



# Kelly Evolving as a Catcher

by Brian Stull

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(Jupiter, FL) When he came to Spring Training [last year](#), Carson Kelly had just begun the process of transitioning from third baseman to catcher. Now with a year of experience under his belt, the St. Louis Cardinals prospect is back and absorbing even more about the position.

“I still have a lot to learn, but coming into this Spring Training, I understand what is expected,” said Kelly of being able to better grasp everything coming his way. “I’m getting flooded with information. Just being able to write that down and taking it and incorporating it into my work and in the games, it’s really helped me. Just being out there—it’s kind of breathtaking.”

“I’m writing stuff down maybe three, four times a day. Just anytime I go back to my locker, I’ve got something new to write down. Having all these resources and everybody behind you, it’s a special feeling that makes you want to work hard and continue to keep learning to be the best player you can be.”

Kelly hit .248 with six home runs and 49 RBIs at Peoria (A) last season and one of the biggest lessons he learned was the “grit” of getting behind the plate game after game.

“Yeah, it’s tough,” laughed Kelly, who recalled that was the first thing Mike Matheny told him about a year ago when he began the transition from third base to catcher.

“You’ve really got to eat, get up, get your conditioning in,” said Carson. “It takes that little bit more to put in to get what you want. You see Yadi in here every morning at five in the morning and he’s ready to work. I’m sure he does that or something similar in St. Louis, but he works. And that’s what’s expected of us. It goes to show that they want you to drive and continue to work hard.”

“It’s hard to explain the demands that come with that position,” agreed Matheny. “Especially for a guy that’s used for seeing a whole lot of offensive production and taking pride in his defense, but there’s so much more you can put into your own-self and your own development in a position besides being a catcher. That’s just the truth of it because there’s so many other responsibilities that take you away, there’s only so many hours in a day, and your body can only handle so much. All that was something we all considered before we even suggested to Carson to put on the ‘tools of intelligence’. He’s answered it extremely well.”

And similar to last year, Kelly is still maintaining his studies at Oregon State University—finishing up 12 credit hours this spring semester towards his Managerial Economics degree. “It’s hard, going home—this long day, been here since five or six in the morning and then you have a couple of hours of homework.”

But the balance is working and the Cardinals manager likes the way the 20-year old is going about it.

“He looks more comfortable behind the plate,” assessed Matheny. “You can see when we do some of the drills and some of the catching that some of these other guys who have been doing it their whole life, they’re going to look a bit more natural, but he fits. He fits a whole lot better this year. He’s looking very comfortable and continuing to try and fast forward on quite a few things. But he’s a great student of the game. He’s athletic. He’s strong. He’s talent and been real impressed at how he’s improved.”