



Wisdom Feels the Support

by Brian Stull

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The fact that he has yet to play in a Major League game, was left exposed for another Rule 5 draft, yet his autograph tickets sold out in advance for the St. Louis Cardinals Winter Warm-Up wasn't lost on Patrick Wisdom.

"I'm thankful for that," he said. "The fans have been great to me. I do the best I can to show my gratitude and say hi to the kids. Anyone that stops to ask me, I always take the time to stop and say hi and chat because it goes a long way, I think. The two seconds I stop for someone can make their day or make their week or make their year. Just making sure I do that shows out there."

This wasn't the first Warm-Up or trip on the Cardinals Caravan for Wisdom, who was drafted in as a compensation pick in the 1st round of 2012 by St. Louis. But this year he felt a different sentiment, the sold-out autograph line was just another example of fans showing they're pulling for him to get that shot in the big leagues.

"Yeah, especially on this one," said Wisdom. "Everyone said that, wishing me the best of luck. I'm so thankful for those kind words. It means a lot to have them support me like that. It goes a long way."

Last season at Memphis, Wisdom hit 31 home runs and drove in 89 runs.

When the Cardinals were looking for some power in the lineup and then Jedd Gyorko went on the disabled list in August, it seemed Wisdom could be a perfect call-up, able to step in at third and provide a big bat. Instead he stayed with Memphis, even when the rosters expanded in September.

“I’ll be honest, it’s frustrating,” shared Wisdom. “But, what can you do? You just have to go out and keep playing and continue to get better. Personally it’s frustrating, but you have to use it as fuel to keep moving and stay focused.”

So was there any feedback as to why there was no call-up? Was it the 149 strikeouts? Something else to work on?

“I wish my paygrade allowed me to get that insight,” smiled Wisdom. “I don’t really hear what’s going on, and I don’t really get any information like that. I wish I did so it would guide me in the right direction. But for now, keep my head down and keep moving.”

Part of that approach included adding work at first base during last year.

“I thought I made great progress,” said Wisdom. “I find first an easy transition. I don’t find it too difficult over there. Playing third base, it’s the other corner so I’m kind of used to the corner aspect. And you’re more involved in any play. For me, I just find it a lot easier. It’s a lot of fun over there. You get to chat with the guys. Like I said, you’re in every play so it makes the game more fun and I guess more action packed. But I love third base as well.”

Going back to the 149 strikeouts, not every strikeout is the same. How many of those were more acceptable because of the situation—where it may have actually been encouraged to swing away? And how many are part of the trade off in hitting 31 home runs?

“That’s a good question,” acknowledged Wisdom. “I probably couldn’t put a number on it trying to look back quickly through the season. There were also a handful of times through the season where I needed to come through and I didn’t, but that’s the nature of the game. Shoot, people succeed 30 percent of the time and they’re Hall of Famers. It is what it is. I look forward to decreasing them next year and continuing my production.”

“It’s a goal of mine just to decrease the strikeouts but still producing the numbers I need to do. Strikeouts are going to happen. I can’t really focus on that because I don’t really want to focus on a negative thing during my practice and working out and stuff. I think working on the positives and a consistent swing will decrease the strikeouts just naturally.”

Putting aside the mixed bag of being comfortable and thankful to still be with the Cardinals, but disappointed to not selected by another team which would have assured his ML dream of coming true, Wisdom is looking ahead to what's next for him in 2018:

“I’m going to have an opportunity in Spring Training to play the game I love.”

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