Walks hampering Garrett's evolution in bigs
Control issues limiting lefty's success while other young Reds arms improve
By Mark Sheldon / MLB.com | @m_sheldon | September 14th, 2017 + 5 COMMENTS

The Reds have used the closing weeks of 2017 to identify young starters that can be penciled in for next year's rotation. Luis Castillo is definitely marked down, while Sal Romano has shown he might have turned the corner.

Robert Stephenson took his lumps in St. Louis on Tuesday, but he had been solid for a month, and Tyler Mahle has impressed quickly. The name that's been missing from the group of young arms making strides is Amir Garrett. In a 5-2 loss to the Cardinals on Thursday at Busch Stadium, Garrett allowed four earned runs, three hits and five walks over just four-plus innings. Three of those walks came around to score.

"They hurt, bad," Garrett said. "Walks will kill you. They turn into runs, every time. I thought I was doing well, but the walks haunt you. It's something that can't happen."

For two-plus innings, Garrett largely kept the Cardinals' lineup in check. His free pass issues began with two outs in the third after striking out four in a row. Garrett worked Tommy Pham to an 0-2 count before throwing four balls, then Paul DeJong walked. The duo executed a double steal, and Jose Martinez drove them both in with a single for a 2-1 Cardinals lead.

In the fifth, Garrett didn't retire a batter. Matt Carpenter walked on five pitches before Pham hit a two-run homer. DeJong's second walk brought the outing to an end.

"You see guys that go up and down in every level, that's because in large part, you're trying to find that 'it' factor that gets you to be able to play the game the same way that you would play it at any other place," Reds manager Bryan Price told reporters. "But this just isn't any other place. This is where these guys want to be. This is where they want to stay."

Garrett began the season in the Majors, but was sent down to Triple-A Louisville following a June 20 loss at Tampa Bay. Going back to that first big league stint, the Reds have lost each of Garrett's past eight starts. He's 0-6 with an 11.20 ERA during that span; his last MLB victory was May 6.

"For two or three years, he's been the best pitcher in our system," Price said. "I think sometimes it's getting over the hump."

"It takes a little while to get their footing up here, and what you don't want to do is get to a point where you don't appreciate what you see in front of you even if it's not the finished product and continue to work with it until it becomes the finished product."

Garrett had a 1.83 ERA over his first three starts, but he hasn't been able to maintain that pace throughout the season. At Triple-A Louisville, he had a 5.72 ERA in 14 starts, though he allowed only 24 walks compared to 61 strikeouts over 67 2/3 innings.

In the big leagues, Garrett has allowed 36 walks in 67 1/3 innings.

"It's something I've got to deal with and get past it," Garrett said. "It's been a long season. I don't anticipate walks being a problem next year or going forward."

Normally, callups into the rotation are for merit, but the Reds wanted to see if Garrett could take his streamlined mechanics and increased velocity and make progress in the big leagues.

"He's trying to get to a point where his arm can work for him consistently and get to the right spot so he can repeat good pitches," Price told reporters. "He's a work in progress."
Garrett, Reds drop rubber match in St. Louis
By Joe Harris and Jenifer Langosch / MLB.com | September 14th, 2017 + 497 COMMENTS

ST. LOUIS -- Cautioned by their manager not to get caught looking ahead to a huge weekend series at Wrigley Field, the Cardinals took care of the task at hand on Thursday by securing a series victory over the Reds with a 5-2 win at Busch Stadium. Luke Weaver shined over six innings, while Jose Martinez and Tommy Pham keyed the offense.

With their 11th win in 14 games, the Cardinals kept pace in the National League Central. The Cubs, who beat the Mets later Thursday evening, hold a three-game lead over both the Cards and Brewers in that race. St. Louis has pulled to within 2 1/2 games of the Rockies for the second NL Wild Card spot.

"A lot of guys in the clubhouse continued to fight and tried to better themselves every day to get us in that position," Pham said. "But we have to take it one series at a time because this ballclub over here, they have one of the best lineups in baseball top to bottom."

