

St. Louis Cardinals vs. San Diego Padres

THE SERIES

Starting lineups

CARDINALS	PADRES
SS David Eckstein	LF Dave Roberts
LF Chris Duncan	RF Brian Giles
1B Albert Pujols	1B Adrian Gonzalez
RF Juan Encarnacion	C Mike Piazza
2B Scott Rolen	SS Khalil Greene
3B Ronnie Belliard	CF Mike Cameron
CF Jim Edmonds	3B Todd Walker
C Yadier Molina	2B Josh Barfield

The schedule

- Game 1:** St. Louis (Carpenter 15-8) at San Diego (Peavy 11-14), 2 p.m. today, ESPN
- Game 2:** St. Louis (Suppan 12-7) at San Diego (C. Young 11-5), 2 p.m. Thursday, ESPN
- Game 3:** San Diego at St. Louis (Weaver 5-4 or Reyes 5-8), Saturday, time and TV TBD
- Game 4*:** San Diego at St. Louis, Sunday, time and TV TBD
- Game 5*:** St. Louis at San Diego, Monday, time and TV TBD

Today's pitching matchup

St. Louis ace Chris Carpenter (15-8, 3.09 ERA) was pushed back from his scheduled start Sunday in order to throw the playoff opener today. The gamble paid off as St. Louis backed into the playoffs when Houston lost. The Cy Young winner is the only consistent starter in the Cardinals' rotation, but he's a true ace of the staff. San Diego's Jake Peavy (11-14, 4.09) can be one of the most dominating young pitchers in the game (215 strikeouts/202½ innings), but has been surprisingly inconsistent this season. He pitched hurt in last year's playoffs but is healthy this season.



Cardinals' Chris Carpenter: 15-8, 3.09 ERA



Padres' Jake Peavy: 11-14, 4.09

Pitchers	Line	2006 Team		2006 vs. Opp.				
		ERA	Rec	W-L	IP			
St. Louis	Carpenter (R)	2:05p	15-8	3.09	20-12	0-1	7.0	7.71
San Diego	Peavy (R)	-11:5	11-14	4.09	15-17	1-0	5.0	10.80

THE MATCHUP

Starting pitching

A primo pitching staff can dominate a five-game series. That won't happen here because both rotations are vulnerable. Cardinals ace Chris Carpenter has a dynamite cut fastball and crisp curve. But he struggled down the stretch, possibly because of fatigue. After Carpenter, manager Tony La Russa has no one he can count on in a big game. There's rookie Anthony Reyes (inexperience), Jeff Suppan (lack of velocity), Jeff Weaver (command issues) and sinkerballer Jason Marquis (0-4 in September). San Diego's top three of Jake Peavy, Chris Young and newcomer David Wells isn't dominant, but it's better than what the Cardinals offer. Peavy, inconsistent all season, still can put bats to sleep when he effectively works the edge of the plate. The wily Wells, the Padres' lone lefty starter, brings big-game experience and a good changeup. As the Rockies know, Young can be nearly unhittable, or a feast for hitters. **Edge:** Padres.

Bullpen

This is no contest, and not just because San Diego's Trevor Hoffman, now the majors' all-time saves leader, is a hot story. The Cardinals' bullpen, their Achilles' heel all season, sank into disarray when closer Jason Isringhausen went on the disabled list because of a bad hip. St. Louis is counting on Adam Wainwright — a rotation possibility next season — to stifle the Padres late. The Padres' bullpen is more than just Hoffman's fabled changeup. Scott Linebrink and side-armed Cla Meredith are effective setup men. San Diego brings in southpaw Alan Embree to face lefties. **Edge:** Padres.

