

SPORTS

www.palatkadailynews.com

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2019

PAGE 6A

Kendrick homer helps Nats to first title

Fomer St. Johns star puts Washington ahead to stay in Game 7 of World Series

BY BEN WALKER
Associated Press

HOUSTON — Almost out of contention in May, champs in October.

Howie Kendrick, Anthony Rendon and the Washington Nationals completed their amazing come-

back journey — fittingly with one final, late rally on the road.

In Game 7 of the World Series, no less.

Kendrick and Rendon homered in the seventh inning as the Nationals overcame a two-run deficit, rocking the Houston Astros 6-2 Wednesday night to claim the first title in franchise history.

With all eyes on Max Scherzer and his remarkable recovery after a painkilling injection, these Nationals truly embraced their shot in the first Series when the road team won every game.

Even more against the odds: Juan Soto and

Washington rallied from behind to win five elimination games this postseason, an unprecedented feat.

Stephen Strasburg, Patrick Corbin and the Nats brought the first World Series championship to the nation's capital since of Walter Johnson delivered the crown for the Senators in 1924.

This franchise started out as the Montreal Expos in 1969 when the major leagues expanded beyond the border, putting a team with tricolor caps at jaunty Jarry Park. They moved to D.C. in 2005, ending Washington's

See **SERIES**, Page 7A

Series

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6A

three-decade-plus wait for big league baseball after the Senators left town to become the Texas Rangers.

But the incredible path these wild-card Nationals with the curly W logo took, well, no one could have imagined.

For the 43,326 revved-up fans at Minute Maid Park, it was a combi-

nation of shock and disappointment. So close to seeing the Astros win their second crown in three years, they watched their chance suddenly vanish as Houston fell apart.

Washington kept pulling away after taking the lead, with Adam Eaton's two-run single in the ninth accounting for the final margin.

Zack Greinke was in complete control until Rendon — a Houston prep and college star — hit a home run that cut Houston's lead to 2-1.

When Soto followed with a one-

out walk, manager AJ Hinch decided to make a move. He'd had ace starter Gerrit Cole warming up in the bullpen earlier, but this call was for Will Harris.

Kendrick connected on the second pitch, slicing a drive that hit the screen attached to the right field foul pole. Just like that, everything had changed for the team in orange that led the majors in wins, and the ballpark fell silent.

For Kendrick, another timely blow. At 36, playing on the oldest team in the majors, the journey-

man earned the MVP award for the NL Championship Series against St. Louis after hitting the winning grand slam in the 10th inning of the deciding Game 5 of the Division Series at Dodger Stadium.

Recruited only by St. Johns River Community College coach Sam Rick out of West Nassau High School, Kendrick was all-state with the Vikings in 2002, then signed with the Angels, who chose him in the 10th round of the draft.

Then again, this was nothing new for the Nationals.