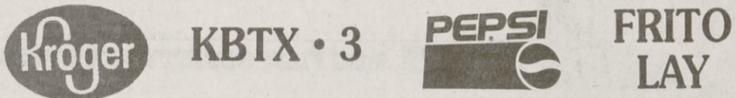


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## Braves win with 4-run 12th

**Ex-Astro pitcher Mark Portugal took the loss for the Reds.**

CINCINNATI (AP) — Add Javy Lopez to the Atlanta Braves' roll call of last-inning heroes.

Lopez hit a three-run homer in the 10th inning, capping yet another dramatic rally as the Braves beat the Cincinnati Reds 6-2 Wednesday night and took a 2-0 lead in the NL playoffs.

Atlanta's second consecutive extra-inning win put the Reds in a near-impossible situation. No team has won the NL pennant after losing the first two games of the championship series at home.

"It's a very uncomfortable feeling," Reds manager Davey Johnson said. "We've got to score more runs. Our offense just hasn't produced that many."

Three-time Cy Young Award winner Greg Maddux will start Game 3 at Atlanta on Friday night, opposed by David Wells.

The Reds pulled out every

offensive trick they could think up against starter John Smoltz, who has beaten them three times this season. They finally got him out of the game following the seventh with the score tied at 2.

But the NL's top extra-inning club failed for the second consecutive night. Mark Portugal, relegated to the bullpen for the playoffs, started the 10th by giving up a single to Mark Lemke, a walk to Fred McGriff and a single to David Justice, loading the bases.

Portugal then bounced a breaking ball for a wild pitch with Ryan Klesko at bat to let in the go-ahead run, and Lopez followed Klesko with a first-pitch homer high off the left-field foul screen.

The Braves, who had the league's worst extra-inning record in the regular season at 3-9, jumped and hugged in the dugout while Lopez rounded the bases.

Mark Wohlers pitched the ninth to close out the Braves' fourth come-from-behind win in the playoffs.

It was a particularly stunning loss for Cincinnati, who was 10-3 in extra innings in the league. The Reds had scoring chances in the seventh, eighth and ninth, and ultimately wasted perhaps the most impressive rally of the season.

The Reds were flat and flailing against Smoltz when they turned the game around with the resourcefulness that has become their trademark. Smoltz had a 2-0 lead and was working on a streak of 12 consecutive batters retired, leaving the less-than-capacity crowd of 43,257 restless.

So what do the Reds do? They stop swinging and start bunting.

Benito Santiago, with 14 strikeouts in 45 career at-bats against Smoltz, caught this baseman Chipper Jones playing back and bunted for a single. Bret Boone, just 1-for-10 in his career against Smoltz, followed with seven strikeouts, followed by another bunt single that seemed to unsettle the pitcher who fielded and threw wild for an error that Santiago took third.

## Hershiser works magic again

**The Indians' pitcher increased his postseason record to 6-0.**

SEATTLE (AP) — Orel Hershiser would have none of it.

Not the Kingdome noise, not the fireworks set off after Ken Griffey Jr.'s home run, not the momentum the Seattle Mariners were starting to build. None of it was going to stop him from winning a game the Cleveland Indians absolutely had to have.

Hershiser maintained his perfect career record in the postseason, and Manny Ramirez homered twice and went 4-for-4, leading the Indians past Seattle 5-2 Wednesday night and tying the AL playoffs at 1-1.

Showing the form that once made him baseball's best pitcher, the 37-year-old Hershiser allowed four hits in eight innings and improved to 6-0 in playoff and World Series competition. His only blemish came in the sixth inning when Griffey tied a postseason record with his sixth home run.

While Ramirez showed what made him an All-Star at age 23, Carlos Baerga came through with the big hit Cleveland missed in the opener. His two-out, two-run single with the bases loaded broke a scoreless tie in the fifth and got everyone off the Indians' bench, and team seemed to re-

lax after that.

The best-of-7 series goes back to Jacobs Field for Game 3 Friday night. Mariners ace Randy Johnson, finally able to get some time off this week, starts on four days' rest, opposed by Charles Nagy.

Seattle is 28-3 this season in games Johnson starts. The Mariners also won the last time he pitched — in relief in Game 5 of the first-round playoffs against New York.

The Indians did not want to go home down 0-2, and thanks to Hershiser, they did not. Not even a crowd of 58,144, the second-largest ever to see baseball at the Kingdome, could shake Orel.

Hershiser, who blanked Boston for 7 1-3 innings in the first round of the playoffs, struck out seven and his lone walk was intentional. Jose Mesa pitched the ninth, allowing Jay Buhner's second home run of the postseason.

Standing still on the mound, Hershiser merely focused in on catcher Sandy Alomar Jr., who would pat his chest protector as if to say, "Just you and me."

Even after giving up a home run, Hershiser already had a new ball back in his mitt and was at the rubber, almost ready to pitch, by the time Griffey touched home plate. None of Hershiser's teammates had to come console, either, because they knew he'd been

around big games before.

Griffey became the first AL player to homer six times in the postseason. Lenny Dykstra did it for Philadelphia in 1993 and Bob Robertson did it in Pittsburgh in 1971.

Hershiser was the MVP of the 1988 World Series, pitching Los Angeles to the championship. He went 3-0 in the postseason that year, as did another pitcher in the Dodgers rotation that October, Tom Seaver.

Belcher took the loss for the Mariners. Hit hard in two relief appearances in the opening round of the playoffs — he took out his frustration by knocking a television camera out of the operator's hands — he lasted 2-3 innings.

Belcher left after Ramirez homered with two outs in the sixth, Paul Sorrento singled and Sandy Alomar tripled for a 4-1 lead. Ramirez, who began the game 1-for-16 in the postseason, homered leading off the eighth against Bobby Ayala.

For the first few innings, it seemed like fate may've been on the Mariners' side.

Griffey made a diving catch to rob Eddie Murray of extra bases and second baseman Joey Cora made a diving catch on Kenny Lofton's liner. In Tuesday night's opener, it was Cora who grabbed Jim Thome's hard grounder to finish off rookie pitcher Bob Wolcott's escape from a bases-loaded, no-out jam in the first inning.

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