At the plate

First baseman Albert Pujols (49 home runs, just 50 strikeouts) single-handedly dragged the slumping Cardinals into the postseason. Brilliant in the clutch, Pujols is baseball's best hitter. He can't do it all alone, however, which is why he will need third baseman Scott Rolen and center fielder Jim Edmonds to start helping more. The Padres struggled on offense all season, finishing 14th in the NL in runs scored. The heart of the order features Brian Giles, Adrian Gonzalez, Mike Piazza and Mike Cameron. Not exactly murderer's row. Dave Roberts' speed is a big plus. **Edge:** Cardinals.

In the field

The Padres' struggles at third base won't be solved until next season, shortstop Khalil Greene is playing hurt (finger injury) and the

Key player



Kyle Ericson | The Associated Press

Albert Pujols, 1B, Cardinals

Can one bat lift a team in the postseason? Usually not, but Pujols is special enough to do so. For St. Louis to have a chance, Pujols needs to come up big. The problem is, the Cardinals aren't getting enough runners on base of late to allow him to do much damage.

Cardinals can run on Piazza. Cameron is solid in center field and Gonzalez is good at first. Overall, the Padres are a solid but not spectacular defensive team. If center fielder Edmonds were 100 percent, the Cardinals would have an advantage, but he's still not right after his concussion, and now he has a sore foot. Shortstop David Eckstein and third baseman Rolen are terrific. **Edge:** Padres.

Managers

Tony La Russa, St. Louis' resident genius, saw his team go 3-9 down the stretch. La Russa loves the chess game, but he doesn't have the right pieces to play it well right now. Critics contend that Bruce Bochy is a poor in-game tactician, yet he's guided the Padres into the playoff two years in a row. **Edge:** Padres.

Intangibles

The Cardinals were wretched down the stretch, backing into the playoffs. All the momentum is with San Diego, which is ready to erase last year's NLDS sweep at the hands of the Cardinals. **Edge:** Padres.

Prediction

Patrick Saunders predicts Padres in four.

BY PATRICK SAUNDERS | THE DENVER POST

CARDINALS STATISTICS

BATTERS	AVG	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Pujols	.331	535	119	177	33	1	0	2	49	137	50
Rodriguez	.301	183	31	55	12	3	2	19	21	45	0
Rolen	.296	521	94	154	48	1	22	95	56	69	7
Duncan	.293	280	60	82	11	3	22	43	30	69	0
Eckstein	.292	500	68	146	18	1	2	23	31	41	7
Encarnacion	.278	557	74	155	25	5	19	79	30	86	6
Spiezio	.272	276	44	75	15	4	13	52	37	66	1
Taguchi	.266	316	46	84	19	1	2	31	32	48	11
Wilson	.263	501	58	132	25	2	17	72	29	121	12
Miles	.263	426	48	112	20	5	2	30	38	42	2
Edmonds	.257	350	52	90	18	0	19	70	53	101	4
Bigbie	.240	25	2	6	1	0	0	1	3	9	0
Belliard	.237	194	20	46	9	1	5	23	15	36	0
Vizcaino	.232	142	19	33	6	0	2	8	17	14	0
Bennett	.223	157	13	35	5	0	4	22	11	30	0
Rose	.222	9	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	4	0
Molina	.216	417	29	90	26	0	6	49	26	41	1
Schumakr	.185	54	3	10	1	0	1	2	5	6	2
Nelson	.000	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	.269	5522	781	1484	292	27	184	745	531	922	59

