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Los Angeles Dodgers
Daily Clips
Saturday, September 24, 2016
OC Register

Dodgers crush another right-hander, inch closer to NL West title

By JP Hoornstra

Los Angeles – For the Dodgers, the path to the postseason becomes more clear by the day.

Each time they beat a right-handed starting pitcher, as they did in a 5-2 victory over the Colorado Rockies on Friday, their path to the National League Championship Series becomes more clear, too.

Two of the Dodgers’ four hits against Rockies starter Jon Gray cleared the fences on a day when their own starter, Scott Kazmir, lasted just one inning.

Gray, whose previous start was a four-hit, 16-strikeout complete game shutout at Coors Field, labored against a patient lineup loaded with left-handers. Gray threw 106 pitches in only four innings.

A two-run single by switch-hitter Yasmani Grandal (batting left-handed) gave the Dodgers a 2-0 lead in the first inning. Joc Pederson’s 24th home run of the season and Andre Ethier’s first came on back-to-back pitches in the fourth inning. Pederson worked the count to 3-2 during a nine-pitch at-bat before homering off Jon Gray (10-9) with two outs. Ethier followed with a shot into the lower right-field seats.

That was all the run support the Dodgers’ bullpen needed. Ross Stripling (5-8) and five other relievers allowed one earned run over the final eight innings, preserving the victory.

At least Gray’s misery has company.

The Dodgers’ .768 OPS (on-base plus slugging percentage) against righties ranks third among National League teams. On Saturday they will face Chad Bettis, another right-hander, perhaps needing only one day to turn their magic number (two) into a fourth straight National League West title.

The San Francisco Giants lost to the San Diego Padres earlier Friday, and trail the Dodgers by seven games in the division. They have eight games remaining on their schedule, too.

The Giants and Padres begin play Saturday at 5:40 p.m., a half-hour before the first pitch at Dodger Stadium. If Clayton Kershaw can coax the Dodgers to victory, the division might well be clinched by the time of the final out.

Making his first start since Aug. 22, Kazmir left after throwing only 19 pitches because of right intercostal spasms. He allowed two hits and was bailed out by a strong throw from left fielder Andrew Toles to retire Nolan Arenado at home plate to end the first inning.

Dodgers manager Dave Roberts removed Kazmir to avoid the risk of further injury.
“I feel bad for Kaz,” Roberts said. “He’s gone through a lot and had high expectations for tonight, and the body wasn’t responding.”

Kazmir was already an unlikely choice to make a postseason start for the Dodgers. He hadn’t pitched in a month due to inflammation in his neck. His only minor league rehabilitation game during that span lasted less than one inning.

“It was tough for me to swallow,” he said. “It’s frustrating.”

Kazmir said the pain on his front side was similar to what he felt during a brief stint at Triple-A Oklahoma City.

“You can’t stay strong,” he said. “I had to not throw as hard.”

The Dodgers have healthier starters on their roster like Brett Anderson, Jose De Leon and Brock Stewart. Another, Brandon McCarthy, is due to come off the disabled list any day now. Each of them seems more likely to join Kershaw, Rich Hill and Kenta Maeda if the Dodgers need a fourth starter in the playoffs.

While Kazmir’s chances of pitching in October diminished, Stripling’s grew. He threw three shutout innings, allowing two hits, two walks and striking out four. The rookie right-hander (5-8) is in the running to be a long reliever in October.

“It’s long relief, so it’s kind of like a start,” Stripling said. “I can still pitch the way I’m used to.”

The Washington Nationals, the Dodgers’ likely opponent in the NL Division Series, feature a right-handed heavy rotation. Four-fifths of their current starters – Max Scherzer, Tanner Roark, Joe Ross, A.J. Cole – throw with their right hand. So does Stephen Strasburg, who is on the disabled list with a flexor mass strain. The only exception is southpaw Gio Gonzalez.

These thoughts were more than allowed for the announced crowd of 52,320 at Dodger Stadium. For a night, they were encouraged.

Notable: The eight innings of relief set a single-season Dodgers record for most bullpen innings pitched with 559.0. The old mark of 553.0 was set in 2009.

**Dodgers honor Vin Scully for his 67 years of storytelling with star-studded pregame ceremony**

By JP Hoornstra

LOS ANGELES – Forty cities and two counties declared Friday, September 23, 2016 as Vin Scully Day. It began like almost any other day at Dodger Stadium.

The Dodgers stretched and played catch. The Colorado Rockies took batting practice. Continuing a recent tradition, some players visited the Vin Scully Press Box before the game to shake hands with the man himself.
“To kind of show respect to him, for what he’s done for a long time,” Dodgers pitcher Joe Blanton said. “He’s one of the greatest announcers of all time. Just on a personal level, to be able to go up in his press box, shake his hand – I don’t do a whole lot of stuff like that, and it was a pretty cool little moment like that to have.”

The game was scheduled to begin at 7:20 p.m., but the first pitch was delayed by 27 minutes. In the meantime, a Vin Scully appreciation ceremony took over the field, turning a ballpark into a shrine – and turning Friday into more than just another stop on Scully’s retirement tour.

The first 50,000 fans in attendance received a typed letter signed by Scully containing recollections from his 67-year career that began in Brooklyn with the Dodgers and continued when the team moved west for the 1958 season.

“You were simply always there for me,” Scully wrote. “I have always felt that I needed you more than you needed me and that holds true to this very day. I have been privileged to share in your passion and love for this great game.”

Los Angeles mayor Eric Garcetti gave Scully a key to the city – a first in his three-plus years on the job, he said. Baseball commissioner Rob Manfred announced a $50,000 donation to the Jackie Robinson Foundation in Scully’s name, and Dodgers manager Dave Roberts emerged from the dugout with an oversized check.

Kirk Gibson couldn’t attend in person, but he wanted to pass along a pre-recorded message.

“It’s an honor for me to have your voice attached to the soundtrack of my career,” Gibson said, moments after it was revealed that fans voted Scully’s 19-word description of Gibson’s home run in Game 1 of the 1988 World Series as his greatest call ever.

Dodgers chairman Mark Walter announced that next year Scully would have a place among the team’s list of retired numbers. As of Friday, the team hadn’t decided what will symbolize Scully, the first nonplayer to join the group.

One of the 10 Dodgers players whose number is retired, Sandy Koufax, recounted a story about Scully.

“Before the World Series, Vin would go to church and pray – not for a win, but there would be only heroes in the World Series, no goats,” Koufax said. “He didn’t want anyone’s future to be tarnished with the fact that they lost the World Series for their team.”

Clayton Kershaw was the only current Dodger player sitting on the dais. He thanked Scully “on behalf of our team and the teams that have come before us.”

“Thank you for painting a picture for us and for our families that we’ll have for the rest of our lives,” Kershaw said. “When we retire, and we don’t have this game anymore, we’ll always have your voice. So thank you for that.”

Actor Kevin Costner was the last guest speaker. He delivered a riveting speech that alternated between tongue-in-cheek humor (“you called my imaginary perfect game; nobody can ever take that away”) and touching prose (“when we held our breath, you filled in the blanks”).
Costner starred in the 1999 baseball movie “For Love of the Game,” in which Scully narrated the play-by-play of his character’s perfect game.

“We’re all taking deep breaths, Vin,” Costner said. “We’re all struggling with our own emotions as we admit we’re down to our last three outs with you. You’re our George Bailey, and it has been a wonderful life. You can’t blame us for trying to hold on to you for as long as we can. And shame on us if you ever have to pay for another meal in public.”

Finally, Scully spoke. He had fought back tears when the emcee, Dodgers broadcaster Charley Steiner, introduced him on stage. He appeared fidgety as the distinguished speakers delivered one tribute after another.

Scully showed his sense of humor when explaining that he is often asked about his future. He turns 89 in November.

“I’m going to try to live,” he said, drawing laughs. “I’m looking for a much smaller house and a much larger medicine cabinet.”

Noting his five children, 16 grandchildren and three great grandchildren, Scully said, “I guarantee you if I don’t know what to do they will find something for me to do.”

Speaking to the sellout crowd, Scully sounded right at home. In his remarks, Scully thanked the fans for “your enthusiasm, your passion for the game.”

“When you roar, when you cheer, when you are thrilled for a brief moment I’m 8 years old again,” he said. “You have allowed me to be young at heart. I owe you everything.”

Vin Scully: Retiring Dodgers broadcaster is voice of generations

By Ryan Kartje

The voice is unmistakable – a warm, velvety tenor, so rich in tone, so rhythmic in its pace – like the croon of a classic standard. In Los Angeles, a city of constant reinvention, where transience is a way of life, the voice has endured for nearly seven decades. “The soundtrack of summer,” it is so warmly labeled.

But to those who have faithfully tuned in over the years, the voice transcends the images that title conjures – of sun-drenched afternoons in the shade of palm trees, of Dodger dogs and baseball in Chavez Ravine. To many here, the voice is bigger than the game itself.

Years after the transistor radio became a relic, replaced by MLB TV and live updates on iPhone screens, the voice remains a time machine. Close your eyes, and you’ll practically smell the fresh-cut grass in center field, taste the fresh-squeezed lemonade, hear the crack of the bat and crackle of the radio dial. To listen in is to be transported across generations.

“Pull up a chair,” Vin Scully asks at the top of his Dodgers broadcast, inviting you in once again as his personal guest. Over 67 years, he has become America’s most trusted storyteller, sports or otherwise,
his tales so artfully intertwined with balls and strikes that it feels as if Scully pulls the game’s strings himself.

He is baseball’s omniscient narrator, after all, the voice behind Kirk Gibson’s famous hobbled walk-off home run in the 1988 World Series – “In a year that has been so improbable, the impossible has happened!” – and baseball’s most infamous World Series gaffe – “It gets through Buckner!” Scully has been a part of each of the Dodgers’ six World Series titles and all four of Sandy Koufax’s no-hitters. His career stretches from Jackie Robinson’s prime in Brooklyn to Clayton Kershaw’s in L.A. – an astounding span of almost 10,000 games.

“There’s no way to separate him from the team’s identity,” says Steve Kaminsky, 71, of South Pasadena, a New York transplant and listener for more than 60 years. “Vinny has always been there.”

Scully will broadcast his final Dodgers home game Sunday. On Oct. 2, the magical 67-year run of broadcasting’s most beloved voice will come to an end in San Francisco. Just shy of his 88th birthday, Scully will bid the baseball world adieu, and fans far and wide, young and old, will collectively mourn. In Los Angeles, the most loyal of Scully’s listeners liken his departure to losing a family member.

To say goodbye, they say, feels like ending a decades-long conversation, as if, in all those years of stitching together baseball soliloquy alone in his Dodger Stadium booth, his stories and his magic are not meant for the millions on freeways and in their living rooms, but for you, wherever you may be.

“I’ve always felt that I was talking to one person,” Scully once said. “But I’ve never envisioned who that one person is.”

FROM BROOKLYN TO BEVERLY HILLS

Larry King was 16 years old when he heard the voice from the bulky set of his transistor radio. Even then, he remembers being drawn in. From the living room of his current home in Beverly Hills, he’s transported back to that afternoon in 1950 – his family’s tiny Brooklyn apartment, the crackle of the radio, and Dodgers announcer Red Barber with the microphone, handing off to a “young man out of Fordham” for the first time.

“Here,” Barber announced, “is the voice of Vin Scully.”

As a child, King’s only reference to his beloved Dodgers was Barber’s voice. His father died suddenly of a heart attack in June 1943 when he was just 9. And in the years that followed, King’s family was the poorest on his block. Baseball tickets were an uncommon luxury, so he dreamed of the crisp white lines and fresh green grass of Ebbets Field.

The radio had been a Hanukkah present from his mother, soon after his father’s death, and King often lugged the 40-pound set around on his shoulders, hanging on Barber’s every word, imitating his voice to strangers.

It was in this imaginative world that Scully flourished. He described scenes in detailed brushstrokes, paying special care to nuance – the tug of a pitcher’s collar or sweat wiped from a batter’s forehead. In 1953, he called a World Series at just 25 years old, and the next season, took over full-time as voice of the Dodgers. Like his predecessor, Scully was a natural storyteller, and in the transistor radio, he found his perfect medium – an open stoop, on which he could sling his press-box poetry.
The Dodgers won their first World Series in 1955, and as left-hander Johnny Podres induced the final ground out of a Game 7 shutout, King burst through the door of his apartment. The sound of Scully’s voice poured into the street with him, from transistors across the neighborhood.

In that moment, Scully’s voice seemed to ring down from on high: “Ladies and gentlemen,” he declared, “the Brooklyn Dodgers are the champions of the world.” The call set off a celebration; the entire borough had been waiting for him to confirm. When the Dodgers moved west in 1958, Angelenos would feel the same, distrusting their own eyes, until Vin had said it was true.

“Baseball announcers were a part of you then,” King remembers. “They were your lifeblood. There aren’t many like that anymore.”

As the transistor’s popularity diminished, the gravitas of baseball’s finest wordsmiths did, as well. Memories of the greats – Barber, Mel Allen, Russ Hodges, Ernie Harwell, each once as famous as the game they announced – have faded. Even King, known for his iconic radio personality, has been forced to adapt. His voice is now heard almost exclusively on Hulu, streamed for millions over the Internet.

“The world really has changed,” he says.

Down the hallway, a collection of sports relics and personal keepsakes, all juxtaposed together, line the halls of a room that’s as much museum as it is family trophy room. Cardboard cutouts from his sons’ little league baseball teams rest near a pair of Muhammad Ali’s boxing gloves. Dozens of autographed balls and gloves and shoes are scattered between photos of King with U.S. presidents and celebrities.

Near the door, an original painting of Ebbets Field hangs on its own, and as he offers a rare tour, King stops in front of it. In the first row, behind home plate, there he is, with his Dodger hat and dark-rimmed glasses, painted into the Brooklyn crowd, frozen in time.

In this room, the past breathes with life, but outside, King is constantly reminded of how much time has changed what he once knew. Just to listen to Scully, he switches his television from DirecTV to a second provider, Time Warner, which, due to a TV dispute, he had to buy to even watch the Dodgers. Sometimes, he yearns again for the simplicity of his transistor radio.

King wonders about his youngest sons, Chance and Cannon, and how they’ll remember Scully or the other greats, if they’ll remember at all. He calls Cannon into the room. “What does Vin mean to you?” he asks.

“You hear his voice, and I don’t know,” Cannon says, “there’s just nothing like it.”

It’s true – Scully is the last vestige of a bygone time, and King wonders aloud what exactly that will mean for those who never knew that transistor era, apart from Scully and the nostalgia his voice conjures. But here again, with his impeccable timing, Scully sweeps him off his feet, launching into a story about Frank Sinatra’s song “My Way.”

“As Sinatra said, ‘There’s a lot to said for longevity,’” King recites, as Scully hums along in the background. “You can’t fool people for 67 years.”
But after all that time, after the world has changed again and again, how will baseball remember its most iconic announcer and the era he leaves behind? Can a voice so constant ever truly fade? A beat passes, and Scully’s timeless cadence fills the room again.

“Ah, that voice,” King says, trailing off. For the moment, it’s all that seems to matter.

BEDTIME STORIES

It’s 9:30 p.m., well past his bedtime, but 8-year-old Jonathan Lobel is still awake, with headphones on, as his mother, Michelle, opens the bedroom door. The jig is up. “It’s the bottom of the eighth!” he begs.

This time, she’ll let it slide. Only a couple more days of summer remain, after all, and in this final season of Scully, what could a few more minutes hurt?

Jonathan is almost certainly the only second-grader in Los Angeles spellbound nightly by Vin’s voice on the transistor radio. Every night, in a room filled with autographed baseballs and bobbleheads, he sets his small, silver radio on his nightstand, slips on black headphones, and closes his eyes, as Scully’s words paint the scene.

The arrangement began as a compromise. Jonathan’s bedtime on school nights meant missing most of the Dodgers broadcast on TV. But as his son grew older, Jonathan’s father worried television was distracting from what, he remembered, made baseball so magical. So Josh Lobel, a hedge fund manager in Beverly Hills, bought his son a transistor radio.

“We live in such a visual culture, and we’ve lost so much magic in the story,” Josh says. “I wanted him to see it all, the way I did listening to Vin.”

Perhaps it sounds contradictory — that only on the radio can we truly “see” — but consider this: Since making their deal, Jonathan’s knowledge of the team has become encyclopedic. On the day backup catcher A.J. Ellis is traded to the Phillies, he conjures statistics out of thin air to analyze the fallout. For fun, earlier this season, Jonathan and his father created a computer spreadsheet to predict the Dodgers’ final record. His estimate called for the Dodgers to win the NL West by six games; as of this weekend, they lead the Giants by that exact margin.

There were other signs of Scully’s influence: Players nearly three times Jonathan’s age were suddenly “youngsters.” One night, he announced to the family that a home run was “hit from here to Utica!”

“We realized he was being raised by an 87-year-old for two hours a night,” Josh says.

His father understands their deal can’t possibly last. Even Jonathan admits he prefers to watch on TV. But Josh will settle for knowing that, however briefly, he and his son shared in the magic of Scully on the radio, like he and his father once did.

“I was wondering,” Jonathan asks, “if the Dodgers won the World Series, do you think he would stay?”

He wants to believe it’s possible — or, at least, that his replacement might actually fill his shoes — but as the voices of Lobel children fill the living room, drowning out the broadcast, there’s no time to dwell on such a dream. It’s well past Jonathan’s bedtime again.
And upstairs, on the nightstand in his room, a voice beckons from the transistor.

A SECOND DAD
For more than seven hours, Dee Audette sat in a chair at a Hollywood tattoo parlor as an ink portrait of the 80-year-old man she’d come to love, but had never met, began to take shape on her right forearm.

Etched from wrist to elbow was his toothy smile, his perfectly coiffed red hair, and his impeccable suit, shaded black and outfitted with a striped tie. As the needle colored in the contours of his face and the wrinkles in his forehead, Audette only grew more confident. For Vin Scully, a tattoo seemed like the least she could do.

Audette grew up in East L.A., in a small house on Morrow Place, with seven brothers and sisters, too strapped to afford baseball tickets for a family of 10. So every night, they gathered in the living room to watch the Dodgers, and her father, Mike, would turn the television on mute and the radio on high. Together, they reveled in that night’s stories, while she watched from her father’s lap.

Over the years, father and daughter grew close. The Dodgers and Vin’s velvety voice on the radio had been the source of their bond.

“I always thought of Vin as another dad,” she says. “He was always there.”

When her father died in 2001, the team and Scully became Audette’s sole escape. She bought season tickets and started traveling to the park for nearly every game, like she always promised she would. She began collecting every keepsake she could and stashing it at home.

On opening day of the 2010 season, Scully’s 60th year as the team’s announcer, Audette went to Chavez Ravine determined to finally meet the man whose image she had tattooed on her arm.

As Scully came into view, Audette’s heart raced. He introduced himself, before the sight of his ink-drawn likeness, smiling up from a strange woman’s forearm turned him a bright shade of red.

“Why would you do that for me?” Scully asked her.

“Why would you give up 60 years for us Dodger fans?” she echoed back.

He invited her into the press box, and they talked baseball for the better part of an hour. He was just as she’d always envisioned – humble, kind, unflinchingly polite. By the end of their conversation, she was sitting on Scully’s lap, just as she’d sat on her father’s years ago. Tears welled up in her eyes, as he signed his name below the tattoo. She drove to Hollywood right away, to have it outlined in ink.

Audette, now nearing 50, admits she has not yet come to terms with the end. After news spread recently that Scully wouldn’t continue through the playoffs, her husband, Kevin, came home to Audette balled up, in tears. “It’s finally hitting me,” she told him.

To Kevin, it was no surprise. Before he proposed, Audette warned that the Dodgers would always come first. He now drives a Dodger blue car, and the walls of their living room are lined with Dodgers memorabilia.
But all of it is secondary to the voice of her childhood, the man smiling up every day from her forearm.

“Without him,” she says, “I can’t even imagine. How will things even go on?”

EASING A DIFFICULT LIFE

It was 31 years ago, aboard a cruise bound for the Mexican Riviera, that Colleen Owen had a serendipitous encounter with Vin Scully in the ship’s gift shop.

Since her mother shook Jackie Robinson’s hand, one morning in 1949, the Owens had been marked for Dodgers fandom. After dinner, the family often gathered in their usual spots around the bulky wooden console in the living room to watch the Dodgers. Scully’s stories, night after night, were their soundtrack.

To her brother, especially, Scully was a hero. As a boy, Tom Owen dreamed of being a baseball announcer. He would ride his Stingray bike up and down the streets of their idyllic Simi Valley neighborhood, copying Scully’s calls with a transistor radio held to one ear. With his bright red hair, family and friends called him “Little Vinny.” The nickname stuck for years.

