

AROUND THE LEAGUE · THIS WEEK

Four Division Series games tonight, two clubs one win from the LCS and two clubs one loss from winter, with the bracket able to compress in a single evening.

4 Division Series games on the Wednesday board

2 clubs (LAD, MIL) one win from the LCS

2 clubs (CLE, NYY) facing elimination at 0-2

4 teams can end the night with a series won or lost

1 hit by the Yankees in ALDS Game 1

10 straight Dodgers playoff runs scored via home run

TALKING POINTS

- **Clinch/elimination math compresses fast:** LAD and MIL each sit one win from the LCS, while CHW and TBD (Rays) can each complete a sweep. That is four series that could be decided tonight, the first time this week the bracket can collapse in one evening.
- **Bullpen leverage is the NLDS story:** Craig Stammen used Game 2 starter Michael King for a six-out, 40-pitch save with Mason Miller on paternity leave, the gamble that decided Game 3. On the other side, Dave Roberts needed only 2.0 bullpen innings because Yoshinobu Yamamoto went seven, saving his leverage arms for a possible clincher.
- **AL health board flips the calculus:** Aaron Judge (right calf/soleus) is off the ALDS roster for the second straight round and eligible only for a potential ALCS, so the Yankees are trying to survive at 0-2 without their two-way threat. Tampa's Shane McClellan could return for the LCS.
- **Dodgers' run-scoring profile is historically one-dimensional:** all 10 of their playoff runs this postseason have come via home run, the longest such run to open a postseason in MLB history per AFP. Watch whether Atlanta's Game 4 game-plan forces Los Angeles to manufacture runs against Tyler Mahle.
- **Trade-deadline scorecard heat:** Dustin May (5.65 ERA / 5.06 FIP in 10 regular-season starts post-trade) has yet to stabilize the Milwaukee rotation, adding pressure to the Brewers' pitching questions if the Padres extend this series.

NLDS: Los Angeles Dodgers lead Atlanta 2-1

- LAD is one win from a third straight World Series run, a feat no NL club has ever accomplished. The Dodgers are 8-2 over their last ten and winners of 4 straight overall, 5 straight on the road.
- ATL sits at 5-5 in its last ten with an L1, and the rotation has been a season-long casualty list: Schwellenbach, Strider, López, Elder and Waldrep all lost, Martín Pérez on the IL since Sept. 24.
- **Game 4 pitching edge:** Tyler Glasnow (3.53 ERA, 2.74 FIP, 11.9 K/9, 0.946 WHIP) against Tyler Mahle, who has posted a 1.99 ERA and 0.957 WHIP in nine Atlanta starts after a 5.13 ERA with San Francisco.
- **Rojas watch:** Miguel Rojas (LAD) exited mid-at-bat with lower back/hip tightness and is unlikely for Game 4, per published coverage. Bryce Elder (ATL, knee) is targeting mid-October.

NLDS: Milwaukee Brewers lead San Diego 2-1

- MIL is one win from a second straight LCS, but Mason Miller's return from paternity leave restores San Diego's closer for Game 4, changing Craig Stammen's leverage math.
- Padres have won 4 straight home games over the Brewers in 2026, and all three games of this series have been decided by one run. MIL is 8-2 over its last ten but 0-4 at Petco Park this season.
- **Game 4 pitching:** Robert Gasser (L, 3.87 ERA, 4.24 FIP) for Milwaukee against Walker Buehler (R, 4.63 ERA, 4.51 FIP), reinstated from paternity leave.
- **Machado** on San Diego's mindset: "It was win or go home, backs against the wall... We're going to keep fighting until the end" (AFP, Oct. 7).

ALDS: Chicago White Sox lead Cleveland 2-0

- CHW has allowed just 3 runs across two games, and the Guardians' bats have cratered: Game 1 at .103/.235/.172, Game 2 at .125/.200/.188, against a season .696 OPS and .305 xwOBA.
- Cleveland rode an 8-2 L10 into the postseason but is 41-40 at home this year, a road-heavy 44-37 profile that now has to survive a hostile environment.
- **Game 3 pitching mismatch:** Daniel Espino (4.11 ERA, 3.75 FIP, 14.7 K/9 in only 15.1 IP across three starts) against Sean Newcomb (L, 3.09 ERA, 3.21 FIP, opener/relief profile with 60 appearances and 6 starts).
- **Bullpen pressure point:** Erik Sabrowski took Game 2's loss (0.2 IP, 2 ER), and with Espino short, how fast does Cleveland go to Cade Smith and Hunter Gaddis?

