

AROUND THE LEAGUE · TODAY

Four Division Series games, four clubs one loss from winter: CLE, NYY and ATL face elimination and SD is win-or-go-home again, with two higher-profile AL clubs on the same clock.

4 Division Series games on the board

4 clubs playing with no margin (CLE, NYY, ATL, SD)

2 ALDS series sitting at 2-0 into Game 3

2 NLDS Game 3s decided by one run Tuesday

1 postseason win for **Dave Roberts** from tying **Tony La Russa (71)** for 2nd all-time

7 combined bullpen arms used by MIL/SD in Game 3

TALKING POINTS

- **Three elimination games on one Wednesday:** CLE (down 0-2 to CHW) and NYY (down 0-2 to TBD) both have to win on the road, while ATL trails LAD 2-1 and needs to sweep two at Truist. SD is the fourth no-margin club, down 2-1 to MIL and again win-or-go-home at Petco.
- **Aaron Judge is out for the entire ALDS** (right soleus strain, possible ALCS), which strips a NYY lineup that posted an MLB-best **9.5 barrel%** and **223 HR** of its anchor while **Clarke Schmidt** is unavailable. That is the single biggest health swing on the board and sets up **Max Fried (0.3 HR/9)** vs a short-handed Yankee order.
- **San Diego's bullpen math is the leverage story:** **Michael King** (a 32-start, 185-IP, 4.3-WAR starter with 0 regular-season saves) logged a 6-out save and the room threw **97 pitches across five arms** in Game 3, with **Adrián Morejón** down (shoulder) and closer **Mason Miller** on paternity. Watch how quickly **Craig Stammen** moves in Game 4.
- **Milwaukee's contact-vs-result gap is the series hinge:** the Brewers out-hit SD **11-6**, doubled them in hard-hit balls **15-7**, and stranded **11** baserunners in Game 3, and are now **0-4 at Petco Park in 2026**. Pat Murphy's frame: "We hit four or five balls over 100 that were caught, but we also punched out in big situations" (ClutchPoints, Oct. 6).
- **American League chalk is under real pressure:** TBD (98-64, AL East champs) and CHW (84-78, one game out in the Central and **8-2** in its last ten) both hold **2-0** leads into Game 3s against the clubs with the bigger brand and, in Cleveland's case, the best staff ERA in the field (**3.77**).

American League Division Series: two 2-0 leads, two clubs on the brink

- **CHW leads CLE 2-0** and needs **one** win; Cleveland must win **three straight**, beginning on the road in a park it lost from in Games 1 and 2. Chicago used an **opener in 31 regular-season games** and opened the DS with **four left-handers across 8.1 IP** in a 3-0 Game 1 win.
- **TBD leads NYY 2-0** after manufacturing low-scoring wins (**1-0, 5-2**). New York faces elimination in the Bronx with **Judge out for the series** and its best remaining lever a **Max Fried** start defined by **0.3 HR/9** and a **2.65 FIP**.
- **Cleveland's staff** is the separator: **3.77 ERA / 3.82 FIP / 9.6 K/9** against a Chicago offense at **.726 OPS / 211 HR**. The question is whether CLE's bats, held down in Games 1-2, can force Venable's bullpen into a third look at a lefty-leaning lineup.
- **Tampa Bay's pitching profile** is the anti-Yankee weapon: **1.14 WHIP / 3.71 ERA** and the field's lowest walk rate (**2.6 BB/9**), with **Nick Martinez (1.3 BB/9 over 180 IP)** as the Game 3 starter. Fewer free passes means New York has to earn every run without Judge.

National League Division Series: Truist and Petco host the leverage

- **LAD leads ATL 2-1** and can clinch a return to the NLCS with a Game 4 win at Truist, where Tuesday was the franchise's **first** postseason win since Oct. 8, 2018. **Dave Roberts** sits **one** postseason win from tying **Tony La Russa (71)** for second-most all-time.
- **Atlanta's rotation is a season-long casualty list** (Schwollenbach, Strider, López, Elder, Waldrep all lost; Martín Pérez on the IL since Sept. 24), pushing **Tyler Mahle** into a Game 4 elimination start. Weiss' stated key is the top three (**Acuña, Baldwin, Olson**) finding one swing.
- **MIL leads SD 2-1** with two shots at Petco, but the Brewers are **0-4 there in 2026** and just lost a game they out-hit **11-6** with **15-7** hard-hit and **11** stranded runners. San Diego's **3.00** night ERA vs **3.98** season is the counterweight.
- **Seed math underneath it all:** a Dodgers win locks the NLCS matchup path, while a Yankee loss ends a **93-68** season one day after a **98-64** division winner (TBD) tries to close the same series. The AL bracket could be chalk-free by Thursday.

