

**L**ong before they yielded the division and saw their archrivals, for the first time in generations, take the crown, the Cardinals lost their way. An uncharacteristic Cardinals team had an uncharacteristic finish, out of the playoffs for the first time since 2010 and looking up at the champion Cubs for the first time in 108 years. A culprit in the Cardinals' slip to second place was shoddy defense and a plodding lineup that proved a stark contrast to the fundamental dynamos that won 100 games in 2015. To correct the drift, general manager John Mozeliak sought a team that was more athletic, stingier defensively. He started by plucking the Cubs' leadoff hitter, Dexter Fowler, to be his own. That allows Matt Carpenter to bat third and will give the Cardinals three on-base monsters atop the order, enough to compensate for a drain in sluggers.

By revisiting the club's roots, Mozeliak desires a "more exciting" team. He wants it to look familiar because the view isn't. Chased for years, the Cardinals are now chasing.

**ROTATION** The rotation slipped from an MLB-best 2.99 ERA in 2015 to a 13th-best and resolutely average 4.33 ERA in 2016. The truth is somewhere in between, and a more reliable defense will help a ground-ball-greedy staff get there. So will the return of stalwart Lance Lynn from elbow surgery and the revival of Adam Wainwright after the most frustrating year of the ace's career. Lynn, Wainwright and Carlos Martinez put three All-Stars atop the rotation, and Mike Leake will benefit most from improved gloves behind him. That seasoned foursome can become an assembly line of quality starts. That depth matches any contender in the league. The punctuation at No. 5 is an exclamation point. Rookie Alex Reyes is arguably the finest pitching prospect in baseball, and he'll offset any inconsistencies of youth with an elite fastball that sped his ascent and will be a fixture into the future.

**BULLPEN** The crater for the Cardinals could have come a lot sooner if not for the presence of the "Stone Buddha." Nicknamed that for his stoicism, Seung-hwan Oh finished one save shy of being the sixth rookie ever with 20 and 100 strikeouts. When All-Star Trevor Rosenthal fizzled due to an injury, Oh inherited the ninth and showed who is boss. Oh, known as "The Final Boss" in Asia, returns to close, but Rosenthal is back too — perhaps in a role just as vital. The Cardinals intend to "stretch out" Rosenthal so that he could start or be used as a multi-inning reliever. With power righthanders Rosenthal and Michael Wacha

possibly in the bullpen, they'll pair with two lefties, newcomer Brett Cecil and holdover Kevin Siegrist, for an eight-limbed bridge to Oh. In a variation of what teams popularized in October, those left-right combos could be utilized aggressively in left-leverage, late-inning binds. A key part of playing cleaner, tighter games is shortening games, and the bullpen is armed with rock-solid options, sharpened for an edge.

**MIDDLE INFIELD** The pivot from the team the Cardinals were to the team they intend to be again is up the middle, where second baseman Kolten Wong can bloom as shortstop Aledmys Diaz did in 2016. Wong personifies the athletic, energetic, frenetic style the Cardinals want to employ. Wong's turnaround would follow a trend. Less than 12 months removed from being designated for assignment, Diaz was an All-Star. His .369 on-base percentage led all rookies, and his 17 homers were the most ever by a Cardinals middle-infield rookie. Diaz can improve and stick as an impact shortstop, while Wong must emerge and star at second. Unsteadiness from either could undermine the desired defense and lineup's pep, leaving the Cardinals not only to rethink their approach but also to recast it.

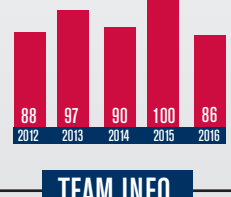
**CORNERS** One of the first changes of the winter was more of a promise. Carpenter had been an All-Star at second and third and was selected as an All-Star in 2016 while playing everywhere. Repurposed as a super-utility infielder, he appeared in at least 40 games at three different positions. Manager Mike Matheny phoned Carpenter this winter to tell him he was the everyday first baseman. He's a defensive upgrade and a fit for an offense-forward position. Carpenter's move opens third for Jhonny Peralta. Hand surgery cost him his job at shortstop and sapped his production. The Cardinals are banking on a bounce-back year for the veteran who led the team in homers in 2014. Jedd Gyorko will challenge for playing time at third after leading the team with 30 homers in 2016.

