



both during the season and when he isn't playing baseball – his caloric needs are significant. He likes to maintain a weight around 230 lbs. and even though he is 6-5, his weight can drop easily because of his activity level. "Basically during the season, I eat everything in sight because I lose a lot of weight just back there sweating underneath all my equipment in the summer," Joe says with a smile. "As you get a little older, you try and be smarter about what you put into your body, but I'm still eating a lot. I need to keep my weight up, so eating all the time is the best way to do it."

Earlier this year, Joe was preparing himself for more than just playing baseball. He became the only two-time cover man in the history of the "MLB The Show" franchise, thought of as one of the best sports video games ever made. His good looks and phenomenal game play landed him on the cover once again this year, bringing with it more notoriety from the ever-present public. He says it has been a real honor for him to be on the cover twice. "When you're a little kid, you play video games and it's pretty neat to see those big leaguers on a game, so it's even cooler to see myself on the game," Joe says. "I was pleasantly surprised when they asked me to be on the cover again. It's been a pretty remarkable experience."

Indeed, his eight years in Major League baseball have been remarkable altogether. Despite his absence from the field at differ-

ent points in his career, he was still able to set a handful of Major League records. In 2006, he became the first catcher in Major League history to lead the majors in batting average and became the first American League catcher to win the batting title (with an average of .347). In 2008, when he became the first American League catcher to win the batting title twice (after leading the majors with an average of .328). This was also the season in which he won his first Gold Glove award.

Who knows how much this catcher and his signature sideburns will achieve in his remaining years in professional baseball, but in the end, the only numbers Joe really cares about are those that he helps the Twins chalk up in the wins category. (During his tenure with Twins so far, the club has posted a record of 619-517.)

He says that he and his ball club have experienced some bad luck in recent years because of injuries to a handful of key players, but this is a season that he is really looking forward to. "We've had some rough breaks, but we've overcome those challenges and became real contenders over the past six or seven years," Joe says. "The goal of every season is to win the division and get into the playoffs. I think anybody can win [a championship] once you get into the playoffs, so we realize that and hopefully we can get ourselves back there and make a run at it." ★



*Joe tests his batting skills at the release party of "MLB 11 The Show."*