

This season marks the 25th and 50th anniversaries of the memorable 1984 Cubs and 1959 White Sox teams, respectively. Each week the Chicago Baseball Museum chronicles the significant events that took place at a similar time in their dramatic seasons.

Holy Cow! Cubs clinch first title in 39 years; Padres are next

PITTSBURGH, Sept. 24 – It was 39 long years between championships, but to see the Cubs pop their corks at Three Rivers Stadium late Monday night, the wait was worth it.

A sparse crowd of 5,472 fans watched the Cubs beat the Pittsburgh Pirates to clinch the East Division championship, 4-1, and it was fitting that Rick Sutcliffe was on the mound when it happened.

When Sutcliffe struck out Joe Orsulak to end the game, the bearded right-hander was mobbed by teammates before the celebration moved to the visitors' clubhouse.

The Cubs began their rise to the top shortly after Sutcliffe arrived in a trade three months ago, and he was never more dominant than in this one.

Sutcliffe allowed only two hits to improve his record to a remarkable 16-1 in a Cubs uniform. The Cy Young Award favorite walked none and struck out nine batters.

Orsulak was the only Pirates batter to reach base. He tripled and scored on a ground out in the fourth inning and singled with two outs in the sixth inning.

Sutcliffe also drove home what proved to be the game-winner in the second inning.

Larry Bowa reached base on an infield hit and advanced to second on an errant throw. Sutcliffe followed with an RBI single off Pirates starter Larry McWilliams (11-11), who took the loss.

The Cubs broke on top in the first inning, when Ryne Sandberg doubled and scored on a Gary Mathews single.

Now manager Jim Frey and his team can set their sights on the San Diego Padres, who will be their NLCS opponents. The Padres clinched the West Division title last week.

National League East standings: 1. Cubs 93-63 --; 2. New York 87-70 6.5; 3. St. Louis 81-75 12; 4. Philadelphia 81-76 12.5; 5. Montreal 75-80 17.5; 6. Pittsburgh 71-86 22.5.

White Sox get needed breather, await Dodgers-Braves survivor

DETROIT, Sept. 24 – The White Sox had a second consecutive off day on Thursday, and on the heels of their wild pennant celebration earlier this week, they needed it.

Manager Al Lopez planned to start several regulars against the Detroit Tigers in the final series of the regular season, which was scheduled to open at Briggs Stadium on Friday afternoon. He indicated they would be lifted in the late innings.

Meanwhile, the National League representative in the World Series has yet to be determined, as the Los Angeles Dodgers and Milwaukee Braves are tied for first place with identical 84-67 records.

The Cubs could have a lot to say about the race in the final weekend of the season. The Dodgers will visit Wrigley Field for three games, while the Braves will host the Philadelphia Phillies in a three-game set.

American League standings: 1. White Sox 92-59 --; 2. Cleveland 87-63 4.5; 3. New York 78-73 14; 4. Detroit 75-76 17; 5. Baltimore 72-79 20; 6. Boston 72-79 20; 7. Kansas City 64-86 27.5; 8. Washington 63-88 29.