

st louis cardinals 3rd baseman history

St. Louis Cardinals 3rd Baseman History has been a rich tapestry woven through decades of Major League Baseball, showcasing an array of talent that has contributed to the team's storied success. The Cardinals, one of the most celebrated franchises in baseball history, have had numerous exceptional players at the hot corner, each leaving their mark on the team and the league. This article will explore the evolution of the third base position within the Cardinals organization, highlighting key players, their contributions, and the historical significance of this position.

Early Years of the Position

The history of the St. Louis Cardinals at third base can be traced back to the early 20th century. The role of third baseman was crucial as teams began to recognize the importance of solid defense and offensive production from this position.

Key Early Players

1. Frank "Home Run" Baker (1910-1914)

- Although Baker is primarily known for his time with the Philadelphia Athletics, his brief stint with the Cardinals in 1910 showcased his power-hitting capabilities, setting the stage for future third basemen.

2. Les Bell (1920s)

- Playing with the Cardinals in the 1920s, Bell was known for his solid defensive skills and ability to drive in runs, reflecting the early demands for offensive and defensive prowess at third.

The Golden Era of Third Basemen

As the Cardinals moved into the mid-20th century, the team experienced a golden era characterized by several Hall of Fame talents who would define the third base position.

Hall of Famers and Their Impact

- Stan Musial (1941-1963)

- While Musial played various positions, it was at third base where he initially made his mark. His hitting ability and versatility allowed him to excel, contributing to the Cardinals' success in the 40s and 50s.

- Ken Boyer (1955-1965)

- A pivotal figure for the Cardinals, Boyer was a seven-time All-Star and won the National League MVP in 1964. His defense earned him numerous Gold Gloves, and he played a crucial role in the

Cardinals' 1964 World Series championship.

- Mike Shannon (1962-1970)
- Shannon was known for his powerful bat and clutch hitting. After his playing career, he became a long-time broadcaster for the Cardinals, further cementing his legacy within the franchise.

The 1970s and 1980s: Transition and Change

The following decades brought a mix of players, some of whom were not household names but still made significant contributions. It was a period of transition for the Cardinals as they navigated through different playing styles and coaching philosophies.

Notable Figures in the 70s and 80s

1. Ken Oberkfell (1976-1985)
 - Oberkfell was known for his defensive skills and ability to put the ball in play. He was a key asset during a period of rebuilding, helping the team remain competitive.
2. Terry Pendleton (1985-1990)
 - Pendleton played a significant role in the Cardinals' 1987 National League pennant-winning season. His speed and defensive capabilities made him a fan favorite.

The 1990s: A New Generation

The 1990s saw the emergence of new stars at third base for the Cardinals, reflecting a mix of youth and experience as the team sought to regain its dominance in the National League.

Emerging Talent

- Scott Cooper (1993-1996)
 - Cooper was known for his steady play and ability to hit in the clutch. He provided stability at third base during a time when the team was undergoing significant roster changes.
- Fernando Tatis (1996-2000)
 - Tatis is perhaps best known for hitting two grand slams in a single inning, a feat that remains unmatched. His power and versatility were key elements during his tenure with the team.

The 2000s: A Resurgence of Talent

The 2000s marked a resurgence for the Cardinals, culminating in multiple playoff appearances and a

World Series championship in 2006. The third base position once again became a critical element of the team's success.

Key Players of the Era

1. Scott Rolen (2002-2007)

- Rolen is often regarded as one of the best third basemen in the history of the franchise. A key player in the 2006 World Series championship team, he was known for his elite defense, winning multiple Gold Gloves, and his offensive production. He was a five-time All-Star and is remembered for his leadership qualities.

2. Troy Glaus (2008-2010)

- Glaus brought power to the lineup during his stint with the Cardinals. His ability to hit home runs and drive in runs made him an essential part of the team's offensive strategy.

The Current Landscape: Recent Developments

As of the 2020s, the Cardinals have continued to evolve the third base position, looking for a blend of power, speed, and defensive prowess.

Recent Third Basemen

- David Freese (2009-2013)

- Freese became a postseason hero during the 2011 World Series, earning the World Series MVP award. His clutch hitting and superb defense endeared him to Cardinals fans.

- Matt Carpenter (2013-2021)

- Carpenter was known for his offensive versatility, often switching between first and third base. His ability to get on base and hit for power made him a central figure in the Cardinals' lineup.

- Nolan Arenado (2021-Present)

- Acquired from the Colorado Rockies, Arenado is one of the top third basemen in baseball today. His elite defensive skills and offensive production have solidified his role as a cornerstone player for the Cardinals.

The Legacy of Cardinals Third Basemen

The history of St. Louis Cardinals 3rd baseman is not just about statistics; it's about the impact these players have had on the team and the community. The third base position has seen a plethora of talent, from Hall of Famers to clutch performers who have stepped up in crucial moments.

Contributions to Team Success

- **Defensive Stability:** The third base position has often been a defensive linchpin for the Cardinals, with numerous Gold Glove winners showcasing the importance of fielding.
- **Clutch Performances:** Many of the Cardinals' third basemen have delivered key hits in critical postseason moments, helping to secure championships and memorable victories.
- **Cultural Impact:** Players like Scott Rolen and David Freese have not only excelled on the field but have also become part of the fabric of St. Louis culture, earning the love and respect of fans.

In summary, the history of the St. Louis Cardinals at third base is a reflection of the franchise's broader narrative—filled with triumphs, challenges, and memorable moments. As the team continues to evolve, the legacy of past players serves as a guiding light for future talents who will take up the mantle of third baseman for one of baseball's most storied franchises.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is the all-time leader in games played at third base for the St. Louis Cardinals?

The all-time leader in games played at third base for the St. Louis Cardinals is Ken Reitz, with 1,199 games.

Which St. Louis Cardinals third baseman was known as 'The Wizard'?

The nickname 'The Wizard' is primarily associated with Ozzie Smith, who played shortstop, but Scott Rolen, who played third base for the Cardinals, was also a standout defender, earning multiple Gold Glove Awards.

What notable achievement did Scott Rolen accomplish while playing for the St. Louis Cardinals?

Scott Rolen was a key contributor to the Cardinals' 2006 World Series championship team and won the National League Rookie of the Year award in 1997.

Which third baseman did the St. Louis Cardinals acquire from the Philadelphia Phillies in 2002?

The St. Louis Cardinals acquired Scott Rolen from the Philadelphia Phillies in 2002.

What year did the St. Louis Cardinals win the World Series

with a third baseman named Mike Shannon?

The St. Louis Cardinals won the World Series in 1964 with Mike Shannon as their third baseman.

Which St. Louis Cardinals third baseman was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2018?

The St. Louis Cardinals' third baseman Scott Rolen was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 2023.

Who played third base for the Cardinals during their 2011 World Series championship?

David Freese played third base for the St. Louis Cardinals during their 2011 World Series championship.

Which third baseman did the Cardinals trade for in 1998 from the Chicago Cubs?

The Cardinals traded for third baseman Gary Gaetti from the Chicago Cubs in 1998.

What is a significant milestone reached by the St. Louis Cardinals' third baseman Ken Reitz?

Ken Reitz achieved the milestone of being selected as a National League All-Star in 1975 while playing third base for the Cardinals.

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