



First Lineup of 2017

by Brian Stull

February 25 2017 7:50 AM

The St. Louis Cardinals open their Grapefruit League schedule today at noon (CST) against the Miami Marlins and as expected, new centerfielder Dexter Fowler will be at the top of the lineup with Matt Carpenter hitting third.

The duo of Fowler and Carpenter at the top of the lineup figure to be trouble for opposing pitchers this season as both have a grinding approach to wear down pitchers.

“We have some of the same approaches, but obviously we go about it in a little different way,” said Fowler. “He has more power than me. He’s more of an RBI guy, I’m more of doubles, triples guy—I’m the runner. But at the plate, we have the same almost mindset.”

“We do, very similar,” agreed Carpenter. “We like to see a lot of pitches. Look for good pitches to hit. Get ourselves in a good count and not afraid to hit with two strikes. We both are that style, very similar. It’s going to probably drive pitchers crazy, but we’re certainly okay with that.”

Last year, Fowler ranked 11th in MLB with a .393 on-base percentage and Carpenter was at 17th (.380) In their careers, Carpenter has a .376 OBP while Fowler is right behind him at .366.

Most days, the two have been paired together in hitting groups and have been regularly seen talking shop in between at-bats.

“I got my first chance to meet Carp at the (’16) All-Star game,” points out Fowler. “We were both actually hurt, so we couldn’t play and we had a lot of time to sit there and talk.”

The last two seasons, Carpenter has hit at least 20 home runs—which the Cardinals are looking to capitalize on by moving him down in the lineup.

“We finally got a guy in Dexter that can really do a good job at the top of the order,” said Carpenter. “I’m looking forward to sliding down and having opportunities to drive him in and give our lineup some depth and the ability to do some things. Give us the chance to score a lot of runs.”

And at least for today’s lineup, Stephen Piscotty is batting cleanup with Jedd Gyorko getting the first chance to impress in the competition for the starting job at third base. Because it is early in Grapefruit League play, the teams will be using a designated hitter—which also allows for Matt Adams to be in the lineup.

[#STLCards](#) at Miami (2/25):

Fowler CF

G Garcia 2B

Carpenter 1B

Piscotty RF

Molina C

Adams DH

Gyorko 3B

Jo. Martinez LF

DeJong SS

Weaver RHP

— St. Louis Cardinals (@Cardinals) [February 25, 2017](#)

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