



Productive Outing for Gonzales

by Brian Stull

March 6 2015 5:02 PM

<http://www.stlbaseballweekly.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/3-6-15-Gonzales.mp3>

(Jupiter, FL) The St. Louis Cardinals improved to 2-0 in the young Grapefruit League season, beating Houston 5-2 on Friday. It was the second consecutive game the Cardinals blanked their opponent for the first six innings as Marco Gonzales got things started with two scoreless against the Astros.

“I thought it was productive,” assessed Gonzales. “I learned a lot of things—most important thing was the ball was feeling good out of my hands.”

Gonzales threw 30 pitches in his two innings of work and utilized his fastball, changeup, curveball, and his developing cutter.

“I used it for strike one and later in the counts just as kind of a ‘show-me’ pitch today,” shared Marco. “Didn’t get any strikeouts or big whiff pitches on it today, but the goal was to get contact early and work out as quick as I could.”

The cutter left a strong impression with Matheny after the manager caught a bullpen session for Gonzales earlier this week.

“You talk about focus and honing in your pitches and not wanting to bounce and hit your manager in the face,” said Marco. “You learned a lot real quick. He had some great feedback.”

“It all comes down to controlling the counts,” said Matheny of the three cutters thrown Friday. “That’s a better pitch when you’re making good four-seam fastballs on the inside part and then you pitch the cutter off of it. It’s not a pitch that he’s necessarily is going to go up there and try and steal strikes with. It’s a swing and put the ball in play

after they've already seen his best pitches. I thought the changeup was okay, the fastball was one that he just didn't have today but he still got his outs and I think that shows what kind of pitcher he is."

Normal for the first start of the year, Gonzales admitted to some nerves, which he tried to use to his advantage, and felt his fastball command was better in his second inning of work.

"You've gotta stay loose," said Gonzales. "I think the biggest thing is you can't put expectations on that you're going to strike everybody out. This is a developmental process and for me, I have a lot to learn. The first couple innings of Spring Training, it's not an end result for me. There's a lot to grow from it."

ROTATION UPDATE

—Jaime Garcia makes the start tomorrow for Cardinals in Viera, FL against the Washington Nationals. Lance Lynn will start on Sunday, followed by Michael Wacha on Monday. By design, John Lackey will make his first start later this spring—part of a mutual plan to allow for him to build his pitch count going into the season.