



"You Don't Want to do This"--Walden

by Brian Stull

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<http://www.stlbaseballweekly.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/2-21-15-Jordan-Walden-1-on-1.mp3>

St. Louis Cardinals reliever Jordan Walden has one of the more unique deliveries in all of baseball, literally leaving his feet in a lunge forward as he throws the ball home. He developed the movement after he grew four inches the summer before his sophomore year in high school.

"I just tried to do something that was going to give me more power on the ball," explained Walden, who saw his velocity surge from 88 to 98mph. "What I came up with was to try and use my legs more. By that, I guess I developed a hop. I didn't know anything of it—it was just me being me. Over time, people were like 'what are you doing?' and I'm like, I don't know. I think it's normal, but it's different."

The five year veteran still teaches pitching lessons during the off-season and while flattered by kids who try to emulate his style, he discourages the practice.

"Everybody tries to mimic me, but you don't want to this," cautions Walden, who at 250lbs and 27-years old has felt the effects as he matures in his career. "I got away with it. Eventually, your body's going to take a toll on you from jumping."

"I'm a big guy. A big guy jumping up and landing everything on my front hip—it's something I have to work on. I spend a lot of time on hip work. I have to make sure I take care of my hip because I have a lot of weight coming down on my front hip. Yeah, I would tell people try not to do it."

As part of his maintenance, the right-hander has a chiropractor that regularly works on him plus a specific workout routine.

“It’s all kind of band work,” said Walden. “Just a lot of little stuff to take care of the hip and my hammies, my legs in general. I’ve had a hammy problem before and it’s hard the way I pitch, if I don’t have my hammy, I’m not worth anything out there. I really have to focus hard on that. I’m constantly learning every year, just always learning how to take care of my body better and what it takes to last the whole season.”

After appearing in a career high 62 games as an All-Star in 2011, Walden has pitched in 153 games combined over the last three seasons. During that time, he’s struck out 164 batters and walking 59 in 136 innings pitched.