

Cincinnati Reds Press Clippings September 14, 2018

THIS DAY IN REDS HISTORY

1993-Major League Baseball announces its three division alignment, plus an extra round of playoff games. The Reds are placed in the Central Division with Chicago, Houston, Pittsburgh and St. Louis. Milwaukee will join in 1998

CINCINNATI ENQUIRER

Michael Lorenzen has become the Cincinnati Reds' version of an in-game 'stopper'

John Fay, Cincinnati Enquirer

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Cincinnati Reds right-handed pitcher Michael Lorenzen has never lacked confidence. Upon his return from the disabled list last year, Lorenzen said this:

“Do I believe I can be a great starter in the major leagues? Of course,” he said. “Do I believe I can be a great closer, a reliever in the major leagues? Of course. Do I believe great center fielder in the major leagues? I do.”

But Lorenzen’s role has morphed into something he didn’t mention. He’s become a new-age “stopper.” The term stopper used to refer to a staff ace, the guy who could stop a losing streak. There aren’t many of those around anymore.

Lorenzen is an in-game stopper. When he’s at his best, he can stop the momentum that an offense has built against a struggling starter.

With Reds Interim Manager Jim Riggleman using the quick hook for struggling starters, Lorenzen’s role has become increasingly important. Lorenzen is ideal for it because he’s durable, pitch-efficient, is always willing to take the ball and he can hit.

“He wants to pitch every day,” Riggleman said.

Lorenzen, the 25-year-old right-hander, is 3-1 with a 3.27 ERA over 41 appearances and 66 innings.

Lorenzen went three innings and 2 ½ innings his last two outings. How much rest did that require?

“Just a day,” he said.

Lorenzen has gone four or more innings three times, three innings three times and two innings and a fraction three times. He says there’s really been no adjustment to the new role.

“It seems like I’ve never had a role since I’ve been in professional baseball – reliever, starter,” he said. “I’ve been thrown in the bullpen while I was starting. I’m used to it, doing different roles or whatever they need. I like not knowing, necessarily. It’s kind of fun.

“I come to the ballpark thinking something neat might happen today. I look forward to it.”

Lorenzen is at 66 innings, despite starting the year on the disabled list. If he’s healthy all of next year, he could get 100 innings as a reliever.

“Easy,” he said. “I’m on pace for around 80 innings this year. That would be easy.”

Lorenzen is actually on pace for 73 innings. His current pace would project to 97 innings over a full season.

The 100-inning reliever has become rare. Right now, Oakland’s Yusmeiro Petit and Jesse Chavez, now with the Chicago Cubs after starting the year with Texas, are on pace for 95 innings. That’s the most among pitchers who haven’t started a game.

Leading baseball with fewer than 100 relief innings is a relatively recent development. Scott Sullivan threw 100-plus innings for the Reds four straight years from 1998-2001.

Lorenzen says he's equipped to do that now more than in the past.

"Going through the struggles last year with mechanics helped me figure out my mechanics," he said. "If the mechanics are bad, it's harder to recover. You're going to be sore every day, like I was last year. You come up sore and need more time to recover.

"If you have a good understanding of your mechanics, you're hitting your positions properly that you need to hit while pitching. You're going to recover better because your body's working the way it should."

Lorenzen often plays a dual role. He'll enter the game as a pinch-hitter for the starter, then stay in to pitch. That's a bit of an adjustment.

"There are times when I'm running back and forth from the bullpen to the dugout, 'hey, you're going to hit,' " he said. "Then I get to the dugout, and things change, so I've got to go back to the bullpen and continue to warm up. Or I'm on the bench, and they need me to pitch, so I've got to run to the bullpen and get ready. There are situations like that, that are different."

If Riggelman's back as manager, Lorenzen will likely continue in his current role. Riggelman has consistently pulled starters in the third and fourth innings. If you do that, you need someone to fill the gap to the back of the bullpen.

"Whatever they need me to do, I'll do," Lorenzen said. "They know what I want to do."

That's start, right?

Lorenzen just smiles. There's that confidence. But, again, his current role could be as valuable as a starting role.

Transactions

09/13/18

Detroit Tigers sent RHP Johnny Barbato outright to Toledo Mud Hens.

Oakland Athletics activated LHP Brett Anderson from the 10-day disabled list.
