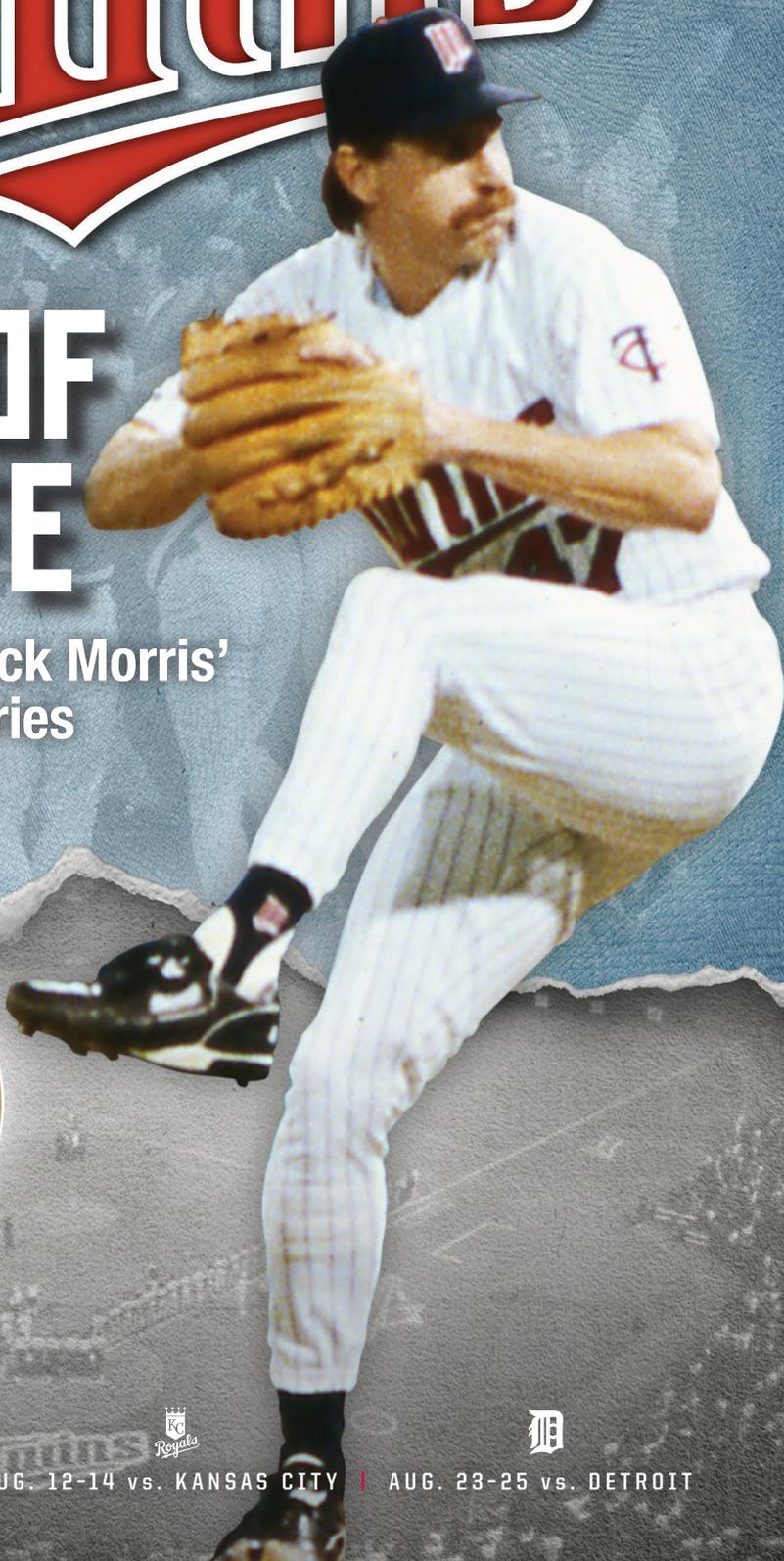


OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MINNESOTA TWINS

# Twins

## GAME OF HIS LIFE

A look back at Jack Morris' historic World Series performance



AUG. 8-11 vs. HOUSTON



AUG. 12-14 vs. KANSAS CITY



AUG. 23-25 vs. DETROIT

# GAME OF HIS LIFE



A look back at Jack Morris' historic World Series performance.

By Erik Bremer

**25** years ago this October, the Minnesota Twins and Atlanta Braves faced off in what is widely considered the greatest World Series ever played. Both teams, last-place finishers the year before, fought to become the first team in baseball history to go from the basement to the penthouse in just one season. Between three extra-inning games, four walk-offs and impact performances from

multiple players, the 1991 Series offered memorable moments in every single game.

But this Series was especially memorable for Jack Morris, the World Series MVP who started three games for his hometown Twins and went 2-0 with a 1.17 ERA. And while his Game 7 performance is impressive on its own, it becomes even more significant when considering all the exciting games that preceded it.