So when Colleen, the gift shop’s manager, worked up the courage to approach Scully that day, she told him about Tom. The next morning, she woke to an envelope under her door. Inside was an 8x10 glossy autographed photo of Scully, along with a note, written on the back of his gift shop receipt.

“Hi Tom,” it read, in loopy cursive. “Best wishes to a ‘little Vinnie’ – Vin Scully”

Six weeks before his final broadcast, Tom and Colleen (now Colleen Ortoli) sit at a table at the ESPN Zone in Anaheim as the Dodgers play on a nearby television, and the note to “Little Vinnie” sits on the table between them. All these years later, he has kept it close. Tom still feels an uncanny bond with the man who signed it.

Tom lives in Moorpark; Colleen is in Laguna Niguel. It has been awhile since they’ve seen each other. But Scully’s voice, humming along in the background, has a way of taking you back, and Tom, with his 1988 Kirk Gibson jersey slipped over a blue polo, is feeling nostalgic, reminiscing of nights in front of that 24-inch RCA, when he’d sit so close his mother worried he’d go blind.

“I had a one-track mind,” he says, laughing. “It was the Dodgers and Vin Scully, all day.”

If only life were as simple as it was then, as Scully’s voice often makes it feel.

Since 2001, when multiple sclerosis first rendered his wife, Cathy, medically disabled, that voice has been Tom’s lifeline. As her strength deteriorated and the weight of his own life overwhelmed him, Tom would sit in his recliner until well past midnight, just to hear Scully and let the world melt away for a while.

Cathy is not yet confined to a wheelchair, but close. The left side of her body often goes numb, and her vision comes and goes. Most nights, she’s too tired to travel. So when Tom returns from his job at Sunbelt Rentals, he takes care of the housework, the laundry, and anything else Cathy might need, waiting until late into the night before he flips on the Dodgers replay.
All of it has taken its toll on Tom. He chokes up, thinking about what they’ve been through. At times, he says, he has struggled to cope.

“His life has not been easy,” Colleen says, her eyes welling up.

During Scully’s 67 years on the air, tragedy has been a constant visitor. In 1972, his first wife, Joan, overdosed on prescribed medication one night and never woke up. His booth partner, Don Drysdale, suffered a heart attack in 1993 and died suddenly in his hotel room. A year later, his eldest son, Michael, died in a helicopter crash while investigating the damage of the Northridge earthquake.

And yet, few ever sensed his heartbreak. Scully’s voice never faltered. Tom wondered, sometimes, how he could possibly carry on through such darkness, but right on cue his voice fills the room. Tom wipes his eyes.

“Vin, he knows – he’s always known – it’s not about him,” Tom says. “He’s not living for just himself.”

And of the many lessons he has learned from Scully over the years, culled from afternoons in the backyard or late nights in his Moorpark living room, this is the one he holds closest, as Scully’s final season comes to a close.

Tom has tried not to think what life will be like without him. But as Scully would certainly tell him, there is plenty to be joyful about. The Dodgers are bound for the postseason. Cathy recently found an office job as a once-a-week sub that she loves. And soon, they will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary.

“I just wish he would’ve met Vin,” his sister says, packing away that note from three decades ago.

But in many ways, he already had. For Little Vinnie, Vin had been there all along.

TIE THAT BINDS
Near the doorway of Gil Cedillo’s office on the fourth floor of City Hall hangs a charcoal drawing of a bridge near the Boyle Heights home where he grew up. Since his election as city councilman, it has hung there as a metaphor. “Bridges bring people together,” he explains.

The neighborhood around 1st and Evergreen was a tapestry of cultures in those days – a Jewish temple, a Chinese corner store, housing projects with mostly African-American families – and yet, for all their differences, there was one thing that brought the community together most. In the summer months, all you had to do was shut up and listen to understand, as Vin Scully’s voice rang out from radios up and down the street.

“The Dodgers were affordable,” says Cedillo, whose district includes Dodger Stadium. “They were working class. They were our team.”

And Vin, by extension, was their voice. It’s a wonder now: To look back on an era of such social unrest and see a white man, with that saccharine tenor and shock of red hair, bridge such a gap, speaking to all races, all classes, reaching them through the same microphone. Scully could quote from 19th-century Italian opera, and yet, still speak to the common man through his stories. In a city spread across 503 square miles, his voice was perpetually central.
“He was a bridge to our common history,” Cedillo says. “We all felt like we knew him, like he was ours alone.”

Last year, after turning it down time and again, Scully finally agreed to let the Dodgers dedicate the street outside Chavez Ravine in his honor. So the team called the local councilman, Cedillo, who cut a year-long process down to “a few months.” Bureaucracy, it seems, has nothing on Vin.

The night before the dedication, Cedillo couldn’t sleep. So he turned on a few of Scully’s most famous calls for inspiration. Instantly, he was transported back to the transistor radio in his parents’ kitchen; to chocolate malts in the cheap seats; to the inner rungs of Dodger Stadium and the back route only his father seemed to know. Even now, Scully had been a bridge back home, like the charcoal drawing in his office.

The next day, he stood next to Scully himself, holding up a sign for Vin Scully Avenue, the stadium he loved in the background. It felt like a dream. He snapped a photo with Scully to commemorate the occasion.

His speech? It came and went: “We all told the same story,” Cedillo says, “of Vin and his voice on our transistor radios.”

FINAL CURTAIN
At his most magical, in those rarest of times when even America’s finest broadcaster and his melodic prose could not capture the tenor of the scene before him, Vin Scully would step away from the microphone and let the roar of the crowd wash over it all, beckoning us into the moment and its euphoria – the thump, thump, thump of fireworks over Hank Aaron’s record home trot or the din of an organ’s song as Kirk Gibson rounded the bases in ’88.

For 30 seconds, for a minute, for longer – you were there, next to the man himself, basking in the scene he so eloquently set, until, at just the right moment, his voice filled the empty space again.

Soon, the curtain will fall on his 67th and final season, and that voice, the one that spoke to generations through their transistor radios, that so elegantly captured the soul of the game and the tone of sprawling Southern California, will welcome us in for one last conversation between friends.

And when the time is right, Vin Scully will pull up a chair and the baseball world will rise to its feet, as the weight of the moment and the roar of the crowd sweeps him away one final time.

Vin Scully, after 67 Dodgers seasons, by the numbers

By Tom Hoffarth

We’d never pegged Vin Scully as a numbers guy.

Asked recently to estimate how many baseball games he has called since breaking in with the Dodgers in 1950, the Hall of Fame broadcaster said: “Quite frankly, I have zero interest in knowing how many games I’ve done. It doesn’t mean that much.”
You could try to do the math and come up with ... does more than 10,000 sound right?

Yet here we are trying to get our head around 67 seasons with the Dodgers, and 88 years, 10 months and three days old when he plans to do his final broadcast for the team in San Francisco on Oct.2.

Here are others digits worth deciphering as to what is being accomplished as Scully calls his final Dodgers games:

24,274: Days that Scully has been with the team when he does his last game.

45.5: The percentage of years Scully has been involved as a broadcaster in Major League Baseball since the game’s origins were established 147 years ago in 1869.

53: The percentage of years Scully has been involved as a broadcaster for the Dodgers with the franchise start date in Brooklyn 126 years ago in 1890.

33: Seasons that Scully had been broadcasting Dodgers games before he was awarded the Ford Frick Award by the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown (inducted in 1982).

34: Seasons that Scully has been broadcasting Dodgers games since his Hall of Fame induction.

80: The age difference of Preacher Roe and Julio Urias, two pitchers whose games Scully has called in his career.

9: Different ownership groups under his time since 1950 – the first included Branch Rickey (who hired him), Walter O’Malley, James Lawrence Smith and James and Dearie Mulvey.

28: World Series calls on TV and radio (a broadcasting record).


6: World Series championships in the Dodgers’ entire history.

13: Number of World Series that Scully has called for the Dodgers, out of the 18 in the franchise’s history dating to 1916.

21: No-hitters called. Fourteen of them were by Dodgers pitchers (four by Sandy Koufax, two by Carl Erskine and one each by Sal Maglie, Bill Singer, Fernando Valenzuela, Jerry Reuss, Kevin Gross, Ramon Martinez, Hideo Nomo and Clayton Kershaw). Six were by Dodgers’ opponents (Vern Bickford, Don Larsen, John Candelaria, Nolan Ryan, Dennis Martinez and Kent Mercker.) One was during a national NBC telecast (Jack Morris).

3: Perfect games called. By Larsen (1955 World Series, Game 5), by Koufax (1965 vs. Chicago Cubs) and by Martinez (1991 vs. the Dodgers). He was on an NBC assignment in 1988 when the Reds’ Tom Browning threw a perfect game against the Dodgers.

9: Primary fellow Dodgers broadcasters Scully has worked with in either the TV or radio booth: Red Barber, Connie Desmond, Andre Baruch, Al Helfer and Jerry Doggett in Brooklyn, plus Ross Porter, Don
Drysdale, Rick Monday, Charley Steiner in L.A. The Dodgers have also employed as broadcasters from 1950-present: Al Downing, Jerry Reuss, Joe Davis, Orel Hershiser, Nomar Garciaparra, Eric Collins and Steve Lyons and Kevin Kennedy. The pay-service ON TV once had Geoff Witcher and Eddie Doucette call games with Downing (1980-84), A Dodgervision production had Doucette, Downing and Monday do games from 1985-87, Z Channel had Monday and Doucette worked with Tony Hernandez, Monday and Don Sutton ('88 and '89) and SportsChannel LA had Joel Meyers, Ron Cey and Duke Snider involved (1990-92). Since 1958, the Dodgers have also had 10 Spanish-language broadcasters, including Baseball Hall of Famer Jaime Jarrin (1959 to present).

1: Ranking, in the 2005 Curt Smith book, “Voices of Summer: Ranking Baseball’s 101 All-Time Best Announcers.” In a grading process that gives 1-to-10 points in the categories of longevity, continuity, network presence, awards, language, popularity, persona, voice, knowledge and miscellany, Scully was the only one to score 100. Says a review from Booklist: “His top pick, Dodgers announcer Vin Scully, may be beyond argument; everyone else is fair game.” Mel Allen (99), Ernie Harwell (97), Jack Buck (96), Red Barber (95), Harry Caray and Bob Prince (94), Jack Brickhouse (93), Dizzy Dean and Lindsey Nelson (92) complete the top 10.

Farewell to Vin Scully: Even mundane moments feel magical in his presence

By Ryan Kartje

One weekend, in the summer of 1963, Don Sundeen and his wife decided to go for ice cream. It proved to be quite a fortuitous craving.

The ice cream parlor was on Sunset Blvd, just a 15-minute walk from their Pacific Palisades apartment. All these years later, Sundeen can’t for the life of him remember the name of the place. But he will never forget who he’d meet inside.

As a teenager growing up in Long Beach, Sundeen grew up a Dodgers fan, even as the team played across the country in Brooklyn. He was a pitcher himself at Jordan High, with a fastball that he said could touch 90 mph. But between occasional gems, in which he’d strike out double-digit batters, Sundeen was wildly inconsistent. And in 1949, a scout for the Pittsburgh Pirates told him his big-league dream was dead. Nine years later, the Dodgers moved to Los Angeles, with a young, red-haired baseball announcer Sundeen soon would meet, in tow.

It was that afternoon at the ice cream parlor that Sundeen met Vin Scully for the first time. One thing led to another, their wives got to talking, and soon enough, Sundeen was alone with the man whose voice had spoken to him through his transistor radio for more than a decade.

“Vin detected right away that I was a big baseball fan,” Sundeen remembers. “The conversation turned that direction quick. The gals wanted to be gals, so in the weeks after that, the pattern was that my wife and his wife and their two daughters would fan out and go by themselves, leaving me there with Vin.”

The two became fast friends. For the next year, when the Dodgers were home for the weekend, Sundeen and his wife would meet Scully and his family at the same ice cream parlor. They met week after week, sometimes twice in a weekend, despite never actually setting a date or time to meet again.
Always, the meetings were open-ended. Always, Sundeen and Scully talked baseball. When Sundeen looks back on that summer, it feels like a dream.

“He had so many stories,” Sundeen says. “God, they were amazing. He was an encyclopedia.”

Sundeen never could resist asking about baseball. Sometimes, though, Scully would redirect the conversation to Sundeen’s aspirations. On more than one occasion, he peppered him with questions about what he wanted from his life. So Sundeen told Scully about his childhood and his dreams of making it to the big leagues, about how he’d fallen short, about how he’d always wondered what might have been. Scully listened warmly. He had a way of putting you at ease, Sundeen remembers.

But as the seasons changed, their meetings grew fewer and further between. Soon, Sundeen was offered a new job, and the couple moved away. The trips to the ice cream parlor stopped, and the Sundeens and Scullys fell out of touch.

A few years later, while in San Francisco on business, Sundeen arrived at Candlestick Park early one afternoon to catch the Dodgers, who happened to be in town. Before the game even began, he found himself in a disagreement with a hostile group of Giants fans. That’s when a familiar voice called to him from the broadcast booth.

“Don!” Scully called out, making his way toward the crowd of rowdy fans. “We’re coming for you!”

After the rescue, the two old friends caught up. They talked about baseball and where their lives had gone these past few years. Before long, the game began, and Scully was called to the booth.

They’ve never seen each other again. But as Sundeen came to understand, years after those afternoons spent over ice cream, even the mundane moments felt magical in Scully’s presence. Those who meet him or know him, however briefly, come to cherish the chance.

Molly Knight, author of “The Best Team Money Can Buy”, vividly remembers the day Scully waived at her from the press box. She was just 8 years old, and, as she recalls, “could’ve fallen over dead at that point.” Since, she has strolled through the press box, only to find Scully, as gentlemanly as ever, holding the door for her.

As he prepares for a future without Scully, Charley Steiner, a play-by-play colleague of his in the Dodgers booth, says he’ll hold most dear the nightly dinners he had for more than a decade with Scully, Rick Monday, and, prior to his death a year ago, team fixture Billy Delury.

“We’d sit at the same table, in the same chairs, with essentially the same conversation, and then the damn game gets in the way,” Steiner says.

For Bryan Cranston, meeting Scully was a surprise anniversary present from his wife, Robin. An award-winning actor, who had just finished a six-month stint on Broadway, Cranston had perhaps never been so nervous. But those nerves quickly melted away in his presence.

“Now, look at who’s here,” Scully said warmly, as Cranston entered the booth.
As far back as Cranston can remember, Scully was there. He recalls watching Wally Moon inside the cavernous confines of the Coliseum, while listening to Scully’s voice over the transistor radio. Years later, during class, he would snake headphones up his sleeve and tuck one earpiece behind his collar, so he could secretly listen to Scully’s call.

“It represented my entire life to meet him,” Cranston says. “Vin Scully and the Dodgers, they’re a part of who I am. To meet that person was monumental for me.”

He told Scully about his transistor radio. They reminisced about famous moments in Dodgers history. “I just noticed he has an uncanny ability to bring whoever is in his company to the forefront,” Cranston says.

It’s that humanity the actor says would make Scully especially challenging to play as a character. But that’s not to say Cranston wouldn’t try. Asked about the possibility, Cranston puts on his best Scully impression.

“Oh,” he says, in Scully’s trademark cadence, “you can count me in.”

**Dodgers Notes: Active roster swells to 39 going into final week of regular season**

By JP Hoornstra

LOS ANGELES – Pitcher Scott Kazmir was activated from the 15-day disabled list and infielder Chris Taylor was recalled from Triple-A Oklahoma City, giving the Dodgers 39 players on their active roster for Friday’s game against the Colorado Rockies.

The 40th man on the roster, pitcher Brandon McCarthy, is on the 15-day disabled list. He threw a 75-pitch simulated game at Dodger Stadium on Tuesday and a bullpen session Friday.

Manager Dave Roberts said McCarthy will be activated before the regular season ends a week from Sunday. That means the Dodgers will have a full complement of 40 players on the active roster.

Although teams can use every player on their 40-man roster after Sept. 1, few – if any – actually do. It also makes the job of trimming the roster to 25 for the postseason that much more difficult.

The final eight games of the season will determine a lot, but not everything, toward constructing the roster.

“Some of it is recent performance, the other part is the year that certain players have had,” Roberts said. “The other part is who we’re playing, and matchups, what makes the most sense for us to put 25 guys on the roster that give us the best chance to win. We’re going to heat up those talks.”

The Dodgers are all but mathematically guaranteed of clinching a fourth straight National League West title.
They have a slim chance of playing anyone other than the Washington Nationals in the first round, a slimmer chance of clinching a wild-card berth, and an even slimmer chance of missing the playoffs altogether.

Inevitably, some players with a strong case for a roster spot will not participate in the first round.

“With our depth and the quality of players that we have, we have a lot of very good players,” Roberts said. “Night to night, getting guys involved is a challenge. Also when you're looking at a potential formalizing or finalizing a playoff roster, those are very difficult decisions.”

NEW THREADS
Tuesday, some Dodgers were wearing T-shirts adorned with the words “Don’t Look At Me” – a reference to Madison Bumgarner’s outburst at Yasiel Puig the night before.

Friday, a new round of apparel arrived. These shirts had a stenciled mug shot of Bumgarner, with the words “Don't Look At Me” on the right and #PUIGYOURFRIEND on the bottom.

Several players, including Puig, also wore hats or shirts paying tribute to Vin Scully.

ALSO
The next outings for McCarthy, left-hander Brett Anderson and right-hander Jose De Leon remain to be determined. Roberts said all three are capable of pitching out of the bullpen, even though they have been starters to this point in the season. ... Rockies manager Walt Weiss and third baseman Nolan Arenado (El Toro High), were among the six-man contingent who visited Scully from the visitor’s clubhouse. ... Former Dodgers shortstop Jimmy Rollins will be a studio analyst for baseball games on TNT in September and October. Rollins, 37, was released by the Chicago White Sox on June 15. ... Trayce Thompson’s brother Klay, who plays for the NBA’s Golden State Warriors, took batting practice before the game.

Vin Scully to fans: 'You were always there for me'

By Staff

Text of Vin Scully’s letter to delivered to fans at Dodger Stadium on Friday:

Dear Friends:

Many years ago, a little red-headed boy was walking home from school, passing a Chinese laundry and stopped to see the score of a World Series game posted in the window. The Yankees beat the Giants, 18-4, on October 2, 1936. The boy’s reaction was pity for the Giants and he became a rabid Giants’ fan from that day forward, until the joyous moment when he was hired to broadcast Brooklyn Dodgers games in 1950. Ironically, October 2, 2016 will mark my final broadcast of a Giants-Dodgers game. It will also be exactly 80 years to the day since that little boy fell in love with baseball.

God has been very generous to that little boy, allowing him to fulfill a dream of becoming a broadcaster and to live it for 67 years. Since 1958, you and I have grown up together through the good times and the bad. The transistor radio is what bound us together. Were you at the Coliseum when we sang “Happy
Birthday” to an umpire? Were you among the crowd that groaned at one of my puns? Did you kindly laugh at one of my little jokes? Did I put you to sleep with the transistor radio tucked under your pillow?

You were simply always there for me. I have always felt that I needed you more than you needed me and that holds true to this very day. I have been privileged to share in your passion and love for this great game.

My family means everything to me and I will now be able to share life’s experiences with them. My wife, Sandi, our children, Kevin, Todd, Erin, Kelly, and Catherine, along with our entire family will join me in sharing God’s blessings of that precious gift of time.

You folks have truly been “The Wind Beneath My Wings” and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for joining me on this incredible journey of 67 years of broadcasting Dodger baseball.

Heartfelt Thanks,

Vin Scully

Dodgers honor Vin Scully for his 67 years of storytelling

By Beth Harris/The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES – Hall of Fame broadcaster Vin Scully thanked Dodgers fans for making him feel like an 8-year-old again every time they cheer. The crowd, in turn, saluted Scully with a loud roar and multiple standing ovations on his appreciation night Friday.

Holding hands with wife Sandi, he walked slowly from the dugout along a blue carpet dotted with the team’s logo to a stage set up in front of home plate for the pre-game ceremony honoring his 67 years in the team’s broadcast booth.

Smiling, laughing and waving to the crowd, Scully placed his left hand over his heart in a sign of gratitude. As the applause and cheers continued, he shook his head and mouthed “OK” to let the crowd know it could quiet down.

They ignored him.

“Hi everybody and a very pleasant good evening to you,” Scully said, his signature greeting drawing the first of several roars. “I thought I’d get that out of the way right away.”

The first 50,000 fans in attendance received a typed letter signed by Scully containing recollections from his 67-year career that began in Brooklyn with the Dodgers and continued when the team moved west for the 1958 season.

