

Royals’ season ends 90 feet short in World Series

By Dave Skretta
The Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — The roars from the field had died away. Kauffman Stadium had fallen silent for the first time all night. In the Royals’ clubhouse, Alex Gordon had finally peeled off his dirt-stained jersey.

He had just watched the San Francisco Giants celebrate their third World Series title in five years, capped by a 3-2 victory in Game 7. But all he could think about was whether he could have scored the tying run with two outs in the ninth inning.

“It was a good hold,” Gordon said, eventually. “Close, but just short.”

Summing up the Royals’ season along with their season finale.

The Giants had taken the lead in the fourth inning, and the game amounted to a battle of the bullpens. San Francisco turned to its ace, Madison Bumgarner, and he kept breezing through the Kansas City lineup, right up until Gordon’s two-out single to left field.

The ball skipped past Gregor Blanco and reached the wall, and Gordon churned around third base and headed home. But he couldn’t get a good read on where the ball was because of the lighted scoreboard in left field, so he relied on third-base coach Mike Jirschele for guidance.

Jirschele said stop. Gordon put on the brakes.

He was left standing 90 feet from home when Sal Perez popped out to end the game.

“It’s tough to pick the ball up from the dugout with that board out there,” Royals manager Ned Yost said. “There was some hope that it might happen, but it didn’t.”

Still, the season will be remembered for



MEMORABLE PLAYOFF RUN. Japanese American Jeremy Guthrie, a pitcher for the Kansas City Royals, throws to the San Francisco Giants during the first inning of Game 7 of Major League Baseball’s World Series on October 29, 2014 in Kansas City, Missouri. The Giants won the World Series title, the team’s third title in five years, with a 3-2 victory over the Royals. (AP Photo/Charlie Neibergall)

back-to-back sacrifice flies against Kansas City’s starter, Japanese American Jeremy Guthrie.

In the bottom half, Butler laced a single up the middle, and Gordon drove in a run with a double. He later took third base on a fly out by Mike Moustakas, and then hustled home for the tying run when Omar Infante sent another flyball to center field.

Once the Giants regained the lead, though, the Royals couldn’t find an answer.

“Obviously, we wanted to win,” Gordon said, “but to be in this situation with these young guys and what they’ve done this postseason, I’m just proud to be a part of this team.”

Now, the question is whether it will take them another 29 years to return.

Along with the likely departure of Shields, the Royals will have to make some hard decisions with players such as Butler, who holds a pricy option for next season. But young cornerstones in Hosmer, Perez, and Lorenzo Cain should provide the foundation for the next few years.

“You know, the organization has a special time to build on what we have here,” Butler said, “and that’s a rare thing to have, to have this much talent in here and go into next year having the majority of that back. Not every team has that. We have an opportunity to build on that, and we have an opportunity to be a better team next year.”

much more than how close the Royals came to forcing extra innings one more time. It will be remembered for their 12-inning wild-card win over Oakland, and sweeps of the Angels and Orioles in their first playoff appearance since 1985.

It will be remembered for Yordano Ventura’s inspired pitching performance in Game 6. And the gutsy performances by the brilliant bullpen. It will be remembered for James Shields and Wade Davis, and the way they taught a losing clubhouse how to win.

It will be remembered for waking a baseball-starved city from its slumber.

“The character we had in this clubhouse is what I’ll remember the most,” said Shields, who now becomes a free agent and will likely pitch elsewhere next season.

“We battled,” first baseman Eric Hosmer said. “I think you saw how much heart we have.”

It was on display one last time in the World Series.

After splitting the first two games at home, Kansas City lost two of three in San Francisco, returning to Kauffman Stadium needing a victory just to force a deciding Game 7.

The Royals got it in a 10-0 rout behind Ventura, who dedicated the victory to the late Cardinals outfielder Oscar Taveras, his good friend who died in a car crash the previous weekend.

Kansas City rallied once more in the finale, falling behind 2-0 in the second inning when the Giants managed

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Sources: Cornell University Study, April 2014; Study by Council for Agricultural Science and Technology, April 2014; Cost Studies by Northbridge Environmental, 2012 & 2013.



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