



DILSON HERRERA

By Logan Jones • The hardest curveballs for a professional baseball player to hit are often the ones they see outside the batter's box. Midseason and offseason trades headline the excitement of the game from a fan's perspective, but it is life altering for those involved.

Since 2015, the Cincinnati Reds have traded away three of its biggest names associated with the organization: Johnny Cueto, Aroldis Chapman, and Jay Bruce. In a matter of two seasons, the franchise acquired an influx of young talent for these individuals, and now the Louisville Bats are getting to see the outcome of these moves.

The first major trade of the 2015 season took place when the Reds sent Johnny Cueto to the Kansas City Royals for a minor league trio that featured current Bats hurler, Cody Reed. A mere five days before the trade deadline, Reed was uprooted from his life in Northwest Arkansas and placed into the unfamiliar Pensacola, Florida to join his new Double-A team. In 2016, Reed was able

to work his way up to the Bats and was ultimately promoted to Cincinnati, indicating that he was able to flourish in new cities with new teams.

After the annual Winter Meetings in December of 2015, the Reds worked out another deal, this time with the New York Yankees, which would send Aroldis Chapman to the Bronx and bring to the Cincinnati farm system four minor leaguers, including Rookie Davis and Tony Renda. Following this trade, both Davis and Renda have earned playing time with the Bats and Reds, although their journeys were far from easy.

Most recently, the New York Mets paired with the Reds, forming an agreement to trade Jay Bruce to the Mets, and Cincinnati was able to obtain current Louisville Bat, Dilson Herrera. Since joining the Reds organization, Herrera has been seeing a lot of playing time at second base in Louisville.

Although these trades can all be considered high profile in their own right,

it is far too easy to overlook the toll it takes on the players involved when a trade is completed. Being uprooted from your family, friends, and hometown is just the beginning of a long list of challenges.

In order to survive in Minor League Baseball, players are required to hone a certain level of toughness; the ability to be open and adaptable is the key to thriving at all levels. The near constant transactions between minor league affiliates forces these athletes to gain rapport with their teammates at an extraordinarily rapid pace, as well as requires that they are able to acclimate to new cities and environments when need be.

Dilson Herrera knows this all too well considering he was traded for the second time in his career in the middle of the 2016 season. Herrera was first traded in 2013 from the Pittsburgh Pirates organization and he joined the Mets as a Single-A prospect. Herrera explains that "the first [trade] was a little bit harder for me because that was my first team,"

however now he feels as though moving around and meeting new teammates is more of a second nature to him. He also mentioned that he still constantly keeps in touch with many friends from previous squads that he has been a part of.

So, when Dilson Herrera first heard word of his trade to the Reds, he said, "I felt excited, first of all, because I got to meet a new team and make new friends, so I thank the Reds for the opportunity. We've got to be ready for everything; you never know what is going to happen. You could be here today but you don't know where you will be tomorrow."

Despite these mental preparations that come along with being a professional athlete, Herrera admitted that he was "a little confused" when he initially found out about the trade. "[The Mets] told me that they planned to have me on their major league team one day, so when they told me about the trade I was

wondering what happened. But I was ready and my mind was right because I always say you don't know what the future holds," Herrera further explains.

