



## Gonzo going to the All-Star Game

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By Steve Gilbert / MLB.com

LOS ANGELES -- Luis Gonzalez has played for four Major League teams, but as Arizona's longest-tenured player, he's become synonymous with the Diamondbacks.

So it only seems fitting that Gonzalez was the lone Arizona player named to the National League squad when Major League Baseball on Sunday announced the rosters for next month's All-Star Game.

"When you think of the Arizona Diamondbacks, Luis Gonzalez's name comes to mind very quickly," D-Backs manager Bob Melvin said. "Very consistent for us all year, offensively and defensively."

It's the fifth time in his seven years with the Diamondbacks that Gonzalez has received such an honor. He has three hits in six All-Star Game at-bats, including a double. In 2001, he won the Home Run Derby.

"It's just nice to go," Gonzalez said.

The All-Star Game, to be held at Detroit's Comerica Park on Tuesday, July 12, at 8 p.m. ET, will be televised nationally by FOX Sports and televised around the world by Major League Baseball International. ESPN Radio will provide exclusive national radio coverage, MLB.com will provide extensive online coverage and MLB Radio will provide exclusive play-by-play coverage of the game on the Internet.

Gonzalez is once again putting together a solid season for the Diamondbacks, who are in contention for the top spot in the NL West after a disastrous 2004 season in which they lost 111 games.

The 2004 season was a tough one for Gonzalez as well. The veteran began the season with a 50 percent tear of a ligament in his right elbow. Despite having his arm go numb for a brief period each time he threw and pain when he extended the arm while swinging, Gonzalez refused to take time off.

Finally, he gave in, and on Aug. 2 underwent Tommy John surgery. When doctors performed the procedure, they discovered that the ligament had been completely torn.

After an exhaustive rehab program, Gonzalez has been the team's leader on and off the field.

"He's just been a rock," second baseman Craig Counsell said. "He's been real consistent. He's been our three hitter every game. He just brings it every day. He does something to help us win every day. I think the best thing about it is that he's coming off a serious surgery in the offseason and he's gotten himself back to what he was a couple of years ago. After a serious surgery, that's a real credit to him."

Gonzalez wanted to spread some of that credit around to team physicians Michael Lee and Don Sheridan as well as team trainers Paul Lessard and Dave Edwards and the team's rehab specialist Derek Steveson.

"There's a lot of people that, when I go to the game, I represented a lot of [those] guys because they've helped me," he said. "And not only that, but my teammates. You don't get to the All-Star Game without having good teammates around you. I have a lot of love and passion for playing this game, but a lot of your accomplishments, they don't come by themselves, they come from the guys around you."

Gonzalez has been on a roll over the last month, hitting safely in 20 of 25 June games and compiling a .323 average. The 37-year-old hit the 300th homer of his career on June 5, in Philadelphia.

"Hitting 300 homers is great, I just didn't think it would take this long," he said jokingly after hitting the blast.



Gonzalez came to Arizona with 107 home runs in parts of nine Major League seasons, but hit 185 in his first six seasons with the D-Backs. He is the Diamondbacks' all-time leader in runs, hits, doubles, home runs, RBIs, total bases and games.

The left fielder helped the Diamondbacks preserve their 7-5 victory over the Dodgers on Saturday when he dove into the front row of the left-field seats to rob Jason Phillips of a two-run homer in the eighth inning.

"That was just a great play, by a guy who grinds it out every single day," said manager Bob Melvin after the game.

While Gonzalez has always relished each All-Star Game appearance, this year's will be even more special for a couple of reasons.

First, he was able to call his mother with the news. It's been a tough week for her and the rest of his family because of the sudden death of his stepfather.

"It was exciting for her just to hear some good news," Gonzalez said.

In addition, Gonzalez's son, Jacob, is now 7 years old so he will be able to take him on the field for the Home Run Derby and share the All-Star experience with him.

"I want him to see and experience something like that," said Gonzalez, who plans on taking his wife Christine and the couple's two daughters to Detroit as well. "It's a unique opportunity. I haven't done it in the past because he was too young and now Jacob is going to get to go with me and I'm going to take him out there and just savor the moment of being with my son out on the field."

*This story was not subject to the approval of Major League Baseball or its clubs.*

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