**OUTFIELD** Since 2014, the only regular center fielder to have a higher slugging percentage than Randal Grichuk was the player drafted immediately after him in 2009, Mike Trout. Grichuk's .495 is well off Trout's MVP-level .567, but it hints at what the Cards are trying to tap by moving Grichuk to left. Matt Holliday's departure for the Yankees after seven-plus seasons as a pillar leaves left unmaned, and in their effort to improve the overall outfield defense, the Cardinals want to give Grichuk a run there.

2016 RECORD  
**86-76**

HOME: 38-43 ROAD: 48-33

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



TEAM INFO

BUSCH STADIUM

Opened: 2006 Capacity: 46,660  
Left: 336' Center: 400' Right: 335'  
Tickets: 374-345-9600  
stlouis.cardinals.mlb.com

FANTASY TICKER



**BLUE-CHIP BOPPER**  
OF Stephen Piscotty  
**HIGH-DIVIDEND HURLER**  
RHP Carlos Martinez  
**BULL MARKET**  
OF Randal Grichuk  
**BEAR MARKET**  
SS Aledmys Diaz

**MEDICAL (IN)SECURITIES**  
RHP Lance Lynn  
IPO RHP Alex Reyes

**FUTURES MARKET** C Carson Kelly

**INSIDER TIP** There are pitching opportunities here that won't break the bank — Martinez here that won't break the bank — Martinez here that won't break the bank — Martinez here that won't break the bank — Reyes as the game's best rookie pitcher, Lynn getting healthy and Wainwright bouncing back.

STATLINE

OPS, 1ST TIME IN GAME FACING STARTER: 2016

1. Dexter Fowler, Cubs	1.203
2. Daniel Murphy, Nationals	1.062
3. Mookie Betts, Red Sox	1.052
4. David Ortiz, Red Sox	1.048
5. Jean Segura, D-backs	1.046

(min. 100 PAs, 1st time facing)

SCROLL DOWN

SCHEDULE

HOME	AWAY
<b>April</b>	
S	M T W Th F S
2 CHC	3 CHC 4 CHC 5 CIN 6 CIN 7 CIN 8
9 CIN	10 WAS 11 WAS 12 WAS 13 NYY 14 NYY 15
16 PIT	17 PIT 18 PIT 19 MIL 20 MIL 21 MIL 22
23 MIL	24 TOR 25 TOR 26 TOR 27 CIN 28 CIN 29
30 CIN	
<b>May</b>	
S	M T W Th F S
1 MIL	2 MIL 3 MIL 4 ATL 5 ATL 6
7 ATL	8 MIA 9 MIA 10 MIA 11 CHC 12 CHC 13
14 CHC	15 BOS 16 BOS 17 SF 18 SF 19
20 SF	21 LAD 22 LAD 23 LAD 24 COL 25 COL 26
27 COL	28 LAD 29 LAD 30
<b>June</b>	
S	M T W Th F S
1 LAD	2 CHC 3 CHC 4
5 CHC	6 CIN 7 CIN 8 PHI 9 PHI 10
11 PHI	12 MIL 13 MIL 14 BAL 15 BAL 16
17 BAL	18 PHI 19 PHI 20 PIT 21 PIT 22
23 PIT	24 ARI 25 ARI 26 WAS 27
<b>July</b>	
S	M T W Th F S
1 WAS	2 MIA 3 MIA 4 MIA 5 NYM 6 NYM 7
8 NYM	9 PIT 10 PIT 11 PIT 12
13 PIT	14 NYY 15 NYY 16 NYY 17 CHC 18 CHC 19
20 CHC	21 COL 22 COL 23 ARI 24 ARI 25
26 ARI	27 COL 28 COL 29
<b>August</b>	
S	M T W Th F S
1 MIL	2 MIL 3 MIL 4 CIN 5 CIN 6
7 ATL	8 KC 9 KC 10 ATL 11 ATL 12
13 ATL	14 BOS 15 BOS 16 PIT 17 PIT 18
19 PIT	20 SD 21 SD 22 SD 23 TB 24
25 TB	26 MIL 27 MIL 28 SF 29
<b>September/October</b>	
S	M T W Th F S
1 SF	2 SF 3 PIT 4 PIT 5
6 PIT	7 SD 8 SD 9 SD 10 CIN 11 CIN 12
13 CIN	14 CIN 15 CIN 16 CHC 17 CHC 18
19 CHC	20 CIN 21 CIN 22 PIT 23 PIT 24
25 PIT	26 CHC 27 CHC 28 CHC 29 MIL 30 MIL