ALDS: Tampa Bay Rays lead New York Yankees 2-0

- NYY managed just one hit in Game 1 (.037/.103/.074) and only two home-run-driven runs in Game 2 (.129/.182/.355), a stunning collapse for a 93-68 club with a 138 run differential.
- Rays are 98-64 with an AL East title and a 55-26 home record, while NYY went 47-34 on the road, so the venue edge in a potential Game 5 swings toward Tampa.
- **Game 3 pitching:** Max Fried (L, 2.80 ERA, 2.65 FIP, 0.994 WHIP) tries to extend the Yankees' season against Nick Martinez (R, 3.10 ERA, 3.96 FIP, 180 IP, elite 1.3 BB/9).
- **Bullpen question:** Gerrit Cole (5 IP, 1 ER) was outdueled by Drew Rasmussen's 8 IP / 0 R / 10 K in Game 1, so how long a leash does Aaron Boone give Fried with the season in the balance?

CLE85-77

PREVIEW7:07 PM ET

84-78CHW

Cleveland faces elimination at 0-2; Chicago can complete the sweep and reach the ALCS.
Series: CHW 3-0, CHW 4-3

Game 3 of the ALDS with the Guardians' bats in a two-game deep freeze and Espino on a short leash.

KEY DECISION

CHW can complete the sweep to the ALCS; CLE faces elimination. Winner meets the Rays-Yankees survivor.

TEAM METRICS

CLE bullpen is the series pressure point: Erik Sabrowski took Game 2's loss (0.2 IP, 2 ER). With Daniel Espino short, watch Cade Smith and Hunter Gaddis usage.

NEWS

CLE offense in the series: G1 .103/.235/.172, G2 .125/.200/.188 vs season .696 OPS / .305 xwOBA. CHW season .726 OPS / .318 xwOBA.

FORM

Munetaka Murakami (35 HR, 20.5% barrel, .825 OPS) went 2-4, HR, 2 RBI in Game 1 and is the White Sox's primary power threat.

LAST 10

CLE 8-2 L10 into the series but 41-40 at home, road-heavy 44-37. CHW 7-3 L10, 48-33 at home.

LAST 10

CLE 8-2 L10 vs season .696 OPS; CHW 7-3 L10 and swept Houston in the Wild Card.

LAD100-62

PREVIEW8:08 PM ET

94-68ATL

Los Angeles can clinch a return to the NLCS with a win; Atlanta must win to force a Game 5.
Series: LAD 3-1, ATL 1-0, LAD 3-1

Game 4 at Truist Park with Glasnow's swing-and-miss stuff against Mahle's Atlanta resurgence.

STORYLINE

LAD leads the best-of-five 2-1 and can clinch a return to the NLCS, chasing a third straight World Series title (no NL club has ever done it).

STORYLINE

Freddie Freeman on Yamamoto: "He can pinpoint five or six different pitches... He kind of just leaves you speechless" (Japan Times, Oct. 7).

KEY DECISION

Tyler Glasnow (3.53 ERA, 2.74 FIP, 11.9 K/9, 0.946 WHIP) vs Tyler Mahle (1.99 ERA / 0.957 WHIP in nine ATL starts since arriving from SF, where he posted a 5.13 ERA).

TEAM METRICS

LAD offense Game 3: .222/.263/.389 with 2 HR vs season .762 OPS / .338 xwOBA. ATL Game 3: .156/.206/.188 vs season .718 / .315.

NEWS

Miguel Rojas (LAD) exited mid-at-bat with lower back/hip tightness and is unlikely for Game 4, per published coverage. Bryce Elder (ATL, knee) targeting mid-October.

