

## **Marvin's memories: In playoffs, it's not always better to be on top**

*Chicago native Marvin Freeman was a pitcher for the Atlanta Braves teams that captured the 1991 and 1992 National League pennants. Here the Chicago Baseball Museum board member reminisces about the 1992 NLCS, in which the Braves advanced to the World Series for the first time since their move to Atlanta three decades earlier.*

*By Marvin Freeman*

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What I remember most was the excitement and intensity in and around Atlanta at the time. In 1991, one year after the Braves finished in last place, we advanced to the World Series. After it was over, they had a parade downtown even though we had lost the series. Thousands of people were there. If we had won, they might have had to shut down Georgia for awhile.

A lot of people thought what we had done was a fluke. *How can the Braves get that far?* But when we got back to the World Series one year later, they expected us to win it this time. They were anxious for it to get started.

The series against the Pittsburgh Pirates was a tough one. It went to seven games, and we trailed in the ninth inning of the last one. I was in the bullpen at the time, not far away from security personnel who were on their horses and ready to take the field. I kept saying to those guys, "This game ain't over! You guys think it's over, but it ain't over!" That Braves team had a belief in itself. We were confident that we would win every game no matter the score.

Francisco Cabrera got the big hit that scored Sid Bream and took us back to the World Series. The guys in the bullpen sprinted to home plate, yelling and screaming all the way. By the time we got there, we were out of breath. A bunch of players had piled on Bream already, so we jumped on top of them. We started a new pile.

Some people think it's better to be at the bottom of the pile, but it depends how you look at it. When you're at the bottom, it means you did something special. A lot of players wouldn't mind being crushed by 24 guys on top of them. That was one time I wouldn't have minded to be at the bottom of the pile.