Reds starter Amir Garrett, who shut out the Cardinals over six scoreless innings the first week of the season, couldn't replicate that success on Thursday. Martinez, who has reached base safely in 15 consecutive games, delivered a two-out, two-run single to put St. Louis ahead in the third.

"It's hard to come through in those big situations, against big league pitchers and a guy who has thrown the ball very well," Cardinals manager Mike Matheny said. "And for Jose to come through with that, we needed somebody to come through with a shot for us and give us the big hit. That turns the whole game around."

Pham then secured his spot in rare 20-20 Cardinals company by padding the lead with a two-run blast in the fifth.

Moments That Matter

Moving on up: Garrett appeared to be cruising through the third, but things stalled when he issued a pair of two-out walks. But the Cardinals didn't just take the free bases. They swiped extra ones, too. Pham stole second and then completed a double-steal with Paul DeJong that moved both players into scoring position.

"I knew they had a guy on base that was really fast," Garrett said. "I don't think I mixed in the slide step really one time like I normally do. That's why I said the game sped up on me. Normally I'm pretty quick to the plate, but I didn't make the adjustment when he was on. He's fast and he took advantage of me not slide stepping."

Walks hampering Garrett's evolution in bigs

From there, both Pham and DeJong were able to hustle home when Martinez followed with a two-run single.

"That was huge for us, because at that time in the game, Amir was throwing great," Pham said. "It was looking like it was going to be one of those hard-fought games for us. And for us to pull that double-steal off, it led to two runs right there. That was huge. That shouldn't get overlooked."

Relay race: The Cardinals executed a perfect relay to prevent the Reds from narrowing the deficit to two in the seventh inning. Joey Votto, who opened the inning with a walk off reliever Tyler Lyons, attempted to score from first when Adam Duvall drove a double into the left-center-field gap. But center fielder Harrison Bader cut the ball off and fired it into shortstop DeJong, who made a perfect throw home to catcher Yadier Molina. Molina applied the tag on Votto's foot to end the inning.

"Great relay all the way around," Matheny said. "You had to have everything go perfect in order to get him at the plate right there, so I understand why they're trying to push the envelope. But that could have been one of those momentum shifters."

Moments That Matter

Moving on up: Garrett appeared to be cruising through the third, but things stalled when he issued a pair of two-out walks. But the Cardinals didn't just take the free bases. They swiped extra ones, too. Pham stole second and then completed a double-steal with Paul DeJong that moved both players into scoring position.

"I knew they had a guy on base that was really fast," Garrett said. "I don't think I mixed in the slide step really one time like I normally do. That's why I said the game sped up on me. Normally I'm pretty quick to the plate, but I didn't make the adjustment when he was on. He's fast and he took advantage of me not slide stepping."

Walks hampering Garrett's evolution in bigs

From there, both Pham and DeJong were able to hustle home when Martinez followed with a two-run single.

"That was huge for us, because at that time in the game, Amir was throwing great," Pham said. "It was looking like it was going to be one of those hard-fought games for us. And for us to pull that double-steal off, it led to two runs right there. That was huge. That shouldn't get overlooked."

Relay race: The Cardinals executed a perfect relay to prevent the Reds from narrowing the deficit to two in the seventh inning. Joey Votto, who opened the inning with a walk off reliever Tyler Lyons, attempted to score from first when Adam Duvall drove a double into the left-center-field gap. But center fielder Harrison Bader cut the ball off and fired it into shortstop DeJong, who made a perfect throw home to catcher Yadier Molina. Molina applied the tag on Votto's foot to end the inning.

