

Analysis: Bard vs Shoppach

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Sunday, January 29 2006 7:00 PM -



The headliner in the Coco Crisp trade may have been Andy Marte, but the Indians also received another talented player in catcher Kelly Shoppach.

Shoppach may have been the toughest player for the Red Sox to part with in the Coco Crisp trade. The Red Sox drafted Shoppach in the 2nd round of the 2001 Amateur Draft. Since then, they have developed him and seen him become one of their most valued prospects. He has landed on the Red Sox Top 10 prospect list in Baseball America the last four years, being ranked #2 in their system in 2003 and 2004, #8 in 2005, and #7 in 2006.

Shoppach's greatest attribute is his defense. In his four year minor league career, he has been voted as the top defensive catcher in the league each season. He was named by managers in the International League as the league's top defensive catcher in 2004 and 2005, was voted the Eastern League's (AA) top defensive catcher in 2003, and was voted the Florida State League's (A) top defensive catcher in 2002.

A big reason he has received such high accolades is his ability to shutdown a running game. In 2003 he threw out 31% of basestealers, in 2004 he threw out 33%, and at AAA Pawtucket last year he threw out

Analysis: Bard vs Shoppach

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Sunday, January 29 2006 7:00 PM -

44% of attempted basestealers. Quite simply, the Indians have acquired a top notch defensive catcher, one who can throw out runners and be a top notch receiver.

Oh, and his bat is pretty potent as well.

Career Minor League Numbers:

Bard: .286/.344/.410/.754 and 19 HRs and 131 RBIs in 1015 at bats

Shoppach: .259/.349/.470/.819 and 70 HRs and 265 RBIs in 1524 at bats

Shoppach hasn't hit for average nearly as high as Bard in the minors; however, Shoppach's ability to work counts and take walks actually had him on base more than Bard.

But, the Indians clearly love his power potential from the right-side of the plate. Bard comes nowhere close to Shoppach from a slugging perspective. Shoppach's power has been put on display the last two years in AAA Pawtucket as he hit 48 home runs, and in 2005 he led the league in home runs per at bat.

Indians 2005 backup catcher Josh Bard seemed to fall out of favor with the Indians some time last season, as evidenced by Indians manager Eric Wedge's refusal to play Josh Bard last year (34 games played and 84 at bats). The Indians clearly did not feel comfortable with Bard in the lineup, and as a result he ran Victor Martinez into the ground. The addition of Shoppach should help quell those fears, as he will allow Wedge to be more confident in resting starting catcher Victor Martinez more often.

Shoppach's leadership skills are outstanding. His first two seasons as a pro, he was named team MVP in 2002 and 2003. He is a gamer, and is often compared to Jason Varitek. He also has been named to the International League's All-Star team the last two years.

Another plus in the deal, is service time. Bard has more major league experience as he has played in 156 games and racked up 496 at bats, while Shoppach has only 9 game and 15 at bats of experience at the major league level. Shoppach's limited service time will keep him under the Indians control for at least the next 6 years, while Bard is only under control for 4 more seasons.

Analysis: Bard vs Shoppach

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Sunday, January 29 2006 7:00 PM -

Shoppach is a major league ready catcher, and has been for two years. Unfortunately, the Red Sox stashed him in AAA Pawtucket the last two years because they wanted him to play everyday, and because they had All-Star Jason Varitek as their starter, and veteran Doug Mirabelli as their backup.

It is also possible that Shoppach could be packaged in another deal at some point for a need, and the Indians go with one of Einar Diaz or Tim Laker as Victor's backup. In the end, however, Shoppach is an upgrade over Josh Bard.