Phoenix took the lead on San Francisco’s field

Phoenix Firebirds beat | 1981-08-31 | Games through 1981-08-30

Two clubs arrived at the opening series on 64–57. Phoenix won the first two in San Francisco, dropped the third 2–1, then closed the set with a 2–0 win. Tony Zacate went eight scoreless and allowed two hits in that last game. The Firebirds finished the challenge one game in front. The two-game margin they took out of San Francisco bought them time when the Warriors won their closing series.

Phoenix split with Los Angeles and split at San Diego. Zacate returned for the August 30 4–1 win, allowing one earned run in 7■ innings. Nick Perez had 17 hits and four steals over the stretch. The team that won 107 games and this division last season has a much smaller margin to protect this time.

The Firebirds open the next series at home against Miami, which arrives with six straight wins. They return to San Francisco for three September 28–30. The first meeting showed what Phoenix could do in that park. The second may ask it to protect what it won there.