PITCHERS	W	L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	ER	BB	SO
Carpenter	15	8	3.09	32	0	0	221.2	194	76	43	184
Wainwright	2	1	3.12	61	0	0	75.0	64	26	22	72
Kinney	0	0	3.24	21	0	0	25.0	17	9	8	22
Thompson	1	2	3.34	43	1	0	56.2	58	21	20	32
Isringhausen	4	4	3.55	59	0	33	58.1	47	23	38	52
Looper	9	3	3.56	69	0	0	73.1	76	29	40	41
Hancock	3	3	4.09	62	0	1	77.0	70	35	23	50
Suppan	12	7	4.12	32	0	0	190.0	207	87	69	104
Narveson	0	0	4.82	5	1	0	9.1	6	5	5	12
Johnson	2	4	4.95	56	0	0	36.1	33	20	20	37
Reyes	5	8	5.06	17	0	0	85.1	84	48	34	72
Weaver	5	4	5.18	15	0	0	83.1	99	48	26	45
Sosa	3	11	5.42	45	13	4	118.0	138	71	40	75
Flores	1	1	5.62	65	0	0	41.2	49	26	22	40
Marquis	14	16	6.02	33	0	0	194.1	231	130	75	96
Mulder	6	7	7.14	17	0	0	93.1	124	74	35	50
Rincon	0	0	10.80	5	0	0	3.1	6	4	4	6
Totals	83	78	4.54	161	161	38	1429.2	1475	721	504	970



Padres' Trevor Hoffman: 46 saves



Cardinals' Adam Wainwright: 3 saves

PADRES STATISTICS

BATTERS	AVG	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Masato	.350	4	0	3	1	0	0	2	0	0	0
Bard	.338	231	28	78	19	0	9	40	27	39	1
Cust	.333	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Gonzalez	.304	570	83	173	38	1	24	82	52	113	0
Roberts	.293	499	80	146	18	13	2	44	51	61	49
Brayan	.292	72	14	21	1	0	6	9	15	27	0
Piazza	.283	399	39	113	19	1	22	68	34	66	0
Barfield	.280	539	72	151	32	3	13	58	30	81	21
Walker	.278	442	56	123	22	2	9	53	55	38	2
Cameron	.268	552	88	148	34	9	22	83	71	142	25
Giles	.263	604	87	159	37	1	14	83	104	60	9
Blum	.254	276	27	70	17	1	4	34	17	51	0
Johnson	.250	120	19	30	5	2	4	12	14	36	3
Greene	.245	412	56	101	26	2	15	55	39	87	5
Bowen	.245	94	22	23	5	0	3	13	13	26	0
McAnulty	.231	13	3	3	1	0	1	3	2	4	0
Sledge	.229	70	7	16	3	0	2	7	8	17	0
Bellhorn	.190	253	26	48	11	2	8	27	32	90	0
Alexander	.176	34	2	6	1	1	0	4	2	5	0
Knott	.000	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Totals	.263	5576	731	1465	298	38	161	698	564	1104	123

PITCHERS	W	L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	ER	BB	SO
Meredith	5	1	1.07	45	0	0	50.2	30	6	6	37
Hoffman	0	2	2.14	65	0	46	63.0	48	15	13	50
Cassidy	6	4	2.53	42	0	0	42.2	39	12	19	49
Sweeney	2	0	3.20	37	0	2	56.1	53	20	16	53
Embree	4	3	3.27	73	0	0	52.1	50	19	15	23
C. Young	11	5	3.46	31	31	0	179.1	134	69	69	164
D. Wells	1	2	3.49	5	5	0	28.1	33	11	4	14
Linebrink	7	4	3.57	73	2	0	75.7	73	55	22	68
Williams	12	5	3.65	25	24	0	145.1	152	59	59	72
Hensley	11	12	3.71	37	29	0	187.0	174	77	76	122
Adkins	2	1	3.98	55	0	0	54.1	55	24	20	30
Peavy	11	14	4.09	32	32	0	202.1	187	92	62	215
Estes	0	1	4.50	1	1	0	6.0	5	3	3	4
Brocaill	2	2	4.76	25	0	0	28.1	27	15	8	19
Park	7	7	4.81	24	21	0	136.2	146	73	44	96
M. Thompson	4	4	4.92	16	16	0	92.0	103	51	30	35
Seanez	1	2	5.68	8	0	0	6.1	7	4	6	6
Williamson	2	4	5.72	42	0	0	39.1	41	25	22	42
Totals	88	74	3.87	162	162	50	1463.2	1385	629	468	1097

Los