

Crowe Looking To Be Leading Man

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Monday, July 14 2008 7:00 PM -

With every home run that Indians outfielder Grady Sizemore hits, the outcry for his move down into the middle of the order to become more of a run producer becomes louder. But with Grady happy atop the lineup, and with no other viable leadoff hitter on the roster, the Indians have kept the AL HR leader in the leadoff spot. Tony believes that the guy that could move Grady down to the three hole is Akron outfielder (and former Indian first round pick) Trevor Crowe. And Tony spoke with him on a recent trip to Akron.



With every home run that Indians outfielder Grady Sizemore hits, the outcry for his move down into the middle of the order to become more of a run producer becomes louder. Sizemore is one of the best leadoff hitters in the game with the ability to get on-base as well as showcase a productive, powerful bat.

So, if or when the Indians ever decide to slide him out of the leadoff spot, a very capable replacement will be required.

The player to move Sizemore out of his perch in the crow's nest atop the lineup may be....wait for it....Akron outfielder Trevor Crowe.

Crowe has the ability to hit for average with some pop, but his biggest strength is his excellent plate discipline and pitch recognition skills. Crowe has a very good approach at the plate with a very advanced bat which has allowed him to be moved quickly through the farm system. He has a contagious swagger, and is a very high energy and explosive player who has an engine that never stops.

Many scouts have compared Crowe to Baltimore Orioles second baseman Brian Roberts, and his approach makes him a potential leadoff or two-hole hitter for the Indians down the road.

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Crowe's season has been plagued with injuries, but when he has played it has probably been the best baseball of his career hitting .325 with four home runs, 26 RBI, nine stolen bases and a .921 OPS in just 41 games. Crowe was unbelievable in June, hitting .400 (42-105) with 24 RBI.

With his hot month of play, Crowe saw his batting average of .155 when June started climb 158 points to .313 when the month ended.

"It was definitely a good month for me and I feel like I am playing the best baseball I have ever played in my life," said Crowe in an interview last week at Canal Park. "I just started playing well.

Started seeing the ball well and putting good swings on balls.

I think it was more a result of everything starting to happen my way.

I started to get some breaks.

Those balls that I was squaring up and just missing by an inch were turning into home runs instead of line drive singles.

When I get back, I am going to keep rolling with it."

Crowe is currently out with what has been officially called an intercostal muscle pull, although Indians Farm Director Ross Atkins calls it more of a deep bruise.

"It is below his left chest in his rib cage region," said Atkins. "It is not an intercostal strain, it is more of a bruise.

He is going to be fine.

We are not exactly sure where the pain is coming from or what is generating the pain.

It is something that is preventing him from swinging with a 100% strength left-handed, and because we are in the minor leagues and we don't have to win every day in the minors and he is not quite ready for the major leagues, we will take advantage of the disabled list and make sure he is 100% and ready to go."

Crowe initially felt the injury on the first day of their most recent road trip that started in Erie, PA on June 30th. He sat out the first game, but came back and played in the second game on July 1st as the designated hitter and was 3-for-3 in the game before being removed in the sixth inning because of the injury.

"I felt it during batting practice the first day on our road trip," said Crowe. "And then during the second game I felt it even more and had to come out of the game.

And since then I just haven't been playing.

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Hopefully in a week or so I will be back.

It is feeling better everyday, but it is just one of those slow healing things."

Talk about awful timing with the injury. Crowe's hot month of June had a lot of fans excited and believing that he was finally starting to realize his potential.

But, once again the injury bug reared its ugly head again, and Crowe is once again on the disabled list.

With Crowe, it has always been about health.

When he is healthy, he performs very well.

In 2005 he missed time with an abdominal and thumb injury, and in 2006 he missed about six weeks total as a result of an oblique and ankle injury.

In that 2006 season, Crowe was sensational and was hitting .329 with four home runs, 31 RBI, 29 stolen bases, and a .919 OPS in 60 games at Kinston by mid-June. He went down with the oblique injury, sat out for a little over three weeks and then when he was reactivated he was moved up to Akron.

In his first ten games at Akron he hit .366 (15-for-41), but went down with a severe ankle sprain that sidelined him another two weeks.

When he came back from the ankle injury at the beginning of August, Crowe was not the same hitter and to make matters worse the Indians began experimenting with him at second base.

Crowe ended up hitting .200 (25-for-125) the last month of the season, but when the second base experiment was nixed and he was back in the outfield for the Eastern League playoffs he was his old self and hit .349 (15-for-43) with six doubles, two triples, two RBI, two stolen bases and scored 12 runs in ten playoff games.

Crowe believes if anything had an affect on his play the last month of the season in Akron in 2006 it was the position change to second base.

"I don't think it was so much the ankle [that year] as it was the position change," said Crowe. "Getting here at noon everyday for a 7 o'clock game and doing an hour of infield and then going and playing the game, I think it was more the position change because once I got to the playoffs that year I played extremely well once I was back in

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