

# 8-3 NBA playoffs

## Washington, Denver grab early edge in series

**United Press International**  
It's been six seasons since Julius "Dr. J" Erving left the New Jersey Nets, and they still need help.  
"The most important player going into a playoff series is the point guard," New Jersey Coach Larry Brown said Tuesday night, after the Nets played without injured starter Foots Walker and lost, 96-83, to the Washington Bullets at home in the first game of a best-of-three NBA Eastern Conference mini-series. "Ray (Williams) thought he had to do an awful lot and I don't think Darwin (Cook) played with a point guard mentality."  
Rick Mahorn, who didn't take a shot in the first half, scored 16 second-half points as the Bullets downed the Nets, who struggled in offense and shot only 36 percent from the field. Walker, the team's playmaker, missed the game with a sprained right ankle.  
The Bullets can wrap up the series with a victory Friday night at Landover, Md. A

third game, if necessary, would be played Sunday at Meadowlands Arena.  
Washington held New Jersey to 38 second-half points and came from a 10-point deficit to open a 14-point lead with just over 3½ minutes to play. Mahorn scored eight points in the final period — including the Bullets' first six points to pull them into a 69-69 tie with nine minutes remaining in the game.  
After Kevin Grevey hit two foul shots and New Jersey's Buck Williams scored on a dunk, the Bullets went on an 8-0 spurt to take control of the game midway through the final period.  
Ruland led the Bullets with 18 points, Johnson hit for 15 and Spencer Haywood added 14. Buck Williams led New Jersey with 23 points and Albert King had 15. Darwin Cook poured in 13 points and Ray Williams finished with 11.  
New Jersey, a team that hustled its way to 44 regular-season victories, might have

been a little in awe of the playoffs, according to Walker.  
"Scared?" he asked. "You might say the team played scared."  
In the Western Conference, Denver defeated Phoenix, 129-113, to go up 1-0 in its miniseries, which will continue Friday night in Phoenix.  
Tonight in the East, Atlanta opens up at Philadelphia while in the West, Houston is at Seattle.  
At Denver, Kiki Vandeweghe scored 11 of his 29 points in a third-quarter surge and Dan Issel and Billy McKinney added 24 each to key the Nuggets' attack.  
Denver shot 72 percent from the floor in the third period and outscored the Suns, 40-21, to take a 102-82 lead after three quarters.  
Kyle Macy paced Phoenix with 22 points and Walter Davis had 20. Alex English scored 19 for Denver.

# Atlanta extends opening streak, edges Reds 4-2

**United Press International**  
The Atlanta Braves are beginning to resemble a family circus — everybody gets into the act.  
Claudell Washington, who hadn't played in a week, and Rafael Ramirez, who hit only two home runs last season, were the latest heroes as the unbeaten Braves Tuesday night extended their start-of-the-season winning streak to a modern major-league record 12 games by beating the Cincinnati Reds, 4-2.

Playing before the largest crowd in Atlanta in nearly two years — 37,628 — the Braves rallied from an early 2-0 deficit to beat the Reds and tie the all-time National League record for victories at the start of a season set by the New York Giants in 1884. The all-time major league record is 20 set by St. Louis of the Union Association, also in 1884.

Washington, playing for the first time since being beamed by Cincinnati's Frank Pastore a week ago, tripled home the tie-breaking run in the third inning and scored an insurance run on a wild pitch by Pastore to spark the triumph.  
"He threw me a fastball and I was looking for it," said Washington.

Although outhit, 9-5, and allowing six walks, the Braves survived with the aid of four double plays.  
"We were in a lot of trouble tonight but we managed to survive," said Braves' Manager Joe Torre. "That's the way it's been going during this streak."

Elsewhere in the National League, St. Louis downed Pittsburgh, 4-1, New York edged Chicago, 3-2, and San Diego defeated San Francisco, 8-4. Philadelphia at Montreal was rained out.

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