"Great relay all the way around," Matheny said. "You had to have everything go perfect in order to get him at the plate right there, so I understand why they're trying to push the envelope. But that could have been one of those momentum shifters."
"I know it's a big deal, but I try to downplay it in my mind and think of it was another game. It doesn't change my mentality when I go out there. I want to stay aggressive and be strong and put up a great performance. Anything less than trying to be perfect is not good in my head, so I want to do the best that I can." -- Weaver, on pitching in a pennant race

"You see guys that go up and down in every level, that's because in large part, you're trying to find that 'it' factor that gets you to be able to play the game the same way that you would play it at any other place. But this just isn't any other place. This is where these guys want to be. This is where they want to stay. They want to be part of a winner. So there's way more on the line. There's more pressure to perform here because everyone wants to stay." -- Price, on the transition from the Minors to the Majors

Pham is the sixth player in Cardinals history to hit 20 homers and steal 20 bases in a season, joining Lou Brock, Ray Lankford, Brian Jordan, Fernando Tatis and Reggie Sanders. Lankford accomplished the feat five times. Sanders was the most recent Cardinal to hit that mark, doing so in 2004.

WHAT'S NEXT

Reds: Cincinnati opens its final homestand of the season with a three-game series against the Pirates starting Friday at 7:10 p.m. ET at Great American Ball Park. Homer Bailey will make his 21st career start against Pittsburgh, against whom he has an 11-9 record with a 3.48 ERA. Chad Kuhl will start for the Pirates.

Cardinals: St. Louis' nine-game road trip will open with a critical three-game series against the Cubs. First pitch from Wrigley Field on Friday is scheduled for 1:20 p.m. CT. Carlos Martinez, who is 4-3 with a 4.08 ERA against the Cubs in his career, will start against former teammate John Lackey.

Joe Harris is a contributor for MLB.com based in St. Louis and covered the Reds on Thursday.

Jenifer Langosch has covered the Cardinals for MLB.com since 2012, and previously covered the Pirates from 2007-11. Follow her on Twitter, and Facebook.

This story was not subject to the approval of Major League Baseball or its clubs.

Bailey looks to bounce back from shaky outing
By Adam Berry / MLB.com | September 14th, 2017 + 0 COMMENTS

The Pirates often preach that prospect development is not a linear process. For proof, look at the growth of right-hander Chad Kuhl heading into Friday's series opener against the Reds at Great American Ball Park.

Kuhl enjoyed a solid rookie season in 2016, posting a 4.20 ERA in 14 starts. That was enough to earn a spot in the Pirates' Opening Day rotation this year, but he struggled out of the gate. Fifteen starts into the season, Kuhl had a 5.58 ERA. But the 25-year-old is still learning, adding to his arsenal and making adjustments. Those changes appear to be paying off, as he has recorded a 2.99 ERA over his last 14 starts.

"This isn't a done deal. This doesn't happen in one year," Pirates pitching coach Ray Searage said. "They're going to the best university in the world to learn baseball. That's the big leagues. As they go, they've got to absorb a little bit more, take those experiences they got there and use that to their advantage, move on and get better. ... He's come so far."

Kuhl will line up against Reds right-hander Homer Bailey, who was handed his eighth loss in 15 starts his last time out, allowing five runs on six hits against the Mets. He pitched well against the Pirates on Aug. 1, however, holding them to one run on four hits over six innings at PNC Park.

Bailey's season high of 6 2/3 innings came on July 9 at Arizona. In his past two starts, he's taken strong outings into the seventh inning only to see things go off of the rails. On Sept. 4 vs. the Brewers, he took a shutout into the seventh inning and didn't retire a batter, as he allowed a home run and two singles en route to a four-run frame. Against the Mets on Saturday, Bailey hit his first batter and walked another in the seventh before a three-run rally led to a 6-1 loss.

"It hasn't been working out there in the seventh. I've got to figure out a way to do it," Bailey said.

Three things to know about this game
• This will be Kuhl's second career start against the Reds and his first appearance at Great American Ball Park. He pitched seven scoreless innings and struck out six against Cincinnati on Aug. 3 at PNC Park.

• Nobody has faced Bailey more than Andrew McCutchen, and the matchup has historically worked out well for the Pirates' center fielder. Pittsburgh's franchise player has a career .313/.450/.396 slash line in 60 plate appearances against Bailey, but he has never hit a home run off the Reds' right-hander.