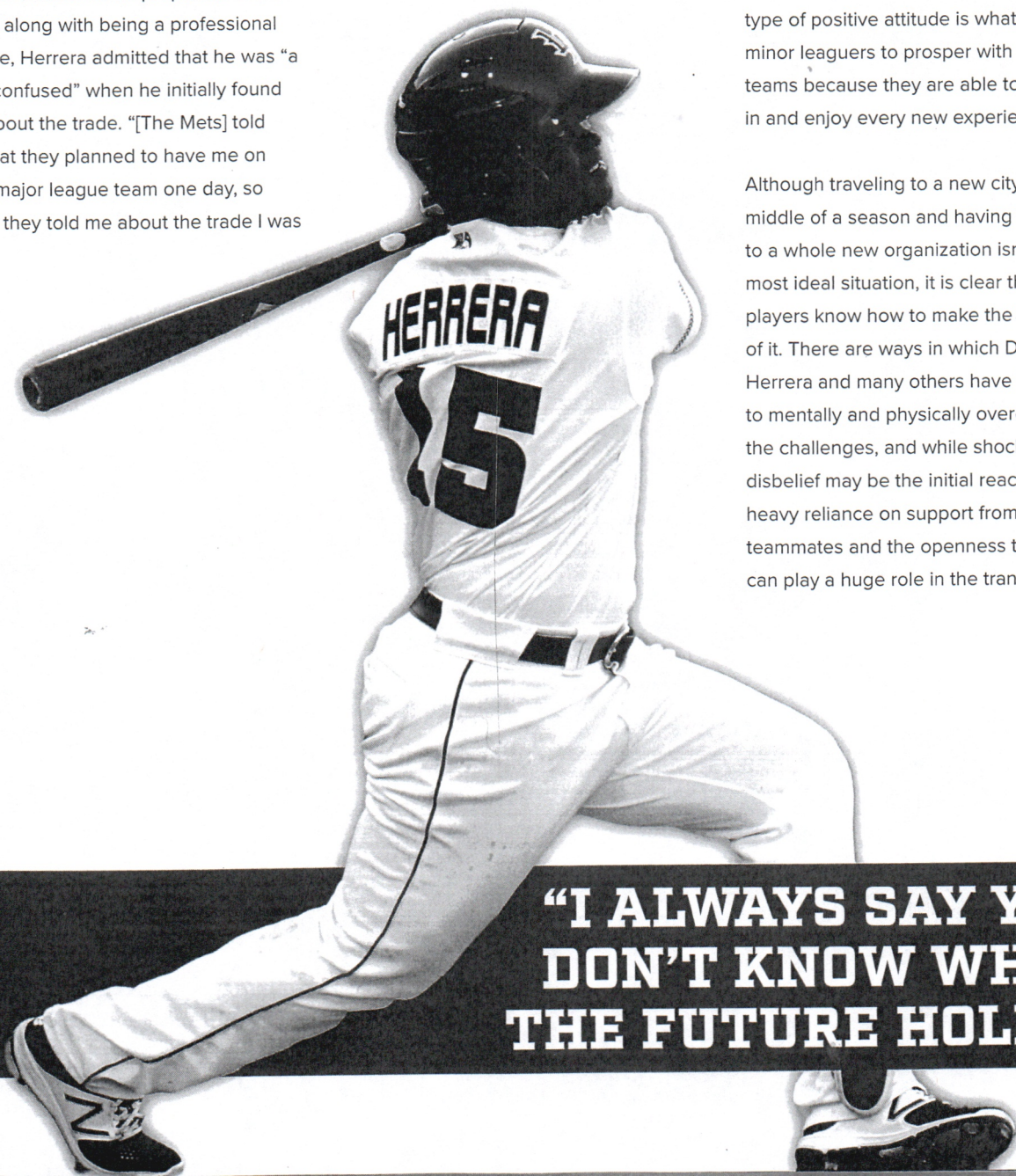
Being a part of any trade can put players in the limelight, but Dilson Herrera coming to the Reds in a swap that involved fan-favorite Jay Bruce was one that really made him feel honored to be part of such a significant transaction. "It felt really good for me because he's a big star and a really good player. So, I'm trying to do my best and work hard to demonstrate to other people that it was a really good trade," Herrera says. This just goes to show that players who get

traded are faced with the subconscious burden of wanting to prove to their new team and fan base that they were worth it.

When talking about how to get through a difficult transition, Herrera explained that having a solid support system is something that is extremely important. Specifically, he mentioned that the Latin community in the Mets organization was supportive of him and a huge help as he made his move to Louisville.

Having been in Kentucky for almost a year now, Herrera says, "I like it here, I like chilling with new people. The weather is crazy sometimes, but there are a couple good Latin restaurants." This type of positive attitude is what allows minor leaguers to prosper with new teams because they are able to soak it all in and enjoy every new experience.

