

Q&A with Michael Barrett

by Bill Center - CNS

Q: Since you were born in Atlanta, would you consider yourself Old South or New South?

A: "Borderline both. I like to hunt and fish."

Q: Before you played in the pressure of Chicago, you broke in with Montreal. Good or bad?

A: "I enjoyed my time in Montreal. I made it to the big leagues at a very young age. I was able to play and learn without external pressure. I played for three outstanding guys in Felipe Alou, Jeff Torberg and Frank Robinson. And I played four different positions (first, third and short as well as catcher). I had a great opportunity to learn the game at a young, young age. And Montreal is a great city."

Q: You mentioned lack of external pressure?

A: "With the Expos, you weren't playing before 40,000 every night. And you were able to move up the ranks faster. I was able to learn early without the pressure of having to deliver in a playoff push."

Q: Talk about Dec. 15 and 16, 2003.

A: "In 22 hours, I went from Montreal to Oakland to the Cubs, both trades being for players to be named later. My time had come to move on from Montreal. The trade to the A's was the day before the contract tender deadline. But before I knew what happened, I had been traded again."

Q: On to Chicago?

A: "I went from one pressure extreme to the other. But being traded to the Cubs was exciting. Wrigley Field was my favorite place to play, and Chicago was my favorite city to visit. Plus, the team wasn't going to be moved. And Cubs baseball was a big deal. I loved playing with the Cubs."

MICHAEL BARRETT - Michael Barrett made his major league catching debut with Montreal in 1998 at

age 20. In December 2003, he became the only player in major league history to be traded twice in 24 hours for players to be named later. He was recently traded by the Cubs to the Padres. CNS Photo by K.C. Alfred.

Q: Are you disappointed by some of the things that have been said in the Chicago media since you were traded to the Padres?

A: "Not overall. I consider the sources. I know how the Chicago media works these things. They wrote some stories because editors wanted stories that would sell papers. But I didn't expect it to turn so fast. The most important thing was my relationship with the players around me."

Q: Are you surprised by the positive reaction the past couple of days from your former Cubs teammates, including Carlos Zambrano?

A: "I don't like talking about what I bring to the field. Most of those guys know who I am. The feeling is mutual. I was privileged to be part of that organization. I got calls after the trade from players with the Cubs as well as in their minor league organization. That's the important thing."

Q: Do you wear your emotions on your sleeve?

A: "I think I'm as emotional as the next guy. I am a passionate person. I'm passionate about the game and how it's played. I think a lot of things in Chicago were blown out of proportion. I don't think I approach the game differently than any other player who wants to win."

Q: Your reaction to being with the Padres?

A: "There is something about San Diego that is very refreshing. It has always been one of my favorite places on the road. My wife (Stephanie) and daughter (Grace) love it here. They've already been to the zoo twice. My daughter can't wait to get to SeaWorld."

Q: You are a free agent at the end of the season. Any thoughts about your future as a Padre?

A: "I feel very fortunate to be here. I'm pleased the organization believes in me. I'm only 30. I still have a lot of work to do defensively. But I will not settle. I feel like a young 30. I'd love to stay here."

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