



# Garcia Healthy in Return

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March 7 2015 2:50 PM

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The last time Jaime Garcia started a game for the St. Louis Cardinals was June 21<sup>st</sup> of last year as thoracic outlet syndrome surgery put an early end to his season. But after the procedure and months of rehab, the lefty was back on the mound as the Cardinals faced Washington in Grapefruit League action on Saturday.

“Of course,” said Garcia of the start having some extra meaning. “Any time you take the mound no matter what—Spring Training game or regular season game there’s always excitement and that adrenaline going. After going through that thing that I went through, it was a big deal. So, it’s always excitement but at the same time, I felt good. I was able to control my emotions and got the first one out of the way. Now, just get ready for my next one.”

Garcia threw 41 pitches (20 strikes) in 1.1 innings pitched, allowing one run on three hits with a walk and strikeout.

“Yeah, I take this as got the first one out of the way,” said Garcia. “I went out there and did my best. Obviously, walked a guy and gave up a couple of hits here and there, but everything’s good.”

“I thought fastball command obviously wasn’t there, we have to tighten that up,” said Mike Matheny. “But it’s just amazing, when he is on the plate—you saw a swing and miss by Bryce Harper that the hitter didn’t touch and neither did Cruz. You don’t see that often. The movement’s there, I think the deception, the life. It’s just gotta be in the strike zone.”

Part of Garcia's effectiveness is the natural movement on his pitches—but today the tailing action away from right-handed hitters worked against him.

“Today it got away from me a little bit,” said Jaime, who noted the extra adrenaline and excitement of a first start could've played a part. “The movement was a little too much. It's just a matter of being able to control that and just gotta be able to a better job of that next time.”

“We saw the same thing with Marco yesterday,” agreed Matheny. “It's one of those things you'd like to get out of their system and hopefully, next time out he's right where he wants to be location wise. His stuff looked good. The off-speed, he didn't make many of them, but when he did it looked like they had the right break, right speed. It's good to see the arm's in good shape.”

The question of longevity will need more time to be fully answered, but for now, Garcia remains steadfast in his physical condition.

“I'm gonna pitch. I'm healthy. I'm going to go out there and compete and continue to do whatever it takes to be the best that I can and be ready for whenever I have to pitch.”