

Cincinnati Reds Rookie Elly De La Cruz Steals 2nd, 3rd & Home in 1 Sequence



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Back in the Spring, the 2023 [World Baseball Classic](#), featuring 20 National baseball teams from all over the world, unfolded over two weeks from March 8th to March 21st. The tournament concluded with Japan's nail-biting victory over the United States in the finale. More importantly, the games also spotlighted two of Major League Baseball's brightest stars, Shohei Ohtani (Team Japan) and Randy Arozarena (Team Mexico). The pair of celebrated sluggers carried the momentum into the MLB regular season, where they will represent the Los Angeles Angels and Tampa Bay Rays on the American League's roster in this week's All-Star game. With the regular season at its midpoint, Arozarena's Rays have the best record in the AL, while Ohtani's monumental season as a hitter and pitcher has propelled him to the front of the MVP race.

Although several members of the sports media remained focused on Shohei Ohtani's individual statistics and the surprise start of Randy Arozarena's Rays in the American League, the Cincinnati Reds suddenly emerged as darkhorse championship contenders in the National League after they called up a 21-year-old shortstop named Elly De La Cruz from their Triple-A Minor League affiliate (The Louisville Bats) on June 6th. The team's new 6'5" (200 lbs) starting shortstop immediately impacted their play, sparking a 12-game winning streak, an overall record of 22-6, and an unlikely surge atop the NL Central Division standings. Thus far, the rookie phenom is already drawing early comparisons to MLB legends such as Mickey Mantle. Since making his MLB debut in early June, De La Cruz is battling .325 with four home runs and 16 stolen bases.

On Saturday, during a pivotal division matchup between the Cincinnati Reds (50-41) and the Milwaukee Brewers (49-42), De La Cruz pulled off perhaps one of the greatest plays in MLB history when he stole second base, third base, and home plate in one sequence, after hitting an RBI single that put his team ahead for good. The historical sequence occurred during the top of the seventh inning when De La Cruz's teammate, Jake Fraley, was at-bat against the opposing pitcher, Elvis Peguero. In the end, the Reds won the game 8-5, and they now enter the All-Star break with a one-game lead over the Brewers for the top spot in the NL Central.

Because Elly De La Cruz has only appeared in 30 of his team's 91 games this year, he was not voted into the 2023 All-Star game, but that hasn't stopped fans from lobbying for the league office to add him to the "Mid-Season Classic." When De La Cruz stole second, third, and home in one sequence against the Brewers, he became the first MLB player to do so since 1919.