



Adams on Bunts and WrestleMania

by Brian Stull

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While St. Louis Cardinals first baseman Matt Adams knew long ago that he wanted to be a professional baseball player, there was a time when “Big City” would’ve preferred to hit a power slam over a home run.

“Back when they first started coming to Penn State—Monday Night Raw came there a couple of times,” recalls Adams of his first experience with professional wrestling. “My dad got tickets, pretty good tickets. Went there early, got the Bret Hart glasses—the pink shades. I would say him and growing up watching WCW and Sting—those are the two that started it for me.”

Married during the off-season to his high school sweetheart, Adams now has newlywed battles over the television to watch the action.

“My wife doesn’t like me when Monday nights come around,” laughed Adams. “But it’s something that I enjoy watching. Most people think it’s fake, but they’ve still got to be athletes out there doing it.”

Hulk Hogan, Randy Orton, John Cena, Big Show, and Paul Heyman are among Adam’s other favorites.

“Just the way he goes from talking to the fans and then when Brock’s name is brought into it, he’s like a whole nother animal in the ring,” complimented Adams of Heyman. “Obviously, Brock does his stuff in the ring but promotion stuff, Paul Heyman’s the best.”

Quiet by nature and without a mouthpiece like Heyman to speak on his behalf, Adams is working to show his critics that he will be ready for the everyday challenges—including hitting left-handed pitching, this season.

“There’s some people that stress, they say that I can’t do it—but that just gives me a chip, a chip on my shoulder,” said Adams. “I’m not real cocky, I don’t like to brag but I showed all those doubters I can do it in the post-season against two of the best lefties in the game.”

“I think it’s just repetition. Yeah, we do the drills in the off-season, we do the drills here in Spring Training but nothing’s going to dictate that except getting out in the field and facing left-handed pitchers and seeing the ball and taking good swings off them.”

“It’s totally different. In the minors, you don’t have the lefty specialist that you get in a tight spot, tying run or game winning run on second or third. They get the guy up in the pen knowing that you’re coming up in the spot. That’s a guy that gets paid millions of dollars to come in and get the lefties out. It’s just tougher. The guys in the minor leagues have good stuff, but mainly you’re facing them as a starter.”

Extra time in the video room and doing his homework on pitcher tendencies are on his agenda—as is working on bunts to beat the shift.

“Whenever we’re at the bunting station, I’m not working on bunting to first base,” said Adams. “I’m working on going to third base because that’s where the third baseman is going to move over by second or on the other side of second. The shortstop is going to move over. All I have to do is work on getting it down in fair territory past the pitcher and I can basically walk to first base. The right opportunity has to call for it in a game, I’m not just going to go up there and do it without the right situation. I’m going to work on it the rest of Spring Training—if I get feeling pretty comfortable, I might try it.”

In the meantime, after today’s game against the New York Mets, Adams will be among those tuning into WrestleMania 31 tonight—in part to see that childhood favorite, Sting, strap on the boots one more time.

“Yeah, I hope Sting takes it to Triple H,” said Matt. “I think that’s gonna be a good one for people to watch, so I’m excited.”

And even though Paul Heyman is also a favorite and he gives WWE Champion Brock Lesnar his due as former NCAA and UFC champion, the first baseman sees a title change coming tonight at WrestleMania 31.

“I would like to see Roman Reigns beat Lesnar,” stated Adams, who not only will be rooting but “believes” that it will happen.

photo credit: WWE