax
- Josh Hader
- Matt Strahm
- Robert Suarez
- Will Vest

These honorable mentions are in alphabetical order and are not ranked by quality.

### 4.1 Uribe

Uribe struggled in 2024, dealing with an injury, suspension, and demotion to AAA. Although he was great in his first full season in 2025 (1.67 ERA, 2.75 FIP, and 1.7 WAR), I think it may be hard for a young pitcher to repeat that success, especially considering he did struggle in his short 2024 season.

### 4.2 Jax

Jax is a great pitcher and was excellent in 2024. He struggled a bit in 2025 with a 4.23 ERA, but he did have a 2.51 FIP and 1.7 WAR. He has a very high strikeout rate and a powerful fastball. However, I did not think he was good enough to get into the top 10.

### 4.3 Hader

Hader was one of the best relievers in baseball from 2017-2021. Despite struggling in 2022 and 2024, he had great seasons in 2023 and 2025. In 2025 he had a 2.05 ERA, 3.25 FIP, and 1.1 WAR. Hader may not be the pitcher he used to be, but he is still a great pitcher.

#### **4.4 Strahm**

Strahm has been a very good, consistent pitcher throughout his 10 season career. He had a breakout season in 2024, where he established himself as one of the best relievers in baseball. Strahm has been very good the past few seasons, but I think there are better relievers, and Strahm's age may also have a negative impact (he will be 34 next season).

#### **4.5 Suarez**

Suarez is another great reliever, who I think is just not quite good enough to make the top 10. He had a sub 3 ERA and FIP, with a 1.9 WAR in 2025. However, he will be 35 years old next season, and his projections are not great.

#### **4.6 Vest**

Vest has been a great reliever the past three seasons. In 2025 he had a 3.01 ERA, 2.71 FIP, and his 1.8 WAR was 12th among MLB relievers. It was difficult to leave Vest out of the top 10, but there are so many great relievers in baseball.