“You were simply always there for me,” Scully wrote. “I have always felt that I needed you more than you needed me and that holds true to this very day. I have been privileged to share in your passion and love for this great game.”
In his remarks, Scully thanked the fans for “your enthusiasm, your passion for the game.”

“When you roar, when you cheer, when you are thrilled for a brief moment I’m 8 years old again,” he said. “You have allowed me to be young at heart. I owe you everything.”

Actor Kevin Costner, baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred, Hall of Fame pitcher Sandy Koufax and Dodgers ace Clayton Kershaw were among the speakers paying tribute to the 88-year-old Scully, who is retiring next weekend after the Dodgers conclude their regular season in San Francisco.

“Obviously he is a Dodger at heart, but he called a lot of really important games and people regard him to be one of those rare treasures that are always going to be a part of baseball,” Manfred said before the ceremony.

Scully showed his sense of humor when explaining that he is often asked about his future. He turns 89 in November.

“I’m going to try to live,” he said, drawing laughs. “I’m looking for a much smaller house and a much larger medicine cabinet.”

Noting his five children, 16 grandchildren and three great grandchildren, Scully said, “I guarantee you if I don’t know what to do they will find something for me to do.”

Dodgers chairman Mark Walter, former owner Peter O’Malley and former managers Tom Lasorda and Joe Torre, now an MLB executive, were among those on hand. O’Malley’s father, Walter, first owned the team and was instrumental in bringing the Bronx-born Scully west when the Dodgers relocated to the vast Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum.

“It was a very strange phenomenon to be on the field and hear the broadcast coming out of the stands,” Koufax said. “The people of Los Angeles, even though they were at the game, didn’t enjoy it without hearing Vin tell them about it. He entertained and he educated them.”

The ceremony began with Bob Costas narrating a video featuring vintage photos from Scully’s career and memories from former Dodger Steve Garvey, actor Bryan Cranston, fellow announcers Joe Buck, Dick Enberg and Al Michaels, Kobe Bryant, Magic Johnson, and comedian George Lopez, among others.

The Dodgers and Colorado players jammed their dugouts to watch.

“We just want to say thank you,” Kershaw told Scully during his turn at the podium.

Costner starred in the 1999 baseball movie “For Love of the Game,” in which Scully narrated the play-by-play of his character’s perfect game.

“We’re all taking deep breaths, Vin,” Costner said. “We’re all struggling with our own emotions as we admit we’re down to our last three outs with you. You’re our George Bailey and it has been a wonderful life. You can’t blame us for trying to hold on to you for as long as we can. And shame on us if you ever have to pay for another meal in public.”
Manfred announced a $50,000 donation from Major League Baseball to the Jackie Robinson Foundation in Scully’s name. Dodgers manager Dave Roberts toted the oversized check on stage. Scully called Robinson’s career when he broke the sport’s color barrier in 1947.

After the speeches, both teams lined up on each side of home plate, removed their caps and listened to John Williams conduct the Los Angeles Philharmonic in the national anthem behind the mound.

Scully stepped to the microphone and proclaimed, “It’s time for Dodger baseball.”

And then he was gone, hurrying upstairs to his fifth-floor booth to spin another night’s worth of baseball lore for generations of Angelenos soothed by the sound of his voice.

On deck: Rockies at Dodgers, Saturday, 6 p.m.

By Staff

Rockies at Dodgers
Where: Dodger Stadium
TV: SNLA, KTLA/5
Did you know? The Rockies are 15-41 in their last 56 road games against a left-handed starter, while the Dodgers are 22-5 in Kershaw’s last 27 home starts against the Rockies.

THE PITCHERS
DODGERS LHP CLAYTON KERSHAW (11-3, 1.73)
Vs. Rockies: 17-5, 3.20
At Dodger Stadium: 70-29, 2.00
Hates to face: Gerardo Parra, 10 for 27 (.370), 3 2B, 1 3B
Loves to face: Brandon Barnes, 2 for 13 (.154), 7 K

ROCKIES RHP CHAD BETTIS (13-7, 4.79)
Vs. Dodgers: 0-1, 4.91
At Dodger Stadium: 0-1, 5.68
Hates to face: Carlos Ruiz, 5 for 8 (.625), 2B
Loves to face: Joc Pederson, 0 for 4

Vin’s big night a winner! Dodgers near clinch

By Ken Gurnick and Thomas Harding

LOS ANGELES -- Vin Scully Appreciation Night started with an emotional pregame tribute for the retiring Hall of Fame announcer and ended with a 5-2 Dodgers win over the Rockies on Friday night, cutting their magic number to win the National League West to two while extending the lead over the Giants to seven games with eight to play.
The NL West champion will play the NL East champion in the NL Division Series. The Dodgers trail Washington for home-field advantage by 1 1/2 games.

"The number's getting smaller, but the thing for us is to play good baseball," said Dodgers manager Dave Roberts. "There are things we've got to clean up to play better baseball."

Joc Pederson and pinch-hitter Andre Ethier hit back-to-back home runs, Ross Stripling (5-8) pitched three scoreless innings after taking over for injured starter Scott Kazmir and Kenley Jansen picked up save No. 47. Stripling, a starter throughout his Minor League career, has become the go-to long reliever on a team that repeatedly uses them, and still wins.

"This role, he gives us a little bit of length out of the 'pen, which is great," said Roberts. "He gives us the flexibility, and it really proved to be the difference tonight."

The Dodgers scored two runs off starter Jon Gray (10-9) on Yasmani Grandal's first-inning bloop single with the bases loaded. Gray, whose first-inning ERA is 6.75, struck out 10 with three walks and a hit batter in four innings, while throwing 106 pitches.

Pederson's home run was his 24th, while it was the first for Ethier, who missed most of the season with a broken leg. Pederson also walked twice.

"He still takes his big swings, but when it comes down to winning a pitch he's doing a better job of that," Roberts said of Pederson. "To see him not try to do too much, when he gets on base and sees pitches, he's at his best. To get that home run was just a little more validation for him."

Ethier, the Dodger with the longest tenure, saw the irony in hitting a home run on a night dedicated to Scully, whose 67 seasons as the voice of the franchise gives new meaning to the word tenure.

"It was a neat ceremony to start the game and you could see what Vin means to this organization and what he means to the fans," said Ethier. "And to be selfish, what he means to my career and that he's called probably every at-bat I've had in this stadium and you realize how lucky you are to be involved in this game. I was able to somewhat reflect on his long tenure and reflect on some of my own stuff."

Nolan Arenado slugged his 40th home run off Josh Fields in the sixth inning and Tom Murphy singled home the second Rockies run. Kazmir, activated off the disabled list (neck injury) to make this start, left after one inning with a right intercostal muscle spasm, essentially ruling him out of postseason consideration.

"It's tough for me to swallow, only going one inning and having the bullpen pick us up, pick me up," said Kazmir. "That's what they did. It's awesome what Strip and all those guys did today."

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED
Collecting the Toles: For the second time in a week, Andrew Toles threw out a baserunner. This time it was Arenado, who was trying to score from second on Carlos Gonzalez's two-out single to left field in the first inning. Statcast™ clocked the throw at 97.6 mph, the fourth fastest of the year for throws that resulted in an assist. It was his third assist in 14 games playing left field.
Into the books: Arenado, who hit 42 homers last year to tie the Nationals' Bryce Harper for the NL home run title, became just the third third baseman in history to have multiple 40-homer seasons before age 26 with his sixth-inning shot off Fields. Arenado joined Eddie Mathews, who had three (1953-55), and Troy Glaus (2000-01), who had two. Arenado also became the fourth player in club history with consecutive 40-homer seasons. He joined Vinny Castilla (three straight), Andres Galarra and Todd Helton.

The other corner: In right field, Josh Reddick saved at least one run for the Dodgers when he made a diving, tumbling catch of DJ LeMahieu's blooper with one out and runners on second and third in the third inning. The catch took a potential hit away from LeMahieu, who saw his on-base streak end at 38 games.

Your run-of-the-mill, 2-6-3-5 strikeout-double play: Righty Jeff Hoffman, who is the Rockies' top pitching prospect and No. 2 overall, according to MLBpipeline.com, has struggled in five starts. He entered for Gray and threw two scoreless innings and had the help of an odd double play to end the fifth. He fanned Grandal with runners at first and third. Adrian Gonzalez tried to steal second but catcher Murphy’s throw had him by a longshot. Gonzalez created a rundown, but Rockies first baseman Stephen Cardullo saw that Justin Turner had strayed from third and threw to Arenado for the tag.

"'Hoffie' did a nice job," Rockies manager Walt Weiss said. "I wasn't sure if we were going to get to see him in that [relief] role the rest of the way, but tonight there was an opportunity and he came in and threw up two zeroes for us."

QUOTABLE
"Getting to see that takes a little sting out of that loss. That was special. Vin's a special guy. You can see how everyone felt. It was very heartfelt, everyone that spoke, they feel like they're very close to Vin. I think he makes everybody feel that way." -- Weiss on witnessing the pregame ceremony for Scully

SOUND SMART WITH YOUR FRIENDS
The Dodgers used six relievers to pitch the eight innings left over by Kazmir. For the season, the Dodgers’ bullpen has pitched 559 innings, breaking the previous franchise record of 551 innings set in 2009.

UPON FURTHER REVIEW
Crew chief Larry Vanover initiated a review of a ball hit by Yasiel Puig in the eighth inning that a fan touched near the right-field box seats. It was originally ruled in play by first-base umpire Dave Rackley and upon review that call was overturned and ruled a ground-rule double on fan interference.

WHAT’S NEXT
Rockies: Righty Chad Bettis (13-7, 4.79 ERA), who has career highs in wins and starts (30), will start Saturday’s game at 7:10 p.m. MT. Bettis is 0-1 with a 4.91 ERA in seven games, including four starts, against the Dodgers.

Dodgers: Clayton Kershaw draws the start in the 6:10 p.m. PT game with a chance to pitch his fourth clincher. He brings with him a 17-5 career mark against Colorado and is 7-1 with a 1.19 ERA at home this year. He's coming off a no-decision against the Giants, when he allowed one unearned run in six innings with seven strikeouts. He hasn't faced Colorado this year.
Dodgers pay tribute to 'national treasure' Scully

By Richard Justice

LOS ANGELES -- It was Sandy Koufax who told the story that seemed to sum up Vin Scully's remarkable life so perfectly. That it would come from the great Koufax seems appropriate since these two men have known one another for more than 60 years, their lives forever intertwined in the hearts and minds of generations of baseball fans.

This was a Friday night the Los Angeles Dodgers hoped would never come, one set aside to say a formal goodbye to their voice of 67 of their 127 seasons.

Full Game Coverage

Scully will call his last series at Dodger Stadium this weekend and then be done after broadcasting next weekend's regular season-ending series in San Francisco.

The Dodgers did Friday night up nicely with a touching pregame ceremony before a 5-2 win that drew both laughter and tears from Scully. From Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred to actor Kevin Costner and others, they spoke of a man millions of Dodger fans consider both a friend and a confidant. They talked of his talent and his humility and told him how much they'd miss him.

"He has been our barometer, our thermometer, uncle, dad, friend through good times and bad," said Dodgers broadcaster Charley Steiner, who anchored the ceremony.

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti presented Scully with a key to the city. Manfred announced Major League Baseball would make a $50,000 donation to the Jackie Robinson Fund in Scully's name.

When it was Koufax's turn to speak, he, too, seemed to be fighting his emotions as he spoke of how Scully was never a cheerleader for the Dodgers, that he always appreciated the talent of players in both dugouts.

And then this:
"Before the World Series, Vin would go to church and pray there'd be only heroes, no goats," Koufax said. "That showed his compassion for the players."

Finally, this:
"I think the thing I treasure most is he allows me to call him friend."

Manfred called Scully "a national treasure with an honored place in baseball history" and pointed out that just two non-players had won the Commissioner's Historic Achievement Award -- Jackie Robinson's widow Rachel and Vin Scully.

"There's a certain poetic [quality] to that," Manfred said. Scully and his wife, Sandi, walked onto the field to a roar of cheers before the ceremony. These were the very kind of cheers he has long said had been what thrilled him most about the game.

"We will miss you, my friend," Costner said. "We will miss you in our radio and our cars and our backyards. You've been a gift to Los Angeles and baseball itself."
Costner joked "shame on us" if Scully ever had to pay for his dinner again in Los Angeles restaurants. Mostly, though, he hoped his words helped Scully appreciate why people loved him so.

"We couldn't be Kirk [Gibson], and we couldn't be Sandy," Costner said, "but you found a way to put us all in the batter's box and on the mound. When we were at a loss for words, you were Norman Rockwell painting the clearest of pictures. You were a poet, a wordsmith. Your name is spoken with a reverence reserved for only the greatest of players. You're our George Bailey, and it has been a wonderful life." Garcetti said he once asked his father, Gil, why so many Dodgers fans listened to transistor radios while watching a game at Dodger Stadium.

Eric Garcetti said his father delivered a two-word answer: "Vin Scully."

"For so many of us, Vin, you are baseball, and you are the Dodgers," Garcetti said. "You have introduced us to our heroes and taught us the game and voiced some of the most exciting moments of our lives. You live your life with such humility and such grace. You are an example for all of us."

When it was Scully's chance to speak, he said simply that he was blessed to have lived his dream. "Welcome to my thanksgiving because that's what this is all about," he said. "I should be on my knees in prayer for all the wonderful things that have happened to me. I had a child's dream. I didn't just fulfill that dream. I got it for 67 years."

He drew a roar from the crowd when he said, "There is one group I really feel I must thank -- you people sitting in the stands. Your enthusiasm, your passion for the game. When I was eight years old, I fell in love with the roar of a football crowd coming out of a radio. When you are thrilled, when you cheer, for a brief moment, I'm eight years old again. You really and truly have been the wind beneath my wings. I owe you everything."

Dodger fans voted his two greatest calls being Gibson's walk-off home run in Game 1 of the 1988 World Series and Koufax's perfect game in 1965.

"It's an honor to have your voice attached to the soundtrack of my career," Gibson said in a taped message.

Scully thanked the Dodgers for organizing the tribute, then ended with: "For those who wonder what I will do, I'm looking for a much smaller house and much larger medicine cabinet. Good night, everybody."

**Bullpen delivers after Kazmir's quick exit**

By Jack Baer

LOS ANGELES -- Scott Kazmir's first start back from the disabled list was cut short after the first inning due to right intercostal spasms, another roadblock as the veteran tries to make the postseason roster.

The southpaw was replaced by rookie Ross Stripling at the start of the second inning in Friday night's 5-2 win against the Rockies. Stripling went on to strike out four and allow two hits in three innings of long relief, with the bullpen totaling two earned runs in eight innings while striking out 11.
"There was something going on with his body, his ribcage area, just didn't feel like he could perform the way he's capable of," manager Dave Roberts said of Kazmir. "For him to be responsible enough in this game to pass the baton to Strip, I thought that was pretty unselfish of Kaz. I feel bad for him, he's been through so much, but it was good of Strip to give us three innings."

The first pitch of Kazmir's start was delayed by more than 20 minutes as the Dodgers' ceremony honoring Vin Scully ran long, resulting in a start time of 7:47 p.m. Kazmir said after the game that his right side started to tighten as he got up to warm up again, but was hesitant to blame the ceremony or call the spasms a setback. He also compared the spasms to a problem that cut short a rehab start with Triple-A Oklahoma City on Sept. 7.

Kazmir would now be a longshot make the Dodgers' postseason roster, as the veteran is competing with several other pitchers, most significantly Brett Anderson and Brock Stewart, for the fourth starter spot in the rotation.

Kazmir's last start came on Aug. 22 in Cincinnati, where he left the game with a thoracic neck injury that made it difficult to turn his head during his pitching motion. He also developed a blister on the ring finger of his pitching hand during a 60-pitch bullpen session on Sunday, but the pitcher had said that the blister would be a non-factor during his start.

It would be Stripling who got a playoff audition instead on Friday, as Roberts had said Wednesday that the club views him as a long reliever now for a potential postseason roster.

"It's been nice that I have now logged some innings out of the 'pen and been able to get used to it," Stripling said. "It's obviously very different than starting, I'm kind of doing more of a long role. I've enjoyed it. It's been a lot of fun. If it comes down to me doing it in the postseason, I'd like to do it."

The Dodgers have set a club record for relief innings in a season. They've now tossed 559 innings, exceeding the 2009 team's 551 mark.

Of those innings, 66 2/3 belong to closer Kenley Jansen, who got his 47th save Friday. Jansen has been on a rampage as of late, striking out 42 of 72 batters he has faced since Aug. 1. With him working as the anchor, the Dodgers have a group of relievers that has worked often, worked well, and is ready to continue working in the postseason.

"It's been the whole year. We're immune to it at this point," Jansen said. "We've never complained the whole year, so why start now?"

**Scully pens heartfelt letter to Dodgers fans**

By Jack Baer

LOS ANGELES -- A letter from Vin Scully awaited fans at Dodger Stadium on Friday night, the first day of Vin Scully Weekend, as Los Angeles commenced three days of difficult goodbyes to a legendary broadcaster.
Looking back to the moment that made him a baseball fan -- a Giants fan, even -- and remembering the
good times he has shared with fans, Scully thanked fans for the support, love, and passion that has
uniformly greeted him and his family in his 67 years calling the team.

"The first paragraph already gives you goosebumps," Dodgers fan Spencer Bruno said. "You can't even
describe it, what he's meant to this community over the last 50-plus years here in L.A. and I can't
imagine what it was like in Brooklyn. It's unbelievable."

Every segment of Dodgers fandom was at Dodger Stadium celebrating Scully's career and lamenting his
deporture. Brooklyn and Los Angeles natives, young and old, those who grew up watching him and those
who started listening to him when the Dodgers came to Los Angeles.

Both Larry Layton and Harvey Haberman were there when the Dodgers made the move across the
country. Haberman started listening the second the team arrived when he was 20 years old and had no
doubt in Scully as the greatest ever.

Layton would listen to Scully's voice as he rolled up newspapers for his paper route. He actually thought
the broadcaster's name was Vince Cully for a while due to the ambiguity of radio.

Every Dodgers fan seems to have a story about the way Scully personally touched him or her.

"Eric Karros tells the story about he would get close to his dad by listening to Dodgers games with his
dad. I did the same thing with my dad. That's how I bonded with my dad. And Vin," Leslie Angel said. "I
just thought he would go on forever. I had hoped he would go on forever. It's never going to be the
same without him."

Scully's irreplaceability was unanimous among fans.

"I grew up listening to him. It's the only thing I know," Bruno said. "He's not just the voice of the
Dodgers, but the voice of baseball."

Los Angeles Dodgers ✔ @Dodgers
To you, from #VIN.

Below is the text of Scully's letter:

September 23, 2016

Dear Friends,

Many years ago, a little red-headed boy was walking home from school, passing a Chinese laundry and
stopped to see the score of a World Series game posted in the window. The Yankees beat the Giants, 18-
4, on October 2, 1936. The boy's reaction was pity for the Giants and he became a rabid Giants' fan from
that day forward, until the joyous moment when he was hired to broadcast Brooklyn Dodgers games in
1950. Ironically, October 2, 2016 will mark my final broadcast of a Giants-Dodgers game. It will also be
exactly 80 years to the day since that little boy fell in love with baseball.
God has been very generous to that little boy, allowing him to fulfill a dream of becoming a broadcaster and to live it for 67 years. Since 1958, you and I have grown up together through the good times and the bad. The transistor radio is what bound us together. Were you at the Coliseum when we sang "Happy Birthday" to an umpire? Were you among the crowd that groaned at one of my puns? Did you kindly laugh at one of my little jokes? Did I put you to sleep with the transistor radio tucked under your pillow? You were simply always there for me. I have always felt that I needed you more than you needed me and that holds true to this very day. I have been privileged to share in your passion and love for this great game.

My family means everything to me and I will now be able to share life's experiences with them. My wife Sandi, our children, Kevin, Todd, Erin, Kelly, and Catherine, along with our entire family will join me in sharing God's blessings of that precious gift of time.

You folks have truly been "The Wind Beneath My Wings" and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for joining me on this incredible journey of 67 years of broadcasting Dodger baseball.

Heartfelt Thanks,
Vin Scully

Vote: Seager up for Best Rookie Award

By Mark Newman

Voting is underway through Nov. 11 at MLB.com/awards to help decide who wins Best Rookie regardless of league affiliation, and all five of your candidates are currently playing key roles in pennant races: Tigers right-hander Michael Fulmer, Indians center fielder Tyler Naquin, Yankees catcher Gary Sanchez, Dodgers shortstop Corey Seager and Nationals center fielder Trea Turner.