• Opponents have hit 4-for-42 (.095) with 21 strikeouts against Kuhl's slider since the beginning of August. That's the fourth-lowest batting average for any pitcher who has ended at least 30 at-bats with sliders during that time.

Adam Berry has covered the Pirates for MLB.com since 2015. Follow him on Twitter and Facebook and read his blog. This story was not subject to the approval of Major League Baseball or its clubs.

Once a strike-thrower, Amir Garrett is now battling his command

Zach Buchanan, zbuchanan@enquirer.com Published 6:03 p.m. ET Sept. 14, 2017 | Updated 6:16 p.m. ET Sept. 14, 2017

ST. LOUIS – To a young pitcher, the damage of walks often can be somewhat theoretical. A pitcher will struggle with command, but may escape a jam or two despite giving away free passes. The impact of those walks may not be felt until their leash is tugged in fifth or sixth, their night ending prematurely because of a high pitch count.

Thursday against the St. Louis Cardinals, left-hander Amir Garrett did not have to carefully dissect his outing to see how his command issues cost him. He walked five batters in four innings, and three of those batters wound up scoring immediately.

Not-so-coincidentally, the Cincinnati Reds lost by three, falling 5-2 at Busch Stadium. Garrett felt the sting.

“Yeah, they hurt,” Garrett said. “Bad. Walks will kill you. They turn into runs every time.”

Garrett’s understanding of the banal evil of walks is not uncommon among rookie pitchers, on this team or any other. No developing pitcher ever is told to not worry about throwing strikes. The challenge is always making the body do what the mind suggests.

The 25-year-old is not alone among Reds pitchers in struggling with the issue. Just about every young Cincinnati starter – including breakout rookie Luis Castillo – has seen his walk rate rise upon reaching the major leagues this year. Garrett walked 8.3 percent of his batters over his minor-league career, but has walked 11.8 percent of them in the majors.

“That’s not me,” Garrett said. “You can go back and check the books – I don’t walk people. That’s just something I’ve got to deal with and get past it. It’s been a long season. I don’t anticipate walks being a problem next year or going forward.”

Thursday, the walks were a symptom of general command issues. Garrett got behind to seven of his first 10 hitters but allowed just two baserunners while striking out six, often after fighting to get back in the count. He couldn’t stave off fate forever.

Back-to-back walks of Tommy Pham and Paul DeJong with two outs in the third ended a streak of six straight batters retired. Garrett then got behind Jose Martinez, ultimately surrendering a two-run single on a 3-2 fastball.

A leadoff walk in the fifth turned into another run when Pham immediately followed it with a home run to right. Garrett walked the next batter and was pulled from the game. He struck out seven and allowed just three hits, but his line score left no doubt about where his outing went awry.

“There’s nobody here that’s not aware of the importance of commanding the strike zone,” Reds manager Bryan Price said. “Everyone’s working on that challenge of commanding the strike zone. So it’s not because it’s lack of awareness.”

In an effort to throw more strikes, Garrett has made a delivery change since being sent to the minors earlier in the season. He pitches more from the stretch, and is more deliberate in his delivery. The rewards of that change were hard to find Thursday, but the drawbacks to it were not.

Garrett generally has been good at controlling the run game. Entering Thursday, runners had tested him only five times in 90 opportunities. They’d successfully stolen a base just once. On top of that, he’s been throwing to catcher Tucker Barnhart, who is one of the best at nabbing would-be stealers in the majors this year.
Thursday, however, the Cardinals swiped three bags off Garrett, all in the third inning. Most glaringly, Pham and DeJong executed a double steal without a throw, taking off before Garrett even lifted his foot to begin his delivery. It was Pham’s 21st steal, but it was just the first for DeJong.

Early in the year, Garrett had all that figured out. He was pitching well and repeating his mechanics, while also controlling the run game. Now he’s searching again for that equilibrium.

