

Fifty years ago, Major League Baseball was in its first season of Division play. The Atlanta Braves were the first champions of the National League Western Division.

For most of that season, the race for the Division title involved the Braves, the Cincinnati Reds, the Houston Astros, the Los Angeles Dodgers, and the San Francisco Giants—that's every team but the expansion San Diego Padres.

On Sunday, August 10, 1969, the Braves lost to the New York Mets 3-0. [Nolan Ryan](#) started for the Mets and, for some reason, pitched only 2 1/3 innings without allowing a hit or striking out a batter. [Don Cardwell](#) pitched four innings of shutout relief to earn the win, and [Tug McGraw](#) closed it out with 2 2/3 scoreless innings to earn the save.

[Jim Britton](#) started on the mound for the Braves, pitched seven strong innings, giving up only a solo home run to [Tommy Agee](#), to take the loss. The usually reliable, [Cecil Upshaw](#), came in in the eighth and gave up the other two runs.

Britton also was the hitting star for the Braves that day. His double and single accounted for two of the Braves five hits; [Tony Gonzalez](#) had two singles, and [Bob Didier](#) had one.

At the end of the day, the Braves were in second place, 2.5 games behind the Reds. The Dodgers were three games back, the Giants were 3.5 games out, and the Astros were in fifth place, 4.5 games off the pace. In the NL East, the Chicago Cubs held a seven-game lead over the Mets.

(Statistics and game details are from retrosheet.org.)