The Esurance MLB Awards annually honor Major League Baseball's greatest achievements as part of an industry-wide balloting process that includes five groups, each of which accounts for 20 percent of the overall vote: media, front-office personnel, retired MLB players, Society for American Baseball Research (SABR) voters and fans like you at MLB.com.

Last year, you helped hand this prize to the Cubs' Kris Bryant, who is now among your Best Major Leaguer choices in the Esurance MLB Awards. Here is a closer look at the five choices for Best Rookie right now, approaching the final week of the regular season:

Fulmer
The Mets got their payoff in the Yoenis Cespedes trade from July 2015 by reaching the World Series last fall, and the Tigers are reaping the benefits this season with Fulmer, one of two players they acquired in that deal (also Luis Cessa). Fulmer makes his 25th start Friday night at Kansas City, hoping to finish strong after losing four consecutive decisions since his Aug. 4 shutout at Texas. His 10-start stretch from May 21-July 17, in which he was 7-1 with 55 strikeouts, was historic as he became the only pitcher in at least the past century to compile an ERA that low -- 0.83 ERA (65 1/3 innings pitched/six earned runs) -- over 10 consecutive starts in the season of his MLB debut. Fulmer had a scoreless streak of 33 1/3 innings, the longest by a Detroit pitcher since at least 1913. The question is whether tailing numbers in late summer will have impact here.
Naquin
Indians shortstop Francisco Lindor finished second in the American League Rookie of the Year Award voting last year, and for this category, there is no league differentiation. Can their young center fielder stand out among this quintet? Naquin’s inside-the-park walk-off on Aug. 20 -- and the supercharged emotion he showed after scoring -- set off social memes galore. He was hitting .301/.376/.535 through Thursday, and only Mike Trout (.992) had a higher OPS than him (.911) among regular AL center fielders. Naquin also has a .994 fielding percentage (four assists), and was a sparkplug in the Indians’ early surge to a full-season stranglehold on the AL Central. He was AL Rookie of the Month for June and July, two pretty strong statements.

Sanchez
The issue here is pretty obvious. Sanchez is basically Babe Ruth for a month and a half so far -- and maybe better -- and you have to decide whether the Yankees’ catcher has been up with the parent team long enough to warrant this overall prize. And here’s the question: If it’s OK for everyone to gush about he homered 19 times in his first 46 games to make more MLB history -- only those numbers change -- then why should that same relatively miniscule length of MLB service be a negative for him in this voting? Isn’t that having it both ways? The brevity is what people are raving about, gaga over history, so the issue is whether that same brevity is perhaps the only thing between Sanchez and a trophy.

The Dodgers’ shortstop would seem to be the favorite for this award, given his All-Star season as the leader of a team marching toward a clincher. Seager -- Sanchez’s opposite in terms of qualifying MLB service time -- already holds the Los Angeles rookie record for hits (187), runs (101) and doubles (40), and he has the highest on-base percentage of any L.A. rookie (.374). Entering Friday, he ranked among National League leaders in hits (187, third), runs (101, fifth), doubles (40, tied for third), total bases (310, fifth), batting average (.315, sixth), extra-base hits (69, seventh) and slugging percentage (.522, 10th).

The Nationals are a legit contender for a World Series crown, and here’s another case where big rookie value has to be considered. Since the All-Star break, through Thursday, Turner was second in the NL in total bases (151) and tied for first in triples (seven). He was tied second in stolen bases (27), fourth in hits (89), sixth in runs (49) and eighth in slugging percentage (.576). Now batting .342 this season, Turner’s average is the highest by a rookie with at least 260 at-bats since Ichiro Suzuki hit .350 for Seattle in 2001. Turner was the NL Rookie of the Month for August, so does that momentum continue here?

The MLB Awards are an all-inclusive program, encompassing the top players and performances from both the AL and the NL, broken into 20 categories from Opening Day through the end of the postseason. In addition to Best Rookie, individual awards will go to Best Major Leaguer, Pitcher, Hitter, Defensive Player, Manager, Executive, Social Media Personality and Postseason Performer.

Winners will also be recognized for the year’s Best Offensive Play, Defensive Play, Moment, Single-Game Performance, Social Media Post, Fan Catch, Interview, Broadcast Call, Player-Fan Interaction and Trending Topic.

Voting began on Monday on MLB.com/awards, one hour after the inaugural Esurance MLB Fans of the Year winners were announced.

Winners will be announced live Nov. 18 on MLB Network and MLB.com.
Kershaw aims to keep LA rolling toward clinch

By Jack Baer

Go ahead, try to find a combination of starting pitcher, stadium and broadcaster more beloved to their fanbase than Clayton Kershaw, Dodger Stadium and Vin Scully. Those three will be on display together for one final time on Saturday night, as the Dodgers continue their final homestand and Vin Scully Weekend against the Rockies.

The Dodgers enter Saturday with a magic number of two to clinch the National League West.

Kershaw has made 136 starts at Dodger Stadium in his career and Scully's voice has backed nearly all of them -- 70 wins, 930 1/3 innings, 15 complete games, nine shutouts and a no-hitter. It's been a nine-year intersection of the greatest broadcaster in baseball history and the best pitcher of his generation. Kershaw, after missing two months with a herniated disk, has performed progressively better in his three starts back, going from two earned runs allowed in three innings to zero in five, and then zero in six.

Kershaw's mission in September is to properly stretch out in time for the Dodgers' postseason run, and he is close to reaching that goal, reaching 88 pitches in his last start.

Countering Kershaw will be Rockies starter Chad Bettis, who allowed four earned runs in six innings during his last trip to Dodger Stadium. The right-hander hasn't allowed more than three earned runs in a month.

Things to know about this game
• Charlie Blackmon is riding a 12-game hitting streak, but he's hit just .226/.226/.355 in 31 appearances against Kershaw.
• Brandon McCarthy (right hip stiffness) is expected to be activated before Saturday's game, but it's unclear when the right-hander will make his return to the mound. McCarthy's activation would give the Dodgers the maximum 40 players on their active roster.
• Dodgers fans attending the game will receive a Vin Scully Limited Edition Commemorative Coin, another giveaway to honor the legendary broadcaster in his 67th and final season. The Dodgers also gave out a bobblehead on Tuesday and a special letter from Scully to fans on Friday.

LA TIMES

Scott Kazmir might be done but Dodgers near closer to clincher

By Pedro Moura

At 7:10 p.m. Friday night at Dodger Stadium, Dodgers starter Scott Kazmir hiked up his right leg, uncorked his body, and delivered a pitch to Yasmani Grandal. And then he turned around and waited, and eventually repeated the exercise. His warmup sessions, already extended earlier this season because of chronic first-inning struggles, seemed interminable on this night when further lengthened because of his team’s hourlong pregame ceremony honoring Vin Scully.
The game’s start was estimated for 7:20 p.m., but finally at 7:46 p.m, Kazmir did the thing for real. Reality, for him, did not last very long. In his return to the mound following a month away, the left-hander exited after one scoreless inning because of what the team termed right intercostal spasms, an apparent aggravation of his previous symptoms.

Reality pushed the Dodgers to within one night of possibly clinching their fourth consecutive National League West title, if Clayton Kershaw wins his Saturday start and San Francisco’s Madison Bumgarner loses his. On Friday, the Dodgers beat Colorado, 5-2, and halved their magic number to two.

Rockies leadoff hitter Charlie Blackmon slapped Kazmir’s sixth pitch into right field for a single. With one out, Nolan Arenado tapped a cutter back up the middle. Kazmir picked it up and sought the double play, but threw low to Chase Utley at second base, and Utley’s throw over to first was even worse. Arenado took second, and then tried to get home when Carlos Gonzalez singled to left field. Andrew Toles delivered a rapid, on-target throw home, clocked at 97.6 mph, to prevent him from reaching safely.

When Kazmir returned to the Dodgers’ dugout, he was examined by team trainers and immediately removed from the game.

"After that first inning, it just wasn't right," Dodgers Manager Dave Roberts said. "So, to risk further injury or whatever it might be, we had to get him out of there. "I just feel bad for Kaz. He's gone through a lot and he had high expectations for tonight, and the body wasn't responding."

In the bottom half of the first inning, Corey Seager worked an eight-pitch walk. Justin Turner fouled off four consecutive pitches, then took Colorado starter Jonathan Gray’s 97-mph fastball off his body and walked to first. While starter-turned-long-reliever Ross Stripling warmed in the bullpen, Adrian Gonzalez walked. Yasmani Grandal then blooped a single into short right field. Two men scored.

The Dodgers did not put another baseball into play until the third inning, when Turner led off with a groundout to third. Gray recorded his first six outs on strikeouts, but used far too many pitches and tired by the fourth inning, at which point Joc Pederson and Andre Ethier launched back-to-back homers on fastballs located over the heart of the plate.

Stripling set down the Rockies in order in the second. In the third, the Rockies strung together two singles and a sacrifice bunt. DJ LeMahieu’s flare to right would have scored at least one run, but Josh Reddick sprinted forward, lunged and willed himself to it.

With two outs, Stripling battled Arenado, the National League leader in home runs. When the count reached 3 and 2, Stripling tried a slider on the outside corner, where the Dodgers have focused on pitching Arenado this series. He fouled it off. Then Stripling landed a curveball at the base of the strike zone that was swung on and missed to end the threat.

Stripling forged on, finishing the fourth inning and inspiring confidence he could fill the long-relief role in the playoffs. Then, Roberts pieced together the rest of the required relief. Arenado launched a solo shot off Josh Fields in the sixth for Colorado’s first run, and Fields soon yielded another run, unearned because of a Seager error. The Rockies' final run scored on a seventh-inning sacrifice fly sent up by Gonzalez.
Kazmir, 32, spent much of this season as one of the Dodgers’ few reliable starting options. He was rarely spectacular, but he was steady. He’d work into the sixth inning, sometimes finish it, and surrender about three runs. He’d strike out a lot of hitters and yield a lot of homers. But, last month, pain began to overwhelm him, and he exited an Aug. 22 start after 2 2/3 innings, citing back and neck issues before and during the game.

He made a minor league rehab start two weeks later but again exited early and was diagnosed with thoracic spine inflammation. Roberts was admittedly unsure he’d pitch again in 2016. Either way, the Dodgers will owe Kazmir $32 million over the next two seasons unless he opts out of his contract, a possibility growing less likely.

Then he was supposed to start Sunday for triple-A Oklahoma City, but Oklahoma City’s season ended Saturday. So he threw a simulated game instead, and developed a blister.

The Dodgers did not turn to him out of current desperation, but rather out of luxury, afforded by their position in the standings, having entered Friday six games up on San Francisco. And perhaps some future desperation; they need a fourth playoff starter and lack an obvious candidate.

Before the game, Roberts said he was uncertain how many innings Kazmir might be able to handle.

"As far as a buildup," Roberts said, "he hasn't really had it."

But, Kazmir said, Friday's start represented progress, even at 19 pitches. He said he was frustrated but undaunted in his pursuit to pitch again this season.

Roberts praised what he called Kazmir's sense of responsibility and unselfishness in telling the team he was not fit to pitch. That helped the Dodgers win the game, but it does not help their chances in the playoffs.

**Vin Scully enjoys his thanksgiving in September as Dodgers pay tribute**

By Bill Shaikin

The Dodgers rolled out the blue carpet for Vin Scully, literally. They rolled out the dignitaries too, and the videos, and even a symphony orchestra.

At its heart, however, the Vin Scully tribute Friday was the world’s biggest thank-you card, come to life. The greatest broadcaster in baseball history came to say thank you to the fans, and the fans came to say thank you to him.

When Scully was introduced, to a sellout crowd seemingly hoping to applaud long enough to persuade him to reconsider retirement, he fought back tears, then put his hand over his heart. The crowd would not sit down before he did.

For nearly an hour, in person and on video, speakers from Sandy Koufax to Kobe Bryant and from Bob Costas to Kevin Costner extolled the virtues of Scully. The occasion was so special that players from the Dodgers — and the visiting Colorado Rockies — gathered in their dugouts to watch.
Then the guest of honor stepped to the microphone, and again the fans rose as one, for so long and with such gusto that Scully sheepishly interrupted the fans he has called friends for 67 years.

“Aw, come on,” Scully said. “It’s just me.”

And then he brought the house down by dropping the line with which he greets his listeners, his viewers, his friends.

“Hi everybody, and a very pleasant good evening to you,” he said, almost mischievously. “I thought I’d get that out of the way right away.”

Dodgers Chairman Mark Walter said the team would add Scully’s name to the stadium “ring of honor,” next to the retired numbers. Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti gave Scully the key to the city. Commissioner Rob Manfred said the league would donate $50,000 to the Jackie Robinson Foundation, in honor of Scully.

Jamie Jarrin, who calls the Dodgers in Spanish and like Scully is in the Hall of Fame, thanked Scully for teaching him the game. Charley Steiner, the Dodgers’ radio voice, said Scully’s 67 years with one team would be as unbreakable a baseball record as Cal Ripken’s streak of 2,632 consecutive games played, Joe DiMaggio’s 56-game hitting streak, and Cy Young’s 511 victories.

Don Newcombe, 90, the Dodgers’ starting pitcher in Scully’s 1950 debut, was there. So were Koufax and Clayton Kershaw, the greatest left-handers in team history. Scully called no-hitters for each, half a century apart.

Kershaw, on behalf of Dodgers players past and present, thanked Scully for “painting a picture for us.”

Said Kershaw: “Long from now, when we’re retired and we don’t have this game anymore, we'll always have your voice.”

In his memorable broadcast of Koufax’s 1965 perfect game, Scully said, “I would think that the mound at Dodger Stadium right now is the loneliest place in the world.” As Koufax started his speech Friday, he said, “As many times as I have been on this field, I have never been this nervous.”

Koufax thanked Scully for his friendship and decency, for his compassion for players on both sides, and for not being “a homer” in his broadcasts.

“You never heard the word ‘we,’ ” Koufax said.

Kirk Gibson and Hank Aaron, who hit home runs that inspired two of Scully’s most memorable calls, each offered a video tribute.

Costner delivered a long ode to Scully, accompanied by music from the “Field of Dreams” score.

"You're our George Bailey, and it has been a wonderful life,” Costner said.

The Dodgers had distributed a letter from Scully to each fan, in which he wrote about growing up with the fans of Los Angeles.
“The transistor radio is what bound us together,” he wrote. “Were you at the Coliseum when we sang ‘Happy Birthday’ to an umpire? Were you among the crowd that groaned at one of my puns? Did you kindly laugh at one of my little jokes? Did I put you to sleep with the transistor radio under your pillow?

“You were simply always there for me. I have always felt that I needed you more than you needed me.”

As the last speaker Friday, after he greeted the fans, he said, “Welcome to my thanksgiving.”

He saluted the fans for the energy he got from them, telling the story about how he fell in love with broadcasting as an 8-year-old boy, hearing the roar of the crowd through the radio in his living room.

"When you roar, when you cheer, when you are thrilled,” he said, “for a brief moment, I am 8 years old again."

Scully, who turns 89 in November, grinned as he talked about his retirement plans.

“I’m going to try to live,” he said.

And, amid all the love and tears, he closed with a laugh line.

“I’m looking for a much smaller house and a much larger medicine cabinet,” he said. “Good night, everybody!”

**Dodgers report: Versatile Chris Taylor added to the roster**

By Pedro Moura

Infielder Chris Taylor joined the Dodgers on Friday. Manager Dave Roberts was uncertain how he would deploy the 39th player on his roster but adamant he would find some way.

“He can play anywhere,” Roberts said.

Acquired from Seattle for former first-round pick Zach Lee and once a top prospect himself, Taylor debuted with the Dodgers in June. He hit .218 with a .271 on-base percentage and .382 slugging mark, and before his triple-A demotion demonstrated aptitude at second base, third and shortstop.

Taylor, 26, will not be the primary backup at any of those positions, but the Dodgers should have innings to fill while they provide rest for their regulars upon clinching playoff position. Roberts has readily acknowledged this week the difficulty in finding playing time for all his players who would like more.

The Dodgers will soon activate right-hander Brandon McCarthy, perhaps as soon as Saturday. His addition would bring the club’s roster to the maximum allowed in Major League Baseball in September, a territory teams rarely reach.

McCarthy has not pitched since Aug. 14. After he returned from Tommy John surgery, he threw wildly in eight starts and was placed on the 15-day disabled list with what the team termed right hip stiffness.
Short hops
Many Dodgers wore blue T-shirts before Friday’s game featuring Madison Bumgarner’s likeness, the phrase “Don’t Look At Me,” and the hashtag “#PuigYourFriend,” a reference to the Monday confrontation between Bumgarner and outfielder Yasiel Puig on Monday. ...Roberts maintained that he was not set on starting left-hander Rich Hill on Sunday, but he did not offer any other candidates. The Dodgers entered play Friday with the possibility of clinching a division title as soon as Saturday, which could affect their plans. ...Dodgers minor league coaches Drew Saylor, Fumi Ishibashi, and Shawn Wooten temporarily joined the major league staff this week, as is commonplace in September.

In his words: Vin Scully shares his 'Thanksgiving' with Dodger Stadium crowd

By Jesse Dougherty

At exactly 7:19 p.m. on Sept. 23, 2016, Vin Scully did what he has done for 67 years: He leaned into a microphone.

Scully wore a dark-blue suit, light-blue shirt and a striped blue tie. He thanked the roaring crowd repeatedly. He stood some 40 feet in front of the Dodger Stadium mound — the same mound he said “must be the loneliest place in the world” while Sandy Koufax finished off a perfect game in 1965 — on an elevated platform surrounded by thousands of his closest friends.

And after a 30-second ovation, here is what Scully told family, friends and fans:

“That’s not fair, you made me cry once tonight.

“Hi everybody, and a very pleasant good evening to you. I thought I’d get that out of the way right away.

“Welcome to my Thanksgiving, because that is what this is all about. I should be on my knees today, to pray in Thanksgiving, for all the wonderful things that have happened to me. I had a child’s dream, and the grace of God not only gave me the fulfillment of my dream, he gave it for 67 years.

“I’ve loved this game for 80 years. That’s a lot of years. But at no time did I ever waver in my allegiance to the greatest sport we have in this world. I have tremendous respect for every single man who ever wore a major league uniform, going all the way back to my first year of broadcasting in 1958. I know how hard it has taken you to get where you are, and I know how hard it is to stay where you are. And please God let you all stay, let you all have great careers, now wouldn’t that be nice?

“I will certainly like to thank his honor the mayor and Commissioner [Rob] Manfred. I have so many friends in the business, from the playing fields, to the executive offices to the commissioner’s office. To the media in the press box, and my friends, the sportswriters across the country. But there is one group I really feel I have to thank: You people, sitting in the stands.

“Your enthusiasm, your passion for the game. When I was 8 years old I fell in love with the roar of a football crowd coming out of the speaker of a four-legged radio. When you roar, when you cheer, when you are thrilled, for a brief moment I am 8 years old again.
“What you have done is the reason why, despite the fact that I am 89 years old, you have allowed me to have a young heart. You really and truly have been the wind beneath my wings. I owe you everything.

“Now people say to me, ‘Well now that you’re retiring, what are you going to do?’

“Well you know if you’re 65 and retired, you may have 20 years of life or more, you better have some plans. When you’re 89 and they ask what your plans are... I’m going to try to live.

“I have a great wife whom I adore, I have five wonderful children, I have 15 grandchildren and I have three great-grandchildren. I guarantee if I don’t know what to do, they will find something for me to do.

“I want you to know from the bottom of my heart how much I appreciate what the Dodgers have done to put this festive night together. I will never, ever forget it, and I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

“And one more thing, for those of you who wonder what I will do, I am looking for a much smaller house and a much larger medicine cabinet. Goodnight, everybody.”

Another drawn-out ovation followed.

As is his custom, Scully stepped back from the microphone and let the crowd noise take center stage.

**DODGER INSIDER**

**NL West title in sight after Dodgers top Rockies**

By Jon Weisman

The Dodgers’ fourth consecutive division title could arrive inside of 24 hours.

Scoring twice in the first inning and adding back-to-back homers by Joc Pederson and Andre Ethier in the fourth, the Dodgers beat the Colorado Rockies, 5-2, whittling their magic number to clinch the National League West down to two.

About an hour earlier, San Francisco wrapped up a 7-2 loss to San Diego. One-time Dodger phenom Edwin Jackson, now pitching for his 11th MLB team, allowed two runs in six innings for the Padres.

The 88-66 Dodgers lead the NL West by seven games with eight to play. With another Giants loss and Dodger win Saturday (or any time in the ensuing week), Los Angeles will have wrapped up its spot in the postseason.

