

Indians Strike Gold With Rodriguez

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Tuesday, September 11 2007 7:00 PM -

The Indians had four second round picks in the 2006 Draft, and with one of them took a gamble on shortstop Josh Rodriguez from Rice. The gamble was not on Rodriguez's talent as going into the season he was one of the top rated shortstops in college. The gamble was on his health, and so far, the gamble seems to have paid off. Our Tony Lastoria had a chance to sit down with the Indians talented shortstop prospect.



The Indians had four second round picks in the 2006 Draft, and with one of them took a gamble on shortstop Josh Rodriguez from Rice.

The gamble was not on Rodriguez's talent as going into the season he was one of the top rated shortstops in college. The gamble was on his health, and so far, the gamble seems to have paid off.

Rodriguez just finished his first full-season of professional ball at advanced Single-A Kinston, and after a slow start finished strong to end the year hitting .262 with 20 HR, 82 RBI, 21 stolen bases and an .811 OPS. He racked up two Carolina League Player of the Week honors (8/13 and 9/4) and also was named a Carolina League Post-Season All-Star.

With his first full season in the books, Rodriguez is satisfied with what he was able to accomplish this year, but knows there is still a need for much improvement.

“Yeah, the first full year I knew I would have some ups and downs as everyone goes through it,” said Rodriguez. “But, I just kept working and working. For awhile there it looked like it was not going to be a good one, but I was able to turn it around and made it a decent season. |

It is definitely the beauty of a long season especially getting to play everyday and working on things and getting to use them in the game.”

The reason why Rodriguez became such a gamble as a second round draft pick is because he was a first round talent who slipped in the draft because of a serious elbow injury. Rodriguez

Indians Strike Gold With Rodriguez

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Tuesday, September 11 2007 7:00 PM -

sustained the injury after his sophomore season at Rice University while playing fall ball.

"It was my elbow," said Rodriguez. "I strained a tendon in there pretty bad. I didn't tear anything, I just strained it to where I had to let it rest for a long time.

It happened during fall ball, so I sat out for two months.

I came back, and started playing at the start of the season and the second week into it playing on a cold day I guess my arm just wasn't warmed up enough and I made a relay throw to home and I felt the same thing that happened the first time, so I had to sit out for seven weeks again to give it some rest and the whole time I just DHed."

Any injury to a high profile draft pick can result in a significant drop in your standing going into the draft. After coming back from the first injury in the fall, and then re-injuring the elbow again early in the spring, Rodriguez slipped as legitimate first round pick to where he was projected as a second to fifth round draft pick. Rodriguez knew this when the injury re-occurred, and tried to find a way to get in there and play to at least hit and keep his draft stock up.

"It was a little disappointing at first, because I had to sit out for two months the first time," said Rodriguez. "This time I didn't know how long I would have to sit out. The first time I couldn't even swing a bat, that's how bad it hurt.

The second time around I was still able to swing the bat, which allowed me to DH and help contribute to the team. I came back after seven weeks, and when I came back I played my first two games at first [base] just so I did not have to make too many throws.

It allowed another week for my arm to rest, and then they decided to put me at third [base] so I did not have to make anymore long relay throws and possibly re-injure it because it was my draft year."

After playing a season in Single-A Mahoning Valley last year, and now a full season in advanced Single-A Kinston in the books this year, it looks like Rodriguez's health issues are behind him. Since being drafted, he has not been sidelined with any elbow issues, and now 100% healthy he is living up to the first round draft hype he had before the injury.

Indians Strike Gold With Rodriguez

Written by {ga=consigliere}
Tuesday, September 11 2007 7:00 PM -