“I don’t know the answer,” Barnhart said, “but you have to find a happy medium.”

Cincinnati Reds recap: Walks kill Amir Garrett vs. St. Louis Cardinals
Zach Buchanan, zbuchanan@enquirer.com Published 4:42 p.m. ET Sept. 14, 2017

ST. LOUIS – The Cincinnati Reds dropped the series finale and the series to the St. Louis Cardinals, falling 5-2 on Thursday at Busch Stadium. Here are the main storylines.

Box score: Cardinals 5, Reds 2

Amir Garrett started hot and then faded. Garrett wasn’t throwing 94 mph like he did his first start back from the minor leagues, but he was plenty sharp in the early innings Thursday. He struck out six of his first 10 batters, working around a walk and a hit in the first.

But then his command evaporated. He issued consecutive two-out walks in the third to Tommy Pham and Paul DeJong, who then executed a double steal behind him. A Jose Martinez single scored both, putting the Reds down 2-1. He rebounded for a scoreless fourth marred only by a throwing error from shortstop Zack Cozart.

The command issues returned in the fifth. Matt Carpenter drew a leadoff walk — his second of the game and seventh of the series — and Pham homered on a fly hit to right that didn’t stop carrying. Another walk to DeJong ended Garrett’s outing.

He was charged for four runs in four innings, although he allowed only three hits. He walked five — three of which wound up scoring — and struck out seven.

Luke Weaver shut down the Reds. If the Cardinals make the playoffs, the former first-round draft pick will deserve a lot of credit. The 24-year-old right-hander entered the game with a 2.16 ERA in nine outings (six starts), and then held the Reds to two hits and no runs over six innings. His ERA now stands at 1.89.

The Reds tallied just one run off him, and it wasn’t even earned. Scott Schebler ambushed a hanging 2-0 change-up for a one-out double in the second, took third on a ground out and then scored when DeJong made an error on a ground ball. Eugenio Suarez recorded the only other hit off Weaver in the fourth.

The right-hander walked none and struck out six.

A bad send cost the Reds a chance to get back in the game. The Reds trailed 4-1 when Joey Votto drew a leadoff walk in the seventh inning, although their chances dimmed when both Suarez and Schebler followed it with strikeouts. But then Adam Duvall shot a ball over the head of Pham in left. The ball caromed off the wall toward center fielder Harrison Bader.

As Votto steamed toward third, Reds third-base coach Billy Hatcher had a choice. Heading his way was the team’s slowest runner, according to Statcast data. The Reds needed not one but three runs to tie the game, and the cost if Votto was thrown out at home would be the end of the inning and the snuffing of a key scoring opportunity.

Still, Hatcher gave Votto a late wave home. The Reds first baseman was out by a foot or two, with no real drama, and threw his helmet in frustration as he walked back to the dugout.

Notes: Shackelford finding a groove in bullpen
Zach Buchanan, zbuchanan@enquirer.com Published 12:38 p.m. ET Sept. 14, 2017

The second the stats of his scoreless streak were read back to him, Kevin Shackelford couldn’t help but pay homage to one of baseball’s more prevalent superstitions.

“This is always the jinx moment,” said the Cincinnati Reds rookie right-hander.
Baseball jinxes are baloney, but the strong run the 28-year-old Shackelford is on is for real. In his last eight appearances, spanning eight innings, he’s been a lockdown reliever. He hasn’t allowed a run or a walk, and batters are hitting just .185 against him. He has nine strikeouts in that span, has excelled at producing grounders and has thrown 70 percent of his pitches for strikes.

The man in the manager’s office, who spoke Wednesday about needing some certainty in next year’s bullpen, has noticed.

“He’s a guy that I’d like to see a lot more of the rest of the month,” Bryan Price said. “I think he could really make a real push to be a guy who could make our club out of camp.”