**ALEDMYS DIAZ**  
His OPS (.797) since 2014 would also rank fourth among MLB left fielders. Newcomer Fowler will be flanked by Grichuk and Stephen Piscotty, two above-average fielders.

**CATCHING** On his way to a career-high 1,218.1 innings behind the plate, Yadier Molina hit .365 with a .529 slugging percentage in the second half. He didn't wear down; he powered up. That will help him, like his team, repeat past accomplishments. The Cardinals re-signed trusted vet Eric Fryer to be the backup, but they also could turn to Carson Kelly, a future starter at the position.

BEYOND THE BOX SCORE

**REVOLVING RIVALS** When the Cardinals host the Chicago Cubs on April 2, the first batter they send to the plate will be familiar to their archrivals. The last time the Cubs saw Dexter Fowler, he was homering for them in Game 7 of the World Series, leading them to the championship. Fowler's migration to St. Louis as a free agent comes a year after the Cubs poached Jason Heyward and John Lackey from the Cardinals' roster. Fowler's replacement in the outfield for Cubs? Why, a former Cardinal, of course: Jon Jay.

**LANCE, A LOT** When healthy, Lance Lynn was an unrepentant fastball chucker. Lynn missed all of 2016 recovering from Tommy John surgery, and he returns intent on picking up where he left off — bulldozing his way to 200 innings aboard his fastball and reasserting himself as a reliable, relentless starter who will be a free agent at season's end.

**SPRING CLEANING** The Cardinals' loose and frayed play throughout 2016 will prompt changes to their spring training schedule, and charged with that will be a new coach on Mike Matheny's staff, quality control coach Mike Shildt. The role's exact responsibilities remain ambiguous, but the Cardinals hope the promotions of Shildt and Oliver Marmol from the minors will add two teachers with

**BENCH** A strength of last year's team also became a complication for St. Louis. The Cardinals sought a stouter bench to provide both power and positional versatility, traits they thought would help fend off fatigue. The return was a MLB-record 17 pinch-hit homers, but players for so many positions also meant stability at none. Gyorko remains from a model that allowed him to thrive, but around him complements will rule, from savvy pinch-hitter Greg Garcia to outfielder Tommy Pham.

**MANAGEMENT** Before making moves to retool the roster, the Cardinals gave Matheny job security. He received a three-year extension, one that reaches past many of his players. A clubhouse-first manager whom players see as a gifted motivator, Matheny must shepherd young players into larger, leading roles all while contending. Mozeliak, nearing his 10th anniversary as GM, has restocked the pipeline and given "the coaching staff new tools in their toolbox." His next moves: a new core player to pair with Fowler, and possibly a snazzier title, above GM.

**FINAL ANALYSIS** After a decade as a regular resident and sometimes king of October, the Cardinals are no longer the organization within their division that others aspire to be. But with stars such as Carpenter (in place) and Reyes (ready to shine) mixed with a style better suited for their ballpark, they are out to prove that 2016 was a brief eclipse. The sun hasn't set on their empire.

