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Walker Buehler was Lights Out for the Dodgers in Game 3 of the World Series



Twenty-six-year-old Walker Buehler threw a historic 10-strikeout game to lift the Los Angeles Dodgers to a 6-2 victory over the Tampa Bay Rays in Game 3 of the World Series. (Getty Images)

By [Laurie Lauletta-Boshart](#) October 23, 2020

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ARLINGTON — The Dodgers talent was on full display in Friday night's 6-2 victory over the Rays in Game 3 of the World Series, beginning with starter Walker Buehler's command performance. The 26-year-old right hander made his tenth straight start with at least six strikeouts. Buehler looked relaxed and in control from the very first pitch, employing his three-part traditional delivery of wind up, rock and go. His 98-mph four-seam fastball and wicked breaking ball produced strike after strike, confounding the Rays' normally potent offense. Buehler even quieted the bat of Brandon Lowe who went 2-for-5 with two home runs and three RBIs in a Game 2 win over the Dodgers Wednesday night.

Thirty-six-year-old Rays veteran Charlie Morton, who has been brilliant in his first four postseason starts, never quite found his groove after surrendering an early home run in the top of the first to Justin Turner. He got all three batters in the second and nearly got through the third inning without any more damage, but with two outs and nobody on, Corey Seager was hit by a pitch. Justin Turner followed Seager's HBP with a double to left field and Max Muncy brought them both home with a single to right center, adding runs 47 and 48 to the Dodgers two-out postseason record.

The Dodgers topped that inning with a small ball play in the top of the fourth that was perfectly executed. Cody Bellinger's leadoff single and Joc Pedersen's deep stroke put runners at the corners with one out. Back-up catcher Austin Barnes then stepped into the box and laid down a perfect bunt, just out in front of the plate and dribbling down the first base line. The only play was to first, as Bellinger came in to score, sending the fans into a near riot. Mookie Betts' single scored Pederson and pushed the Dodgers lead to 5-0. Betts stole second and set the table for Corey Seager, whose hard-hit grounder to third was nearly mishandled by Joey Wendle. The high throw was destined for the bleachers when first baseman Ji-Man Choi athletically leaped to snag the ball and applied a sweeping tag to Seager before he crossed the plate, saving a run and ending the inning. Choi demonstrated that same athleticism with a similar play in the top of the eighth when he tagged out Betts.

Buehler didn't surrender a hit until the bottom of the fifth inning when he allowed a line drive double down the left field line off the bat of Manuel Margot. After striking out Joey Wendle, Willy Adames lined a near identical double to score Margot and finally put Tampa Bay on the board. Kiermaier grounded out to end the inning. After throwing six complete innings, Walker ended the night with 10 strikeouts, allowing three hits and one earned run. "I felt really good tonight," says Buehler. "I was in the zone and locked into the hitters, and the team put up some great runs to give me room to work."

Blake Treinen and Brusdar Graterol came out of the Dodgers bullpen to handle the seventh and eighth innings. L.A. closer Kenley Jansen took the mound in the ninth, striking out Austin Meadows and coaxing a fly out for Lowe. Rookie Randy Arozarena played spoiler by belting a solo home run over the left field fence before Jansen got Choi to line out, ending the game, 6-2.

The Rays struggled to get their offense going and were limited to just four hits. Walker was in his element and Turner was superb, going 2-for-5 with a homer and a double and two highlight-reel defensive plays. "The whole team was really on tonight," says Turner. "We are all just working hard and bringing everything we've got to every game."

Given how successful the squeeze play was, I asked Manager Dave Roberts about the likelihood of more situational small ball in the rest of the series. He chuckled (sans mask) and then said he couldn't give away all of his trade secrets. "But this is the World Series and we will do whatever it takes to get that extra base, that extra run and that means using every tool in our arsenal." Based on that answer, I suspect Roberts has a few more surprises up his sleeve.

Game 4 is set for Saturday, October 24 at 5 p.m. at Globe Life Field in Arlington. Dodgers left-hander Julio Urias will face off against Rays starter Ryan Yarbrough.

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