That Shackelford would find success in the big-league bullpen isn’t a complete surprise given his minor-league track record. He was one of the best relievers in the International League this year, compiling a 1.53 ERA and striking out nearly 12 batters per nine innings over 47 innings of work with Triple-A Louisville.

But adapting to the majors didn’t go smoothly at first. Shackelford had some solid outings, but also got blitzed in a few, as rookie pitchers are wont to do. Through his first 11 appearances, he had an 8.04 ERA.

Shackelford doesn’t cop to ever feeling overwhelmed by the level, but said there was one big adjustment he had to make. In the minor leagues, they used different balls. When your success depends on manipulating it, those differences stand out.

“The biggest thing was – it sounds stupid, but – trying to get used to the baseball,” he said. “Either way you look at it, it is different. It’s slicker. It’s not even the seams. It’s the fact that they put baby powder on it. It’s ridiculous.”

Another key has been leaning harder on his slider, which has hard downward movement that allows him to throw it to both left-handed and right-handed hitters. He threw it 37 percent of the time before his scoreless streak, and has thrown it 47 percent of the time since. Thirty percent of his sliders generate a swing and miss.

“I think he’s got one of the better sliders on our ball club,” Price said. “He’s got a really good, hard breaking pitch. He can match that up against a right-handed and left-handed lineup, and he’s taken advantage of the great opportunity that he created through his performance.”

More rest planned for Gennett

Wednesday, Reds second baseman Scooter Gennett did nothing but get treatment on the left hand he injured during Tuesday’s game. Price said the infielder might be able to do a bit more Thursday, but that he’d like to avoid using Gennett if he can.

BAR: Cincinnati Reds on record homer pace, but so is the rest of Major League Baseball
C. Trent Rosecrans, crosecrans@enquirer.com Published 10:38 a.m. ET Sept. 14, 2017

The Blog Above Replacement a daily look at the Reds, their minor leagues and whatever else is on the mind of Enquirer Reds beat writers, C. Trent Rosecrans and Zach Buchanan. You can follow them on Twitter (@ctrent and @ZachENQ), Facebook (C. Trent Rosecrans and Zach Buchanan) and Instagram (ENQReds).

On Tuesday, Zack Cozart hit his 20th home run of the season, giving the Reds six players with 20 home runs this season, the most they’ve ever had.

The 2017 Reds are just the 25th team in baseball history to have six players with 20 homer in a season.

But there’s a catch — they’re the third team to do it this year (Cubs, Orioles) and there are a total of 100 players with 20 homers this season heading into Thursday’s games.

In fact, the league average for homers for a player with 600 plate appearances is 20. So 20 homers is just the average for full-time players.

As of Thursday morning, there have been a total of 5,497 home runs hit this season — an average of 1.27 home runs per team per game.

The record since the 1998 expansion to 30 teams is 5,693 home runs, an average of 1.17 per team per game (thanks to the incomparable Dayn Perry at CBSSports.com for some of the leg work here, you should read Dayn all the time).

Yes, it’s a good season for Reds hitters, but it’s a good season for all hitters. With half a month to go, there have been more home runs hit this season than there have been in all but three seasons in MLB history. Last year 5,610 home runs were hit and in 1999 there were 5,528 hit — a number that should be surpassed tonight.
On the current pace, there should be 6,167 home runs hit this season — the first time in history 6,000 homers will have been hit.

Back to the Reds, at this point, it’d be surprising if they didn’t have five players with 25 or more homers, with Scooter Gennett and Eugenio Suarez sitting at 24. On the other end of the spectrum, after Cozart, the Reds player with the most homers is Patrick Kivlehan, with eight.

The Reds have a total of 200 home runs, the seventh time in team history they've hit 200 homers in a season. The team record is 222 hit in 2005. The Reds hit 221 in 1956 in 154 games. At this pace, the Reds will finish will tie the 2005 record with 222.

ICYMI

- Tyler Mahle went five innings last night, despite struggling early.
- The Reds will likely need to add outside help for the bullpen heading into 2018.
- Rookie Davis has added a splitter.

