

Royals crowned king

K.C. slaughters St. Louis in final game

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The Kansas City Royals, rallying behind the five-hit pitching of Bret Saberhagen, completed one of baseball's most shocking comebacks Sunday night and won their first World Series championship, defeating the St. Louis Cardinals 11-0 in the decisive seventh game.

The Cardinals, who had seen their 3-1 lead in games vanish along with their hitting, simply collapsed in the final game.

What had been billed as the greatest seventh-game pitching matchup in more than two decades went up in smoke created by the Royals' bats. The Cardinals' ace, 21-game winner John Tudor, couldn't even make it through the third inning and wound up in a Kansas City hospital for stitches after cutting his index finger on an electric fan in the clubhouse.

The destruction occurred at the hands of platoon outfielder Darryl Motley, who hit a two-run homer and drove in three runs; Steve Balboni, who drove in two of Kansas City's three runs in the third inning; and the suddenly rejuvenated George Brett, who had four hits.

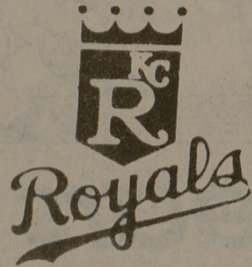
The Royals put the game away with six runs in the fifth inning, during which both pitcher Joaquin Andujar and Manager Whitey Herzog were ejected by home plate umpire Don Denkinger. Herzog had argued a critical Denkinger call at first base that fueled the Royals' winning, ninth-inning rally in Game 6, and consecutive ball calls on inside pitches to Royals catcher Jim Sundberg brought all the frustration erupted to the surface.

While the Royals completed a comeback unprecedented in the game — recovering not only from a 1-3 deficit in the American League playoffs but from 0-2 and 1-3 disadvantages in the Series — the Cardinals faded into offensive oblivion.

After leading the National League with a .264 team average during the season, the Cardinals hit just .185 in the World Series and scored a total of 13 runs.

Part of the Cardinals' offensive woes probably could be traced to the absence of injured leadoff hitter Vince Coleman, but the lack of St. Louis hitting also had to be a tribute to the young, well-schooled pitching staff of the Royals.

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The Royals' pitchers not only quieted the St. Louis bats but frustrated and eventually halted altogether the vaunted running game of the Cardinals. The Cards had stolen 314 bases during the season, for an average of nearly two a game, but managed just two swipes in the Series against the predominantly left-handed Royals staff.

This night, however, belonged to a 21-year-old right-hander by the name of Saberhagen, whose wife, Janeane, had given birth to their first child, son Drew, the day before.

Saberhagen, who had won Game 3 to give the Royals hope, struck out two and walked none.

Saberhagen, selected most valuable player, allowed a second-inning single to Jack Clark, then retired 11 in a row before giving up another single to Tito Landrum with two out in the fifth inning. He also allowed singles to Ozzie Smith, Andy Van Slyke and Terry Pendleton.

Saberhagen pitched the Royals' first victory of this Series, a six-hitter in Game 3.

The Royals' hitters, meanwhile, asked for no quarter, and gave none. After dispensing with Tudor, they slugged their way through another six St. Louis pitchers, winding up with 14 hits and the greatest margin of victory ever in the seventh game of a World Series. The Cardinals used five pitchers in the fifth inning, tying a World Series record set by Baltimore in 1979.

In their big inning, the Royals sent 11 men to the plate against Bill Campbell, Jeff Lahti, Rickey Horton, Andujar and, finally, Bob Forsch, in the process building their biggest winning margin of the season. They had won two earlier games 10-1.

Without the services of a designated hitter, the Royals had routed

the Cardinals, who were in their 14th World Series. The Royals, born of 1969 expansion, had been in the Series only once before, losing six games to Philadelphia in 1980.

No team ever had come back after falling behind 0-2 at home in a Series, and only four had rallied from a 1-3 deficit.

The big inning began when Jim Sundberg singled, chasing Campbell in favor of Lahti. Balboni singled, sending Sundberg to second, and Motley drove in the first run of the inning with a single. Buddy Biancalana struck out, and Saberhagen hit into a fielder's choice, Balboni going to third.

Lonnie Smith followed with a two-run double, going to third on the throw home, and Willie Wilson hit an infield single that scored Smith. That was all for Lahti, and Horton relieved. He gave up a single to Brett, whose Series average had slipped below .300 with just one RBI, as Wilson moved to third.

Horton was out, Andujar was in, and that's when the real trouble started.

Frank White singled, scoring Wilson and sending Brett to third, and when the count went 3-2 on Sundberg, hitting for the second time in the inning, Andujar motioned angrily to home plate. Andujar and Denkinger met about halfway between the mound and the plate, and Herzog stormed out. Herzog already had accused Denkinger, an AL ump since 1969, of being prejudiced toward the Royals after his ninth-inning call at first base in Game 6. This time, Herzog was thrown out for arguing balls and strikes.

Andujar wound up walking Sundberg, and he began to argue again. This time, he was ejected, bringing

on Bob Forsch, who got the final out of the inning.

In the process, the Royals tied a World Series record with their six-run inning. The last time a team had a six-run inning in the Series was 1971 when the Baltimore Orioles did it against Pittsburgh.

The Royals drew first blood for the fifth time in the Series on Motley's two-run homer off Tudor in the second inning.

With one out in the inning, Tudor walked Balboni on a 3-2 pitch. The count on Motley went to 3-1, and he hit a towering foul fly that would

easily have landed in the seats had it been fair. On the next pitch, Motley lined his homer into the left-field bleachers, about 15-20 feet fair.

Motley, the right-handed half of the Royals' platoon in right field, had 17 homers in 383 regular-season at-bats, but he had only one hit in seven previous World Series at-bats.

Tudor hadn't given up a home run since Bill Madlock of the Los Angeles Dodgers hit one in the seventh inning of Game 4 of the National League playoffs. It was only the fourth home run of the Series and the second for the Royals.

By the third inning, Tudor, the winner of Games 1 and 4, was history, having walked in another Royals run before walking off the playing field.

This mess was of his own making. He walked the first hitter, Lonnie Smith, the first time in 127 innings he had walked a leadoff man. After Willie Wilson fouled out to right, Brett tapped a checked swing roller between the mound and third base. Tudor gloved the ball and dropped it, and Brett was credited with an infield single as Smith went to second.

Smith and Brett then executed a double steal, Smith beaming catcher Darrell Porter's one-hop throw to third with a belly-whopper slide. White walked on a full count to load the bases, and the count also went full on Sundberg before Tudor walked him for the first run of the inning.

Herzog had seen enough. He went to the mound and signaled for his right-hander, Campbell, to face Balboni. The count was 2-1 on Balboni when he bounced a single through the left side, scoring Brett and White, and the score was 5-0.

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