



Scruggs Adds to Versatility

by Brian Stull

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<http://www.stlbaseballweekly.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/1-17-15-Scruggs-on-OF-experience.mp3>

Over the last five seasons in the minors, Xavier Scruggs has hit at least 20 home runs. That kind of power, in particular from a right-handed bat, makes him an attractive prospect for the St. Louis Cardinals. But as Scruggs surveyed the landscape the of the organization, the first baseman spent much of his time playing Winter Ball in the outfield.

“I didn’t get to rob any home runs, I made some diving catches which was pretty cool,” smiled Scruggs. “I felt comfortable out there—I think I made maybe one error...it’s good to finally put into play something that I’ve been practicing for a long time. Whatever comes my way, whether it be outfield-infield, I’ll be ready.”

Listed at 6’1, 220lbs, Xavier also dropped a couple of pounds—wanting to add some quickness, and quickly answered “nothing hurts the power” with a laugh.

He also faced a lot of right-handed pitchers as he hit .264 with 5 home runs and drove in 19 runs in 28 games for the Gigantes del Cibao, who are still competing for the league championship.

Scruggs made his big league debut on September 4th and appeared in nine games for the Cardinals last season (3-15, 2 RBIs), but with Matt Adams again expected to receive the majority of at-bats from first base and the addition of Mark Reynolds as a right-handed compliment, playing time there at the big league level may be difficult.

“Wherever they need me at,” said Scruggs. “I’m excited to offer the versatility wherever I need to play.”

Besides playing baseball, he was also struck by the culture and lifestyle of the Dominican people.

“It’s great the way they go about life,” shared Scruggs. “They still live every day to the fullest, like every day is a party out there. It was good to experience to that. It’s tough, seeing a lot of the poor conditions out there. The whole thing with Oscar was real tough. So just seeing some of those things was tough—but at the same time, there were so many positives out there.”

Scruggs was teammates with Taveras the last few seasons as the two were promoted through the Cardinals minor league system and wrote a very [eloquent tribute](#) after the death of his friend in October.

“Everybody out there knew that me and Oscar were close—that we came up playing together, so everybody was real good once that happened. Everybody was real good to me. It’s crazy because it affected the whole country out there. You just see the effect that it had out there—moments of silence in every game that we played after that. Every team, every stadium. It was cool to see how much they cared about Oscar as a person and as a player.”

Like most of his teammates, Scruggs will head down early for Spring Training with a planned arrival over a week before the February 24th report date.