

birdbats

LETTER OF OPINION



2008 ALBERT PUJOLS GAME-MODEL BAT

This letter will serve as my opinion that the following professional model baseball bat was manufactured for Albert Pujols. However, it does not exhibit characteristics consistent with game use by Pujols.

Manufacturer:	Marucci
Model number:	Pujols Custom Cut
Labeling Period:	8/25/2008
Length:	34 inches
Weight:	33.4 ounces
Wood:	Maple
Finish:	Gwynn (Natural handle, black barrel)

This non-contract-model Albert Pujols has a handle crack that begins about 6 inches up from the knob end and extends into the black part of the barrel. White athletic tape, about 5.25 inches, is wrapped around the crack. I did not remove the tape, but the bat appears to be broken in two pieces. A chip, measuring about 1/2 inch long and 1/2 inch wide, clearly is missing under the tape. A "grain slope test" spot appears on the top edge grain, 12.5 inches up from the knob end (*Photo A*). The handle shows an unusual discoloration/staining near and on the knob (*Photo B*). The bat shows light use; there are 4-5 ball marks on the top barrel and one ink transfer on the back barrel (*Photo C*). The bat was manufactured by Marucci on August 25, 2008; the date is stamped into the knob along with Pujols' number 5 and the bat's length (4) and weight (1⁷) (*Photo D*). However, the bat's actual weight of 33.4 ounces is heavier than the 31.7 ounces indicated on the knob. A PSA/DNA hologram (number J71301) is affixed to the knob. The bat is signed in silver on the sweet spot (*Photo E*). The bat has a shallow cupped end. The finish of the bat exhibits multiple defects. A bluish transfer appears on the upper handle (*Photo F*). Two raised areas exist on the bottom barrel below the center brand. There is white residue in those areas; it could be from Styrofoam packing peanuts. And the back barrel has a rough texture, as though the bat was in contact with canvas or cloth before the finish cured properly (*Photo G*).

While I believe this bat has was made for Pujols, I am not confident it ever was used by Pujols. In addition to the bat's weight, which is heavier than bats preferred by Pujols, I see little evidence of pine tar on the upper handle. In mid 2008, Pujols began applying a moderate to heavy coat of brown pine tar to the upper handle of his bats (*Photo H*). The grain slope ink spot likely was applied in the spring of 2009 when slope testing began. As such, I'd expect to see an even heavier coat of pine tar (*Photos I and J*). This bat is missing that key characteristic.



Photo A: A grain slope test spot is located 12.5" up from the knob end on the top edge grain. White athletic tape is wrapped around the crack.



Photo B: Discoloration/staining on the handle between the knob and tape.



Photo C: Ball marks on the top of the barrel.



Photo D: Bat's knob.



Photo E: Bat's autograph.



Photo F: Blue transfer on handle.



Photo G: White residue and rough texture on barrel.



Photos H, I and J: Examples of Pujols' pine tar pattern in late 2008 and early/mid 2009.

My opinion regarding this bat is based on information available to me from reliable sources. Any questions about this bat or my opinion regarding the bat should be directed to me at P.O. Box 752, O'Fallon, IL 62269; via telephone at (618) 628-1765; or via e-mail at birdbats@charter.net. I also can be reached through my Web site, www.birdbats.com.

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May 6, 2010