

# Cubs head to playoffs for first time since '89

Chicago hasn't been to the Series since 1945 and hasn't won one in 90 years

By Rick Gano  
The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Now, Steve Trachsel will be remembered for more than giving up a historic home run. He's pitched those lovable losers, the Chicago Cubs, into the playoffs.

With a home run boost from castoff Gary Gaetti and two key singles by Sammy Sosa, the Cubs beat the San Francisco Giants 5-3 Monday night to win the frenetic one-game playoff for the NL wildcard spot.

They survived despite a three-run rally in the ninth by the Giants. Barry Bonds, who grounded out with the bases loaded to end the seventh, came up again with the bases loaded but managed only a sacrifice fly.

The Cubs haven't been to a World Series since 1945 and haven't won one in 90 years, yet they're going to the postseason for the first time since 1989.

And now it's on to Atlanta, an extension of one of the most exciting seasons in their storied, sometimes laughable, always eventful, history. The Cubs, who won six of nine from the Braves, play Game

1 Wednesday.

Trachsel (15-8), who surrendered Mark McGwire's 62nd home run, didn't give up a hit until pinch-hitter Brent Mayne singled with one out in the seventh.

Trailing 4-0, the Giants went on to load the bases with two outs and brought Bonds to the plate. But the three-time MVP, who has struggled in the postseason, grounded out against reliever Felix Heredia and slammed his helmet to the ground.

In the ninth, reliever Kevin Tapani gave up a pair of leadoff singles. That brought on Terry Mulholland, who went eight innings and threw 121 pitches Sunday.

Stan Javier hit an RBI single and pinch-hitter Ellis Burks walked, loaded the bases with no outs and the score 5-1. But Bonds flied out, and then Rod Beck earned his 51st save, getting Jeff Kent on an RBI forceout and retiring Joe Carter on a popout.

It was Carter's final at-bat in the majors. At 38, the hero of the 1993 World Series is retiring.

The Cubs nearly did not get this far, losing six of their previous eight games, including Sunday's finale in Houston. But they were

saved when Colorado rallied from a 7-0 deficit to beat the Giants 9-8, forcing the first one-game playoff in the NL since 1980.

Trachsel and Giants starter Mark Gardner kept it scoreless until the fifth inning.

Henry Rodriguez singled and then the balding Gaetti lifted a two-run homer to left, his 19th of the season and eighth since joining the Cubs on Aug. 19 — his 40th birthday — after his release by St. Louis.

Gaetti raised his arms in triumph as the ball landed in the left-field seats and after a delay as fans littered the field, he emerged from the dugout for a Sosa-like curtain call.

Singles by Lance Johnson and Sosa drove out Gardner (13-6) in the sixth. Rich Rodriguez relieved and after Grace walked to load the bases, Matt Mieske, called up from the minors earlier this month, lined a two-run single to right for a 4-0 lead.

Sosa went 2-for-4 with a pair of singles, scoring in the eighth on Jose Mesa's wild pitch.

Sosa finished the regular season, because this game's numbers counted, with 66 home runs, trailing McGwire's 70. But Sosa gets something McGwire doesn't — a chance to play into October.

Trachsel hadn't won since Aug.

28 and had given up eight homers in his previous four starts.

The slow-delivering right-hander, whose long pauses between pitches served to take the charged-up crowd at Wrigley out of the game, struggled with his control.

He loaded the bases by hitting a batter and walking two in the fourth before slipping a called third strike past Brian Johnson. By the end of five, he'd already thrown 96 pitches.

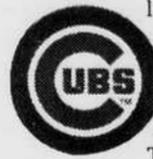
Trachsel allowed just one hit in 6 1-3 innings, walking six and striking out six.

After Mayne singled, Trachsel walked pinch-hitter Armando Rios and was replaced by Matt Karchner.

After another reserve, left fielder Orlando Merced, reached into the seats to pluck Javier's foul fly, ex-Cub Shawn Dunston got an infield single to load the bases.

But Bonds bounced out to end the threat. Bonds, a career .200 hitter in four postseason series, went 0-for-4 with a sacrifice fly.

Monday night's game was the first one-game playoff in the National League since 1980 when the Houston Astros beat the Dodgers 7-1 to win the NL West. In 1995, Seattle beat the Angels 9-1 in a one-game showdown for the AL West.



## Playoff roundup

**GAME 1 SAN DIEGO AT HOUSTON:** (1:07 p.m. ESPN) Today  
**GAME 2 SAN DIEGO AT HOUSTON:** (1:07 p.m. ESPN) Thursday  
**GAME 3 HOUSTON AT SAN DIEGO:** (TBA) Saturday  
**GAME 4 HOUSTON AT SAN DIEGO:** (TBA) Sunday if necessary  
**GAME 5 SAN DIEGO AT HOUSTON:** (TBA) Monday if necessary  
**GAME 1 TEXAS AT NEW YORK:** (5:07 p.m. Fox) Today  
**GAME 2 TEXAS AT NEW YORK:** (5:07 p.m. NBC) Wednesday  
**GAME 3 NEW YORK AT TEXAS:** (5:07 p.m. NBC) Friday  
**GAME 4 NEW YORK AT TEXAS:** (TBA) Saturday if necessary  
**GAME 5 NEW YORK AT TEXAS:** (TBA) Sunday if necessary  
**GAME 1 BOSTON AT CLEVELAND:** (10:07 a.m. ESPN) Today  
**GAME 2 BOSTON AT CLEVELAND:** (10:07 a.m. ESPN) Wednesday  
**GAME 3 CLEVELAND AT BOSTON:** (1:07 p.m. ESPN) Friday  
**GAME 4 CLEVELAND AT BOSTON:** (TBA) Saturday if necessary  
**GAME 5 BOSTON AT CLEVELAND:** (TBA) Sunday if necessary  
**GAME 1 CHICAGO AT ATLANTA:** (1:07 p.m. ESPN) Wednesday  
**GAME 2 CHICAGO AT ATLANTA:** (5:07 a.m. Fox) Thursday  
**GAME 3 ATLANTA AT CHICAGO:** (TBA) Saturday  
**GAME 4 ATLANTA AT CHICAGO:** (TBA) Sunday if necessary  
**GAME 5 CHICAGO AT ATLANTA:** (TBA) Monday if necessary

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