

SPORTS

L.A. Dodgers Win Over N.Y. Mets

(AP) The World Series is always the goal for the big-spending Los Angeles Dodgers. It's been elusive recently, with first-round flops two years running. Now, with Shohei Ohtani leading the way for the first time, they are going for another championship.

So a raucous clubhouse celebration was in order after the Dodgers beat the New York Mets to clinch their record 25th National League pennant.

"We hope we can do it again," infielder Max Muncy said. "We need to get four more wins."

Next up are the New York Yankees in the World Series, starting with Game 1 on Friday at Dodger Stadium. The best-of-seven series pits two of baseball's most glamorous teams, with a storied World Series rivalry.

"I know the fans love this and the players love this, too," Los Angeles outfielder Teoscar Hernández said. "It's not going to be easy but we have the team, we have the help, and we're going to go for that World Series trophy."

The Yankees have beaten the Dodgers in eight of their 11 World Series clashes. The first seven were played in New York — with the Yankees in the Bronx and Dem Bums in Brooklyn. The Dodgers moved to Los Angeles before the 1958 season.

"I think the whole world was looking forward or hoping for this potential matchup," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said.

He isn't kidding. The Dodgers have another country backing them — Japan has been tuning into the team's playoff games in record numbers, eager to see Ohtani and pitcher Yoshinobu Yamamoto.

The Dodgers landed Ohtani with a record \$700 million, 10-year deal in free agency, and they gave Yamamoto a \$325 million, 12-year contract.

Ohtani's performance in 2024 included becoming the first player in major league history with 50 home runs and 50 stolen bases in a season.

At the same time, the Dodgers overcame a litany of injuries that decimated their starting pitching. They led the major leagues with 36 injured list placements



Los Angeles Dodgers' Tommy Edman celebrates after their win against the New York Mets in Game 6 of a baseball NL Championship Series, Sunday, Oct. 20, 2024, in Los Angeles. The Dodgers will face the New York Yankees in the World. (AP Photo/Ashley Landis)

and 2,342 days lost, 445 more days than any other team.

Helped by a couple key contributors that arrived at the July trade deadline, they still finished with baseball's best record at 98-64 to earn home-field advantage throughout the postseason.

"This is a team that stayed together. Everybody contributed," Hernández said. "Shohei was a big part of all the wins we got, but the pitching, the bullpen was the big thing and thanks to them we're here, going to the World Series."

The Dodgers were in a perilous position in their NL Division Series, trailing the rival San Diego Padres. They rallied to win the last two games and take the best-of-five series 3-2.

"They proved to themselves how tough they are," Roberts said.

The Dodgers are down to three healthy starters and have used three bullpen games so far this postseason. That strategy worked twice, including Sunday's clincher over the Mets.

It wasn't supposed to be like this. They acquired Tyler Glasnow, but he went down with an elbow injury in mid-August. Two weeks later, Clayton Kershaw, already coming off elbow surgery, was finished because of a bone spur in his big toe. Dustin May never pitched this season and Tony Gonsolin was rehabbing after Tommy John surgery.

Walker Buehler struggled at times in his first season back from a second Tommy John procedure.

All-Star first baseman Freddie Freeman and shortstop Miguel Rojas have missed some time this postseason be-

cause of injuries, forcing multiple lineup changes.

Still, the Dodgers have stayed alive.

"I'm going to enjoy it no matter how little I helped," said Kershaw, the team's longest-tenured current player.

The Dodgers bolstered their roster in July by trading for starter Jack Flaherty, reliever Michael Kopech and versatile utilityman Tommy Edman, whose 11 RBIs against the Mets earned him NLCS MVP honors. Thrown into the cleanup spot in Game 6, Edman responded with four RBIs.

"I just think that I've got to bet on players that I feel are capable, put them in the best position to have success and be willing to live with whatever consequence," Roberts said. "This postseason, I've had a lot of clarity, and the players have made me look really good."

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