Colorado right-hander Jon Gray tied an MLB record for most strikeouts (10) in an outing of four innings or less, something that had never happened against the Dodgers. But he threw 106 pitches in the process, allowing four runs — including a first inning in which he walked two and hit Justin Turner (2 for 3) with a pitch.
Ethier’s homer, which came as a pinch-hitter, was his first in almost exactly a year, dating back to September 26.

The one discordant note for the Dodgers was twanged by Scott Kazmir, who in his first September start, threw a 19-pitch shutout inning — aided by outfielder Andrew Toles outfield assist at home — but couldn’t answer the call for the second. The Dodgers said Kazmir suffered from right intercostal spasms.

Winning pitcher Ross Stripling pitched three innings of shutout relief, lowering his ERA as a reliever this year to 2.11. The Dodgers tonight broke the single-season franchise record for most bullpen innings pitched with 559, according to the Dodgers public relations department.

‘Welcome to my Thanksgiving’: In moving ceremony, Los Angeles begins its final farewell to Vin Scully

By Jon Weisman

We might need time. We might need 67 years to get over this one.

Emotionally charged from the opening video salute to the final blue-carpet walk lined by Dodger players and coaches, tribute was paid to Vin Scully tonight, in an hour-long ceremony infused with heartstopping thoughts from guest speakers and heartwarming words from the man himself.

It was a valediction for Vinny, and a validation of our love.

In an evening that would conclude with John Williams conducting members of the Los Angeles Philharmonic in the National Anthem, so many moments played like perfect notes in a symphony.

“Vin is that favorite sweater of yours that you can't wait to put on on a chilly day,” said Dick Enberg in the video.

Buoyantly self-deprecating during this year-long farewell experience, Vin remained composed throughout the night, but his eyes, large and moist, betrayed a deeper twist.

Tonight, the goodbyes turned visceral.

Appreciation was fundamental to the evening. Dodger broadcaster and ceremony emcee Charley Steiner noted that Vin’s career has spanned nine of the 10 commissioners MLB has ever had. Los Angeles mayor Eric Garcetti awarded Vin what he’s always metaphorically had — a key to the city.

Jamie Jarrín, the Dodger broadcaster whose relationship with Vin dates back nearly 60 years, spoke about the “triumpths and tragedies” the two have shared.

“I pray his retirement is as blessed as I have been to have him as my friend all these years,” Jarrín said. “Vin, vaya con dios.”

Two bits of happy business followed: MLB commissioner Rob Manfred announced a $50,000 donation by MLB to the Jackie Robinson Foundation in Vin’s name, and Dodger owner Mark Walter announced
that Vin would be honored along the row of retired numbers that grace the balcony — number (or icon) as yet undisclosed.

Then came the two great left-handed complements to Scully: Sandy Koufax and Clayton Kershaw. Koufax told a story, unfamiliar to most I suspect, that spoke volumes about the southpaw announcer.

“Before the World Series, Vin would go to church and pray,” Koufax recalled, “not for a win, but so that there would be only heroes, not goats.”

Kevin Costner, who bears the honor of being Vin’s co-star in the movie “For Love of the Game,” took the podium next. He spoke by far the longest, by far the most intensely and by far with the only instrumental soundtrack, but his words were deeply well-crafted.

“We will miss you on our radio, in our cars and in our backyard. You’ve been a gift to Los Angeles and baseball itself.”

“The game will not lose its way, but it loses its perspective, a singular voice.”

“We couldn’t be Kirk, and we couldn’t be Sandy, but you found a way to put us all in the batter’s box and on the mound.”

“You’re our George Bailey, and it has been a wonderful life.”

“Thanks for always giving it to us straight. Instead of being above the magic, you chose to marvel at it with us.”

“You can’t blame us for trying to hold onto you as long as we can, and you can’t stop us from saying we love you.”

It was Vin’s turn. He let go of his wife Sandi’s hand for nearly the first time since the ceremony began, stood and immediately endeavored to suppress the overflowing ovation, saying, “Come on, it’s just me.”

“Hi everybody, and a very pleasant good evening to you,” he offered, in trademark style. And then: “Welcome to my Thanksgiving.”

He spoke of his respect for every Major Leaguer ever to put on a uniform, how hard it was for them to earn that uniform and how hard it was to keep it. He wished them all long, fruitful careers: “Wouldn’t that be nice?”

For fueling his career, he thanked the fans, for “your enthusiasm, your passion for the game.”

He answered the question of what he plans he had for his retirement, in a way that you can imagine he hoped would avoid making God laugh.

“When you’re 89 and they ask you what your plans are,” Vin said, “I’m going to try to live!”

And soon after that, he finished.
The anthem played, and the camera honed in on Vin, singing every word. Then the uniformed Dodgers moved from the dugout to the carpet. A healthy throw from Vin Scully Avenue, this was now the most hallowed path in Chavez Ravine, suddenly, brilliantly ... briefly.

Vin walked through and disappeared down the tunnel.

It was almost impossible to imagine that there could actually be a baseball game to follow an experience that transcended the game. But Vin himself has never allowed himself to be bigger than the sport. Mere minutes later, he was back to work.

“The ceremony has concluded,” he said to his TV and radio audience. “It’s been quite a night — I never thought in a million years I would see my name on the field ... but enough of that!”

In the space between the ceremony and the game, I took a brief walk from my seat in the press box to let my muscles exhale. For an hour, for the entire day, for weeks and months, I have been trying not to shy away from the notion that this was the final year of work for the broadcaster who inspired me, as much as anyone outside my family, to try to be the best I could be. I have kept calm. I have focused on gratitude for the time, the unbelievably extended and rich time, Vin has given us.

But suddenly, the sound of Vin’s voice in my head rolled blissfully into an intersection of my mind, crashing into the imminent finality of his departure, debris flying everywhere. I convulsed, and pounded a wall with my fist.

His voice will never leave me, but how I’ll miss hearing it anew.

Joe Torre and Commissioner Rob Manfred on Vin

By Cary Osborne

On November 5, 2007, Joe Torre put on a Dodger jersey for the first time. He stood on a stage on the outfield grass at Dodger Stadium and cinched the uniform top up button by button while a voice introduced him as the eighth manager in Los Angeles Dodgers history.

“That was pretty cool,” Torre said on Friday reflecting on Scully emceeing his introductory press conference.

Torre, the Dodger manager from 2008-2010 and now MLB’s Chief Baseball Officer, returned to Dodger Stadium on Friday along with Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred to pay tribute on Vin Scully Appreciation Day.

“It’s the end of an era, and I’m happy to say it was a long era for Vin because it just never got stale,” Torre said. “I just respect the man so much. And I was grateful for the three years I had here where I could hang with him a little bit.”

Commissioner Manfred spoke about Scully in terms of his unique impact on the game.
“He is the unique part of our history,” Manfred said. “When you think about it, 67 years to do anything is just phenomenal, and to be the best at it for 67 years is really some sort of accomplishment in terms of a career.

“It’s amazing when to think about it,” Manfred continued. “You think of Vin’s place in history. There are two non-players who have gotten the Commissioner’s Historic Achievement Award. Right? Rachel Robinson and Vin Scully. There’s a certain poeticness to that. It’s really a great pairing when you think about it.”

Twelve players, including Cal Ripken Jr., Ken Griffey Jr. and Roberto Clemente, have received the award, which is given out at the commissioner’s discretion. Then Commissioner Bud Selig honored Scully with the award in 2014.

Manfred offered a thought that Scully is the last of his kind — a broadcaster who does all nine innings, and sometimes, more by himself.

Torre, a former broadcaster with the California Angels, also chimed in about Scully’s unique qualities.

“He’s one of a kind, this man,” Torre said. “I always admired him. I never tried to imitate him because I knew I’d finish far short of where I needed to get. But the thing is he has a conversation. There are a lot of announcers who like to yell and get people excited that way. He can get people excited by just building the suspense.

“And the one line that I think everybody or most people feel is one of the most memorable was the Kirk Gibson (1988 World Series Game 1 home run). The guy comes up and surprises you with a home run (and you say), ‘In the year of improbable, the impossible happened.’ There it came out just like — molasses.”

#VinTop20: No. 1, ‘She is … gone!’

By Jon Weisman

In the Vin Scully Appreciation Day pregame ceremony this evening, the Dodgers finished revealing the results of the fan vote ranking Scully’s top 20 Dodger calls of all time. And here it is, No. 1: Kirk Gibson’s 1988 World Series home run.

Previously:
No. 2, Koufax’s perfect game
No. 3, Henry Aaron’s 715th
No. 4, Returning after 9/11
No. 5, ‘If you have a sombrero …’
No. 6, Roy Campanella tribute
No. 7, Don Larsen’s perfect game
No. 8, Monday captures the flag
No. 9, ‘We go to Chicago!’
No. 10, Clayton Kershaw’s no-hitter
No. 11, Joe Ferguson’s throw
No. 12, Fernandomania begins
No. 13, ‘The Squeeze!’
No. 14, Nomo’s No-No
No. 15, the 4+1 Game
No. 16, Don Drysdale’s streak stays alive
No. 17, Mike Piazza, Giant-slayer
No. 18, Yasiel Puig’s first slam
No. 19, Manny’s Bobbleslam
No. 20, Mark McGwire hits it way, way out

#VinTop20: No. 2, Koufax’s perfect game

By Jon Weisman

In the Vin Scully Appreciation Day pregame ceremony this evening, the Dodgers finished revealing the results of the fan vote ranking Scully’s top 20 Dodger calls of all time. Here’s No. 2: Sandy Koufax’s perfect game.

Previously:
No. 3, Henry Aaron’s 715th
No. 4, Returning after 9/11
No. 5, ‘If you have a sombrero …’
No. 6, Roy Campanella tribute
No. 7, Don Larsen’s perfect game
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No. 19, Manny’s Bobbleslam
No. 20, Mark McGwire hits it way, way out

Dodgers call up Chris Taylor — McCarthy to follow

By Jon Weisman

Chris Taylor has been recalled from Triple-A Oklahoma City, bringing the Dodgers’ active roster to 39 players with the activation of tonight’s starter, Scott Kazmir, from the disabled list.
Dave Roberts also said today that Brandon McCarthy would be activated from the disabled list before the season ends, perhaps as soon as this weekend — at which point the Dodgers will have an unprecedented 40 actually active players.

Taylor has a .271 on-base percentage and .382 slugging percentage in 59 plate appearances for the Dodgers this year, highlighted by the July 15 game in which he doubled, tripled, hit a grand slam and drove in six runs.

In Triple-A this year, Taylor had a .397 OBP while slugging .474 for Tacoma in the Mariners organization and the Dodgers’ team in Oklahoma City.

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What’s at stake for the Dodgers on Saturday

By Eric Stephen

LOS ANGELES — The Dodgers’ three straight wins have accelerated their timetable a little bit, and greatly improved their chances of clinching the National League West at home. The party could start as soon as Saturday night if things break their way, but that’s not all in play this weekend.

First thing’s first — the Dodgers’ magic number to clinch the division is two, meaning any combination of Dodgers wins and Giants losses clinch LA’s fourth consecutive division title, unprecedented in franchise history.

For that to happen on Saturday, the Dodgers need to beat the Rockies, and will have Clayton Kershaw on the mound. They also need the Giants, with Madison Bumgarner starting, to lose to the Padres. The game in San Diego starts at 5:40 p.m. PT, 30 minutes before the action begins at Dodger Stadium.

Should both things not happen, the Dodgers still have a chance on Sunday to clinch at home, and more importantly with Vin Scully on the call.

The Dodgers on Saturday could also know, officially, who they will play in the National League Division Series.

Spoiler alert: it’s the Nationals.

The Cubs on Friday clinched the top seed in the National League, meaning Chicago will begin their NLDS at home against the winner of the NL Wild Card Game. That leaves the NL West to play the NL East, and out east the Nationals own a 7½-game lead on the Mets with nine (and eight) games left to play.

Washington’s magic number to clinch the NL East is two, so they could clinch their division on Saturday too.

There is the matter of home field advantage in the NLDS which is still up for grabs. The Dodgers (88-66) are now just 1½ games behind the Nationals (89-64). By winning five of six games between the two teams this season, the Dodgers own the tiebreaker.
LA has eight games remaining and the Nationals have nine games left. For the Dodgers to gain home field advantage in the opening round, they need 10 of those 17 outcomes to go their way.

Here is a schedule of the relevant games for Saturday:
4:05 p.m. PT: Washington (Joe Ross) at Pittsburgh (Ivan Nova)
4:10 p.m.: Philadelphia (Alec Asher) at New York (Sean Gilmartin)
5:40 p.m.: San Francisco (Madison Bumgarner) at San Diego (Jarred Cosart)
6:10 p.m.: Colorado (Chad Bettis) at Dodgers (Clayton Kershaw)

**Dodgers honor Vin Scully in emotional ceremony**

By Eric Stephen

LOS ANGELES — Well, that was amazing. The pregame tribute to Vin Scully on the field before Friday night’s Dodgers-Rockies game was an hour long, and full of goosebumps, cheers and tears.

The pregame ceremony began with a video narrated by Bob Costas and tributes from dozens. Then, master of ceremonies Charley Steiner introduced those present in the flesh, including Los Angeles mayor Eric Garcetti, MLB commissioner Rob Manfred, Dodgers chairman Mark Walter, Sandy Koufax, Clayton Kershaw, Dodgers Hall of Fame broadcaster Jaime Jarrin, and Kevin Costner.

Here is Scully and his wife Sandra getting introduced.

There were several highlights, including:

Sandy Koufax saying, "As many times as I’ve been on this field, I’ve never been this nervous."
Walter saying that Scully would join the Dodgers retired numbers — he called it “the ring of honor” down the left field line — in 2017. Walter said to Scully, "This is your house. We expect you to come home and see us often."
Manfred presenting a $50,000 check from MLB in Scully’s name to the Jackie Robinson Foundation.
Scully’s all of Kirk Gibson’s home run in the 1988 World Series was revealed as Scully’s top call in his career, as voted by fans. The Dodgers played a video of the call interspersed with video of Kirk Gibson remembering parts of the call, which was amazing in its own right.

I thought Costner’s speech should have ended with this: "You're our George Bailey, and it has been a wonderful life."

But then he added this later, which was great: "Shame on us if you ever have to pay for another meal in public."

Scully took the microphone last and was gracious as always, as fans were giving him a standing ovation he implored them, "Aw, come on. It’s just me."

Vin added, “Welcome to my Thanksgiving,” and said, "I have tremendous respect for every single man who has worn a major league uniform."
Asked what he would do in his retirement, Scully said he would spend time with his wife and their grandchildren, then had the line of the night.

“When you’re 89, and they ask what your plans are — I’m going to try to live!”

Scully then joked, “I’m looking for a much smaller house with a much larger medicine cabinet.”

After the Los Angeles Philharmonic, led by composer John Williams, played the national anthem, Scully himself announced “It’s time for Dodger baseball” to deafening applause, then walked off the field on a blue carpet flanked by rows of Dodgers players.

Los Angeles Dodgers ✔ @Dodgers
#VIN. 😊

That was quite a ceremony.

**Scott Kazmir has tightness in right side, Ross Stripling excels in relief**

By Eric Stephen

LOS ANGELES — Dodgers pitcher Scott Kazmir left his start on Friday night after just one inning, suffering right intercostal spasms.

Kazmir said he first felt tightness in his right side during his second round of warming up in the bullpen before the start, which was a later-than-usual 7:45 p.m. on Friday. Then the tightness returned in the first inning.

"As I got back up, everything on that side just started to tighten up. It was the same thing that happened in OKC, just not as bad, Kazmir said. “It was a tough thing for me to swallow, having to only go one inning. It’s awesome what Strip and all those guys did."

Kazmir left a rehab start with Triple-A Oklahoma City on Sept. 7 after just seven batters with the same injury.

"The body just wasn't responding,” manager Dave Roberts said. “[Kazmir] said he could keep trying to go out there, but it was the responsible thing with the magnitude of this game, if you’re not 100% to give someone else the opportunity.”

Where this leaves Kazmir in the mix for the postseason rotation, or perhaps even a start next week, remains to be seen. But Kazmir seemed relatively upbeat after the game.

“It's frustrating, but I feel like we’re making progress, and there is no setback,” Kazmir said. “I just have to continue with the treatment and the process and keep looking forward and staying positive.”

Ross Stripling pitched three scoreless innings for the win on Friday, and six Dodgers relievers combined to finish off the game. In seven relief appearances totaling 21⅔ innings, Stripling has a 2.11 ERA with 15 strikeouts and seven walks.
"It's long relief but it's kind of like a start, so I can still pitch like I'm used to, trying to set guys up for another AB,” Stripling said.

"In this role, which we've used him a few times, to give us a little bit of length out of the pen, he's been great,” Roberts said. “He's done well as a starter, but to give us that flexibility tonight was the difference.”

Stripling also said he picked the brains of Joe Blanton and J.P. Howell, both of whom started before a full-time relief role.

“They told me don't give them anything, don’t back down, and everything counts,” Stripling said.

The Dodgers’ player of the game, wrestling-style belt, which started in Miami on the last road trip, was sitting at Stripling’s locker after the game.

"Technically it goes to the whole bullpen, but they let me keep it in my locker,” Stripling said. “That thing is the real deal. It weighs 10 pounds, so it's no joke."

The winner gets to pass the belt to the next player of the game.

Up next
The Dodgers have a chance to clinch the National League West as early as Saturday night, with both a win over Colorado and a Giants’ loss to the Padres. The Dodgers will send Clayton Kershaw to the mound for Saturday’s 6:10 p.m. PT game, while the Rockies counter with right-hander Chad Bettis.

Kershaw started and won division clinchers in 2009, 2014 and 2015.

The Giants play the Padres at 5:40 p.m., and have Madison Bumgarner on the mound against Jarred Cosart.

**Dodgers beat Rockies, move closer to division crown**

By Eric Stephen

LOS ANGELES — The Dodgers started the night in front of a frenzied crowd at Dodger Stadium, and kept the aura of good feeling alive with a 5-2 win over the Rockies, bringing LA to the precipice of a fourth consecutive National League West title.

Coupled with the Giants’ loss in San Diego, the Dodgers now own a seven-game lead in the division with eight games to play, with a magic number to clinch the division of just two.

The wonderful ceremony for Vin Scully ran about an hour, which delayed the start until 7:45 p.m., about 25 minutes after originally planned. But the layoff didn't hurt the Dodgers, who rallied immediately in the first inning.
Yasmani Grandal, who homered twice including a grand slam on Thursday night, found himself up with the bases loaded in the opening frame. He didn’t go deep this time, but his fly ball single into shallow right field scored a pair for an early lead.

Scott Kazmir left after one inning with right intercostal spasms, but Ross Stripling picked up the slack with three scoreless innings to keep Colorado at bay. Six Dodgers relief pitchers combined to pitch the final eight innings.

Joc Pederson and Andre Ethier hit back-to-back home runs in the fourth inning to widen the Dodgers’ advantage. For Ethier, it was his first home run of the season and his second extra-base hit in as many nights.

For the 24-year-old Pederson, it was his 24th home run of the season, after hitting 26 in 2015. In Dodgers history there have only been two players with two 25-homer seasons through age 25 — Duke Snider and Matt Kemp.

Chase Utley was hit by a pitch, advanced to third on a single by Justin Turner then scored on a sacrifice fly by Adrian Gonzalez for an insurance run.

Kenley Jansen closed things out in the ninth for his career-high 47th save of the season. He has 101 strikeouts and 9 walks in 2016.

7th inning stretch
A recording of Scully singing ‘Take Me Out To The Ballgame’ set to music was played during the seventh inning stretch, leading the Dodger Stadium crowd. Scully and his wife Sandra stood and sang along with the recording from the booth, and during that break a banner was unveiled in front of Scully’s announcing booth, reading “I’ll miss you.”

Los Angeles Dodgers ✔ @Dodgers
We'll miss YOU, #VIN.

Friday particulars
Home runs: Joc Pederson (24), Andre Ethier (1); Nolan Arenado (40)
WP - Ross Stripling (5-8): 3 IP, 2 hits, 2 walks, 4 strikeouts
LP - Jon Gray (10-9): 4 IP, 3 hits, 4 runs, 3 walks, 10 strikeouts
Sv - Kenley Jansen (47): 1 IP, 2 strikeouts

**Dodgers’ magic number to clinch NL West is 2**

By Eric Stephen

As the Dodgers try to capture their fourth consecutive National League West title and a fourth straight trip to the postseason, unprecedented in franchise history, we will keep track of their magic number, the combination of Dodgers wins and Giants losses needed to clinch the division.
The Dodgers beat the Rockies on Friday night, while the Giants lost to the Padres in San Diego. LA’s lead in the division is now 7 games, now with 8 games left to play, plus the pending result of the Dodgers game.

