

Brown hopes to deliver in September

Written by {ga=consigliere}

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What can Brown do for you?

Well, the Indians certainly hope to find that out this September.

Like the popular UPS slogan, Cleveland Indians outfielder and first baseman Jordan Brown is hoping to deliver a good September to give the Indians front office and coaching staff a look at how he can help this team in 2011 and beyond.

"As of right now I think things are going pretty well," said Brown in a recent interview for the IPI. "Obviously I got sent down [in mid-August], but you have to take that with a grain of salt and continue to do what got you here. I think I did a good job the last few games hitting balls hard and getting back to do what I do best and hope to continue that in September."

Brown, 26, has had an amazing six year minor league career where over 594 games and 2440 plate appearances he has hit .306 with 59 HR, 355 RBI, and an .840 OPS. He and the Indians are hoping his minor league success at the plate will translate to the big league level and help a

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much beleaguered big league lineup.

So far Brown has gotten off to a slow start offensively in his first foray into the big league this year where in 11 games he is just 8-for-39 and hitting .205 with a .552 OPS. He knows it is still very early and the sample size is small, and that he is one small hot streak of two to three games from making those numbers much more respectable.

"I am working on a few things, but I am just trying to get back to where I was last year," said Brown. "It has kind of been an uphill battle and sometimes I feel like it. My health is great, and I am being productive on and off the field in regard to that. The swing is really getting back to where it was driving the balls to all parts of the field, because there was a little while there I wasn't doing it."

Getting Brown's swing back on track has been the focus all season as his swing is his bread and butter and ultimately is what has earned him his big league opportunity. It is not the prettiest of swings, but with his excellent eye at the plate he has a very good knack of making consistent, hard contact.

"There are a ton of things I can go through that involves my swing mechanics, but that is neither here nor there," said Brown. "There are always ways you can refine yourself and make things simpler and that is what I am constantly trying to do. I got to a stage last year where I didn't even have to work as I would just go and take my swings and I was good. This season it has kind of been a little bit of a struggle mentally and physically. I have a newfound respect for guys who are able to come back and produce and play well after a surgery. It is not an easy thing to do."

Brown's season got off to a rough start when a few weeks into spring training this year he injured his knee doing outfield drills and had to have surgery. He subsequently missed all of the exhibition season in spring training and the first month of the season before making an appearance with Triple-A Columbus on April 29th.

The knee no longer bothers Brown, but the Indians have been careful with how they have used him this season as they wanted to make sure it was 100%. As a result, he was the designated hitter for 23 of his 83 games in Columbus (17 1B, 43 OF).

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Now that the reigns have come off so to speak, it looks like the Indians are going to try him out at first base and see if it is a position they can help them out at as a handcuff to Matt LaPorta. With his versatility, he could play left field at times when LaPorta plays, or designated hitter since Travis Hafner will probably only be able to play four to five games a week the rest of his career because of his chronic shoulder issues.

"I played a lot of first [of late in Columbus]," said Brown. "I [didn't] know if I [was] going to play first up top. That's their decision. I do my best to be prepared if I am ever called upon at first. Mainly [in Columbus I played] left field and designated hitter, and I DHed a little more often to make sure my knee is okay, which was all at the Indians discretion."

Since Brown returned to Cleveland on Wednesday when rosters expanded on September 1st, he looks much more relaxed. That was not the case when he had first came up after he was called up at the end of July when Austin Kearns was traded to the Yankees. He made his big league debut on August 1

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at Toronto with an 0-for-4 and two strikeouts and then went to Boston and had a chance to play at legendary Fenway Park.

"It was tough to calm down and relax and do what got you here," said Brown. "It took a few games for me to relax and breathe. I couldn't breathe for the longest time because I had been waiting so long for this and I couldn't concentrate. I was just so in awe of the fact I was there as opposed to actually going out there and producing and just doing what I do. I think I got back to normal the last day at Boston."

With the month of September now in motion, this is Brown's opportunity to show what kind of hitter he can be at the big league level. It is not fair to use a month's worth of playing time to evaluate a player - especially in September - but considering the logjam of outfielders and backup first basemen on the roster, opportunities are limited so he has to make the most of it.

As a former two time minor league MVP and winner of several batting titles, Brown undoubtedly wants to produce, but he mostly wants to show he can deliver in the clutch.

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"I have yet to get a big yet in a game to help us win," said Brown. "That would be something I want to do, to get some hits and help put a "W" in the win column. I am just thinking more along the lines of doing what it takes to help us win because I think ultimately that is what it comes down to. That's what I am hoping to do in September, and then when spring rolls around hopefully it puts me in a better spot in 2011."

It has been an interesting year of ups and downs to say the least for Brown. One which started all the way back last November when he was finally added to the 40-man roster, then was injured in February, and then finally made his big league debut in August. It is a year that hopefully provides a good base to build off of for a long, successful big league career. Hopefully in Cleveland.

"I missed the first month and some change, and then I threw my back out so I missed another two and a half weeks there," said Brown shaking his head. "It has been interesting to say the least. It has been a year of opportunity. It has been a year of discouragement. It has been a year of many things. But hopefully it will be a year I can look back on and say that was the start of a long career."

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