

The Ravine Reader

ENJOY IT, THEN GO ABOUT YOUR DAY.

ROUND SIX.

NLDS GAME 1 | Braves at Dodgers | Saturday, Oct. 3, 2026 | 1:08 PM PT | Dodger Stadium | FOX

THE HISTORY BOOK IS CLOSED. THE SCORECARD IS BLANK.

1996. 2013. 2018. 2020. 2021. Now 2026. The Dodgers and Braves meet in October for the sixth time, with Los Angeles beginning its attempt at a third consecutive World Series championship.

LOS ANGELES 100-62 NL West champions	ATLANTA Wild Card Series winner 5-1 vs. LAD in 2026	ROUND SIX LAD won 3 of the previous 5 series
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TODAY'S STORY

The Dodgers spent the bye week resting. Atlanta spent the Wild Card round fighting through Philadelphia. Now L.A. gets to hand the baseball to **Tarik Skubal** while the Braves open with left-hander **Dylan Dodd** and plan to piece together Game 1.

The other headline is sitting on the lineup card: this is essentially the lineup the Dodgers imagined when the roster was assembled - Betts, Ohtani, Smith, Freeman, Teoscar, Tucker, Pages, Muncy and Edman.

The three-peat does not begin with history. It begins 0-0.

GAME 1 PITCHING

LAD - Tarik Skubal, LHP 12-7 2.72 ERA 186 K	ATL - Dylan Dodd, LHP 4-1 2.54 ERA 53 K Atlanta opener
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OFFICIAL DODGERS LINEUP

THE VARSITY NINE

#	PLAYER	POS
1	Mookie Betts	SS
2	Shohei Ohtani	DH
3	Will Smith	C
4	Freddie Freeman	1B
5	Teoscar Hernandez	LF
6	Kyle Tucker	RF
7	Andy Pages	CF
8	Max Muncy	3B
9	Tommy Edman	2B

WHAT TO WATCH

Mookie at the top: Betts gets leadoff against the left-handed opener. He closed September with a 1.112 OPS.

Ohtani at No. 2: after late-season biceps and knee trouble, October begins with Shohei in the middle of the action rather than leading it off.

Will Smith is back in the heart of it: Smith catches and bats third, putting the Dodgers' preferred offensive core together when it matters.

Tucker heating up: his .890 September OPS was his best month of the season.

Atlanta's bullpen puzzle: Dodd is an opener. The Dodgers may see several different looks, making early plate discipline and forcing traffic especially valuable.

THE BENCH HAS A KID

Josue De Paula made the NLDS roster at age 21 as a left-handed bench bat. Hyeseong Kim is also active as a speed/utility option. Los Angeles is carrying 14 position players and 12 pitchers.

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RANDOM DODGER

JOSE VIZCAINO

Today's Random Dodger is for anyone who remembers the late-'90s roster and immediately starts picturing names that somehow existed between Piazza and the modern era.

Jose Vizcaino was a switch-hitting infielder who had two separate Dodgers stints: 1989-90 and 1998-2000. He was never the star of those clubs. That is precisely the point.

Vizcaino played 18 major-league seasons for eight teams, appearing everywhere from shortstop to second and third. He later won a World Series with the Yankees in 2000 - and delivered the walk-off single in the 12th inning of World Series Game 1 against the Mets.

TWO DODGERS STINTS. EIGHT TEAMS. EIGHTEEN YEARS. AND A WORLD SERIES WALK-OFF. THAT'LL PLAY.

WHY HE FITS TODAY

After an 18-page playoff primer filled with Koufax, Gibson, Kershaw, Freeman and Ohtani, we needed somebody from the margins. October history is built by superstars - but it is also filled with guys like Vizcaino who hang around long enough to wander into a moment nobody forgets.

BALLPARK NOTE

Former Dodger first baseman **Adrian Gonzalez** throws today's ceremonial first pitch. A B-52 flyover from Edwards Air Force Base is also part of the pregame ceremony.

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PREVIOUSLY ON DODGERS-BRAVES...

FIVE SERIES IN FIVE MINUTES

1996 - ATLANTA 3-0. Peak Braves pitching. Javy Lopez's 10th-inning homer wins Game 1 and Atlanta sweeps.

2013 - DODGERS 3-1. Kershaw punches out 12 in Game 1. Juan Uribe fails to bunt, then launches the eighth-inning homer that sends Dodger Stadium into orbit.

2018 - DODGERS 3-1. Ronald Acuna Jr. hits a grand slam at age 20 in Atlanta's lone win. L.A. closes the series in four.

2020 - DODGERS 4-3. Down 3-1 in the NLCS. Eleven runs in the first inning of Game 3. Betts at the wall. Kike ties Game 7. Bellinger puts L.A. ahead. Dodgers advance and win the World Series.

2021 - ATLANTA 4-2. The Braves answer. Walk-offs in Games 1 and 2. Chris Taylor's three-homer Game 5 keeps L.A. alive, but Eddie Rosario finishes it in Game 6. Atlanta wins the World Series.

1996 - THEY INTRODUCED THEMSELVES. 2013 - URIBE FLIPPED IT. 2018 - L.A. AGAIN. 2020 - 3-1. 2021 - REVENGE. 2026 - ROUND SIX.

READER TRIVIA

Question: Which Dodger won the 2020 NLCS MVP after the 3-1 comeback against Atlanta?

A) Mookie Betts B) Corey Seager C) Cody Bellinger D) Julio Urias

Answer: B. Corey Seager hit five home runs in the series.

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OCTOBER NOTES

THE LITTLE STUFF

HOT

Mookie Betts: 1.112 OPS in September.

Teoscar Hernandez: .965 September OPS.

Kyle Tucker: .890 September OPS - his best month of 2026.

ATLANTA COMES IN SWINGING

Matt Olson, Ozzie Albies and Michael Harris II all homered in Atlanta's Wild Card clincher over Philadelphia. Harris went 5-for-11 in the series.

A FEW COLD BATS

Atlanta's Drake Baldwin went 2-for-13 in the Wild Card round and Ronald Acuna Jr. went 1-for-9. For Los Angeles, Ohtani carried a .666 OPS over his final 29 regular-season games while dealing with injuries.

THE ROSTER WRINKLE

The Dodgers left Jack Dreyer, Justin Wroblewski and Dalton Rushing off the NLDS roster. De Paula and Hyeseong Kim made it; Edgardo Henriquez is back in the bullpen. Tanner Scott, Roki Sasaki and Edwin Diaz all give Dave Roberts late-inning options.

READER MISSION

Forget the 100 wins. Forget the two trophies. Forget the five previous Braves series for three hours.

Watch Skubal attack the zone. Make Atlanta's bullpen work. Keep a pencil nearby.

THE SCORECARD IS BLANK.

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RAVINE READER SCORECARD

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	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	R	H	E
ATL												
LAD												

SCORING / NOTES

FINAL THOUGHT

The history book is closed. The scorecard is blank. Let's go.