#HeyBartender

Friday is mailbag day, and I’ll be handling it this week. Feel free to email me, Tweet at me with #HeyBARtender or message on Facebook your questions, Reds or otherwise.

The Rotation

1. From The Onion: “Mr. Red Blames Years Of Chewing Tobacco For Massive Tumor”

2. So Kirby Smart can trust his team to a true freshman, but can’t trust that true freshman enough to speak to the media. (If I knew how to do an eye roll emoji in our publishing program, I’d do it here.) But ESPN.com’s Mark Schlabach writes a really good feature on UGA freshman quarterback Jake Fromm without talking to Fromm himself, because Schlabach is really, really good.

3. Honestly, not sure I feel about the level of navel-gazing in this story about wearing a Colin Kaepernick jersey to an NFL game, but it’s kind of interesting. Maybe.

4. The Enquirer’s Terry DeMio and Dan Horn were on WBUR’s On Point to talk about our “7 Days of Heroin” report.

5. R.I.P. Grant Hart. [StarTribune]

**ASSOCIATED PRESS**

**Rookie Luke Weaver shines again, Cardinals top Reds**

ST. LOUIS -- Luke Weaver and Tommy Pham were teammates with Triple-A Memphis to open the 2017 season. Now they're helping the St. Louis Cardinals make a push toward the playoffs.

Weaver threw six innings of two-hit ball, Pham drove in two runs and stole two bases, and the Cardinals beat the Cincinnati Reds 5-2 on Thursday.

"I felt great," Weaver said. "It's a close race we're in and we just needed the big win, and I'm just happy to contribute."

The Cardinals, who are chasing the first-place Cubs in the NL Central and the Rockies in the wild-card standings, have won five of their last six and nine of 12.

Weaver (6-1), a rookie right-hander, allowed one unearned run, struck out six and didn't walk a batter.

"Outstanding job from Luke," Cardinals manager Mike Matheny said. "He's done a real nice job of taking advantage of the opportunity."

Weaver was 3-0 with a 1.71 ERA in four appearances, including three starts, in June. He's now 3-0 with a 0.99 ERA in three starts this month.

"That guy, that bulldog, that everything he was in Memphis is exactly what he is up here and what he's going to be moving forward," Cardinals outfielder Harrison Bader said. "He's found himself and he's just rolling with it and it's really fun to watch."
Rookie left-hander Amir Garrett (3-8) was charged with four runs in four innings. He struck out seven and walked five.

"The walks hurt a bit today," Reds manager Bryan Price said. "I thought after the first hitter of the game, (Matt) Carpenter, it looked like he got on a nice roll. It ended up being a catalyst to their scoring was three of the walks that came ahead of a two-run single and home run."

The Reds took a 1-0 lead in the second when Scott Schebler hit a double and scored with two outs when shortstop Paul DeJong mishandled Phillip Ervin's grounder.

Garrett struck out four consecutive batters before running into trouble with back-to-back, full-count walks with two outs in the third.

After a stolen base by Pham and a double steal by Pham and DeJong, Jose Martinez came through with a full-count, two-run single to left to put St. Louis ahead.

"We needed somebody to put that shot in the arm for us and to give us that big hit," Matheny said.

Pham hit a two-run homer in the fifth, his 20th of the season. With 21 stolen bases, he became the first Cardinals player to record a 20/20 season since Reggie Sanders in 2004.

"With everything I've gone through this year, to go out and have a 20/20 season is a proud moment," Pham said.

The Cardinals cut down Joey Votto at home plate to end the Reds' seventh. Following Adam Duvall's double off the left field wall, DeJong took a relay toss from Harrison Bader and threw home to Yadier Molina, preserving the Cardinals' three-run lead.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Cardinals: RHP Adam Wainwright (right elbow) threw a bullpen session before Thursday's game.

Reds: 2B Scooter Gennett, who left Tuesday's game with left hand inflammation, was not in the lineup for the second straight day and is considered day to day.

