

= 1946 National League tie @-@ breaker series =

The 1946 National League tie @-@ breaker series was a best @-@ of @-@ three playoff series at the conclusion of Major League Baseball 's ( MLB ) 1946 regular season to decide the winner of the National League ( NL ) pennant . The games were played on October 1 and October 3 , 1946 , between the St. Louis Cardinals and Brooklyn Dodgers . It was necessary after both teams finished the season with identical win ? loss records of 96 ? 58 . This was the first ever tie @-@ breaker series in MLB history .

The first game took place at Sportsman 's Park in St. Louis , and the second , at Brooklyn 's Ebbets Field . The Cardinals swept the Dodgers behind wins from pitchers Howie Pollet and Murry Dickson , thus advancing to the 1946 World Series in which they defeated the Boston Red Sox , four games to three . In baseball statistics , the tie @-@ breaker series counted as the 155th and 156th regular season games by both teams , with all events in the games added to regular season statistics .

= = Background = =

In the first season of baseball since the conclusion of World War II , all ballplayers who had served in the military were returning to their former teams . The Cardinals regained Hall of Famer Stan Musial , and the Dodgers reacquired Hall of Famer Pee Wee Reese . The previous season , St. Louis finished second in the NL , and Brooklyn ended the season third , with records of 95 ? 59 and 87 ? 67 , respectively . In a pre @-@ season poll of 119 sportswriters , 115 picked the Cardinals to win the National League , while none selected the Dodgers .

Cardinals manager Eddie Dyer said that talk about his team being a " shoo @-@ in " to win the pennant was devised by Dodgers general manager Branch Rickey to ease the pressure on them , and increase pressure on the Cardinals , noting that he felt Brooklyn was the clear favorite . The Dodgers spent the first month of the season creating a " youth movement " on their club , allowing younger players to have significant playing time . When the team was in first place in the middle of May , however , manager Leo Durocher dropped the idea and instead focused on winning the pennant . Dyer said at the start of the season that as long as Saint Louis was within five games of first place on July 4 , they would win the pennant race . As July 4 came and went , they found themselves seven games behind the Dodgers , and concern grew in St. Louis .

The Cardinals rebounded , and on August 22 , after winning both games of a doubleheader against the Philadelphia Phillies , the clubs were tied , 71 ? 45 . After the Dodgers had led the league most of the season , the Cardinals were in first place most of September . On September 29 , Saint Louis and Brooklyn were again tied with just one game left to play against the Chicago Cubs and Boston Braves , respectively . The Cardinals lost to the Cubs , 8 ? 3 , while the Dodgers lost to the Braves , 4 ? 0 , and as a result the two teams were placed in a best @-@ of @-@ three playoff series to determine who would face the Boston Red Sox in the 1946 World Series . The Dodgers chose Ralph Branca to pitch the first game in the series . The Cardinals debated starting either Howie Pollet or Murry Dickson , before deciding on Pollet .

= = Game 1 summary = =

Pollet started the game by retiring the first three Brooklyn hitters . Eddie Stanky grounded out , Cookie Lavagetto flied out to center field , and Joe Medwick grounded out to end the inning . Branca took the mound in the bottom of the first , striking out Red Schoendienst and allowing a single to Terry Moore . After National League MVP Musial struck out , Enos Slaughter singled and Whitey Kurowski walked to load the bases . Joe Garagiola , Sr. brought in a run before being tagged out to end the inning with the score 1 ? 0 . In the second inning , Carl Furillo reached base on an error by Pollet . Pee Wee Reese singled , but Furillo was out at second . Another groundout brought the Cardinals back up , and the Dodgers got all three batters quickly out to end the inning . In the top of the third , Howie Schultz hit a home run on the first pitch he saw , tying the score at 1 ? 1 . After three more outs , St. Louis came back up to bat . Moore flied out , then Musial walked , and

Slaughter singled . Musial scored on Kurowski 's hit while Slaughter was called out , and after two more singles , the latter bringing in Kurowski , Branca was taken out of the game .

Kirby Higbe replaced Branca on the mound , and ended the inning with the Cardinals in the lead , 3 ? 1 . Both teams combined for one hit in the fourth inning , a single by Moore . In the top of the fifth , Reese and Bruce Edwards singled , and Schultz grounded out on a bunt . Stan Rojek pinch hit for Higbe , and walked , loading the bases . Stanky grounded into a double play , ending the inning without the Dodgers scoring any runs . In the bottom of the fifth , Hal Gregg replaced Higbe on the mound , and retired the side in order . The sixth inning contained just one baserunner ? Schoendienst ? who was stranded on first after hitting a single .

The top of the seventh started with Furillo flying out to right field . Reese , Edwards , and Schultz all singled after Furillo 's out . Reese scored on Schultz 's hit , but Slaughter threw Edwards out at third base . A groundout by Bob Ramazzotti ended the threat with the Cardinals leading , 3 ? 2 . Dyer later said he considered this play the one that saved the game for St. Louis . In the bottom of the seventh , the Dodgers insterted their fourth pitcher , Vic Lombardi . After Musial tripled and Slaughter flied out , he was replaced by Rube Melton , the fifth and final pitcher the Dodgers used . A Garagiola single scored Musial , and Melton got the other two outs in between a wild pitch , making the score 4 ? 2 at the end of the seventh . Stanky walked to start the eighth , giving him a league @-@ leading 137 walks for the season . Brooklyn finished the eighth inning leaving two on base , and the Cardinals failed to score in the bottom of the eighth as well , leaving a man on base . In the top of the ninth , Reese and Edwards flied out , and Schultz struck out to end the game , giving the Cardinals a 4 ? 2 victory .

