



# Heart and Hustle for Piscotty

by Brian Stull

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Whether or not his 3-run homer to lead Sunday's comeback against Chicago amounts to finally being the catalyst to launch the St. Louis Cardinals, the impact Stephen Piscotty is making amongst his teammates is becoming more and more evident.

The outfielder was recently chosen as the Cardinals recipient of the MLBPA's Heart and Hustle Award.

"It's definitely pretty special," said Piscotty after being presented with the award. "Just the title—Heart and Hustle, definitely means a lot to me. For all the people that voted on it for me, thank you. It's a tremendous honor."

The Heart and Hustle Award honors active players who "demonstrate a passion for the game of baseball and best embody the values, spirit, and traditions of the game" and is voted on by former players of each team. Alumni and active players will vote on the overall winner near the end of the season.

"A lot of guys congratulated me," continued Piscotty. "I really appreciate that and take some pride in it and want to continue to keep my style of play like that."

"I think that's a great award and compliment to just how he's gone about his business," stated Mike Matheny. "He's done a real nice job of being that young player but also kind of a chameleon that can kind of fit in wherever. The young guys, the veterans respect him."

“He just kind of goes back to that old way we were taught the game—seen not necessarily heard, shut up and do your job kind of a thing for a young player. Then you earn the ability, like even some of the meetings or some of the conversations they start to ask his opinion.”

In traditional fashion, Piscotty downplayed his growing role on the team.

“It’s hard to say, I kind of try to stay pretty even keel,” he explained. “We have such a great core of veteran leadership on this team. I definitely defer to them and try to do the best I can in my role. If there’s little ways I can help out, not on the field but maybe in the clubhouse, I look for those chances but like I said, it’s pretty well taken care of with the guys we have.”

But even with the style of that response, Piscotty showed how his growth in the clubhouse is reminiscent of how another team leader emerged.

“I saw that same progression with Carp,” compared Matheny. “They gave him trouble non-stop because he just worked so hard. Then you could tell, that he won their respect over and I’d say that’s exactly what’s happened with Stephen.”

“He’s having a great year,” said Carpenter, who has provided some advice for Piscotty. “Just being aware that he’s going through the natural flow of ups and downs of being an everyday starter, just giving him some guidance and thoughts on that. Letting him know that he’s doing great but it’s a long season and being able to finish strong—which he will.”

To that point, while his batting average has dipped over the last month, Piscotty has still found ways to drive in runs and overall he is hitting .376 (38-101) with runners in scoring position, including 6 home runs and 51 runs batted in.

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