



Another Big Task for Girsch

by Brian Stull

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(Busch Stadium) The need for Trevor Rosenthal to undergo Tommy John surgery presents yet a new problem for the St. Louis Cardinals. Besides the missing big bat for the middle of the lineup, potential rotation help, the team must now also look for help at the back end of games.

“It certainly creates a need where we previously had a pretty set answer,” said General Manager Michael Girsch. “In the short term, there’s not a ton we can do about it, unfortunately because of the time of the year. We’re doing our best...in the longer term, it’s something that we’ll have to add to the things we’re trying to address in the off-season.”

But that doesn’t necessarily mean the Cardinals will go all-in on trying to sign a new closer.

“We’ll see,” answered Girsch. “We’ve got whatever it is, 36 games or whatever the magic number is, to see whether someone steps up and puts a stamp on the role or not. I think we’re going to be in the market to improve our bullpen, one way or another. What that looks like depends on what’s available.”

One of those immediate candidates is Tyler Lyons.

“Tyler’s been borderline dominant for the last few weeks and that’s exciting,” said Girsch. “We’ve also got a guy who’s been dominant for years, but we have a guy who’s been dominant for weeks so at least we have that going for us. We’ve seen Tyler’s role expand and I think it will continue to expand and we’ll see how it plays out.”

There are no immediate plans to convert a current starter—at the major or minor league levels—into a closer.

The waiver wire has yet to set up a situation where the Cardinals can make a deal to obtain additional relief or help at another position.

“It’s the same difficulty as it always is,” explained Girsch. “It’s just hard to find the right mix of a player who either gets through waivers or gets to you in waivers from a team who wants to trade him. Some teams are putting players on that they have no intent of trading, other players you don’t get a claim in on. There’s not a lot of big upgrades available through the waiver wire.”

He described the activity as typical from the Cardinals stand point of putting players through, some had been claimed others were not.

And while it may seem that with the team’s recent flirtation with the top of the division it may increase the aggressiveness to make a move, things appear to be status quo.

“Certainly our position in the standings affects our plan,” acknowledged Girsch. “But I don’t think we’ve reached a point right now where it’s had a meaningful impact in sort of—look, at this point just trying to get anyone where the two teams both want to have a conversation about a player who actually got claimed, that’s step one before you worry about if your trading short term or long term.”

Equally, the plan hasn’t changed in terms of how the Cardinals are handling their own prospects. The general manager was asked if they are intentionally slow with promoting certain top prospects.

“It’s all in the eye of the beholder,” said Girsch. “If someone believes that, I don’t really have an argument for it. We try to make decisions in the best interest of the players and the organization and long term for the organization. Whether the guy’s ready to make the step, whether he’s got innings left, whether he’s got a roster spot—there’s a lot that goes into it. It might not always be the flashy answer, but we’re just trying to make the answer that’s best for the organization.”

Again, it was stressed that there is the same urgency as usual to improve the team.

“There’s not a formula. There’s not a games behind minus days left in the season plus what—we’re reading the team, reading the situation, trying to do the best we can to understand our options. There’s a lot more than just that that goes into these decisions...there’s no ‘magic bullet’ that is an easy answer.”

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