

Reds victorious despite terrible play

■ **NL PLAYOFFS:** Reds take 2-0 lead over the Dodgers

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The Cincinnati Reds took advantage of Giveaway Night at Dodger Stadium.

The Reds, handed scoring chances and runs all evening, beat the Los Angeles Dodgers 5-4 Wednesday to take a 2-0 lead in their NL playoff series.

Eric Karros homered twice for the Dodgers, who out-hit Cincinnati 14-6. But Los Angeles could not overcome a key error, a botched pitchout and three walks that led to the eventual winning run. The Dodgers also lost right fielder Raul Mondesi, ejected after the seventh inning.

Karros hit a two-run homer with one out in the ninth, making it 5-4. But Jeff Brantley retired Tim Wallach and Delino DeShields for a save.

Cincinnati's first two runs, on a homer by Reggie Sanders, were set up by a throwing error by shortstop Chad Fonville. Then, with the score 2-2, a wide throw by catcher Mike Piazza on a pitchout led to another run.

The Reds added two more in the ninth on only one hit, a two-out RBI single by Mariano Duncan, who scored an inning earlier on Larkin's hit.

The rest of the best-of-5 series is in Cincinnati, starting with Game 3 Friday night. Hideo Nomo (13-6, 2.54 ERA) will pitch for the Dodgers against

National League Playoffs

Reds vs Dodgers

- **Series:** Cincinnati leads Los Angeles 2-0
- **Last night:** Reds beat the Dodgers in Los Angeles 5-4
- **Highlight:** Eric Karros belted two home runs to lead Cincinnati past the Dodgers in the National League playoffs.
- **Next game:** Friday

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David Wells (6-5, 3.59 ERA).

The game was played before a paid crowd of 46,051 — about 10,000 below a sellout. A crowd of 44,199 attended Tuesday night's game; won by the Reds 7-2.

This game was one of missed opportunities for the Dodgers. They had 14 hits — four by Fonville — and stranded 11 runners, eight of them in the fifth, sixth and seventh innings. Piazza, second in the NL with a .346 average, finished 0-for-5.

They also missed Mondesi, ejected by plate umpire Bob Davidson after the seventh inning. Mondesi was the on-deck hitter when DeShields fouled out with the bases loaded to end the inning, and was tossed for apparently making remarks to Davidson.

Duncan singled with one out in the eighth off loser Antonio

Osuna. With Larkin was batting, Duncan stole second on an 0-2 pitch, beating Piazza's wide throw. Larkin followed by looping a single down the right-field line.

The Reds combined three walks, three steals and Duncan's single to score twice in the ninth. Mark Lewis had an RBI grounder.

Dave Burba, the second of four Cincinnati pitchers, earned the victory with one scoreless inning of relief.

Dodgers starter Ismael Valdes retired the first 11 batters before Ron Gant reached second with two outs in the fourth on a wild throw by Fonville.

Sanders made the Dodgers pay for the mistake with a home run to center for a 2-1 lead. Fonville took over at shortstop in the last month for All-Star Jose Offerman, who made 35 errors.

The Dodgers tied it in a hurry as Karros hit John Smiley's second pitch in the bottom half over the fence in center, close to where Sanders' ball went out.

The Dodgers had taken a 1-0 lead in the first on a leadoff single by Brett Butler, a sacrifice by Fonville and a two-out double by Karros.

The Dodgers didn't score in the fifth, sixth and seventh despite getting a total of seven hits and a walk in the three innings.

Mordecai and Fred McGriff, whose RBI single tied the score in the ninth. The Rockies compounded their troubles by making an error that brought in two more runs.

On Tuesday night, the Braves won 5-4, with the Rockies loading the bases in the ninth and forced to use a pitcher to pinch-hit in their final at-bat.

"Our pitching has kept us in these games," Cox said. "Tommy Glavine can't pitch any better than he did tonight. He made only one bad pitch."

Larry Walker's three-run homer and Andres Galarraga's RBI single had given Colorado a 4-3 lead going to the ninth Wednesday night, overcoming a pair of solo homers by Marquis Grissom, who increased his series total to three.

But Chipper Jones led off the ninth by slicing a double down the left-field line off Curtis Leskanic.

