



ACE HIGH.

NLDS GAME 3 | Dodgers at Braves | Tuesday, Oct. 6, 2026 | 3:00 PM PT | Truist Park | FS1 / FOX One

BEST OF THREE. HERE WE GO.

The Dodgers and Braves arrive in Atlanta tied 1-1, and now the aces take over: **Yoshinobu Yamamoto vs. Chris Sale.**

YAMAMOTO 14-9 2.53 ERA 0.87 WHIP 182 K	SALE 14-9 2.16 ERA 200 K	GAME 3 71.6% Game 3 winner takes series historically
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SUNDAY: A WINNABLE ONE GOT AWAY

Atlanta evened the series with a **3-2 win**. Blake Snell allowed only one run, but five walks pushed him to 90 pitches in just 3 2/3 innings. The Dodgers went **0-for-8 with runners in scoring position** and stranded seven.

Freddie Freeman homered to tie it in the fourth. Michael Harris II tripled and scored on a wild pitch in the fifth, then doubled home another run in the seventh. Max Muncy made the ninth interesting with a solo homer, but Atlanta closed it out.

Freeman said the quiet part out loud afterward: the Dodgers have to find a way to score runs *without* waiting for the home run.

ONE GAME EACH. NO MORE MARGIN TO WASTE.

The Ravine Reader

ENJOY IT, THEN GO ABOUT YOUR DAY.

OFFICIAL LINEUPS

DAVE MOVED THE FURNITURE.

DODGERS

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

BRAVES

#	PLAYER	POS
1	Drake Baldwin	C
2	Ronald Acuna Jr.	RF
3	Matt Olson	1B
4	Ozzie Albies	2B
5	Michael Harris II	CF
6	Mauricio Dubon	LF
7	Sean Murphy	DH
8	Austin Riley	3B
9	Ha-Seong Kim	SS

THE OHTANI MOVE

Shohei Ohtani bats fifth. It is the lowest he has hit in a Dodgers starting lineup and his lowest starting spot since September 2020 with the Angels. He is 2-for-8 in the series, both singles.

Against Sale, Roberts stacks right-handed bats near the top: Betts, Teoscar and Smith surround Freddie, while Miguel Rojas starts at second and **Kike Hernandez** gets his first start of this postseason at third.

It is not a demotion so much as an October lever. If the offense needs a different look, this is the moment to try it.

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THE MAIN EVENT

YAMAMOTO vs. SALE

This matchup already happened once in Atlanta. On **August 27**, Yamamoto allowed one run over 6 1/3 innings with eight strikeouts. Sale was better: a five-hit, 11-strikeout shutout. Atlanta won **1-0**.

Last time, one run decided it. Tonight, October gets a vote.

RARE COMPANY

This is only the **third postseason matchup** between starting pitchers who had previously recorded the final out of a World Series clincher.

Sale: retired the final three Dodgers in Game 5 of the 2018 World Series for Boston.

Yamamoto: finished the Dodgers' 2025 Game 7 championship on one day's rest after starting Game 6.

THE 71.6% GAME

In postseason history, when a best-of-five is tied 1-1, the winner of Game 3 has gone on to win the series **48 of 67 times**. That is 71.6%.

No, tonight does not mathematically end anything. But it determines who wakes up Wednesday one win from the NLCS and who wakes up facing elimination.

WHAT TO WATCH

Yamamoto vs. Baldwin: Drake Baldwin's leadoff homer supplied the only run in that August 1-0 game.

Sale's finish: he posted a 1.96 ERA over his final 24 regular-season starts.

Harris stays hot: Michael Harris II is 8-for-20 this postseason with two three-hit games.

Pages needs one: Andy Pages enters 0-for-7 in the series.

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THIS DAY IN DODGER HISTORY

OCTOBER 6, 1981

The Dodgers opened the first-ever National League Division Series in Houston and lost **3-1**. Nolan Ryan beat Fernando Valenzuela. Then Los Angeles lost Game 2, too.

Down **0-2** in a best-of-five, the Dodgers returned home and won three straight elimination games: **6-1**, **2-1** and **4-0**. They advanced, survived Montreal in the NLCS, then beat the Yankees in the World Series.

The point is not that falling behind is fun. The point is that October stories almost never travel in straight lines.

THE 1981 CHAMPIONS STARTED THEIR DIVISION SERIES 0-2.

FORTY-FIVE YEARS LATER

Today's Dodgers are not facing elimination. They're tied. But the old lesson travels well: a frustrating game does not become a series unless you let it.

THE SALE FOOTNOTE

Sale has not faced the Dodgers in the postseason since the last inning of the **2018 World Series**. He entered Game 5 for Boston and struck out the side, including Manny Machado for the final out. Eight years later, he gets them again — now in a Braves uniform, now as the opposing starter.



RANDOM DODGER

ALEJANDRO PENA

Today's Random Dodger fits the pitching duel and somehow belongs to both sides of this series.

Alejandro Pena debuted with the Dodgers in 1981 and became one of baseball's most effective swingmen. His best season came in **1984**, when he led the National League with a **2.48 ERA** while making 28 starts.

By 1988 he had shifted into relief and was part of the Dodgers' championship bullpen. He later bounced through the Mets and Pirates before landing with — naturally — **Atlanta**.

And there is the crossover: Pena pitched for the Braves in the 1995 World Series and earned the win in Game 3, Atlanta's only loss-free path toward its championship before Cleveland eventually pushed the series to six.

DODGER. BRAVE. STARTER. CLOSER. ERA CHAMP. RANDOM ENOUGH FOR US.

READER TRIVIA

1. Who supplied the only run the last time Yamamoto and Sale faced each other?
2. Which pitcher recorded the final out of the 2018 World Series against the Dodgers?
3. What was Alejandro Pena's NL-leading ERA in 1984?
4. What percentage of 1-1 best-of-five series have been won by the Game 3 winner?

Answers: 1) Drake Baldwin. 2) Chris Sale. 3) 2.48. 4) 71.6% (48 of 67).

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OCTOBER NOTES

SMALL THINGS, BIG GAME

HOT

Freddie Freeman: 3-for-7 with a homer through two games.

Michael Harris II: 8-for-20 this postseason after going 3-for-5 in Game 2.

Max Muncy: homered in both Games 1 and 2 — and now becomes a dangerous left-handed bench option against Sale.

LOOKING FOR A SPARK

Ohtani: 2-for-8, both singles.

Pages: 0-for-7.

Atlanta: Acuna is 3-for-18 without an extra-base hit and Olson is 3-for-19 with seven strikeouts.

BULLPEN MAP

The off-day helps L.A. after the bullpen covered 5 1/3 innings Sunday. Atlanta has Iglesias, Robert Suarez and Dylan Lee rested, while Ray Kerr and Didier Fuentes are unlikely after throwing 40-plus pitches in Game 2.

READER MISSION

Watch the first time through the order. Can the Dodgers make Sale work? Can somebody manufacture a run before the long ball arrives? And if Yamamoto gives them six or seven strong innings, can the offense make it count?

No therapy couch required once the first pitch is thrown.



NLDS GAME 3 — DODGERS AT BRAVES

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