Anna Delivers Walk-Off Hit

by Brian Stull
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Still competing for a spot on the 25-man roster, Dean Anna has a hit in his last four consecutive at-bats, the biggest coming on Saturday as he lined a single to right field to score Charlie Tilson with the walk-off run to beat Atlanta 1-0.

Anna has raised his batting average by more than 100 points (.154-.267) over the last two games but in some earlier at-bats Dean had been taking some pitches he would normally swing at to work on the timing of pitches out of his crouched over stance.

"When I was with the Padres in A ball, I was standing real tall and I didn't feel like my legs were getting under me," explained Anna. "Now I like to get really crouched in there and kind of feel my legs and stuff. It's kind of a unique style now."

The 28-year old Anna grew up in Glenwood, Illinois–just 28 miles outside of Chicago.

"I was a Cubs fan," laughed Anna as he looked around the Cardinals clubhouse. "It's a family thing. We all grew up Cubs fans, I loved watching Ryne Sandberg play. He was a great player, a great second baseman."

"Unbelievable," said Anna of now seeing some of the Cardinals greats that he watched battle Sandberg and the Cubs as a boy. "I mean, Willie McGee is unbelievable. Ozzie Smith, he was here before games started and when I just saw him, I was like 'wow, that's the greatest shortstop pretty much around' I talked to him a lot. He's an unbelievable teacher, he knows the game so well. A Hall of Famer."

Anna has now logged 51 innings this spring–playing at shortstop, second base, and third base.

"I feel like Mike (Matheny) believes in all of us," said Anna of the opportunity to compete for a spot with the Cardinals. "It feels good to know that. You just have to go out there and work hard–in a way, I really don't think about the competition stuff as much as whatever. We're all teammates. Whoever is doing good this spring is probably going to get the job, just like any other job."