**NL West standings**

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<th>Team</th>
<th>Record</th>
<th>Win %</th>
<th>GB</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>88-66</td>
<td>.571</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giants</td>
<td>81-73</td>
<td>.526</td>
<td>7</td>
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</table>

That leaves the Dodgers’ current magic number to clinch the NL West at 2, worn below by Hall of Fame manager Tommy Lasorda (photo: Getty Images).

The Dodgers continue their series against the Rockies on Saturday, while Madison Bumgarner starts for the Giants in San Diego.

**Friday scores**

- Dodgers 5, Rockies 2
- Padres 7, Giants 2

**Saturday schedule**

- 5:40 p.m.: Giants (Madison Bumgarner) at Padres (Jarred Cosart)
- 6:10 p.m.: Rockies (Chad Bettis) at Dodgers (Clayton Kershaw)

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**ESPN LA**

### Dodgers limit Vin Scully merchandise at Scully's request

By Darren Rovell

Fans looking to walk away with a Vin Scully collectible, besides the bobblehead and coin giveaways at Dodger Stadium this week, will be hard-pressed to find one.

That's because Scully himself requested that anything that was done be limited. Los Angeles Dodgers spokesperson Yvonne Carrasco said Scully approved four different T-shirts, all of which quickly sold out in 10,000-shirt quantities. The top two selling shirts were reordered and have nearly sold out again. There is also no Scully merchandise available on the Dodgers' online shop.

That doesn't mean the demand isn't there. On eBay on Thursday, a Scully autographed card sold for $798 and more than 40 bobbleheads from this week's giveaway sold on the site for more than $60 each.

Carrasco says the team is unsure of what the availability of Scully items will be during the postseason.

Scully, who has broadcast Dodgers games since 1950, will call his final Dodgers home game on Sunday before calling his final game on the road against the San Francisco Giants on Oct. 2.

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**A subplot as Dodgers close in on another division title: 'Win for Vin'**
LOS ANGELES -- Perhaps Yasiel Puig was on to something way back on July 17, with a simple pair of footwear.

"Win for Vin," it said on a pair of Puig's Nike spikes when the Los Angeles Dodgers played the Arizona Diamondbacks. There was a superimposed face of legendary broadcaster Vin Scully on that shoe too. On the other shoe, there was an image of an old-school microphone along with "#ITFDB," an acronym for Scully's famous pregame call: "It's time for Dodger baseball."

Win for Vin was the theme of the night for the Dodgers on Friday as the team held a one-hour sendoff ceremony that delayed the start of the game against the Colorado Rockies by 37 minutes. It did not mess with the timing of the Dodgers, who finished off a 5-2 victory to cut their magic number for clinching the National League West to two.

Winning for Scully in his final season is not necessarily a point of emphasis for the Dodgers, but there is enough respect in the clubhouse for the longtime broadcaster that a triumphant sendoff would add plenty to the thrill.

Said Southern California native Justin Turner, who finished the night with two hits: "It's just not going to be the same, I guess, for anyone who turns on a Dodgers game and you don't hear that majestic voice painting the pictures and describing the game in detail, telling background stories."

If the Dodgers are to make a sixth World Series in Scully's time as a Dodgers broadcaster, there is plenty of work ahead. The Dodgers have their weaknesses, like hitting against left-handed pitchers, and they still have their top two starters, Clayton Kershaw and Rich Hill, working their way back to 100 pitches after lengthy stints on the disabled list.

Then there are the powerhouse Cubs, whom the Dodgers will not face unless they advance to the National League Championship Series. The Dodgers and Washington Nationals appear to be on a course to face each other in the National League Division Series, with home-field advantage left to be decided.

Puig likely will be a part of that run, getting back into the club's good graces by providing some key offense and spectacular defense at times this month. In his lone at-bat, Puig delivered a double and looks comfortable at the plate and in the clubhouse.

But Puig will have to move forward with new shoes. Not long after he wore his Vin Scully-themed spikes, Major League Baseball outlawed any other custom footwear themes he had planned. Puig ended up giving the shoes to Scully when the two got together in the press box earlier this week.

Puig gives the Dodgers what they need, in somebody who can hit a left-handed pitcher. The offense has been better against lefties this week, but still figures to finish the season as one of the worst hitting teams against left-handers in baseball.

But even Friday, the club's left-leaning ways with the offense made itself known. The team's five runs were driven in by four players, all batting left-handed. Yasmani Grandal had a two-run single in the first inning, Joc Pederson and Andre Ethier had back-to-back home runs in the fourth and Adrian Gonzalez had a sacrifice fly in the seventh.
Winning for Vin won’t be easy, of course. But Puig helped to create a subplot for the remainder of the season. Scully won’t call games past the regular-season finale on Sunday at San Francisco, so that means he won’t be on the premises for the playoffs.

But he did hint, ever so slightly, how he might come back. It will depend on the players, and if they really will be able to “Win for Vin” the rest of the way.

“First of all, I’ve certainly had experience with large crowds, so probably not,” Scully said about returning as a spectator. “I’m not sure because the last time they won was 1988. I would probably watch, however, for sure, and maybe if I was invited to the last game or whatever, maybe I would go.”

**Dodgers beat Rockies 5-2 on emotional night for Scully**

By Associated Press

LOS ANGELES -- Scott Kazmir is running short on time to prove he belongs on the Dodgers' postseason roster. Fresh off the disabled list, the veteran pitcher was dealt another blow when spasms cut short his start.

Ross Stripling picked up the slack with three scoreless innings of relief, Joc Pederson and pinch-hitter Andre Ethier hit back-to-back home runs in the fourth inning and the Dodgers defeated the Colorado Rockies 5-2 on Friday night after an emotional pre-game ceremony honoring Vin Scully.

Their third straight victory trimmed the Dodgers’ magic number for clinching a record fourth consecutive NL West title to two. Their division lead increased to seven games after San Francisco lost at San Diego 7-2.

Kazmir allowed two hits while tossing just 19 pitches in his first start for the Dodgers since Aug. 22. He left after one inning because of right spasms in his ribs and chest. The left-hander spent the past month on the disabled list with neck inflammation.

"It was tough for me to swallow," he said. "It's frustrating."

Kazmir said the pain on his front side was similar to what he felt during a brief stint at Triple-A Oklahoma City.

"You can't stay strong," he said. "I had to not throw as hard."

Dodgers manager Dave Roberts removed Kazmir to avoid the risk of further injury.

"I feel bad for Kaz," Roberts said. "He's gone through a lot and had high expectations for tonight, and the body wasn't responding."

Pederson worked the count to 3-2 during a nine-pitch at-bat before homering off Jon Gray (10-9) with two outs. Ethier followed with his first homer of the season into the lower right-field seats, extending the Dodgers' lead to 4-0.
Yasmani Grandal's RBI single gave Los Angeles a 2-0 lead in the first. Corey Seager scored from third and Colorado catcher Tom Murphy had his back to the plate as he fielded the throw from right field, allowing Justin Turner to score from second.

Stripling (5-8) allowed two hits in three innings, struck out four and walked two.

"It's long relief, so it's kind of like a start," Stripling said. "I can still pitch the way I'm used to."

Kenley Jansen retired the side with two strikeouts in a scoreless ninth for his 47th save in 53 chances.

Gray gave up four runs and three hits in four innings. The right-hander struck out 10 and walked three on 106 pitches. Gray was coming off a franchise-record 16 strikeouts in a complete-game 8-0 win over San Diego last weekend. His combined 26 strikeouts are the most in a two-game span in Colorado franchise history.

"I knew from the beginning it would be a tough day with no fastball command," Gray said. "Fastball command is number one when it comes to pitching. Without that it is incredibly tough to succeed."

Colorado scored its runs in the sixth on Nolan Arenado's 40th homer leading off and Tom Murphy's RBI single.

The Dodgers honored Scully on his appreciation night with fellow left-handers Sandy Koufax and Clayton Kershaw among those paying tribute to the 88-year-old Hall of Fame broadcaster who is retiring when the regular season ends next weekend.

"I should be on my knees to pray in thanksgiving for all the wonderful things that have happened to me," said Scully, showered with the same roar of the crowd that first enticed him while listening to college football games on the family's four-legged radio as an 8-year-old in the Bronx.

"I've loved this game for 80 years," he said.

TITLE BELT
The Dodgers' player of the game belt went to Stripling. The large decorated blue belt resembles one given to a prize fighter. "That thing weighs like 10 pounds," Stripling said. "Technically, it goes to the whole bullpen but they let me keep it in my locker."

WORKING 'PEN
The eight innings of relief set a single-season Dodgers record for most bullpen innings pitched with 559.0. The old mark of 553.0 was set in 2009.

SINGING SCULLY
Scully did a bit of lip-synching while his pre-recorded version of "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" played in the seventh inning. He had his arm around wife Sandi and a banner reading "I'll Miss You!" was unrolled from his booth while the sellout crowd of 52,320 cheered him as they had all night.

QUOTE OF THE NIGHT
"As many times as I've been on this field, I've never been this nervous." -- 80-year-old Koufax said before addressing the crowd.
WHAT A CATCH
Josh Reddick charged a ball hit by Colorado's DJ LeMahieu to right field, catching it on the run and completing a cartwheel to hold the runner at third base with two outs in the third. LeMahieu's 38-game on-base streak and 13-game hitting streak ended as he went 0 for 4.

UP NEXT
Rockies: RHP Chad Bettis (13-7, 4.79) has career highs in victories, starts (30) and innings pitched (174 2/3). He is 0-1 with a 4.91 ERA in seven career games, including four starts, against Los Angeles.

Dodgers: Kershaw (11-3, 1.73) is 7-1 with a 1.19 ERA in nine home starts.

Vin Scully got 'sombreros' sailing, which Valenzuela will never forget

By Rigo Cervantez

Former Los Angeles Dodgers pitcher Fernando Valenzuela said on Wednesday, in an interview with ESPNDeportes.com, that the no-hitter he threw on June 29, 1990, will remain forever in his memory, immortalized by the legendary Vin Scully's play-by-play on the game. Now, as Scully's retirement and final game nears, the Mexican pitcher who inspired the call also spoke on how Scully inspired him.

"Maybe I'll forget who my last out was, or how many walks I gave up in my career, but his quote, 'If anyone has a sombrero, throw it to the sky,' it's something I'll never forget. That will remain forever." That call was recently voted by fans as No. 5 in the top 20 greatest moments in Vin Scully's 67 years as the voice of the Dodgers.

"It's something that comes from someone who has great experience calling baseball. To hear it from someone like him, it's a really nice memory," added the "Bull of Etchohuaquila," who currently serves as a color analyst on Spanish-language telecasts of Dodgers games.

During "Fernandomania," the name given to the phenomenon that was sparked by Valenzuela's arrival in the major leagues with the Dodgers in 1980, the number of Hispanic fans attending Los Angeles games in Chavez Ravine is estimated to have soared from 8 to 40 percent, according to the Dodgers Spanish-language broadcaster for the past 58 years, Ecuadorian Jaime Jarrín.

"That's great, isn't it? I think our Mexican and Hispanic community has always liked baseball. And that increase is a positive thing for the sport. And if what I did in my career could contribute in any way, that's something that makes me feel very happy. People follow baseball and it's a great honor for me to know that we have more Spanish-speaking fans of the Dodgers and of baseball in general," Valenzuela said.

The former pitcher also admitted that he had little contact with Vin Scully during his early days in the major leagues.

"I remember that, in the beginning, I spent most of my time on the field and I didn't have chance to get to know him more. Over time, once I had established myself with the Dodgers, I understood that he was greatly admired, not only in Los Angeles, but by everyone involved in baseball."
The relationship actually deepened when Valenzuela retired.

"Then, when I started this stage of my career as a broadcaster and analyst for Dodgers games in 2003, I had a really nice experience. He was there at the press conference where they announced my new roles on the team, and that's something I will never forget."

Scully didn't push any advice on Valenzuela's new career path, however.

"I learned some things from him, the way he carried himself, because you can always follow the example of someone so important, with his career behind the microphone," Valenzuela said. "Seeing and hearing him calling games day in, day out, and always trying to do his job the best he can, is something to be admired and that's enough to have learned from him, without him having to give me any advice. Also, always seeing him around and being able to greet him here in the press box is very nice. It's a great honor."

Even the great Scully may have had trouble overcoming the language gap in Valenzuela's playing days, since he wasn't pressed by the broadcaster for details about his life.

"Actually, no. That's something I missed in my early days in the majors," Valenzuela said. "And now, looking back, I think it would have been interesting if there had been some kind of conversation."

**Dodgers honor Vin Scully with pregame ceremony**

By Doug Padilla

LOS ANGELES -- The Dodgers wrapped 67 years of Vin Scully's career into an hourlong on-field ceremony Friday night, and nobody seemed to mind one bit that first pitch was pushed back some 37 minutes.

Scully, the legendary broadcaster who was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1982, will retire following next Sunday's game at San Francisco. At 88, he has just six games remaining behind the microphone, counting Friday night's 5-2 victory over the Colorado Rockies.

Going back to his first Dodgers broadcast in 1950 in Brooklyn, New York, Scully has called thousands of Dodgers games and also branched out into network golf and as an NFL announcer for a time. Among his most famous calls, he was on hand for three perfect games, including one by the Yankees' Don Larsen in the 1956 World Series.


The first 50,000 fans in attendance Friday received a typed letter signed by Scully containing recollections from his career.

"You were simply always there for me," Scully wrote. "I have always felt that I needed you more than you needed me and that holds true to this very day. I have been privileged to share in your passion and love for this great game."
During the ceremony, the results of a fan poll revealed Scully's top call to be Kirk Gibson's dramatic home run in Game 1 of the 1988 World Series against the Athletics. Gibson was on the video board reciting lines from Scully's call and told the story of how he was inspired to come to the plate in that game despite two leg injuries because Scully had said on the broadcast that Gibson wouldn't play.

On-field speakers Friday included Los Angeles mayor Eric Garcetti, Hall of Famer Sandy Koufax, current staff ace Clayton Kershaw, Spanish-language broadcaster Jaime Jarrin and MLB commissioner Rob Manfred. But it was actor Kevin Costner who brought down the house with a dramatic speech set to music.

"We will miss you, my friend," Costner said. "We will miss you on our radio, in our cars and in our backyards. You have been a gift to Los Angeles and to baseball itself. How lucky we were that day in Brooklyn when the microphone was passed into your hands. You were the chosen one."

Joc Pederson and Andre Ethier hit back-to-back home runs in the fourth inning and the Los Angeles Dodgers defeated the Colorado Rockies 5-2 on Friday after a pregame ceremony for Vin Scully. Costner has been a part of three iconic baseball movies, "Bull Durham," "Field of Dreams" and "For Love of the Game," a film that included Scully as a broadcaster who calls a perfect game thrown by Costner's character, Billy Chapel.

Despite taking the microphone in front of nearly 50,000 in attendance, Scully did as he always does, by seeming to talk to each person individually. But not before starting his speech with one of his more famous lines.

"Hi, everybody, and a very pleasant good evening to all of you," he said as the crowd roared upon hearing his familiar sign-on to games.

Scully thanked the players, he thanked the media, he thanked those who work in the commissioner's office, but most of all he thanked the fans.

"When I was 8 years old, I fell in love with the roar of a football crowd coming out of a speaker on an old four-legged radio," Scully said. "When you roar, when you cheer, when you are thrilled, for a brief moment, I am 8 years old again."

So now what for Scully? He was quick with a response.

"You know, if you're 65 and you retire, you might have 20 years of life left or more, and you better have some plans," Scully said. "When you're 89 (he turns it in November), and they ask you what your plans are -- I'm going to try to live."

A quick wit was always a part of Scully's arsenal, as was his incomparable and informative storytelling. As for the immediate future, he joked, "Now I am looking for a much smaller house, and a much larger medicine cabinet."

But his time at the microphone did not end until he delivered another of his signature lines.
"It's time for Dodger baseball," he said in the deliberate cadence that has helped make Scully the most beloved broadcaster of all time.

NBC SPORTS

Dodgers go Back to Back, Beat Rockies 5-2 on Vin Scully Day

By Michael Duarte

"I have always felt that I needed you, more than you need me." – Vin Scully

The Dodgers need just two more wins to clinch their fourth consecutive NL West division title after they defeated the Colorado Rockies, 5-2, on Vin Scully Day at Dodger Stadium.

"It's getting smaller," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said of the number of wins combined with Giants losses in order to clinch the division.

After an hour long pregame ceremony that paid tribute to the legendary broadcaster, Joc Pederson and Andre Ethier went back-to-back in the fourth inning to lead Los Angeles over Colorado.

"That was a neat ceremony to start the game," Ethier said. "You can see what he means to this organization and the fans. Being selfish, what he means to me, and all the games in my career he's called. He's probably called every at-bat I've ever had in this stadium. I've been extremely lucky and I was able to reflect on that."

The Dodgers choked back their emotions from saying goodbye to their broadcaster long enough to jump out to an early two-run lead.

Thursday night's hero, Yasmani Grandal, kick-started the action with a two-run broken-bat bloop single to right field that scored the first two runs of the game for the boys in blue.

Grandal has now knocked in seven runs in the last two games, and 12 overall in 14 games against Colorado this season.

Dodgers starter Scott Kazmir lasted just one inning after he left the game before the second frame with spasms in his right rib cage area.

"It was the same thing I felt in OKC," Kazmir said of the intercostal injury. "Everything in my right side tightened up. It was tough for me to swallow to only go one inning. I'm thankful the bullpen picked me up."

Kazmir was activated off the 15-day disabled list before the game, and was making his first start since Aug. 22nd. It's doubtful he starts again this season.

Ross Stripling (5-8) entered the game in his familiar role as "emergency starter," and shutdown the Rockies for three consecutive innings.
"It's interesting every time," Stripling said of his emergency relief role. "We heard that Scott [Kazmir] wasn't feeling quite right, so I went down and got ready. Then I was told he wasn't coming back out for the second, so I was able to get ready ahead of time. Thankfully, I was able to give us three zeroes and keep the momentum on our side."

Pederson and Ethier went back-to-back off Colorado starter Jon Gray in the bottom of the fourth inning. It was the ninth time the Dodgers have gone back-to-back this season, and the first home run of the year for Ethier.

"They told me to 'stay ready' and so I was prepared for the at-bat," Ethier said of the pinch-hit. "I was able to watch Joc's at-bat and he threw him a lot of pitches. He threw me a breaking ball and I put a good swing on it and was able to double-up with Joc right there."

Pederson flexed his power on a towering fly ball to right-center on his 24th dinger of the year, and 50th of his career. Ethier followed with a first-pitch home run to right that wrapped just inside the foul pole. For Ethier, it was his fourth career pinch-hit home run, with his last one coming on Aug. 13, 2013. Gray (10-9) was chased after the inning, allowing four runs on three hits with three walks and 10 strikeouts in four innings.

"I had no fastball command," Gray said in the clubhouse. "I was just trying to keep us in the game without it. I really didn't have a good feel. Without a fastball, it's incredibly tough to succeed."

The right-hander's double-digit strikeouts gave him 26 in his last two games, the most in a two-game span in Colorado Rockies history. It was the sixth time this season Gray has recorded 10 or more strikeouts in a start.

Nolan Arenado hit his NL-leading 40th home run of the season as the Rockies scored their only two runs of the game in the top half of the sixth inning.

"It's elite. He's doing big time stuff," Rockies manager Walt Weiss said of his third baseman. "To do that in his first few years in the league, he's a special player."

Arenado leads the Major Leagues in RBIs with 129, and became the third Colorado Rockie's hitter to belt 40 or more home runs in consecutive seasons, joining Vinny Castilla and Andres Galarraga, immortal members of the "Blake Street Bombers" from the mid-nineties.

Chase Utley scored on a sacrifice fly in the bottom of the seventh to give the Dodgers a much-needed insurance run.

Kenley Jansen once again pitched a perfect ninth inning for his career-best 47th save of the season. Los Angeles now leads the NL West by seven games over the San Francisco Giants who lost in San Diego earlier in the night. The Dodgers lowered their magic number to just two games, meaning they can clinch the division and a playoff spot as earlier as Saturday.

Players of the Game:
Joc Pederson: Home run.
Andre Ethier: Home run.
Yasmani Grandal: Two-run single.
Three Takeaways:
1. Vin Scully Day: It was a sellout crowd at Dodger Stadium as 53,000 fans gave a standing ovation to the Hall-of-Fame broadcaster in an hour-long pregame celebration. Scully said that everyone wants to know what he's going to do after he retires. His answer? "I'm going to live!"
2. Win For Vin: Vin Scully announced that he would not do any radio or tv broadcasts for the Dodgers during the playoffs. Scully said he may attend a game if they reached the World Series, but primarily he'll watch on T.V. Did you know, that Scully is the youngest broadcaster to ever call a World Series game? He was just 25 in 1955 when the Brooklyn Dodgers defeated the New York Yankees in seven games.
3. Thank You, Vin: After he drops the mic in San Francisco for the final time, Vin Scully will have been the announcer for the Dodgers for 24,274 days, over half of the games in franchise history. We'll miss you, Vin.