**STRETCHING ROSEY** An All-Star and back-to-back 40-save closer, Trevor Rosenthal never hid his aspirations to be a starter. He'll take a step closer to that wish this spring. The Cardinals intend to "stretch out" Rosenthal so that he could start games — but also so he will pitch multiple innings in relief. In Rosenthal, a power right-hander who lost the ninth due to injury, and starter Michael Wacha, the Cardinals see two hybrid relievers — similar to October star Andrew Miller — who could pitch in high-leverage spots without being tethered to the ninth inning.

**VIVA CUBA** Aware the rules could change and the big-budget behemoths were handcuffed by spending limits, the Cardinals executed a record spending spree on international talent, especially from Cuba. Two years after the Cardinals tiptoed into the market to sign Aledmys Diaz, they signed three young Cubans for bonuses more than \$1 million: speedy outfielder Randy Arizona (\$1.25 million); teen leadoff whiz Jonatan Machado (\$2.3 million); and 6'6" starter Johan Oviedo (\$1.9 million). Machado alone blew past the Cardinals' MLB-imposed spending cap, of \$2.0 million. They're taxed on average.

SCROLL DOWN



**YADIER MOLINA**

PROJECTED LINEUP NEXT LEVEL

**LINEUP**

CF	Dexter Fowler (S)
SS	Aledmys Diaz (R)
1B	Matt Carpenter (L)
RF	Stephen Piscotty (R)
LF	Randal Grichuk (R)
3B	Jhonny Peralta (R)
C	Yadier Molina (R)
2B	Kolten Wong (L)

**BENCH**

1B	Matt Adams (L)
INF	Jedd Gyorko (R)
C	Eric Fryer (R)
OF	Tommy Pham (R)
INF	Greg Garcia (L)

**ROTATION**

RHP	Adam Wainwright
RHP	Carlos Martinez
RHP	Lance Lynn
RHP	Mike Leake
RHP	Alex Reyes

**BULLPEN**

RHP	Seung-hwan Oh (Closer)
RHP	Trevor Rosenthal
LHP	Brett Cecil
RHP	Jonathan Broxton
LHP	Kevin Siegrist
RHP	Michael Wacha
RHP	Matt Bowman

Aledmys Diaz ranked fifth among rookies in WAR (2.7), sixth in on-base percentage (.369), seventh in batting average (.300) and homers (17), and eighth in slugging percentage (.510).

Jedd Gyorko's home run per fly ball rate shot up 9.7 points to a career-high 24.4 percent, eighth best in baseball among hitters with at least 400 PAs.

Mike Leake struggled to a 4.69 ERA in his first season in St. Louis in part because he stranded a league-low 65.6 percent of his baserunners. His strand rate had never dipped below 71.0 percent.

Trevor Rosenthal's 14.7 percent walk rate was surpassed only by Hunter Cervenka among relievers with at least 40 innings.

SCOUTING REPORT

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP THE CARDINALS

"I'm always a little skeptical of a pitcher you could have gotten for half the price a year ago, but they didn't overpay by too much for Dexter Fowler. He gets on base, he switch-hits, and if he's below average in center, it's only by a little. Moving Matt Carpenter to first base is a surprise to me, but it does help sort out the rest of that roster. I like their rotation a lot, even with Adam Wainwright on the decline. He can still be effective, and Carlos Martinez is the real deal. So is Alex Reyes. He might be the best pitching prospect in baseball. They gave Brett Cecil a lot of money as his main lefty in the bullpen, but he's very good, and so is Seung-hwan Oh. The Cardinals got Oh from South Korea and Aledmys Diaz from Cuba — without a lot of hype — on multiyear deals that are providing a lot of value. There's a reason they're still a model organization."

