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And if you're looking for a place to call home, stop by and try Faith Center's College-Age Fellowship

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Please Recycle!

Braves stick it to Pirates in Game 1

ATLANTA (AP) — Atlanta's gamble with John Smoltz wasn't so risky after all.

Smoltz, a right-hander who struggled through September, added to Pittsburgh's October woes Tuesday night, pitching the Braves to a 5-1 victory over the Pirates in the first game of the National League playoffs.

Smoltz held the heavy-hitting Pirate lineup scoreless until Jose Lind led off the eighth with a home run to left field. That ended Pittsburgh's post-season scoreless streak at 29 innings, one shy of the major league record.

Now the Pirates must come from a game down if they are to avoid becoming the first team since the Philadelphia Phillies of the late 1970s to win three consecutive NL East titles without advancing to the World Series.

Braves manager Bobby Cox gambled perhaps the whole series by starting Smoltz against the predominantly left-handed-hitting Pirates, and was reward-

ed. Smoltz gave up just four hits before Mike Stanton took over in the ninth and gave up a two-out double to Jeff King before striking out Orlando Merced.

"I thought the game plan I had coming in, it ended up working," Smoltz said. "I kept the guys off base ahead of (Andy) Van Slyke and Bonds, and didn't allow them to get a big inning going. I got out of the gate good, but I stiffened up a little bit late and was able to get a five-run cushion."

Smoltz, who shut out the Pirates 4-0 on six hits in Game 7 last fall, didn't allow a hit until Lind's two-out infield single in the fifth.

The NL strikeouts leader was even more overpowering than he was in beating Pittsburgh twice last October. He struck out six and allowed only one runner as far as third base until Lind's second career playoff homer.

And Smoltz didn't shut down just Barry Bonds, a lead-

ing contender for the NL Most Valuable Player who's been anything but Mr. October. Bonds was 0 for 3 but had plenty of company from the rest of the Pirates, who have scored all of two runs in their last four playoff games.

The Braves had no trouble solving Doug Drabek, whose 1.16 post-season ERA entering the game was the best of any current pitcher with 30 or more innings. Sid Bream, the former Pirate who cried when he left the team two years ago, scored the Braves' first run and drove in the second and Jeff Blauser hit a solo homer.

Bream singled with one out in the second for the game's first hit and Damon Berryhill walked on a 3-2 pitch one batter later. Mark Lemke, Atlanta's unlikely offensive star of the '91 World Series but a .226 hitter this season, hit a hard grounder up the middle that second baseman Lind knocked down just to the right of the bag.

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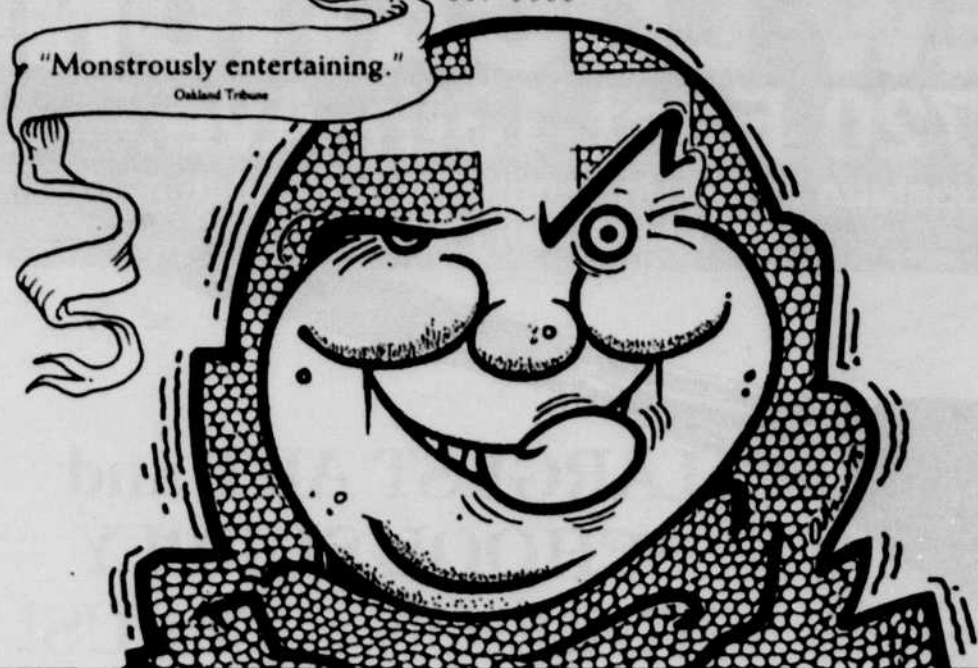
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