

## **Barrel Full of Rally Monkeys: Angels win First Title in Seven Game Thriller**

By MPAW

The Anaheim Angels and the San Francisco Giants made the baseball fans that were still watching forget all about the scandals of the year with an electrifying World Series we haven't seen the likes of since, well, last year's seven game Series. Unlike last year's World Series however, neither of these teams were supposed to be duking it out for the Major League Baseball crown.

From the beginning of the first all-wild card World Series, it was clear these left coast rivals were evenly matched. The Rally Monkey came up short in game 1 which was taken by San Francisco 4-3 thanks to home runs from Barry Bonds, Reggie Sanders, and a 2-run shot by J.T. Snow in the 6<sup>th</sup> inning which proved to be the game winner.

Anaheim struck back in game 2 in a wild game which featured both starting pitchers being removed before the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning. Combined, Giants starter Russ Ortiz and Angels starter Kevin Appier gave up 12 runs in 3 2/3 innings. The hero of the game was Tim Salmon who hit two home runs including the game winner in the 8<sup>th</sup> inning against Felix Rodriguez. Barry Bonds hit a 485 foot home run in the 9<sup>th</sup> in the Giants' losing effort.

The Series then shifted to San Francisco, but the momentum stayed with Anaheim as their bats stayed hot, producing 10 runs to the Giants' 4 in their game 3 victory. Barry Bonds hit yet another home run, but was no match for the Halo's 16 hits.

The Angels' bats came back to the ground in game 4 as sanity was restored to the series in the Giants' 4 – 3 victory. San Francisco finally got a starter to go deep with Kirk "Woody" Rueter going 6 innings and giving up 3 runs. Offensively, the RBI's were evenly divided at one a piece between Rich Aurilia, Jeff Kent, Benito Santiago, and David Bell.

San Francisco maintained the momentum in game 5 clobbering Anaheim 16 – 4. At first, it appeared the Rally Monkey was about to do his work as he had all season for the Angels as Anaheim was rallying back from an initial 6 – 0 lead by the Giants. The Angels had pulled to within 2 when their National League counterparts busted out with 10 runs in 3 innings.

All momentum appeared with the Giants even as the series came back to Anaheim for game 6. San Francisco was up 5 – 0 in the 7<sup>th</sup> inning – a deficit which had never been overcome by a team facing elimination. Victory appeared at hand but the power of the Rally Monkey could not be undone. The offense of the American League champs was jump started by Scott Spiezio's 3 run homer in the 7<sup>th</sup>. Anaheim came all the way back in the 8<sup>th</sup> inning after a solo home run by Darin Erstad and a go-ahead 2 run double by Troy Glaus after a bobbled ball by Bonds in left field.

And so, baseball had its second seven game World Series in two years. The home team had won the last seven games in a row and the trend continued with no Rally Monkey needed as rookie John Lackey pitched Anaheim to a 4 – 1 victory to take the first championship ever in the 42 year history of the franchise. Taking MVP honors was Troy Glaus who homered a record 7 times (as did Bonds) along with a .344 batting average. It was a series for the ages, destined to go down in the annals of baseball history as a classic.