

Marvin's memories: '92 Fall Classic will always be my Winfield of dreams

Chicago native Marvin Freeman was a pitcher for the Atlanta Braves teams that captured National League pennants in the 1991-93 seasons. Here the Chicago Baseball Museum board member reminisces about the sixth and final game of the 1992 World Series.

By Marvin Freeman

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When I see a relief pitcher come in late in a game, I wonder what I would have done if given the same opportunity. There's one time that remember most especially at this time every year. It was Game 6 of the 1992 World Series, because it could have been me out there.

In the 11th inning and the score tied, the Toronto Blue Jays had two runners on base with two outs. I was in the bullpen, prepared to face Dave Winfield, who was the next batter. While I warmed up, my fastball felt like it was 200 miles per hour. That was probably as high as my adrenaline could get short of a heart attack.

There was another reason why I was pumped up more than normal: When I was a kid, Winfield was one of my idols. He was 6-foot-6, and I was an inch taller. I always said that, if I had been a position player, I would have been his type.

But manager Bobby Cox stuck with veteran Charlie Leibrandt instead. Because Winfield was a great fastball hitter and Charlie had good off-speed stuff, Bobby considered him to a better matchup. Maybe he also knew that I wanted to knock the catcher down and might try too hard. Whatever the case, Winfield doubled down the left-field line to score two runs, and we went on to lose the game and the series.

I never did pitch in a World Series game – there was no room for relief pitchers with Tom Glavine, Greg Maddux and John Smoltz around --- but I did catch the grand slam that Lonnie Smith hit into the bullpen in the fifth game. Lonnie was my locker neighbor in the clubhouse, and I made sure he got the ball for his personal collection.

I have the home run on tape. I call it my World Series moment, but every so often, I wonder if there could have been a better one.