Mike Munoz then gave up a bloop single to McGriff, which scored Jones. David Justice flied out, and Darren Holmes struck out Javy Lopez.

Mike Devereaux then singled to center, with McGriff taking second, and Mordecai — batting for pitcher Alejandro Pena — lined a single to center to drive home the go-ahead run.

Mordecai took second on the throw home. Rafael Belliard then hit a routine grounder to second, but Eric Young's throw to first was low and wide, letting in two more runs.

Pena got the win for the second straight night, and Mark Wohlers pitched a one-hit ninth for his second save of the series. Munoz was the loser for the Rockies, in the playoffs in just their third season.

It was the second straight blown save for the Rockies in as many games, Leskanic having given up Jones' winning homer in the ninth Tuesday night. The Rockies had 15 blown saves during the season.

"The disheartening thing is we should be 2-0 going to Atlanta," Rockies manager Don Baylor said. "We kind of gave in to Mordecai at 3-0. We've beaten ourselves the last three years against the Braves. It seems like every time we kick a ball, they come back to beat us."

Game 3 is on Friday night, John Smoltz (12-7) is scheduled to pitch for the Braves against Bill Swift (9-3).

"We haven't had much success against them here or there, but we know we can play with them," Baylor said.

Atlanta comes back again, holds lead

■ **NL PLAYOFFS:** Atlanta steals another game from Colorado

DENVER (AP) — Leave it to the Atlanta Braves to find the most obscure heroes.

Remember Francisco Cabrera, whose pinch-hit, two-out single in the ninth sent the Braves to their second straight World Series in 1992? Meet rookie Mike Mordecai.

National League Playoffs

Braves vs Rockies

- **Series:** Atlanta leads Colorado 2-0
- **Last night:** The Braves beat the Rockies in the Mile High City 7-4
- **Highlight:** Mike Mordecai became the second Atlanta rookie in two days to win the game for his team by driving in the go-ahead run during the top of the ninth inning, leading the Braves to their second consecutive come-from-behind victory in this season's National League playoffs.
- **Next game:** Friday

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said, "All of our players know who Mordy is. He works hard, he knows who he's going to face. He clutched it in."

Mordecai, whose hit off Darren Holmes came on a 3-0 count, said he was surprised he was given the green light.

"But Bobby knows I can hit the fastball, and he's going to give me a chance to swing the bat in that situation," said Mordecai.

He had a pair of game-winning, last at-bat hits this season, including one against Colorado on Aug. 13, also off Holmes.

For the Braves, it was another great escape against the Rockies. For the second straight game, Atlanta couldn't put away the Rockies until the ninth.

The latest bit of theatrics came courtesy of

Kearney: Paying \$19.95 for T. V.? What a joke

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to watch the Ducks beat the Beavers senseless.

Unless, that is, my cable operator doesn't carry that game.

For example, when the Ducks played UCLA earlier this year and the game was covered regionally on ABC, everyone I knew watched what has turned out to be the most exciting game of the season thus far.

That is, everyone but my one lucky friend who happened to be out of town. Sure, the game may not have been broadcast on ABC in the Midwest, but as it stood, it wasn't available for pay-per-view in the immediate area either. But since it was offered in some nearby areas, my friend was plain out of luck.

Which brings me to last weekend's failed one-on-one Taco Bell million dollar match up between Shaquille O'Neal and Hakeem Olajuwon, the epitome of pathetic cable programming.

Not only did Taco Bell and

pay-per-view promoters conjure up the idea to have two oversized, rather slow basketball players face off one-on-one (which I really don't find all that entertaining), but they hyped it up with a \$1 million winner-take-all prize (which, considering they are already millionaires, I don't find entertaining at all).

In essence, the cable companies wanted 50,000 sports fans, at \$19.95 a head (the price of the pay-per-view event) to pay for O'Neal and Olajuwon to try and shoot jump shots (Hakeem would win), dribble (again, Hakeem would win) and eventually get frustrated and dunk (Shaq would win, but also break the backboard).

This is just what I wanted broadcast into my home. A battle of the big, slow and overpaid.

Not to worry, though. On Nov. 4, avid sports fans don't have to pay a thing to watch all whopping 45-seconds of the Tyson-Buster Mathis, Jr., fight held at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, Nev.

It's on Fox.

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