**CLE** 85-77

PREVIEW
SCHEDULED

84-78 **CHW** 

ALDS Game 3: CHW leads 2-0 and needs one win; CLE must sweep three straight, starting on the road where it lost Games 1 and 2.
4:00 PM ET

Elimination game for Cleveland; Chicago one win from advancing.

STORYLINE

CLE trails **2-0** and now must win **three straight**, the first two on the road. CHW is one win from a series it has controlled since a **3-0** Game 1 behind **four left-handers covering 8.1 IP**.

STORYLINE

Stephen Vogt (SI/cleveland.com, Oct. 5): "Backs against the wall, this is where this team thrives... we've backed ourselves into a corner. We know that." Why it matters: Cleveland's clubhouse framing is pressure-tested, not panicked.

KEY DECISION

Watch **Will Venable's** opener usage vs a lefty-leaning Cleveland lineup: Chicago used an **opener in 31 regular-season games** and his Game 2 bulk plan was a stated "combination of **Kay** plus **Newcomb** to get through **DeLauter** a second time, then pop **Burke** in there." First sign of the second-look decision is the tell.

TEAM METRICS

Cleveland pitching season baseline **3.77 ERA / 3.82 FIP / 9.6 K/9** against a Chicago offense at **.726 OPS / 211 HR**. The series has flipped the other way so far, with CLE bats quiet through two games.

NEWS

Chicago C **Jake Rogers** (paternity) and **Luis Castillo** (15-day IL) are off the roster. Cleveland RHP **Khal Stephen** is out with a UCL injury (2027). Roster depth now matters more than the season baseline.

LAST 10

CHW **8-2** in its last ten with **63** runs scored; **CLE 6-4**. Cleveland closed the regular season **8-2** and Chicago **7-3**, so the clubs arrive on similar form and very different series footing.

**LAD** 100-62

PREVIEW
SCHEDULED

94-68 **ATL** 

NLDS Game 4: LAD leads 2-1 and can clinch a return to the NLCS; ATL faces elimination at Truist Park.
6:00 PM ET

Clipping game for Los Angeles; must-win for Atlanta at home.

RECAP

Drake Baldwin (.817 OPS / 12.9 barrel%) and **Ronald Acuña (.796 OPS / 13.0 barrel%)** are the two bats whose swing rates decide whether Glasnow goes six or gets to the pen. Atlanta's offense is barrel-or-nothing against a **11.9 K/9** starter.

STORYLINE

LAD leads **2-1** and one win sends it back to the NLCS; ATL must win tonight and at least one more at Truist. Tuesday was the Dodgers' **first** postseason win at Atlanta since Oct. 8, 2018.

STORYLINE

Walt Weiss (Daily Sports, Oct. 7): "They can change the flow of a game with one at-bat." Why it matters: Weiss is publicly betting on his stars' single-swing leverage rather than small ball. **Dave Roberts** (heavy.com, Oct. 6) on **Andy Pages** (0-for-7, 4 K in the DS): "trying to do too much... I'm gonna continue to give Andy leash."

KEY DECISION

Tyler Glasnow (11.9 K/9, 2.74 FIP, 0.946 WHIP in 74 IP) vs Atlanta's K-prone middle. **Walt Weiss** has named the top three (**Acuña, Baldwin, Olson**) as his path. The leverage decision is how quickly he exposes that group a second and third time if the K rate climbs.

TEAM METRICS

ATL managed only a **.394 OPS** in Game 3 (5-for-32, 6 TB) vs a **.718** season mark, while LAD staff spun **1 ER in 9 IP (1.00 ERA)** vs **3.55** season. Atlanta's pitching FIP (**4.13**) is the worst in the remaining field.

NEWS

Miguel Rojas exited Game 3 mid-at-bat (lower back/hip, aggravated on a diving play) and is **unlikely for Game 4** (MLB.com, Oct. 6). ATL RHP **Bryce Elder** (knee) is aimed at a possible NLCS; **Martín Pérez** is eligible but doubtful.

LAST 10

LAD **7-3** in its last ten and allowing just **2.1 RA/g** vs **3.70** season; ATL **4-6**, scoring **38** and allowing **37** over the same stretch. The run-prevention gap is the series' defining number.

