



ON TO THE NLCS.

2026 POSTSEASON | NLDS CLINCHING SPECIAL | LOS ANGELES DEFEATS ATLANTA, 3-1

THE BRAVES ARE DONE. THE DODGERS ARE NOT.

There was a moment after Game 2 when the Dodgers looked like they had let the series slip through their fingers. A split at home. A trip to Atlanta. Chris Sale waiting. Plenty of opportunities left on base.

Then Yoshinobu Yamamoto took the baseball, the lineup found just enough thunder, and Andy Pages finally delivered the most beautiful thing in October: **a two-run single with runners in scoring position.**

The Dodgers won Game 4, **4-1**, and the NLDS, **3 games to 1**. They are headed to a third consecutive NLCS.

FOUR WINS DOWN. EIGHT TO GO.

THE SERIES AT A GLANCE

GAME	RESULT	THE STORY
1 - Oct. 3	LAD 5, ATL 3	Skubal steadies; three Dodgers homers
2 - Oct. 4	ATL 3, LAD 2	Missed chances and a split at home
3 - Oct. 6	LAD 3, ATL 1	Yamamoto dominates; Kike and Freddie go deep
4 - Oct. 7	LAD 4, ATL 1	Pages breaks through; bullpen seals it



GAME 4 | THE HIT WE HAD BEEN BEGGING FOR

ANDY PAGES. FINALLY.

Los Angeles was tied 1-1 in the seventh. Teoscar Hernandez singled. Pinch-hitter Josue De Paula walked. Kyle Tucker walked. The bases were loaded, two outs, and Andy Pages was staring at Robert Suarez.

Pages worked the count full, then lined a single up the middle. Two runs scored. **Dodgers 3, Braves 1.** And suddenly the entire story of the series changed.

The Dodgers had started the series **0-for-15 with runners in scoring position** before that hit. Their first run of Game 4 had already arrived in gloriously unglamorous fashion: Shohei Ohtani walked, stole second, advanced on a throwing error, and scored when Atlanta dropped a shallow fly.

A WALK. A STEAL. AN ERROR. A SINGLE. WE HAVE DISCOVERED SMALL BALL.

Max Muncy added a ninth-inning homer for insurance. It was his **19th postseason home run as a Dodger**, extending his franchise record.

Tyler Glasnow did not have his sharpest command: five walks in 4 2/3 innings. But he allowed just one hit. Alex Vesia, Edgardo Henriquez, Tanner Scott and Edwin Diaz finished the job. Atlanta managed only three hits all night.

READER GAME BALL

Andy Pages. After opening the series 0-for-7, he kept his place in the lineup and delivered the swing that sent the Dodgers onward.



THE ACE WHO CHANGED THE SERIES

ALL HAIL YAMAMOTO.

There are outings that look good in the box score. Then there are outings that change the temperature of a postseason series.

Game 3 belonged to **Yoshinobu Yamamoto: 7 innings, 4 hits, 1 earned run, 10 strikeouts**. On the road, against Chris Sale, with the series tied 1-1, he turned the volume down on Atlanta and handed his teammates a path to the NLCS.

Kike Hernandez hit a two-run homer. Freddie Freeman followed with a solo shot. Tanner Scott and Edwin Diaz protected the lead. The Dodgers won 3-1, and Atlanta never regained control.

WHEN THE CHIPS WERE DOWN, THE WORKHORSE SHOWED UP.

We have made plenty of jokes about carrying Yamamoto around on a golden throne. The joke works because the appreciation underneath it is real: the preparation, the drive, the stamina and the calm. A fan is lucky to watch a pitcher like this when a season hangs in the balance.

THE OTHER DIFFERENCE-MAKERS

Freddie Freeman: a Game 3 homer in Atlanta, a reminder that October memories travel with him.

Kike Hernandez: the two-run blow off Sale that finally broke Game 3 open.

Max Muncy: power all series and another postseason franchise record.

The bullpen: scoreless relief in the two road wins, including a clean Game 4 ninth from Diaz.



HISTORY, LORE & THE OCTOBER FILE

THE 1977 ECHO.

October 7 already meant something in Dodger postseason history. On that date in **1977**, Los Angeles trailed Philadelphia 5-3 with two outs and nobody aboard in the ninth inning of NLCS Game 3.

Vic Davalillo bunted for a hit. Manny Mota followed with a double. Davey Lopes reached on a disputed infield play. Bill Russell singled home the winning run. Dodgers 6, Phillies 5. The comeback became infamous in Philadelphia as **Black Friday**.

Forty-nine years later, on October 7, 2026, the Dodgers did not need a miracle. They needed a timely hit. Pages supplied it, and another October 7 ended with Los Angeles celebrating.

RANDOM DODGER: LANCE RAUTZHAN

The winning pitcher in that wild 1977 NLCS Game 3 was a left-handed reliever named **Lance Rautzhan**. His Dodgers career was brief, but one of his six big-league victories lives forever in one of the strangest playoff finishes in franchise history.

READER TRIVIA

1. Which Dodger drove in the go-ahead runs in Game 4?
2. Who struck out 10 Braves in Game 3?
3. Which Dodger reached 19 franchise postseason home runs in Game 4?
4. Which former Dodger began the 1977 ninth-inning comeback with a bunt single?

Answers: 1. Andy Pages. 2. Yoshinobu Yamamoto. 3. Max Muncy. 4. Vic Davalillo.



THE ROAD AHEAD

FOUR MORE TO THE FALL CLASSIC.

The Dodgers will meet the winner of the Brewers-Padres NLDS. The NLCS is scheduled to begin **Sunday, October 11**. The opponent and venue determine the opening-game details.

This is the third consecutive NLCS trip for Los Angeles. The larger ambition is even rarer: becoming the first National League team to win three straight World Series championships.

WHAT THE NLDS TAUGHT US

The starting pitching can carry the club. Skubal and Yamamoto supplied the kind of October starts every contender dreams about.

Patience and contact matter. The long ball powered the early wins, but Pages showed why a single can be worth a thousand feet of fly balls.

There is no easy inning in October. Atlanta threatened often enough to make the final 3-1 series margin feel earned, not inevitable.

THE READER MISSION

Enjoy this one. Rewatch the Yamamoto strikeouts. Give Pages another standing ovation. Then check back for the NLCS primer, because the next opponent will have its own history, oddities and October ghosts.

ENJOY IT, THEN GO ABOUT YOUR DAY.

UNTIL SUNDAY.

Editorial references: CBS Sports Game 4 box score; Reuters Game 3 recap; The Guardian and DodgerBlue Game 4 reporting; contemporary 1977 NLCS historical accounts.