

# Stechschulte Homers in First Major League At-Bat Tuesday

Putnam County Sentinel – April 25, 2001

Gene Stechschulte is a relief pitcher with the St. Louis Cardinals. Last Tuesday he turned in another relief performance for the Cardinals, but it wasn't on the mound.

As the Cardinals were being beaten by the Arizona Diamondbacks 15-1 in the sixth inning of the National League game Tuesday, Stechschulte was called on to pinch hit for a fellow reliever. The at-bat will be something the Kalida graduate will always remember.

In his first major league at-bat, Stechschulte swung at the first pitch and connected for a two-run home run. The two-run shot was half of what the Cardinals scored in the game as St. Louis dropped a 17-4 decision to the Diamondbacks.

Stechschulte's home run grabbed him some major league history as he became the 82<sup>nd</sup> player to homer in his first at-bat. He the 13<sup>th</sup> player to hit a home run in his first at-bat as a pinch hitter and he is the 16<sup>th</sup> player to leave the yard on the first pitch he saw.

His home run also broke a 0 for 15 hitless streak by Cardinal pinch hitters this season. "I was just swinging on the first pitch, whatever it was," Stechschulte said in a press release on the Cardinals web-site. "We got on

(Chris) Richard last year when he said what he was looking for on the first pitch and they all told him to just swing hard, so that's pretty much what I did."

Stechschulte didn't appear in the game, on the mound, as position player Bobby Bonilla was one of six pitchers to work for the Cardinals.

The right handed reliever did work in Wednesday night's game throwing a scoreless inning of relief.

Through Saturday the 6-5 Stechschulte appeared in six games working 7.1 innings allowing one run on four hits with a 1.23 ERA. He has recorded four strikeouts and walked three.

Stechschulte is a graduate of Kalida High School and Ashland University where he was a two-time academic All-American. He appeared in 20 games for the Cardinals in the 2000 season winning his major league game on June 2 against the Los Angeles Dodgers working two scoreless innings.