Up Next:
Rockies (73-81): Colorado starts Chad Bettis on Saturday.
Dodgers (88-66): Los Angeles will throw Clayton Kershaw to the mound with a possible chance to clinch the division at 6:10 PM PST.

The Moments You Missed From Dodgers Emotional Ceremony on Vin Scully Day

By Michael Duarte

"In a year that has been so improbable, the impossible has happened."

That's right folks, the impossible has happened. Vin Scully is calling it a career.

After 67 years behind the mic, Scully has called more than half of the games the Dodgers have ever played in a 100+ year history.

On Friday, before the team took on the Colorado Rockies, 67 years of gratitude, generosity and dedication poured over onto the field as the city of Los Angeles said goodbye to the greatest broadcaster in the history of sports.

The pregame tribute to Scully started promptly at 6:30PM as the Dodgers aired a video tribute on their two big screens honoring Scully. The short film was narrated by the great Bob Costas and featured congratulatory words from Kobe Bryant, Kirk Gibson, Magic Johnson, Al Michaels, and more.

Immediately following, Dodgers radio announcer Charley Steiner introduced the 42nd mayor of Los Angeles Eric Garcetti, the commissioner of MLB Rob Manfred, Dodgers chairman, Mark Walter, Sandy Koufax, Clayton Kershaw, Spanish Language broadcaster Jaime Jarrin, and Kevin Costner. Finally, Scully and his wife Sandi were introduced.

After a three-minute standing ovation for Scully, those aforementioned people who were present on the stage, delivered speeches for Scully.

Garcetti got the ceremony going by presenting his first key to the city during his tenure as Mayor to Scully.
Manfred presented Scully with a check for $50,000 from MLB in Vin Scully's name to the Jackie Robinson Foundation.

The Dodgers then played a clip of Scully's greatest call, as voted on by the fans, the walk-off home run by Kirk Gibson in Game 1 of the 1988 World Series.

Steiner said it best about the call, "Nineteen words that will last as long as baseball has been played." Dodgers chairman Mark Walter then stepped up to the microphone and announced that Scully would enter the Dodgers ring of honor located in the left field foul pole area next season.

Next was Koufax, who said he was more nervous than any time he played on the field, and told a story about Scully going to church to pray before every World Series game he ever called. Koufax mentioned that he didn't pray for the Dodgers to win, or for certain players to play well, but simply prayed for heroes, not goats on the field.

Kershaw then took the microphone on behalf of the Dodgers team and simply said, "Thank you." Finally came Costner who brought everyone in attendance to tears, including the media in the press box and those watching at home.

Costner called Scully, "The Chosen One," and said that "The game will not lose its way, but it loses its perspective, a singular voice."

As the Field of Dreams soundtrack played in the background Costner continued with these gems: "You tricked us into thinking you were a sports announcer. When really, you were a poet." "When we were at a loss for words, you were the Norman Rockwell, painting us the clearest of pictures."

"Shame on us if you ever have to pay for another meal in public again."

"You're our George Bailey, and it has been a wonderful life."

Finally, Scully himself was introduced to the crowd who roared to life with excitement and gratitude. "Oh, it's just me," said Scully smiling.

He started his speech by saying, "Welcome to my Thanksgiving."

He went on to thank everyone, from every player who ever put on a uniform, to the media and sportswriters, to his family and finally the fans.

"When you roar, when you cheer...for a brief moment, I am 8 years old again," he said.

He told the sold-out crowd that he's going to spend time with his wife, children and many grandchildren in retirement and said, "I am going to try and live."

After Scully sat back down, out of the dugout came the Los Angeles Philharmonic orchestra led by John Williams, one of the most storied film composers ever. He played a rousing rendition of the national anthem, and then Scully stepped back to the mic to unearth his historic words that will live on forever, "It's time for Dodger baseball."
After another standing ovation from the crowd, Scully left the field down a blue carpet, surrounded by the current Dodger players. Now that’s a way to go out.

Thank you, Vin.

FANGRAPHS

Chase Utley Hustles for History

By Neil Weinberg

Rewinding the clock roughly 11 months, we’d find Chase Utley in a very different place. He had just completed a .212/.286/.343 season that led to 423 plate appearances of replacement-level value. He was the subject of significant (justified) criticism for tackling Ruben Tejada and breaking his leg during the NLDS. Then 36, Utley was staring into the twilight of his career and it didn’t look like there were a lot of great days left.

Utley is a borderline Hall of Famer, delivering five Cooperstown-level peak seasons from 2005 to -09 and then five more well above-average seasons from 2010 to -14. His problem has always been that a good portion of his value has been tied up in defense and base-running. Given his slightly late debut, accumulating the sort of counting stats one often requires to earn 75% of the vote is probably out of reach. He’s not a slam-dunk case, but from an objective statistical sense, he’s worthy of consideration.

Players of Utley’s caliber often need a narrative to lift them over the last hurdles of a Hall of Fame candidacy. Unfortunately for Utley, it looks like his final notable act is might be having injured another player and ushering in a rule named for his transgression. Perhaps he’ll carry the Dodgers to a World Series this October, but if he doesn’t, might I suggest one final argument in favor of Mr. Utley’s election. Chase Utley is a week away from joining one of baseball’s most exclusive clubs.

Here is a leaderboard featuring players with at least 450 plate appearances through Thursday, sorted by the number of double plays.

2016 Double-Play Avoidance
Name   PA  GDP
Chase Utley  541  0
Charlie Blackmon  601  2
Kris Bryant  667  3
Matt Carpenter  526  3
Dexter Fowler  519  3
Danny Espinosa  565  3
Mike Trout  642  4
Odubel Herrera  617  4
Joc Pederson  450  4
*Min 450 PA
This table might be interesting for a variety of reasons, but on its own there’s nothing earth-shattering. MLB players hit into somewhere between zero and 30 double plays per year and this is the bottom of the list. There are some great players and some okay players on this list.

Here is a second table, however, that adds a little color to the first.

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SOURCE: Baseball-Reference

Qualified batters
Baseball-Reference has double-play data back to 1939 and Chase Utley is zeroing in on just the eighth qualified season since the start of World War II without a single double play. There have been over 9,000 qualified seasons since 1939, meaning that these no-double-play seasons constitute a tiny 0.08% of the entire available sample. And that’s actually underselling it, as you’ll notice that three of the seasons are between 376 and 482 PA because of the 1994 strike. Presumably, one or more of those players would have hit into a double play if they had gotten a fuller season of reps.

A few years ago, I wrote about that fantastic 1997 Biggio campaign, noting how he led the league in WAR and hit .403/.487/.677 in situations in which a double play was possible. Utley isn’t anywhere close to the league lead in WAR, but he has hit .373/.400/.608 in double-play situations. Overall, the league has a .777 OPS in these situations this year compared to a .739 OPS overall. Utley is rocking a 1.008 OPS compared to his overall mark of .709.

Of course, offensive performance in double-play situations isn’t really a skill. There is skill involved in avoiding double plays, but that’s not the same thing. You can adjust your swing to avoid double plays, but that adjustment isn’t going to make you a more productive hitter. And if it did, you should adopt it in all situations. Fly-ball hitters and strikeout artists will hit into fewer double plays because double plays are predicated on ground balls. Naturally, Chase Utley is running the highest (?) ground-ball rate of his career.

His ground-ball rate in these types of situations isn’t quite so high, but it is in line with his career norms from seasons in which he grounded into a very normal number of double plays. Being left-handed helps, but Utley has mostly hit leadoff this year and he’s presumably not getting a lot of help from the ninth-place hitters in breaking up double plays. Also, in case you’re wondering, the overall incidence of double plays hasn’t declined in the year of the Utley Rule.

At its most fundamental level, this is an anomaly. Utley hasn’t been a huge double-play guy during his career, but he’s never demonstrated an extreme ability to avoid them. He also hasn’t done anything new this year that would make you think he picked up this trick in his late thirties.
This isn’t a record chase with meaning, but he is angling to be the fifth player in a non-strike season to qualify for the batting title without hitting into a double play. This is my favorite kind of “record” chase because, by definition, it will go down to the wire. If you only have 65 home runs after 160 games, you’re not breaking Barry Bonds’ record. But until Utley comes to the plate for the final time next Sunday, the record will be in jeopardy.

Perhaps you’ll be spending time watching actual playoff races during the season’s final week, but if your team is out of it and you’re looking for something to follow, it doesn’t get more gripping that Utley’s chase for zero. Who knows, the notoriety that comes with this gritty, random oddity might be enough bring a few more Hall of Famer voters into his camp.

A Dialogue on the Urgent Matter of Jharel Cotton’s Cutter

By Carsib Cistulli

In light of Oakland right-hander Jharel Cotton’s minor-league success, his major-league success (which includes a 1.50 ERA over three starts) isn’t an entirely surprising development. More surprising, perhaps, is how he’s achieved that success — less by means of his celebrated changeup and more by means of his barely-ever-mentioned-once cut fastball.

Curious as to what might explain this development — and curious, generally, about what constitutes a successful cutter — I contacted pitch-type enthusiast and mostly tolerable colleague Eno Sarris. What follows is the product of our correspondence. The author’s questions appear in bold, Sarris’s in normally weighted typeface.

Because I’m not the foremost expert on anything, Eno — except perhaps the length and breadth of my own personal weakness — I’m also not an expert on Jharel Cotton. That said, it’s probably also fair to say that I’ve followed him with some interest. He finished atop the Fringe Five leaderboard last year (tied with Matt Boyd and Sherman Johnson). He finished among the top 10 on that same arbitrarily calculated scoreboard this year, too.

Anyway, as the sort of person who’s followed Cotton with some interest, I’ve been aware that the changeup is impressive. That’s what the scouting reports have suggested and also what the video evidence has suggested. Now that Cotton’s in the majors, it’s what the PITCHf/x data suggests, too. Indeed, there are hardly any changeups like it. But the change has also produced only a 16% whiff rate — which, if I’m not mistaken, that’s pretty close to average.

The changeup.

His cutter, meanwhile — with which offering I was decidedly less well acquainted — his cutter has earned a swing and miss 22% of the time. That’s higher — and seems high, in general. Like, relative to the league.

The cutter.
So, some questions. How does that 22% figure compare to other starters? What’s league average? And, if you know, what generally leads to whiffs on the cutter? Velocity? Velocity separation? Horizontal or vertical movement? Something I’m omitting entirely from this series of flailing questions?

The cutter is a really, really hard pitch to study. The problem is that there are probably as many as three sub-types of cutters. There’s the true cut fastball, like Mariano Rivera threw, which is about 1 or 2 mph slower than the fastball. Then there’s the baby slider, like the one Jon Lester, James Shields, and Adam Wainwright throw. And there might even be a third pitch between the cutter and the slider — think Madison Bumgarner — with a name that would make my grandma blush. Well, maybe someone else’s grandma.

In any case, Cotton’s looks like the baby slider version since it’s 4 mph slower than his fastball. And by movement, it’s exactly average with baseball’s right-handed cutters as a monolith. So why is it getting more than twice the whiffs of an average cutter right now?

Difficult to answer. I’d say that the third reason the pitch is so difficult to study is that it is designed to work in tandem with another pitch. It’s supposed to look like a fastball and then it comes in five inches lower and four inches to the left. So later, perhaps after more people have seen the cutter, later it may not get as many whiffs.

But, judging from Cotton’s minor-league strikeout rates, he’s been doing this for a bit. The changeup (judged by whiff rate) has the worst relationship with overall strikeout rate among the various non-fastballs. He’s always needed a good non-changeup to get so many strikeouts, and this might be it.

The degree to which pitches work in tandem is interesting. It’s logical but also, from what I gather, difficult to identify objectively. Each pitcher is his own universe in that way, it seems.

I’m wondering, do you feel like there are any pitches that seem unexceptional on their own but that are super effective because of the context in which they’re thrown (i.e. in the context of a pitcher’s entire repertoire)? Alternatively, can you think of any pitches that seem like they ought to be effective but just aren’t — perhaps because they lack the proper context?

Oh, for sure. Off of the top of my head, I just wrote about Kenta Maeda’s curve. I think it’s not a good pitch. It gets terrible whiff rates. It’s slow. It doesn’t even get ground balls. I think people can spot it a mile away. But because his slider is so good, and his command, when people see that curve coming, they don’t swing (only five people get fewer swings) and he pops it into the zone for a called strike (only four people do so more often).

And then there’s the Anthony DeSclafani changeup. It gets more drop and fade than average, but he doesn’t trust it, and he might telegraph it with his arm speed. In any case, his career took off when he more or less ditched it and learned a knuckle curve instead.

Sometimes things only work as a surprise, and they’re not necessarily any better if you throw it more. If Maeda threw that curve too often, I think it would get spanked.

This seems like it probably poses a real challenge where talent evaluation is concerned — the idea that what looks like a plus pitch, if it lacks the proper context, might not play like one. Or, alternatively, that a
seemingly banal repertoire might lead to excellent results, simply because all the pitches complement each other well.

Here’s a question that is maybe unfairly difficult to ask: what do you think is the most banal but also effective repertoire? I recognize that banality is probably subject to interpretation. But also that’s why the question is unfair.


Even if you parse out his two changeups and look at them separately, and compare the “fade” changeup to righty changeups, and the “cut” change to righty sliders, neither has plus movement compared to the league. His curve is boring and slow. His four-seam is straight, no rise. His sinker is slow and has less fade than usual, even if it has good sink. His cutter goes 86 and gets worse than average results.

Kyle Hendricks has plus command, especially to the glove side, which is tough for righties. Collin McHugh brought him up just this week, talking about how the mechanics of the normal righty takes you straight to the plate on the arm side. Somehow Hendricks has plus command to the inside part of the plate against lefties and he eats them up inside there with front-door sinkers and high-and-tight four-seamers.

I have to eat dinner. I invite you to make one last comment, though — preferably involving Jharel Cotton, the reason for this brief conversation in the first place.

I see homers in Cotton’s line, at least from time to time. They can come from poor velocity, but Cotton is average for a righty there. They can come from youth, from falling into easy-to-spot patterns. Homers can also come from poor command. I’m not good enough to know which it is for him, which means I love Cotton for now.

INSIDE SOCAL

Vin Scully memories from the media: Toby Zwikel

By Tom Hoffarth

They have been Scully’s colleagues in the Dodgers’ media-related front office. As a week-long tribute to Scully at Dodger Stadium for his final seven home games comes to a close, these are some of their stories:

Toby Zwikel, who spent seven years in the Dodgers’ organization as an assistant publicity director and head of publications, was a sportswriter and columnist for the L.A. Daily News at one point. Now a partner with Steve Brener at BZA public relations as they continue to work directly with the Dodgers, Zwikel shares these Scully memories:

“Having grown up in Chicago and gone to college at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, I got to hear broadcasters such as Jack Brickhouse, Milo Hamilton and Harry Caray, among others. When I first moved to Los Angeles in 1973, it was refreshing and illuminating to hear Vin.
“Covering the team as a writer in the late 1970s for the then Valley News was even more special on the occasions when our paths would cross. Then I had the privilege to work with Vin from 1981-88 in my first PR tour with the Dodgers. It provided still another opportunity to gain an up close and personal perspective of the man.

“No question, from every angle, he is incomparable. Regardless of the station of the person with whom he comes in contact, he always made you feel like you’d known him forever; like you had his undivided attention, even though he had to have a million things on his plate.

“Perhaps my funniest recollection of my time with Vin was when we were on a team bus navigating traffic to the Pittsburgh airport. He said the one thing you could count on in Pittsburgh was that it would rain at least once during your time there. To this day, whenever someone mentions Pittsburgh to me, I always recall that story.

“Another favorite memory: Vin would occasionally call the PR office with a question or seeking assistance. The phone would ring and I would answer and Vin would say, ‘Hi Toby, it’s Vin Scully.’ As if I wouldn’t recognize that melodious voice!

“There would be times when we would receive media requests to interview Vin. Knowing Vin arrives several hours before the game to begin his preparation, we would try to go to the press box to see him before he got too involved. When you entered the booth, regardless of what he was doing, Vin would turn to greet you and ask how he could help.

“And it’s certainly fitting the press box at Dodger Stadium be named for Vin. When he would walk from the broadcast booth to the press dining room during the game, it was like royalty in your midst, only this was royalty with the touch of the common man.”

**Vin Scully memories from the media: Mark Langill**

By Tom Hoffarth

They have been Vin Scully’s colleagues in the Dodgers’ media-related front office. As “Vin Scully Appreciation Night” arrives along with memories of his greatest calls, here are more of their stories:

Mark Langill, the Dodgers team historian since 2002 as it was given to him by Derrick Hall, allowed us the pleasure of sharing an evening with him at the Sierra Madre Library recently for Vin Scully story time.

The former Pasadena Star-News Dodgers beat writer and Cal State Northridge journalism graduate who was born on the date of the Dodgers’ 1965 home opener (April 20) joined the organization in 1994.

He told us about how he had covered the Dodgers for six season and finally made his first road trip on a plane to Pittsburgh one July. He came out of the plane’s restroom and looked up — and there was Scully, “sitting in first class reading a thick military novel with his glasses half down on the bridge of his nose. He looked up and say, ‘Hiya, Mark.’
“It was one of those moments when it’s like going through the looking glass. It’s as if you’re now going to see behind the scenes of this incredible world you followed as a kid.”

Langill has plans of traveling to San Francisco to watch the final Dodgers-Giants games as a fan in the AT&T Park stands.

“I just want to be there, sit in the stands, listen to the broadcast later ...” he said with a pause. “Just fly up there in the morning, enjoy the game, then hurl myself into the bay and it’ll all be over.”

Langill’s dry humor goes to this extreme: “If I was in the electric chair and he was doing the call, I’d be rooting for him because he always makes it sound so interesting and exciting.”

He shares more thoughts on Scully’s retirement:

“How could 44 years have flown by since picking up a transistor radio at age seven and hearing a magical voice describe baseball games and tell stories? Today I have a dream job as the ‘team historian’ of the Dodgers, although sometimes the feeling is ‘team dinosaur’ when interacting with some colleagues as we collectively cope with Vin Scully’s impending retirement.

“Working to the left of my office cubicle is 20-something-year-old Justine Woerner, a first-year member of the Premium Services department who, like Scully, grew up rooting for the Giants as a kid. It’s fun to hear about this season’s Woerner family soap opera unfolding in the Bay Area, the patriarch a devoted San Francisco diehard trying to cope with a daughter proudly bleeding Dodger Blue. Maybe she’ll take the replica Willie Mays jersey out of mothballs when she attends the season finale on October 2 in San Francisco. Even Scully would give her a pass on that wardrobe selection – he termed Mays as the best player he ever saw.

“Directly behind my cubicle is public relations associate Miranda Perez, an Arizona State graduate who grew up a Dodger fan in Riverside. Like rookie All-Star shortstop Corey Seager, Perez appeared a natural for her job since Day One, whether calmly fielding a frustrated fan’s phone call the morning after a tough loss or distributing statistics and other information in the press box in the afternoon.

“Perez is also the first public relations associate who was born after I started working for the Dodgers in January 1994. Her arrival from Planet Youth provided new terminology to a collector of dusty reference books. For example, ‘deuces’ is an apparent type of farewell slogan, an updated version of ‘peace out’” And if she approves of one’s shoe selection, the complimentary message will be ‘nice kicks.’

“But the common bond we share is the privilege of seeing Scully work behind the scenes. Bridging generations, Scully is the shining example of someone finding a job he truly loved while being gracious and generous to those around him. He also lives by the philosophy of Sir Laurence Olivier when preparing daily for his work: ‘Have the humility to prepare and the confidence to pull it off.’

