



Story Continues for Harris

by Brian Stull

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(Jupiter, FL) As Lance Lynn left Sunday's game due to a strained hip flexor, Mitch Harris quickly got ready to take his place on the mound. Being ready to react at a moments notice is nothing new for Harris, who had to be ready on three different deployments as an [officer in the United States Navy](#).

"I honestly think there is," said Harris, a graduate of the Naval Academy, on the carry-over from his first career. "There's times when you've got to keep cool, especially when you're in charge of guys, which I think translates on the mound. You're the leader out there. You've got to maintain composure when there's tough situations. I feel like it's definitely helped—it doesn't exactly translate but in the military you've got a job and you gotta do it. It doesn't matter what kind of distractions or what kind of things you got going on. You've got to focus and get it done and I feel like that's the thing that's able to translate."

Harris inherited the bases loaded and after a grounder, walk, and double play the Cardinals escaped the inning with only one run scored.

"I thought Harris did a terrific job coming in a tough spot," said Mike Matheny. "Almost getting out of there with nothing."

After only being able to play catch on a naval carrier for a couple of years, Harris has finally built back up physically to where he wants to be and in Major League Camp with the Cardinals, not a visitor from the minor league side.

"Just the fact that I feel 100% right off the bat is something I'm very happy about," said Harris. "The last few Spring Trainings, it's been a learning process of how do I get back into pitching shape and how do I get things rolling. I really worked hard this off-season to make sure when I got here I was ready, not get here and try to get ready. That's paid off a lot. I feel really good and excited to see how things progress."

“His stuff is radically different than that day we brought him over,” pointed out Matheny, who admits part of that prior experience was to recognize the sacrifices made of not just Harris, but all the men and women in the Armed Forces. “Just to give him a chance to be over here—not knowing if that might be his only day in the sun. Little did we know he was going to improve to the level that he has to be one of the best in our organization. It’s been fun to watch him, it’s an exciting story.”

Harris appeared in eight games at Palm Beach to start last season, then threw in 33 games for Springfield before he pitched one inning to close out the year in Memphis.

Primarily used as a 7th-8th inning guy to get to the set-up man last year, Harris is also comfortable in long relief, throwing an inning, or making a spot start.