= = Game 2 summary = =

Originally , the Cardinals were wavering between starting Murry Dickson or Harry Brecheen in game two , while the Dodgers were looking to use either Higbe , who had pitched in the previous game , or Joe Hatten ; the two clubs went with Dickson and Hatten . Hatten began the game in the top of the first inning by only allowing one hit to Terry Moore . In the bottom of the first , the Dodgers scored the game 's first run . After Eddie Stanky struck out , and Dick Whitman flied out , Augie Galan singled . He was brought home by a walk and another single . After Carl Furillo flied out , the first inning ended with a score of 1 ? 0 . In the top of the second , the Cardinals responded when Erv Dusak tripled after a Slaughter ground out . Marty Marion hit a sacrifice fly to score Dusak , and after a single by Clyde Kluttz , Dickson tripled to score another run , giving St. Louis a 2 ? 1 lead , before a fly out ended their half of the inning . Dickson walked Bruce Edwards , but retired the next three batters , leaving the score 2 ? 1 at the end of the second inning .

Neither team got a hit in the third or fourth innings . The only runners to reach base were Whitey Kurowski and Marion , both on walks . The fifth started that the same way , with Slaughter and Moore flying out . With two outs however , the Cardinals started hitting . Musial doubled , Kurowski walked , Slaughter tripled , and Dusak singled . All but Dusak scored on the hits , bringing the score to 5 ? 1 and ending Hatten 's day . Hank Behrman came on in relief . Behrman kept any more runs from scoring , and after another inning in which the Dodgers did not record a hit , the score was 5 ? 1 at the end of the fifth .

Vic Lombardi replaced Behrman in the top of the sixth . He allowed just one hit to Dickson , keeping the score 5 ? 1 when Brooklyn came up to bat . Whitman , Galan , and Dixie Walker all grounded out to end the inning . In the top of the seventh , Lombardi allowed two walks , then Dusak hit a sacrifice bunt , after which Lombardi was replaced by Higbe . Marion hit a sacrifice bunt as well , which allowed Kurowski to score . Higbe quickly got the third out , and the Dodgers again went hitless in the seventh , making the score 6 ? 1 at the end of seven innings . In the top of the eighth , Dickson struck out , while Red Schoendienst singled and Moore doubled . Musial was intentionally walked to load the bases , and Kurowski singled , allowing two baserunners to score and making the game 8 ? 1 in favor of the Cardinals . After another walk , Higbe was replaced on the pitcher 's mound by Rube Melton , who got the final two outs of the inning .

Brooklyn went hitless in the bottom of the eighth . They inserted Harry Taylor to pitch the top half of

the ninth , in which , he held St. Louis hitless . With half an inning left to play , the Dodgers began to get hits off of Dickson . Galan doubled , and after Walker flied out , Ed Stevens tripled to score Galan and Furillo singled to score Stevens , after a wild pitch and a walk , Brecheen took over pitching duties for Dickson with St. Louis leading 8 ? 3 . Edwards singled off Brecheen and allowed Furillo to score , and after Cookie Lavagetto walked , the score was 8 ? 4 with the bases loaded . The Cardinals kept the score from getting any closer , as Brecheen struck out the final two batters to end the game .

= = Aftermath = =

The Cardinals advanced to the World Series against the Boston Red Sox , whom they defeated four games to three . While the Cardinals were facing the Dodgers , the Red Sox faced a team of American League All @-@ Stars in an exhibition match . During the game , Ted Williams injured his elbow . He recovered in time to play in the World Series , but manager Joe Cronin blamed the injury on having to wait for the three @-@ game series to finish , and pushed for future tie @-@ breakers to be a single game . Cronin got his wish in the American League , as the 1948 American League tie @-@ breaker was only a one @-@ game matchup . However , the National League hosted three more series @-@ style tie @-@ breakers in later seasons before converting to a single @-@ game format .

After Brooklyn lost the series , rumors of Durocher leaving to manage the New York Yankees , which had started in the final days of the regular season , resurfaced . Durocher responded by saying that he would remain the manager of the Dodgers " until I die " , quelling any speculation .

The two games counted statistically as regular season games . As a result , Musial and Slaughter led the league with 156 games played , which could not have been equaled by anyone but a Brooklyn or St. Louis player . Musial 's two hits in the series gave him a league @-@ leading 228 for the season . Pollet 's nine inning , two earned runs performance lowered his earned run average ( ERA ) to 2 @.@ 10 , and increased his win total to 21 , both of which led the National League , narrowly edging out Johnny Sain 's 20 wins and 2 @.@ 21 ERA . Murry Dickson 's victory in the second game gave him 15 wins and six losses on the season ; this brought his win @-@ loss percentage to .714 , which led the National League . Musial finished the season with a .365 batting average , 124 runs , 50 doubles , 20 triples , 16 home runs , and 103 runs batted in , and won the Major League Baseball Most Valuable Player Award at the end of the season .