



Fryer Makes Most of Start

by Brian Stull

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(Busch Stadium) When you play behind the likes of Yadier Molina, you know the innings are going to be limited, so in his first start of the season Eric Fryer made the most of it. The catcher drove in the winning run for the St. Louis Cardinals in their 4-3 defeat of Cincinnati on Sunday.

“It was probably definitely one of them for sure,” agreed Fryer when asked if it was his best game in the big leagues. “Just to be part of the atmosphere here, get the series win, and get ready for the Cubs tomorrow—this is pretty special for sure.”

Besides the RBI double in the 8th inning to drive in Aledmys Diaz, Fryer also had single and another double earlier to extend his hitting streak to four games for this season and six games dating back to last season. He now has hits in his first six at-bats as a Cardinal, topping Eli Marrero who was the last player in St. Louis to begin his career with the team going 5-5.

In addition to getting it done at the plate, Fryer also delivered a strike to second base in the 6th inning to nab Brandon Phillips attempting to steal.

“I was really thinking more of a hit and run to be honest,” he said. “As a catcher, you’re trying to think along with them a little bit. I wasn’t necessarily expecting a straight steal, but at some point I thought there was going to be a hit and run in that at-bat.”

Signed as a free agent this off-season, Fryer was hoping to showcase his talent in Spring Training and perhaps get a chance on the active roster if Yadier Molina needed more time to recover from his thumb surgery. Instead, it was Brayan Pena’s injury that has him backing up Molina.

“It’s been a blast,” said Fryer. “To be honest I didn’t have a good spring. I was able towards the end, to start doing a few things to make me feel good going into the season but to be up here—the whole atmosphere with this team where winning is a priority, it’s been a blast. I can’t tell you how much fun it’s been.”

The fun has also taken place off the field, as Fryer has continued seek advice from both Molina and Mike Matheny.

“As a catcher, there’s a lot of gold to be flashed between those guys,” he pointed out. “I can learn as much as I can, not even just defensively but just picking the game. Like running situations, how he calls the game, how he sets up. It’s phenomenal. And just being next to him, he’s willing to teach and I love that.”

Fryer hit .243 (34-140) in his prior 65 big league games with Pittsburgh and Minnesota combined over the last five seasons.

photo credit: Jeff Curry-USA TODAY Sports, Bill Greenblatt/UPI