

## Astros Avoid Arbitration with Keppinger, Sampson

Written by Joe Tetreault  
Friday, 15 January 2010 19:50

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HOUSTON, TX — The Astros have agreed to terms on one-year contracts with infielder Jeff Keppinger and right-handed pitcher Chris Sampson, General Manager Ed Wade announced today.

As a result, the club will avoid going to arbitration with either player as both were eligible. Keppinger's deal is worth \$1.150 million while Sampson's is worth \$815,000 plus bonuses. The Astros now have six unsigned players remaining that are eligible for arbitration: Michael Bourn, Tim Byrdak, Matt Lindstrom, Hunter Pence, Humberto Quintero and Wandy Rodriguez. The deadline for players to file for arbitration is today.

Keppinger, 29, hit .256 (78x305) in 107 games in 2009 with 13 doubles, three triples, seven home runs and 29 RBI after being acquired by the Astros from Cincinnati in exchange for a player to be named later (IF Drew Sutton) on March 31. He tied a franchise record that had stood since 1962 by hitting safely in his first eight games with the club. Keppinger, who was 5x15 (.333) as a pinch-hitter, had a combined 76 starts at third base, second base and shortstop. He has a .279 career average (329x1181) in 350 Major League games and a .341 (126x370) career average vs. LHP, which ranks ninth among active players (min. 350 AB).

Sampson, 31, was 4-2 in 49 relief appearances in 2009 with a 5.02 ERA (31ER/55.1IP) with three saves, 21 walks and 33 strikeouts. Sampson had a solid start to the season, posting a 4-0 mark in 36 appearances through June 26 with a 2.09 ERA (10ER/43IP) and three saves, ranking among the league leaders in relief wins and innings before being slowed by discomfort in his right shoulder, landing him on the disabled list from July 10-26.

**Source: Houston Astros**

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