STATISTICIAN

- 381 Combined on-base percentage in 2016 for the likely top three hitters in Cardinals' 2017 order: Dexter Fowler, Aledmys Diaz and Matt Carpenter.
- 0 Gold Glove Awards won in 2016 by Cardinals, a first since 2007 and ending Yadier Molina's run of eight consecutive.
- 25 Jersey number Fowler will wear, the first player to do so for the Cardinals since Mark McGwire returned in 2001.
- 37 Years the Cardinals went between appearances by a home-grown shortstop in the All-Star Game, from Garry Templeton (1979) to Aledmys Diaz (2016).
- 38-43 Record at home in 2016, the first losing record in Busch Stadium III's history and first time in Mike Matheny's tenure with fewer than 50 home wins.
- 60 Home runs lost with the departures of Brandon Moss (28), Matt Holliday (20), and Jeremy Hazelbaker (12).

SCROLL DOWN

CARDINALS ROSTER

General Manager: John Mozeliak Manager: Mike Matheny Coaches: David Bell (bench), Blaise Iltisley (bullpen), Derek Liliquist (pitching), John Mabry (hitting), Chris Maloney (third base), Oliver Marmol (first base), Bill Mueller (base hitting), Mike Shildt (quality control)

No.	Pitchers	B-T	Ht.	Wt.	Birthdate	2016 Club	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	BB	SO
67	Matt Bowman	R-R	6-0	175	5/31/91	ST. LOUIS	2-5	3.46	59	0	0	67.2	59	20	52
8	Mike Leake	R-R	5-10	170	11/12/87	ST. LOUIS	4-2	4.30	66	0	0	60.2	52	24	57
30	Jonathan Broxton	R-R	6-4	285	6/16/84	ST. LOUIS	1-7	3.93	54	0	0	36.2	39	8	45
21	Brett Cecil	R-L	6-3	235	7/2/86	TORONTO	0-0	0.00	2	0	0	2.0	1	0	0
						Buffalo (AAA)	0-0	0.00	2	0	0	2.0	2	0	0
						Duquoin (A)	0-1	4.50	2	0	0	2.0	2	0	4
29	Zach Duke	L-L	6-2	210	4/19/83	ST. LOUIS	0-1	1.93	28	0	1	23.1	17	13	26
						Chicago AL	2-0	2.63	53	0	1	37.2	31	16	42
						Atlanta	1-4	4.86	20	7	0	50.0	54	21	49
						Atlanta	3-3	4.18	12	10	0	56.0	58	22	57
						Gwinnett (AAA)	0-0	0.00	1	0	0	3.0	1	1	2
						Rome (A)									
							Injured - Missed Season								
							0-12	4.69	30	30	0	176.2	203	30	125
							0-0	0.00	1	1	0	3.0	3	0	3
							0-0	2.45	2	2	0	3.2	4	0	4
							2-0	3.38	30	0	0	48.0	35	14	44
							16-9	3.04	31	31	0	195.1	169	70	174
							1-1	27.00	4	1	0	5.1	16	3	2
							4-8	3.73	16	16	0	89.1	87	31	84
							5-2	2.30	9	9	0	54.2	47	17	43
							6-1	1.92	76	0	19	79.2	55	18	103
							4-3	1.57	12	5	1	46.0	33	23	52
							2-3	4.96	14	14	0	65.1	63	29	93
							2-4	4.46	45	0	14	40.1	48	29	56
							1-0	2.77	67	0	3	61.2	42	26	66
							0-6	3.14	45	0	5	51.2	42	16	59
							2-0	6.00	12	0	0	9.0	12	6	7
							3-2	5.21	42	0	17	46.2	47	22	72
							7-7	5.09	27	24	0	138.0	159	45	114
							13-9	4.62	33	33	0	198.2	220	59	161
							1-4	5.70	9	8	0	36.1	46	12	45
							0-0	0.00	1	0	0	6.0	2	2	4
							1-3	1.00	1	1	0	6.0	2	2	4
							0-0	0.00	12	12	0	77.0	63	10	88
							0-0	4.12	21	0	0	19.2	14		