



Better Shape, Better Attitude for Choate

by Brian Stull

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<http://www.stlbaseballweekly.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/2-28-15-Randy-Choate.mp3>

(Jupiter, FL) While the change isn't nearly as dramatic as Yadier Molina losing 20lbs, St. Louis Cardinals pitcher Randy Choate also spent time with a trainer during the offseason getting himself into better shape.

"The first week I couldn't even bend over my stomach was so sore," laughed Choate. "After two weeks, I was looking forward to going in there each day. I got a good month and half of working out and I could definitely see my body trim up. It's not like all of a sudden I'm going to look like Holliday by any means, but it's definitely better shape for me."

Mike Matheny noticed the change in the left-hander as soon as he arrived in Florida.

"He shakes my hand and he's like 'hello Randal, you're looking fit'. Right when he said that, I was like 'yes', that just made the whole last month and a half so worth it that he would notice right off the get go."

Besides the benefit physically, the off-season regiment by Choate was also part of a rededication to the himself and the St. Louis Cardinals.

"Game 3 was definitely tough," began Choate, referencing the National League Championship Series last year. "I felt like I let my teammates down. It was just an error and it happens. But to watch those guys in Game 4, is really what I kind of focused on."

In particular, he focused on the response of his teammates when he threw the ball to Matt Adams to record a key out.

“You can really hear the guys being genuine in there and picking me up and yelling ‘Holler’ and knowing how tough Game 3 was for me.” That reaction in Game 4, especially that of his manager, has created a stronger feeling of family and commitment for Choate.

“One of the biggest things on that video...all those guys are yelling, but if you pause it right before I go in the dugout, you can see Mike’s face and Lilly’s right behind him,” continued Randy. “Lilly’s kind of got like a grin on his face. Motte’s right behind him on the left—he’s laughing. But you can really see it in Mike’s face—just how genuine he was. And I told him, I said no disrespect but that’s the first time that I guess I really felt like you had confidence in me and you were almost just like a super-proud dad.”

Choate is also excited about the prospect of returning to more of a left-handed specialist role in 2015. With a healthy Kevin Siegrist returning to form and the addition of Matt Belisle, and Carlos Villanueva in the mix, it could allow the Cardinals to again use Choate in that role. He held left-handed batters to a .093 average last season versus the .385 right-handers hit.

TERAN NEW COACH

—The Cardinals will have Kleininger Teran serve as their new assistant bullpen catcher this season, taking over for Roberto Espinoza who is now a coach for the team’s Gulf Coast League affiliate. In 2006, Teran began playing in the Venezuelan Summer League as a 16-year old for the Cardinals and eventually made it Quad Cities (A) five years later.

FANTASY CAMP OPENINGS

—Tickets for the remaining spots in the upcoming Busch Fantasy Camp go on sale tomorrow (March 5th). Hall of Famers Lou Brock, Whitey Herzog, Bruce Sutter and Cardinals Hall of Famer Willie McGee will each manager one of the four teams in the round-robin tournament which takes place at Busch Stadium June 3-6th.

Rick Ankiel, Andy Benes, Gary Bennett, Vince Coleman, Scott Cooper, Cal Eldred, Rick Horton, Jason Isringhausen, Brian Jordan, Dave LaPointe, Kyle McClellan, Ted Savage, Scott Terry, and Todd Worrell are also scheduled to be involved.