



Choate Bleeding Blue

by Brian Stull

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<http://www.stlbaseballweekly.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/4-16-15-Choate.mp3>

A few days ago, the St. Louis Blues wore baseball themed jerseys during their warm-up skate as both a fundraiser and sign of support for the St. Louis Cardinals kicking off the 2015 season. Today as the puck will drop in the first playoff game for the Blues, the favor was returned by Randy Choate, who had a Vladimir Tarasenko jersey hanging in front of his locker.

“It was opening day here when I had signed” recalled Choate of arriving with his wife in St. Louis in January of 2013. They bought tickets for the Blues game that night and in the course of conversation with fans learned about Tarasenko.

“They were talking about Tarasenko, that he’s the new guy and was skating faster than anybody else,” said Choate. “I was like, ‘oh, I’m the new guy’ and went down to try and find one at the store and went home and ordered it online just because he was the new guy, and I was the new guy to St. Louis at that time. So, I’ve had it ever since that first season.”

“He ended up being a really good player, obviously,” added Choate. “Siegrist was telling me all the time, especially this year, he was unbelievable this year, his scoring.”

Choate also went online to find a pair of matching blue and yellow Reeboks with the Blues logo on the back.

“They gotta match the jersey I’m wearing,” laughed the left-hander. “I have some from one year I went to Game 7 of a Rangers game. We were in New York and happened to run into that and I’ve got some Canadiens shoes, so I knew where to get those at Reebok.”

Similar to last year, a number of Cardinals are planning to attend tonight's playoff game.

"We were in Yadi's box and he ended up scoring goal," said Choate of watching Tarasenko in the playoffs. "I was going nuts, just being silly. He's just kind of a different player. I liked that it was 91, it's just a weird number and that's just kind of how it came to be."

Besides wearing the sweater, Randy is hoping to get it signed by Tarasenko.

"I was in St. Louis and that's kind of when I started following hockey, so I'm a Blues fan," said Choate. "Gotta get them out of this first round and watch them dominate."

A diehard Sabres fan, Kevin Siegrist grew up in Buffalo before moving to Florida in high school and likes the Blues chances.

"I got the Blues in six," said Siegrist of the first-round matchup against Minnesota. "And then the Rangers, so I'm going to have to say the Rangers against the Blues for the Stanley Cup."

"There's teams that are hot right now—I could see like Montreal, I could actually see the Islanders in it too. As far as the West, you always have the Blues and the Blackhawks. I like the Ducks too. I actually like how the Jets play—I'm a big fan of the Jets. Other than that, it's pretty tight. I don't see anyone that's too far ahead as far as just a complete, dominant team. I feel like anyone has a good chance of winning."

photo credit: Luke Thompson, FS Midwest