“At the start of his last homestand, Perez asked about my favorite Vin Scully call. It was tough to think about just one highlight because Scully’s presence has always been part of the landscape like sunlight and running water. I decided the most memorable period was ‘Fernandomania’ in 1981 when a rookie pitcher from Mexico won his first eight Major League starts, five by shutout. Scully’s tone showed the fans that he, too, was along for the ride as lefty Fernando Valenzuela took the baseball world into unchartered waters.
“I excitedly told Perez about listening to my record album of 1981 highlights over and over during the off-season, eventually memorizing Scully’s descriptions of Valenzuela’s Opening Day shutout and his eighth victory in mid-May, courtesy of a Pedro Guerrero walk-off home run in the ninth inning. ‘Valenzuela has now tied the Major League record of eight-and-oh,’ I slowly said in a Scully impersonation mixed with drama and cheer. ‘And who is to say when it will end …’

Vin Scully memories from the media: Joe Jareck

By Tom Hoffarth

They have been Vin Scully’s colleagues in the Dodgers’ media-related front office. As a week-long tribute to Scully begins at Dodger Stadium for his final seven home games, these are some of their stories:

imagesJoe Jareck, the current senior director of public relations for the Dodgers, has been with the organization for the last 11 years. He shares these stories:

“When I was hired in January of 2006, I picked up and left my whole life in New Jersey to come to L.A. and really didn’t know anyone outside of Josh Rawitch, who had just hired me. Now, I know you hear stories about how when we hire someone, they always have the story, ‘Then Vin Scully called me …’ But really, the first day I got here, I’m meeting people and really just pinching myself as to what’s going on. It’s finally about 4:15 or 4:30 in the afternoon, the day is winding down, and the phone on my desk rings. I haven’t given this number out to a soul yet. I’m thinking, ‘How did my dad get this number already?’ I pick up the phone and hear, ‘Joe, it’s Vin Scully and I just wanted to welcome you to the Dodgers.’ I could barely breathe. I have no idea what I said back to him. There were these things I was ready to tell my family about my first day, but all I could get out was that Vin had called me. It kind of tells you what he means to people who are fans of the game. He may have seen a press release that went out about my hiring, and he could have called later, but that’s why he is who he is.

“In the days when Vin was still traveling a little more with the team, he would always sit in the front row of the plane – Seat 1A – and Billy DeLury (the longtime Dodger employee who had been with the team before his passing in 2015) was in his usual Seat 1B. On a trip Billy didn’t make in 2014, Vin was on a road trip with us, I think it was a flight from Phoenix to San Francisco, and Scott (Akasaki, the traveling secretary) put me in the front row for this trip, next to Vin. I didn’t know what Vin would want to do – maybe read a book, go to sleep. We spent the entire time just talking – and very little about baseball. About his move from Brooklyn to L.A. from his personal standpoint, people who used to be around the team in the 1960s. I had been working for the team eight or nine years and never got that kind of one-on-one time with Vin before. I will never forget any of that. I remember the next day we had off, so I made a trip to Napa with (MLB.com writer) Ken Gurnick and I remembered Vin telling me about the different kinds of wines he and his wife liked. It somehow became important to me to find one of those wines. He was so grateful when I gave it to him that when we were back five days later, Vin brought me a bottle of wine from one of his son’s wineries in the Santa Barbara region.

“One other thing I’ll never forget, from a broadcasting standpoint … I’ve always been a baseball nerd from the time I was 7 or 8 or 9 years old, watching every game on TV and loving to hear him – but it never registered with me about what a great broadcaster he was. All I really knew him for were the Farmer John references. A lot of people will say his greatest call was from the 1988 World Series Game
1, the call of the Gibson homer, but any true fan probably didn’t hear it because they were jumping up and down and yelling and not believing what they just saw. Vin’s call probably wasn’t a focal point of all that until hearing the replays. To me, the 1986 World Series Game 6 was his greatest call. That last inning ... it was a broadcasting masters class in just letting pictures tell the story. I’ve studied that game. As it unfolded, Vin would set the story by talking about Carter getting on first, Mitchell was 1 for 5 in the series, and the Red Sox were looking increasingly worried. Vin let the director tell the story and the crowd and he just filled the gaps. It was all about pacing and the buildup. People talk about his call of Hank Aaron’s 715th home run and how Vin was silent. But it’s the same thing here. After he says, ‘Little roller up along first, behind the bag, it gets through Buckner, here comes Knight and the Mets win it!’ he doesn’t talk for another four-and-a-half minutes. It’s not until you hear that Marv Albert is ready for an on-field interview that he drops the line: ‘Not only are the Mets alive, but they’re well, and there’s a Game 7 tomorrow.’ I just remember as a kid being like, ‘Wow, Scully is the best.’

“And at that moment, I was watching the game in New Jersey. We were living in La Crescenta from 1982 to ’86 and we got a flight to LaGuardia Airport in New York the day of Game 6 as my family was moving back East again. When we landed, it was probably the third or fourth inning and I was listening on a headset. When we got to my aunt and uncle’s house in Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, my cousins were in bed because it was already late and they school the next day. It’s now the 10th inning, and I talked my way into staying awake because of the time difference. So I was on the couch with my dad and mom and uncle. So it’s my first night in New Jersey and I remained there until I came back to work for the Dodgers 20 years later.

“And now this year, nearly 30 years after that game, here we are. It’s been a blessing to get to share a small space with Vin these last 11 seasons. A dream-come-true for a lifelong Dodger fan. I’ve given him his space this season with all of the demands on his time, but it’s tough...I’m starting to feel the emotion of it now...I just can’t believe he won’t be in the booth after next week.”

Vin Scully memories from the media: Josh Rawitch

By Tom Hoffarth

They have been Vin Scully’s colleagues in the Dodgers’ media-related front office. As a week-long tribute to Scully begins at Dodger Stadium for his final seven home games, these are some of their stories:

Josh Rawitch, the Senior Vice President of Content and Communications with the Arizona Diamondbacks, was the Dodgers’ Vice President of Communications and a member of the organization from 1995 to 2011. He covered the Dodgers as a daily beat reporter for MLB Advanced Media at one time after working in the Dodgers’ advertising and special events department as well as marketing and public relations.

Rawitch shares these memories of Scully:

cry-lpuw8aavdaq“I was an advertising intern in the mid ‘90s and having grown up idolizing him and wanting to become a Dodger broadcaster, meeting him for the first time is incredibly vivid in my mind. He was in line in front of me in the press box dining room (not yet named Dave’s Diner) and I worked up the courage to introduce myself to him. He shook my hand and said, ‘Hi, Josh. Nice to meet you.’
“Hearing the same voice in person that I had heard for so many years on radio and TV was almost jarring. I don’t think I expected him to sound exactly like he did as a broadcaster but of course, he did. There’s nothing phony about him, including his golden voice.

“I’ve had so many great interactions with him, it’s truly hard to pick one that sums him up. But everyone who has had the great fortune of knowing Vin knows that he really never complains. He’s always positive and friendly and upbeat with everyone he meets.

“So the one time he wasn’t is what I remember the most because it sums up best who he really is.

“It was Memorial Day, probably around 2006 or 2007 and we really didn’t do a very good job as an organization with our pregame ceremony to show our appreciation for our fellow Americans who had made the ultimate sacrifice.

“Vin called me into his booth between innings and really wanted me to know, respectfully, how disappointed he was. I felt like we had let him down as an organization, but I also knew that he was absolutely right and that we had to do better in the future.

“It reminded me that he cared deeply for our military and for our country and that he was always looking out for the organization and wanted us to represent the Dodgers in a first-class manner every single day.

“As a broadcaster, I’ll always think of him as the best storyteller who ever lived, with impeccable command of the English language and of his emotions. He always knows when to speak and when to be quiet and how to weave in historical facts or current events that have nothing to do with baseball into the pace of a broadcast.

“As a human being, he’s as humble as they come and always finds a way to make you feel like you’re the most important person in the room.

“During his final broadcast against the D-backs this season, he made it a point to say hello on-air to Derrick Hall and myself and as I sat in Arizona watching the game with my kids, I was struck by the fact that my brother and I had listened to him with my dad, and that my dad had listened to him with his own father. Four generations of our family, all tied together with one genuine voice and I’ll forever be grateful that I’ve had the opportunity to get to know him.”

CANADIAN BASEBALL NETWORK

Legendary Vin Scully a friend to millions he’s never met

By Danny Gallagher

From 1969-76, Vin Scully did play-by-play of Dodgers-Expos’ games from Jarry Park in Montreal.

From 1977-2004, he called games from Olympic Stadium in Montreal.

Scully was at Olympic Stadium Oct. 19, 1981 when Rick Monday hit the famous home run off of Steve Rogers as the Dodgers beat the Expos to win the NLCS.
Scully’s soothing, deep voice was at Olympic Stadium Aug. 23-24, 1989 when the Dodgers and Expos silently went through 21 innings of no-run ball until Rick Dempsey brought in the go-ahead run in the top of the 22nd with a home run off of Dennis Martinez, his former Orioles’ batterymate, who was making a very rare relief appearance.

I was there to witness that game as a reporter and it ended up close to six hours in length, finishing at close to 2 a.m. Eastern time. Just two months earlier, Scully was at the mike for another 22-inning Dodgers’ game. In this one, the Astros won. Go figure, two, 22-inning games in the space of two months.

Scully was behind the microphone when Expos pitcher Martinez fired a perfect game July 28, 1991 at Chavez Ravine.

On July 3, 1993, Scully had to announce -- with much difficulty -- on air the death of Dodgers’ broadcaster and early 1970s Expos announcer Don Drysdale, who had died of a heart attack in a Montreal hotel room. The announcement was delayed, pending notification of next of kin.

“Never have I been asked to make an announcement that hurts me so much as this one. And I say it to you the best I can with a broken heart,” Scully said on air about Drysdale’s death.

Scully, 88, is bowing out as Dodgers’ lead announcer at the end of the regular season. He has said he will not do any post-season games, if the Dodgers find their way there.

As the season winds down, we in Canada still occasionally with great delight hear and see Scully when Sportsnet breaks to another game following the conclusion of a Jays’ game or late nights on MLB Network or on MLB Network highlight packages.

“Vince mentored me, he coached me, he’s always been very helpful. He and I are very, very good friends,” Dodgers’ Spanish-language broadcaster Jaime Jarrin told me recently.

Since 1950 when Scully entered the Brooklyn Dodgers’ broadcast booth, Scully’s voice has been full of storytelling, anecdotes, reliability and trustworthiness.

“Vinny brought to me the magical game of baseball,” Rick Monday told me the other day. “I was intrigued by him. My mom Nelda came out to southern California as a single parent and Vinny and broadcast partner Jerry Doggatt were our friends.”

And when Monday was talking about ‘friends’, he meant people he heard on air, listening through the airwaves.

“We knew Vinny in our cars and in our homes,” said Monday, a Dodgers’ announcer since 1985. “He was a friend before I met him. I was in the professional ranks for six years and what made my mother proud of me and when it sunk in is when my mother was watching a game and she’s seeing me and Vince Scully mentions her son’s name on the air. He was talking about her son.”

That would have been 1972, Monday’s first season with Cubs, a National League team, after he spent six seasons with the Athletics, first in Kansas City and then in Oakland, both American League venues where Scully’s voice largely could not be heard, if never.
Monday has a cassette tape of Scully’s call April 25, 1976 from Dodger Stadium when Monday, as a Cub, rescued the U.S. flag from two protesters, who were about to set it on fire in centre field.

When Monday was traded to the Dodgers by the Cubs following the 1976 season, it was a homecoming for Monday because he was raised in Santa Monica after he was born in Batesville, Ark.

“Vinny has been a friend of millions of people but they never met him,” Monday said. “From all of us, as our friend is going into retirement, you can make the legitimate claim that Vinny is the most influential person in Dodgers’ baseball history.

“Jackie Robinson was right there as a man, a great ballplayer, who contributed to society. There was the O’Malley family for all the great players that came through the organization. The single most influential part of the Dodgers came with Vinny’s presentation of the game he absolutely loves.

“I feel for Vinny for the love he has for the game. That is the part he may miss. The beauty and quality of the broadcast go hand in hand with the quality of the person. However, when you think of the broadcaster Vinny, the person is even better than the broadcaster.”

LA DAILY NEWS

How Vin Scully has taken us above, and beyond, a simple Dodgers broadcast

By Tom Hoffarth

Why do we revere Vin Scully so?

Nostalgia? His unfailingly polite and pleasant persona, both on the air and in person?

His poetic vocabulary and delivery with a grandfatherly lilt, never a touch overdone?

His abiding respect for the game, personified by prodigious preparation?

Those aren’t our questions. Word for word, all of the above was asked this past week by Wendy Parker, a former Atlanta Journal-Constitution writer and editor now of the exceptional Sports Biblio Digest, a blog dedicated to sports books, history and culture.

“All of the above” was also the next line in Parker’s summarization to her inquiry. And she’s living about 3,000 miles away from all this current Vin-sanity.

Above all, Scully remains the total package, the person broadcasters can still learn from, a gracious, grateful, priority-conscious gentleman we all hope somehow rubs off on us.

He leaves us grasping for the right words as we try to explain the way he has impacted our lives, as much a part of our city’s DNA and our own. He’s our “Wonder Years” narrator through a powerful electronic connection.

(Really, how did he make a Farmer John shank and butt portion sound even edible?)
This all become a more profound exercise as we inhale these last home games. Even then, those who use their words for a living may not even necessarily be in proper alignment on what adjectives to use.

Dick Enberg is struck about how Scully is the “poet laureate of baseball.” George Will counters: “Although he uses language fluently and precisely, he is not a poet. He is something equally dignified and exemplary but less celebrated: He is a craftsman. Scully, the most famous and beloved person in Southern California, is not a movie star but has the at-ease, old-shoe persona of Jimmy Stewart.”

Can both be correct? Of course. It’s all of the above. And more.

We generally just accept that Scully has fashioned himself into the greatest baseball broadcaster of all time. So is our greatest doubt in Southern California that no one will ever replace him? Has anyone really made us forgot about Chick Hearn? Or Enberg? Or Tom Kelly?

Our primary media filter has changed too dramatically, and with it, the drama that someone like Scully can provide.

No team would ever allow a single announcer to carry a broadcast by himself on any sport. It’s analyst-driven, mostly by former players, so the play-by-play man, particularly on TV, is just a facilitator.

Bob Costas nailed it when asked by ESPN’s Jayson Stark to best explain why the artistry of Scully is one for the ages, not the future:

“If you watch any other game, no matter how good the announcer is, no matter how good they are, there is always some obstacle or some maze that they have got to make their way through if they are going to tell even one or two of the dozen or so stories like that Vin tells during a game. So he’s a uniquely talented announcer.

“But if a 30-year-old Vin Scully came along today, the circumstances could never be duplicated. The business might not know what to do with him. The importance of radio would be much less. You would never have anything that would match the odyssey of the Dodgers … the importance of Jackie Robinson … the transplant from Brooklyn to the West Coast … the broken hearts in Brooklyn … the whole new vistas of baseball on the West Coast.

“And then the metabolism of the society of the game changing. But he is grandfathered in, and I mean that in the nicest way. So the very things that appeal to people about him are the opposite of most sports TV does. It’s like, we can’t get enough of this, and we can’t stop doing the exact opposite.”

Take that further: Why, as a way to complete this circle of broadcasting life, won’t the Dodgers allow Scully to call an entire game — either Sunday’s home finale or his final one Oct. 2 in San Francisco — as a radio-based format that just happens to be on TV? And then allow the radio to carry all nine innings of it?

A Dodgers spokesman said that isn’t going to happen, and that’s a mistake.

We hear frequently from Southern California natives who, not necessarily by their choosing, happen to work in different places around the world. They buy into the MLB.com app so they can pick up Dodgers audio games wherever they may be.
Their simple request, while thousands of miles away, is for a hometown connection, to hear Scully more than just the first three innings.

As a tribute to him, don’t you think Charley Steiner and Rick Monday would be fine stepping aside to hear Scully’s voice call at least those last innings of these final games instead of their own?

**Dodger Yasiel Puig meets with wounded West Covina police officer**

By Brian Day

LOS ANGELES >> When Dodgers right fielder Yasiel Puig learned that a West Covina police officer who returned to duty last month after being wounded in a gunfight in May was among dozens of law enforcement officers honored during the Dodgers home game Wednesday, he decided he needed to seek out the officer.

Officer Kenny Benitez, a Dodgers fan who lists Puig among his favorite players, was part of a group of officers honored on the field for heroism as part of Law Enforcement Appreciation Night.

“Puig had heard about Officer Benitez and this incident,” West Covina police Lt. Dennis Patton said.

Upon hearing that the officer was taking part in the ceremony, “Puig took it upon himself to search out Benitez,” according to the lieutenant.

The officer and the player met and took photos before each returned to their respective duties. Puig would go on to hit a three-run homer and make an impressive catch, helping his team achieve a 9-3 victory against the San Francisco Giants.

Patton said the police department appreciated Puig’s personal gesture to Officer Benitez.

Benitez was allegedly wounded during a gunfight with Jose Chavez, 47, on May 20. Chavez also was wounded in the gunbattle, but managed to escape.

He was apprehended by a SWAT team following a six-day manhunt and is now awaiting trial.

Benitez was fortunate in that the bullet that penetrated his abdomen did not strike any vital organs, West Covina Police Chief David Faulkner said at the time.

Benitez recovered from his injuries and returned to duty Aug. 18.

**FOX SPORTS**

**Several Los Angeles Dodgers express frustration with their playing time**

By Ken Rosenthal
As clubs employ a greater number of platoons, players sometimes grow frustrated with a lack of regular playing time.

Dodgers manager Dave Roberts acknowledged Friday that several players have conveyed such frustration to him as the team continues its march to the NL West title.

“You would expect that -- you have so many good players that can make a case to play more,” Roberts said. “Everyone wants to play. I don’t fault that. But I can’t make everyone happy. I’ve got to do what I see is best for us to win a game that night.”

The Dodgers, who entered Friday’s play leading the Giants by six games, play first baseman Adrian Gonzalez, shortstop Corey Seager and third baseman Justin Turner nearly every day, but mix and match at every other position.

Gonzalez, Seager and Turner each entered Friday with 500 or more at-bats. Second baseman Chase Utley was at 492 and infielder-outfielder Howie Kendrick at 459. No other player had more than 400.

The Cubs, who also use multiple players at different positions, had a similar distribution of at-bats. Third baseman Kris Bryant, first baseman Anthony Rizzo and right fielder Jason Heyward each had more than 500, while second baseman Ben Zobrist was at 499, shortstop Addison Russell at 498 and center fielder Dexter Fowler at 431.

The difference, perhaps, is that Cubs manager Joe Maddon is known for managing his roster creatively, going back to his days with the Rays. Roberts, on the other hand, is in his first season as a manager.

The Dodgers players, Roberts said, have an “understanding of where we’re at” even as they lobby for more playing time.

“I can hear guys and listen,” Roberts said. “But it doesn’t mean I’ll do anything different. I’ll still do what is best for our club. There is nothing else I can say.

“I’m not here to make individual players happy. My job is to help us win baseball games. Everything I’ve done this year – and there have been some controversial things – have been in the spirit of what is best for the team.

“I can live with that.”

THE SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE

Watch Vin Scully magically call two simultaneous baseball games

By Luis Gomez

Legendary baseball broadcaster Vin Scully may be retiring soon but he’s not ready to let go of one of his most precious gifts: calling two baseball games at the same time.
On Thursday, the 88-year-old announcer narrated two simultaneous games — one in Los Angeles where the Dodgers played against the Colorado Rockies, and one in San Diego where the Padres played the San Francisco Giants. Watch the play-by-play here.

Cut4 ✔ @Cut4
And for his next trick, Vin Scully will call two baseball games ... simultaneously!
http://atmlb.com/2cRgj2G

Scully has become a household name among baseball fans, particularly for Dodgers fans who have listened to his voice since the 1950s when the team was still in Brooklyn. But after more than 60 years on the team, Scully is voicing his final Dodgers game in Los Angeles on Sunday and will announce his final game at AT&T Park in San Francisco.

Thursday’s game wasn’t the first time he’s announced two games at the same time. But it drew a lot of attention because he’s in his final games as an announcer. A few fans have taken note of his talent as a broadcaster.

Roy Brent Jr @RoyBrentJr
#VinScully can call two games simultaneously better than most announcers can call one. #SFatCHC #SDatLAD

Matt Allen @El_MattAllen
Vin Scully = 🔗. Announcing two games at once like its nothing @VinScullyTweet

James Curran @JamesJericho
The only thing better than watching Vin Scully call a #Dodgers game is listening to him call two games at once during a pennant run.

squantch @darth_nacho12
Oh my God vin scully is calling two games at once again and it's fantastic. I'm gonna miss him so much after the season is over.

Matthew Reichbach @fbihop
I love when Vin Scully calls two games at once.

Reuben Hernandez @reuben81691
Vin Scully calling two games at the same time is amazing within itself. Gonna miss him next season, he's truly one of a kind. 🏠 #WinForVin

Melissa Menashe @M_Menashe_23
Vin Scully is literally calling two games at the same time. Most booths have three people calling a single game. #GOAT #Dodgers

Parimal M. Rohit @parimalrohit
Vin Scully is literally calling TWO games right now. What did we do to deserve such grace and humanity? #Dodgers