**TB** 98-64

PREVIEW
SCHEDULED

93-68 **NYY** 

ALDS Game 3: TBD (Rays) leads 2-0; NYY faces elimination at home and must win to force a Game 4 in the Bronx.
8:00 PM ET

Win-or-go-home for New York; Tampa Bay one win from the next round.

RECAP

Nick Martinez (3.10 ERA / 1.094 WHIP / 180 IP / 1.3 BB/9 / 15-6) is the anti-Yankee lever: he does not walk hitters, so New York has to earn every baserunner. Without Judge, the margin for a mistake-driven rally shrinks.

STORYLINE

NYY trails **2-0** after Tampa Bay manufactured **1-0** and **5-2** wins, and now has to climb off the mat in the Bronx, as **Aaron Boone** framed it (sports-addict.net, Oct. 6). TBD needs **one** win.

KEY DECISION

Max Fried's 0.3 HR/9 vs a Rays lineup that has won two low-scoring games without a win inning. The decision point is whether New York's power bats can force **Nick Martinez** out before the Tampa Bay pen takes over, or whether Fried has to be near-perfect to hold a short-handed order in it.

**MIL** 103-59

PREVIEW
SCHEDULED

91-71 **SDP** 

NLDS Game 4: MIL leads 2-1 with two shots at Petco; SDP is again win-or-go-home, a win forces a decisive Game 5 in Milwaukee.
10:00 PM ET

San Diego staves off elimination again; Milwaukee tries to close on the road.

RECAP

Jake Cronenworth delivered the decisive Game 3 HR on a **.629 OPS / .275 xwOBA / 7 HR** season line, and it was his **first** October home run since Oct. 12, 2022. Milwaukee's counter is traffic without timing, the exact risk carrying into Game 4.

STORYLINE

SD avoided elimination in Game 3 and now must do it again, with a win forcing a decisive Game 5 in Milwaukee. MIL still leads **2-1** but has lost all **4** games it has played at Petco Park in 2026.

STORYLINE

Craig Stammen (postgame, Oct. 6): "We used a lot of energy today... it's going to be another fight just like the first three games." Why it matters: Stammen is publicly acknowledging a taxed bullpen going into an elimination start, the exact place the leverage math gets tested.

TEAM METRICS	NYY offense carries a .720 OPS but the MLB-best 9.5 barrel% and 223 HR , now without Judge for the entire ALDS. TBD pitching posts 1.14 WHIP / 3.71 ERA and the field's lowest walk rate at 2.6 BB/9 , the exact profile that starves a power-only offense.
NEWS	Aaron Judge is out for the entire ALDS (right soleus strain, possible ALCS); RHP Clarke Schmidt is unavailable; Giancarlo Stanton was reinstated from the 60-day IL on Sept. 29. TB LHP Shane McClellan is a possible ALCS addition.
LAST 10	TBD 6-4 in its last ten; NYY 6-4 . Note the season split: Tampa Bay finished 98-64 as AL East champs , New York 93-68 at 4.5 GB , so the 2-0 lead tracks the standings, not an upset.

KEY DECISION	With Adrián Morejón down (left-shoulder) and King, Matsui, Adam and Rodriguez all used Tuesday (97 relief pitches, five arms), the decision point is the first sign of trouble in the 6th or 7th and whether Craig Stammen goes back to a burned arm or stretches Walker Buehler . Milwaukee's Game 4 starter is still unnamed.
TEAM METRICS	MIL out-hit San Diego 11-6 with a .785 night OPS vs .743 season and 15 hard-hit (53.6%) to SD's 7 (30.4%) , yet lost. SD pitching posted 3.00 night ERA vs 3.98 season, the series-flipping shift.
NEWS	SD Casey Mize (ankle) out ; Jeremiah Estrada doubtful; Walker Buehler (SD) reinstated from the paternity list Oct. 5 and gets the ball with the season on the line. MIL Andrew Vaughn activated Oct. 2 ; Brandon Woodruff (shoulder) is targeting a possible World Series return.
ROTATION	MIL threw 81 relief pitches across four arms in Game 3 after Dustin May lasted just 3.0 IP / 51 pitches . Both pens were emptied, so tonight is a war of who recovers: the club with the deeper room in a one-run game is the leverage edge.
LAST 10	MIL 8-2 in its last ten with 43 R / 27 RA (2.7 RA/g) vs 3.81 season; SD 7-3 , winning Game 3 while being out-hit 11-6 . Both clubs are on strong form; the road/home split is the divider.