In Game 1, a three-run home run by

shortstop Greg Gagne in the fifth inning provided the run support Morris would need for an eventual 5-2 Twins victory. The late innings didn't disappoint, and offered plenty of thrills for the fans. Dan Gladden flipped Braves catcher Greg Olson on his head in an unsuccessful attempt to add an insurance run for the Twins, and Rick Aguilera had to come on for a four-out save when the Braves threatened in the eighth.

Game 2 had its own memorable moments as Kevin Tapani outdueled



**GAME 1** – October 19  
*Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome*

**Highlight:** Greg Gagne and Kent Hrbek hit homers and Rick Aguilera picks up a four-out save in a tone-setting Twins victory.



**GAME 2** – October 20  
*Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome*

**Highlight:** Kent Hrbek keeps his tag on Ron Gant and Scott Leius hits a game-winning home run in the eighth to give the Twins a 2-0 Series lead.



**GAME 3** – October 22  
*Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium*

**Highlight:** With an empty bench, Tom Kelly is forced to let Aguilera hit with two outs and the bases loaded in the 12th inning of a tie game. After a fly out, the Twins closer surrenders a walk-off single to Mark Lemke.



**GAME 4** – October 23  
*Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium*

**Highlight:** The Braves walk off for the second time in less than 24 hours as Jerry Willard hits a sacrifice fly in the ninth inning to score Lemke with the winning run.

**TWINS 5** | **BRAVES 2**

**TWINS 3** | **BRAVES 2**

**BRAVES 5** | **TWINS 4**

**BRAVES 3** | **TWINS 2**

12 innings

NL Cy Young Award winner Tom Glavine and Scott Leius hit an eighth-inning home run to give the Twins a 3–2 win. However, the game could have taken a different turn if not for a pivotal play by first baseman Kent Hrbek. In the third inning with the Twins clinging to a 2–1 lead, a Braves rally was squelched when Hrbek held his tag on a retreating Ron Gant for the third out. The controversial play left the tying run on third, and the hard loss had the Braves looking for revenge.

As the Series moved to Atlanta, the home-field advantage that the Twins had enjoyed at the Metrodome was used against them. The Braves won all three games at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium, two in walk-off fashion, and appeared poised to complete their own Cinderella story.

“I said it after the World Series ended and I’ll say it again, they should have cut the trophy in half because both teams played their hearts out,” says Morris. “Both teams fought tooth and nail to win it.”

The Twins faced long odds after losing three straight, but they remained confident as the series returned to Minnesota. Capacity crowds at the Metrodome provided a much needed boost for the Twins.

The fans were the tenth man on the field, no question,” Morris recalls. “They gave every ounce of energy they had. There’s probably never been a sporting venue that has been anywhere near as loud . . . It was incredible.”

Kirby Puckett fed off that energy and delivered both offensively and defensively in a Game 6 performance for the ages. In the third inning, he made a leaping catch against the Plexiglass wall in left-center field to rob Ron Gant of a potential RBI hit. After the Braves

rallied to tie the game 3–3 in the seventh, both teams matched zeroes until the 11th. Puckett, who had already singled, tripled, and hit an RBI sacrifice fly in the game, launched a Charlie Leibrandt pitch over the wall for a walk-off home run to send his team to a seventh game with a 4–3 victory.

Game 7 came and offered Morris, a St. Paul native, the chance to live out a childhood fantasy.

“Kids from Minnesota grow up dreaming about playing for their hometown team. Everybody does. That’s what made it special,” Morris recalls.

He pitched the game of his life in a winner-take-all showdown against John Smoltz, working in and out of jams to pitch 10 shutout innings against the potent Braves lineup. The game remained scoreless until the bottom of the 10th, when pinch hitter Gene Larkin entered, with the bases loaded and one out, and lofted a fly ball past the drawn-in Braves outfield to score Dan Gladden for the winning run. For the second time in five years, the Twins were World Champions.

Morris won’t say that Game 7 was the best baseball game of all time, but he admits that his clutch performance came on the biggest stage imaginable.

“In the entire course of a baseball season, there is no more important game than Game 7 of a World Series,” he says.

And if you manage to pitch a 10-inning shutout in Game 7 to win a World Series for your hometown team, you can let other people debate if anyone in baseball history has ever pitched a finer game. It had never happened before, and it’s unlikely that it will ever happen again. 🏆



**GAME 5** – October 24  
Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium

**Highlight:** The Twins trail just 5–3 at the seventh inning stretch, but the Braves open it up with nine runs in the final frames.

**GAME 6** – October 26  
Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome

**Highlight:** Kirby Puckett does everything to keep the Twins alive. His run-saving catch in the third sets the stage for a walk-off home run in the 11th to send Minnesota to Game 7.

**GAME 7** – October 27  
Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome

**Highlight:** Jack Morris benefits from a baserunning blunder and a clutch 3–2–3 double play to keep the game scoreless. The Twins load the bases in the 10th off Alejandro Peña, and pinch hitter Gene

Larkin singles home Dan Gladden to declare the Twins World Champions.



**BRAVES 14 TWINS 5**

**TWINS 4 BRAVES 3**

**TWINS 1 BRAVES 0**

11 innings

10 innings