UP NEXT

Reds: RHP Homer Bailey (4-8, 7.26) starts off a three-game home series against the Pirates and RHP Chad Kuhl (7-10, 4.21). Bailey is 0-1 with a 6.00 ERA in two September starts.

Cardinals: RHP Carlos Martinez (11-10, 3.33) opens a three-game series against the Cubs in Chicago opposite RHP John Lackey (11-11, 4.65). Martinez is 1-1 with a 3.19 ERA in four career starts at Wrigley Field.

Reds' Amir Garrett can't match Cardinals' Luke Weaver in rookie pitchers clash

Reds' Amir Garrett can't match Cardinals' Luke Weaver in rookie pitchers clash

Associated Press
5:06 PM, Sep 14, 2017
5:57 PM, Sep 14, 2017

ST. LOUIS - Amir Garrett couldn't match up to Luke Weaver in a clash of rookie pitchers Thursday afternoon.

Garrett (3-8) was charged with four runs in four innings in losing to the Cardinals 5-2.

Weaver (6-1) threw six innings of two-hit ball, allowed one unearned run, struck out six and didn't walk a batter.

Weaver has boosted a Cardinals staff hurt by injuries and helped reignite their playoff hopes. Weaver was 3-0 with a 1.71 ERA in four appearances, including three starts, in June. He's now 3-0 with a 0.99 ERA through his first three starts in September.

The Cardinals, who are chasing the first-place Cubs in the National League Central and the Rockies in the wild-card standings, have won five of their last six and nine of 12.

Tommy Pham drove in two runs and stole two bases for St. Louis.

Scott Schebler had a double and a triple for the Reds, drove in a run and scored a run.

The Reds took a 1-0 lead in the second when Schebler doubled and shortstop Paul DeJong mishandled Phillip Ervin's grounder.
Garrett struck out four consecutive batters before running into trouble with back-to-back, full-count walks with two outs in the third.

After a stolen base by Pham and a double steal by Pham and Paul DeJong, Jose Martinez came through with a full-count, two-run single to left to put St. Louis ahead.

Pham hit a two-run homer in the fifth, his 20th of the season. With 21 stolen bases, he became the first Cardinal to record a 20/20 season since Reggie Sanders in 2004.

The Cardinals cut down Joey Votto at home plate to end the Reds' seventh, following Adam Duvall's double off the left field fence. DeJong took a relay toss from Harrison Bader and threw home to Yadier Molina, preserving the Cardinals' three-run lead.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Cardinals: RHP Adam Wainwright (right elbow) threw a bullpen session before Thursday's game.

Reds: 2B Scooter Gennett, who left Tuesday's game with left hand inflammation, was not in the lineup for the second straight day and is considered day to day.

UP NEXT

Reds: RHP Homer Bailey (4-8, 7.26) starts off a three-game home series against the Pirates and RHP Chad Kuhl (7-10, 4.21). Bailey is 0-1 with a 6.00 ERA in two September starts.

Cardinals: RHP Carlos Martinez (11-10, 3.33) opens a three-game series against the Cubs in Chicago opposite RHP John Lackey (11-11, 4.65). Martinez is 1-1 with a 3.19 ERA in four career starts at Wrigley Field.

TRANSACTIONS

09/14/17 RHP Mike Fiers roster status changed by Houston Astros.

Los Angeles Dodgers sent RHP Fabio Castillo outright to Oklahoma City Dodgers.
San Francisco Giants claimed SS Engelb Vielma off waivers from Minnesota Twins.
Kansas City Royals sent LHP Onelki Garcia outright to Omaha Storm Chasers.
Cleveland Indians activated LHP Andrew Miller from the 10-day disabled list.
Seattle Mariners activated RHP Felix Hernandez from the 10-day disabled list.
San Francisco Giants transferred 1B Michael Morse from the 10-day disabled list to the 60-day disabled list. Concussion.
Boston Red Sox activated LHP David Price from the 10-day disabled list.