Although traveling to a new city in the middle of a season and having to adjust to a whole new organization isn't the most ideal situation, it is clear that these players know how to make the best of it. There are ways in which Dilson Herrera and many others have been able to mentally and physically overcome the challenges, and while shock and disbelief may be the initial reaction, a heavy reliance on support from past teammates and the openness to change can play a huge role in the transition. • • •



**"I ALWAYS SAY YOU
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Catching up with **CHAD WALLACH**

By Logan Jones • The idea that baseball runs through a person's blood is a concept that Louisville Bats' catcher Chad Wallach knows all too well. As the fifth round draft pick to the Miami Marlins in the 2013 MLB Draft, Wallach has tirelessly worked his way up and is now a part of the Cincinnati Reds Triple-A organization.

Chad Wallach's destiny to become a professional baseball player is one that was practically decided before he was even born. Chad's father, Tim Wallach, enjoyed an 18-year Major League Baseball career with the majority of his time being spent with the Montreal Expos. Tim also played for the Los Angeles Dodgers for four years and the California Angels for one year.

Throughout his stint with the Expos, corner infielder Tim Wallach was decorated with two Gold Gloves, two Silver Sluggers, and five trips to the All-Star Game. Currently, he is serving as the bench coach for the Miami Marlins, following an extensive managerial and coaching career with the Dodgers.

The Wallach family baseball legacy does not end with Chad's father; both of his older brothers, Matt and Brett, played minor league baseball for many years. Matt, who is the oldest of the bunch, was also a catcher, while Brett was a right-handed pitcher.

Matt Wallach, like Chad, was drafted out of California State Fullerton as a 22nd round pick by the Dodgers in the 2007 MLB Draft. He played in the Los Angeles organization for all seven years of his minor league career.

Brett Wallach was also selected by the Dodgers in the third round of the 2009 MLB Draft out of Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa, California. Brett spent four years with the Dodgers and Cubs in the minors, and in 2014-15, he played in an independent league.

Growing up in a family of talented baseball players can certainly seem intimidating for the youngest son, but Chad never doubted that he wanted to play the sport professionally. Wallach explains, "I could have had a choice, but I watched my brothers play and my dad play so I didn't want to do anything else."

Three sons that are taught the ins and outs of this beloved sport by their professional-caliber father could appear to outsiders as though their dad would be very hard on them, but Chad disagrees. "He was never too hard. If he had something to say, he would tell us, but he would do it in the right way; he wouldn't yell or anything like that."

The coaching side of his father is exactly what Chad grew up knowing, considering Tim retired when Chad was just four years old. However, Chad said that "he [Tim Wallach] had some of his highlights and he'd like to show us those, so he'd make us sit down and watch them." Watching highlights from his dad's playing career is something that allowed Chad to grow and learn in his own baseball journey.

Although Chad never really got to see his dad play in person, some of the best learning experiences for him actually came during his father's coaching career. "I never really traveled, but every once in a while, he would let me come into the ballpark early with them and hit in the cage with some of the guys, which was always an awesome experience. I was at a junior-high level, so it was always cool to go and watch those guys."

Being surrounded by a group of established professionals is something that definitely motivated Chad and his brothers to excel at the game. "One of the cooler guys that I've met, just because he's such a big name now, is [Clayton] Kershaw. I got to meet him when my dad was a bench coach with [the Dodgers] the last few years, but him being such a normal dude as he is, is cool to see," Wallach explains.

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Since Chad Wallach and his two older brothers have never played against one another on a baseball field, they find other outlets for their competition. Chad says that there is "not too much baseball competition, but we all play golf and it gets pretty heated that way. It's usually my two older brothers against my dad and me, so the golf series this offseason was 3-2 and my dad and I won. It gets competitive out there."

It is evident that Tim Wallach has successfully shared his love of the game with his three sons, which serves to motivate each in their respective baseball careers. However, it would appear, the extensive amount of talent is second to the passion for the sport that bonds the family together. . . .