



DeJong In Contention to Repeat

by Brian Stull

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As the month of August winds down, St. Louis Cardinals rookie Paul DeJong is in strong position to retain his honor of July's National League Rookie of the Month.

Since August 4th, the 24-year old shortstop has reached base safely in 20 of his last 23 games, hitting .354 (35/99) in that stretch.

"It's trying not to be so inconsistent, but these guys are good up here and I'll have to make my adjustments," said DeJong recently. "I'm getting thrown right into the fire, but I think it's been great for my development....Really, it's just about coming to the park everyday with a fresh, clean slate, trying to help the team win every day."

DeJong's 20 home runs are the fourth most all-time for a rookie in franchise history and to do so in his first 77 MLB games is second only to Albert Pujols, who hit 21 in 2001.

That rookie campaign by Pujols ranks third all-time according to Ryan Murphy, who recently posted his Top-10 list via sportsbettingdime.com.

Eventually, Pujols became a fixture at the three-spot in the lineup, but in 2001 with the likes of Jim Edmonds, Mark McGwire, and even J.D. Drew, Pujols was more often in the clean-up spot or lower.

Tonight will be DeJong's 32nd game hitting third for the Cardinals after racking up 22 appearances while hitting in the seventh spot.

"I was pretty much a three-hole guy my whole life," shared DeJong, who enjoys the position. "I feel comfortable in there. I think I should be in that spot, I like being in that spot, and I think I can keep producing in the three-hole. I've just to get on base more, that's my goal. Whether it's getting hits or walks, both those things matter. Really pushing the line, and letting guys hit behind me."

DeJong also has 39 extra base hits this season—just two away from rookie franchise record of 41 set by Johnny Mize.

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