OFF-NORM

LAD has scored its first 10 playoff runs entirely on home runs, the longest such run to start a postseason in MLB history (AFP). Watch whether Atlanta forces Los Angeles to manufacture runs.

ROTATION

LAD bullpen used only 2.0 IP in Game 3 (Tanner Scott 19 pitches, Edwin Diaz 19) because Yamamoto went seven; ATL used 4 relievers (Suter 21, Iglesias 22, Dodd 17, Lee 9) behind Sale's 95.

LAST 10

LAD 8-2 (W3) and winners of 4 straight overall, 5 straight on the road; ATL 5-5 (L1).

TB98-64

PREVIEW8:07 PM ET

93-68NYY

New York faces elimination at 0-2; Tampa Bay can complete the sweep and reach the ALCS.
Series: TBD 1-0, TBD 5-2

Game 3 at Yankee Stadium with Fried trying to save the season and Martinez's elite control on the other side.

STORYLINE

TBD (Rays) can sweep to the ALCS; NYY faces elimination without captain Aaron Judge. Winner meets the Cleveland-Chicago survivor.

STORYLINE

Aaron Boone, on the roster decision, via published coverage: "We're going to have to win without him."

MIL103-59

PREVIEW9:08 PM ET

91-71SDP

Milwaukee can clinch a second straight NLCS berth with a win; San Diego must win to force a Game 5.
Series: MIL 3-2, MIL 3-4, SDP 4-3

Game 4 at Petco with Gasser trying to close it out and Buehler back from paternity leave for the Padres.

STORYLINE

MIL is one win from a second straight NLCS; SDP is again in elimination mode, having now won 4 straight home games over the Brewers this season.

STORYLINE

Craig Stammen on King: "He came in the office today and said, 'I'm available to pitch... the next day and... Game 5'" (CBS Sports, Oct. 7).

KEY DECISION	Gerrit Cole (5 IP, 1 ER) was outdueled by Drew Rasmussen's 8 IP / 0 R / 10 K in Game 1, so how long a leash does Aaron Boone give Max Fried with the season in the balance?
TEAM METRICS	NY Yankees Game 1: .037/.103/.074 and only one hit; Game 2: .129/.182/.355 with only two HR-driven runs. TBD staff season 3.71 ERA but a soft .310 xwOBA-against; NY Yankees staff 3.24 ERA / .297 xwOBA-against.
NEWS	Aaron Judge (right calf/soleus) was left off the ALDS roster for the second straight round and is eligible only for a potential ALCS; Giancarlo Stanton active (MLB.com, AP, Oct. 3).
FORM	TBD 98-64 with an AL East title and 55-26 home record; NY Yankees 93-68 with a 47-34 road mark, so a potential Game 5 venue edge swings to Tampa.
LAST 10	NY Yankees 5-5 L10 (W1); TBD 5-5 L10 (L1), both trending sideways into the series.

KEY DECISION	With Mason Miller back from paternity leave, does Craig Stammen get his closer back, and can the Brewers' bullpen, taxed in Game 3, hold up?
TEAM METRICS	MIL out-hit SDP 11-6 with a .785 night OPS vs season .743 and 15 hard-hit (53.6%) to San Diego's 7 (30.4%), yet lost. SDP pitching posted a 3.00 night ERA vs 3.98 season.
NEWS	Walker Buehler (R, 4.63 ERA, 4.51 FIP) reinstated from paternity and lined up for Game 4; Robert Gasser (L, 3.87 ERA, 4.24 FIP) for Milwaukee.
OFF-NORM	All three games in this series have been decided by one run; MIL is 0-4 at Petco Park in 2026 despite an 8-2 L10.
ROTATION	SDP used 5 arms in Game 3: Pivetta 4.1 IP (2 ER), King 2.0 IP for his first career postseason save after 32 regular-season starts, Rodriguez 1.1 IP (1 ER), Matsui 1.0 IP (W) on his second career playoff appearance, Adam 0.1 IP. MIL also used five, with Romero charged the loss.
LAST 10	MIL 8-2 over its last ten despite an 0-4 mark at Petco Park in 2026; SDP 8-2 with Mason Miller back from paternity leave.