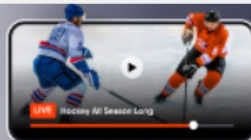


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The Texas Rangers Continue Their Winning Ways

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Dramatic walk-off home runs from Corey Seager and Adolis Garcia help the Rangers take Game 1 of the 2023 MLB World Series. (AP Photo/Godofredo A. Vásquez)

ARLINGTON — This is why we love baseball. As fans of the game, we live for the big moments. We replay them in our minds, on our feeds and talk about them for years to come. Game 1 of the 2023 World Series was one of those games. It was October baseball at its best—thrilling, dramatic, nerve-wracking. Even the extra innings were exciting. And the path that these two unlikely competitors took to get here made it all the sweeter.

The Arizona Diamondbacks were outscored 15-3 in spectacular fashion by the Philadelphia Phillies in the first two games of the NLCS. Just when fans were counting them out, they won Games 3 and 4 at home and proceeded to pull back the final two games on the road to clinch the series. The Texas Rangers were strong out of the gate, winning the first two ALCS games in Houston, but then couldn't buy a win at home. They returned to their winning form in Houston, clinching the final two games and securing a spot in the World Series.

Friday night under the domed Globe Life Field, both teams put on a show worthy of the Fall Classic. Rangers' right-hander Nathan Eovaldi was on the mound, making his fifth postseason appearance, but his first World Series start. The Diamondbacks tapped Zac Gallen, who was the starting pitcher for the National League All-Star Game, but had been struggling in the postseason. Eovaldi came out with confidence, shutting down Arizona in the first two innings. Gallen struggled to find his rhythm, giving up two runs in the first. But the Diamondbacks quickly responded in the third, using small ball tactics. After a pair of singles by Alek Thomas and Evan Longoria, shortstop Geraldo Perdomo moved the runners up 90 feet with a sacrifice bunt, which set up the opportunity for right fielder Corbin Carroll, who roped a two-run triple into center field, scoring Thomas and Longoria. The speedy Corbin came in to score after Ketel Marte hit a sharp grounder to first. Rangers first baseman Nathaniel Lowe fired back to home, but was too late to get Corbin. Eovaldi struck out Gabriel Moreno and Christian Walker to retire the side, but the Diamondbacks pulled ahead 3-2, setting a record in the process as the first team in World Series history to pull off a triple, a sacrifice bunt and a stolen base in the same inning.

After back-to-back strikeouts in the bottom of the third, Gallen surrendered a two-out walk to Corey Seager, followed by an Evan Carter double down the left field line—his second in as many at bats—and an Adolis Garcia walk to load the bases. He gave up a bases-loaded walk to Mitch Garver, forcing Seager home and knotting the score at three. In the

top of the fourth, outfielder Tommy Pham wasted no time putting Arizona back in the lead with a solo shot to the left field seats. Marte tacked on another run in the fifth after doubling off the left field wall and scoring Perdomo. His extra-base hit also tied a postseason hitting streak record of 17. The Diamondbacks seemed destined to pick up the win until the bottom of the ninth. Paul Sewald, Arizona's go-to closer, was brought in to finish the game. He had a perfect postseason save record: six for six with eleven strikeouts, one base on balls and no earned runs. He surrendered a leadoff walk to Leody Taveras and then struck out Marcus Semien. Seager stepped into the box and crushed the first pitch, sending the ball into the outfield seats for an epic two-run, game-tying homer. The entire stadium erupted as Seager pumped his fist while rounding the bases. "There is really no other feeling like it," says Seager, who was still beaming after the game. "We had a chance to win the game and I knew that if I got the right pitch, I could get a good hit. When I saw that high fast ball, I just took it for a ride." Seager is relentless in working on his offense, often hitting the batting cages right after a game.

With only one out, the Rangers had a chance to win the game. Sewald struck out Carter, but hit Garcia on the hand and intentionally walked Garver. Austin Hedges came in to hit for Jonah Heim, but was quickly dispatched with three straight strikes. The score was knotted at five all and was headed for extra innings. Jose LeClerc came in to pitch for the Rangers in the top of the tenth, retiring the side with three up and three down in the tenth and eleventh innings. In the bottom of the eleventh, Sewald coaxed a fly ball from Carter for the first out. Arizona then elected to go to the bullpen, bringing on Miguel Castro to pitch to Garcia. Looking to be the hero and the spoiler again (Garcia hit a grand slam in the ninth inning of Game 6 of the ALCS), Garcia hit a walk-off home run to win the game. The Rangers right fielder reached base all five times in Game 1, and had hit a home run in five straight postseason games. The ALCS MVP had gone through his share of postseason adversity with a hit-by-pitch bench clearing incident in Game 5 of the ALCS where he, Astros pitcher Bryan Abreu and Astros Manager Dusty Baker were all ejected. He struggled to find his footing in Game 6, striking out four times, before stroking a towering grand slam in the ninth. He repeated his home run heroics in Game 1 of the World Series. "I was very happy to hit the home run tonight and help my team," says Garcia. "We just kept working hard and knew we could win the game."

Game 2 of the World Series is set for Saturday, Oct., 28 at 8:00 pm ET at Globe Life Field in Arlington, Texas. The Rangers left-hander Jordan Montgomery will face off against Arizona starter Merrill Kelly.



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