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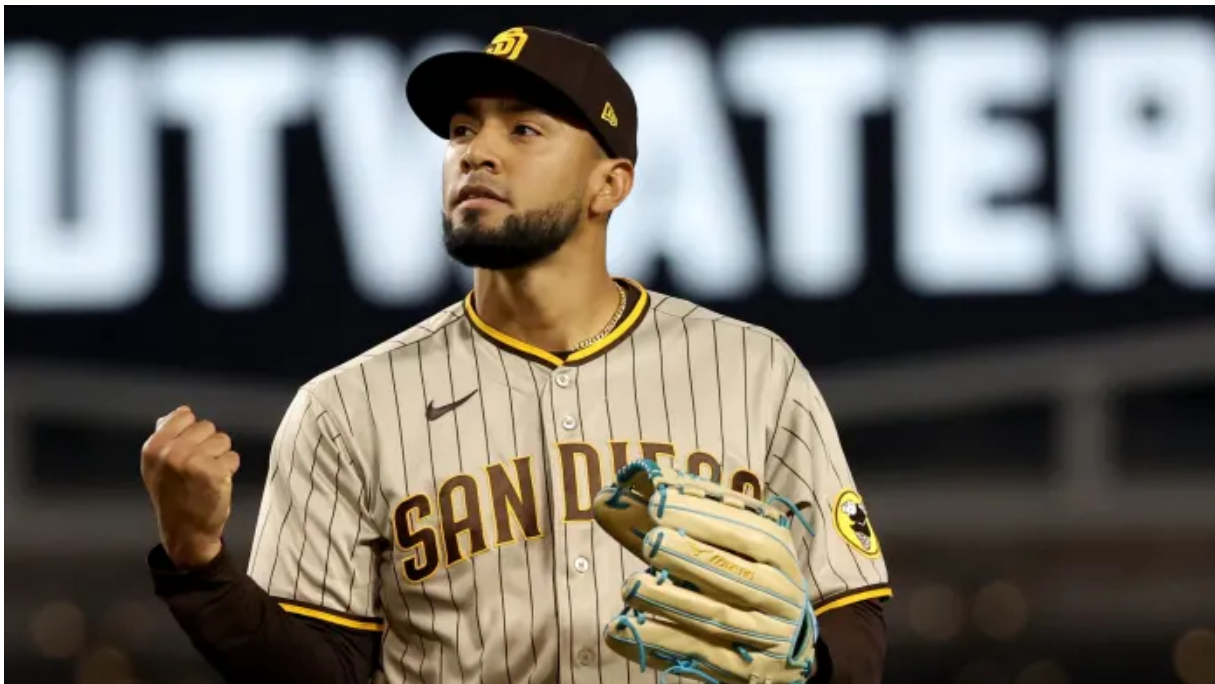
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OCT 12, 2022

# The Padres Edge the Dodgers in Game 2 to Tie the Series

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Kiyoshi Mio/USA TODAY Sports

Robert Suárez, the 31-year-old rookie reliever who didn't start playing baseball until he was 24, helped the Padres defeat the Dodgers 5-3 in Game 2 of the NLDS in Los Angeles on Wednesday night.

LOS ANGELES — Baseball fans were treated to a postseason spectacle Wednesday night in Game 2 of the NLDS, complete with highlight-reel defensive plays, towering home runs and the postseason heroics of 31-year-old rookie reliever Robert Suárez. After a lackluster series opener on Tuesday night — where the Dodgers rode a comfortable 5-0 early lead to a 5-3 victory — the Padres flipped the script to keep the Dodgers on edge and chasing the lead, an unfamiliar position for the winningest team in baseball.

Manager Bob Melvin had a plan, but was in an unenviable position. "We knew we had to win this game in order to have any momentum in the series," said Melvin. "Under no circumstances could we go back to San Diego down two games." The Padres skipper tapped veteran pitcher Yu Darvish to start Game 2; he was up against three-time Cy Young Award winner Clayton Kershaw for the Dodgers.

Padres third baseman Manny Machado — who has become a veteran leader for the club — opened the scoring with a first inning home run deep to left field. Freddie Freeman answered with his own solo shot in the bottom of the inning. The Padres threatened again in the second with back-to-back singles from Wil Myers and Jurickson Profar; both runners advanced 90 feet on a passed ball by Dodgers catcher Will Smith, but Kershaw was able to coax strikeouts from Trent Grisham and Austin Nola to strand the runners and end the inning.

The Dodgers took their first lead of the night when Max Muncy hit a high curveball into the outfield field seats to make it 2-1 Los Angeles. Darvish recovered with three consecutive strikeouts to close out the inning.

In the top of the third, singles by Padres leadoff hitter Ha-Seong Kim and outfielder Juan Soto set the table for Machado who roped a 2-1 curveball down the left field line, plating Kim and knotting the score at two all. Machado's double was the first division series hit with runners in scoring position for San Diego. The momentum was shifting. Following a Brandon Drury strikeout, second baseman Jake Cronenworth fought back from an 0-2 hole to full count. His ground ball to the right side produced an out, but scored Soto and the go-ahead run. The Padres were in the lead 3-2.

It didn't last long; Dodgers shortstop Trea Turner homered in the bottom of the inning for the second time in as many games, tying the score at three.

After five innings of Kershaw work, right-handed Dodgers reliever Brusdar Graterol took over in the top of the sixth. A fielder's choice, an uncharacteristic error by Turner and a Profar single pushed another run across for San Diego. Looking to pad the lead, a Trent Grisham squeeze play was quickly shut down by Graterol who made a perfect pickup and throw home to get a sliding Myers. Bellinger then made a spectacular over-the-shoulder catch in center field to rob Nola of an extra-base hit, ending the inning.

After giving up back-to-back singles, Darvish surrendered the ball in the bottom of the inning to Robert Suárez, the 31-year-old rookie reliever from Venezuela. Suárez, who was working in construction before joining a Mexican league at age 24, and signing his first contract this year, has been a go-to reliever for the Padres in the 2022 postseason. The newcomer caught Justin Turner looking and got Gavin Lux to ground into a double play, preventing the Dodgers from closing the run gap.

The Dodgers threatened again in the bottom of the seventh with two on and one out. Trea Turner hit a sharp ground ball to Machado at third, who held the runner, then fired to first base for the out. Freeman was intentionally walked to load the bases. Suárez got Will Smith to line out to center to get out of the jam.

Cronenworth tacked on an insurance run in the top of the eighth, drilling a 416-foot bomb to right field to secure a 5-3 win and the team's first division series victory in 16 years. "When I saw that cutter down and in the zone, I just went for it. I knew I made good contact, but wasn't sure if the ball was going to stay in fair territory. Once I saw it clear the fence, I was pumped. It's exactly what we needed," he said.

The Padres will take on the Dodgers in Game 3 of the NLDS on Friday, Oct. 14 at 5:37 p.m. PT at Petco Park in San Diego. Dodgers right-hander Tony Gonsolin will face off against Padres lefty Blake Snell.