



MR. VERSATILITY

■ FRESHMAN FROM PLEASANTON A PLEASANT SURPRISE; CLEANUP HITTER GIVES CARDINAL FLEXIBILITY ON DEFENSE

BY JOHN REID

Daily News Staff Writer

Stanford plays a Pac-10 baseball doubleheader with Oregon at Sunken Diamond today at 1. One can bet Stanford coach Mark Marquess has penciled first baseman Stephen Piscotty into the starting lineup for both games. The freshman from Amador Valley-Pleasanton has started all 25 games for the Cardinal this season. Second baseman Colin Walsh is the only other Stanford player to have done so.

Piscotty gives Marquess a lot of flexibility in that he can play left field, shortstop, third base or man the designated hitter position. Piscotty has started 13 games at first base and 12 in left field.

"Piscotty was a shortstop in high school," Marquess said. "He's good. He can play left field. He can play third. I can play him in different positions. He's not slow afoot and has enough arm strength. He's a very good athlete."

"Playing in the infield and in the outfield both have their positives and negatives," said Piscotty, drafted in the 45th round by the Los Angeles Dodgers last June. "It doesn't matter to me. I'll play anywhere."

In Friday night's 5-2 loss to the Ducks, Piscotty was 0-for-3 with a walk, scoring twice. He appeared to beat out an infield hit in his last atbat, but first base umpireDwayneFinley thought otherwise, calling Piscotty out on a close play.

"I wanted that one real bad," Piscotty said.

Piscotty has batted cleanup much of the year, but was moved up to the No. 3 spot Friday. He leads the Cardinal in most offensive categories among everyday players. The righthanded-hitting Piscotty leads the club in batting (.337), hits (32), doubles (8) and RBIs (18). He's tied for the team lead in runs with 23. He has yet to hit his first collegiate home run. Piscotty has had eight multi-hit games, tying him with two others for the team lead.

"The coaches are helping me a lot," Piscotty said. "I'm worrying about making good contact. I'm just worried about hitting the ball hard, driving in runs."

Piscotty came up with a fine defensive play Friday, making a diving stop to his right, saving a run. He has committed two errors in 152 chances. Stanford is 13-12 overall, 3-4 in conference and in desperate need of a win to snap a four-game loss streak.

"We're not playing our best baseball right now," Piscotty said. "Both pitching and offense are areas where we need to improve. We need to come out (today), show some signs of life and get our emotions back on track. We have to turn it on right now."

Oregon, Cal and Arizona State were three other schools that wanted Piscotty.

"I always wanted to come to Stanford," Piscotty said. "I could have signed, but I'm glad I came here."

Marquess would be the first to admit the feeling is mutual.

E-mail John Reid at jreid@dailynewsgroup.com.

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