

Bumgarner Blanks Cubs

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Madison Bumgarner has really stepped it up as a young Major League pitcher.

Last season, he was stellar in the World Series as the San Francisco Giants picked up their first world championship since 1954. And despite some pratfalls along the way, Bumgarner is starting to turn it around. And it couldn't come at a better time. The lefthander was stellar Wednesday afternoon as he blanked the Chicago Cubs 4-0 at AT&T Park.

He went eight innings, scattered two hits and matched his career high with 11 strikeouts. It was a much-needed win for the Giantss, who were mired in a three-game losing streak when the day began. The Giants (72-65) find themselves trailing the Arizona Diamondbacks by six games for first place in the National League West. And the Diamondbacks come to town for a weekend series beginning on Friday.

Jeff Keppinger and Pablo Sandoval hit consecutive home runs in the fourth inning giving the Giants and Bumgarner all the runs he needed.

"I didn't think about what was at stake," Bumgarner said. "But we need to win. And it would be nice to win from here on out."

Bumgarner, who picked up his ninth win of the season is 9-12 with a 3.43 earned-run-average. Bumgarner will make his next start either September 5 or 6 at San Diego.