

Top Rookie JJ Wetherholt Earns Major Cardinals Commitment

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ST. LOUIS — The St. Louis Cardinals and rookie second baseman JJ Wetherholt have agreed to an eight-year, \$112.5 million contract extension, a deal that keeps one of the club's rising young players in St. Louis for the long term.

The agreement, reached as the Cardinals entered the weekend three games out of a National League wild-card spot, buys out Wetherholt's first several years of free agency. The move also shows a bold change in the Cardinals' personnel decisions in recent years.

Wetherholt, selected seventh overall out of West Virginia by St. Louis in the first-year player draft two years ago, moved quickly through the organization's farm system before establishing himself in the majors.

Going into Friday night's game against the Atlanta Braves, Wetherholt was batting .267 with 13 home runs, 36 RBIs and nine stolen bases. Wetherholt is regarded as one of the top defensive second basemen in the Major Leagues.

The Cardinals entered the weekend with a 48-44 record.