Bosox Leery To Deal Prospect Declarmen, Trying To Bring Reds/Kearns Into Deal

The latest chapter in The Coco Crisp Saga was provided by ESPN.com this evening as Jayson Stark reported that one of his sources is telling him that talks between the Red Sox and Indians have hit a snag. The Indians were less than impressed with the team physical they gave reliever Guillermo Mota, and reports are that the Indians are unsure whether or not he will be able to pitch this season.

As a result, the Tribe has told Boston to sweeten the pot, and are asking for prized pitching prospect Manny Declarmen to be added to the deal. Declarmen pitched in ten games for Boston a year ago, and Indians GM Mark Shapiro believes he could help the team out of the bullpen this season.

Boston is unwilling to deal Declarmen, especially given the fact that two other prized prospects of theirs (Andy Marte and Kelly Shoppach) would also be included in the deal. They are now talking to the Reds, trying to obtain Austin Kearns, who they feel they could turn around and deal to the Indians for Coco, and not have to give up all three prized prospects in addition.

Shapiro is dealing from a position of strength, and is wisely taking

advantage. He does not have to deal Coco, and Boston is desparate for the center fielder to hit at the top of lineup, and also to help save face with the fans in the wake of Johnny Damon signing with the Yankees in free agency.

Below is the link and story from Stark, which hit the internet late Thursday afternoon.

http://sports.espn.go.com/mlb/news/story?id=2307396

Source: Odds Of Crisp Going To Boston Decreasing

By Jayson Stark, ESPN.com

The chances of Coco Crisp landing in Boston seem to be shrinking by the hour.

The Red Sox and Indians continued to talk to each other -- as well as to a potential third club, the Reds -- on Thursday. But there were indications that the Indians were beginning to have second thoughts about dealing Crisp.

An official of one team that spoke with the Indians reported Thursday he got the impression the odds of Cleveland trading Crisp had sunk below 50-50.

Nevertheless, the Indians and Red Sox were still discussing ways they could rework the six-player trade that collapsed Tuesday over concerns about the health of reliever Guillermo Mota.

Multiple sources say Mota didn't technically "fail" his physical with the Indians. But his examination raised enough questions that the Indians have told Boston they will keep Mota only if the Red Sox upgrade the rest of the package, which originally had Mota, third-base prospect Andy Marte and catching prospect Kelly Shoppach heading for Cleveland, with Crisp, reliever David Riske and catcher Josh Bard landing in Boston.

The Red Sox, however, prefer not to trade away one of their top young pitching prospects, Manny Delcarmen, whom Cleveland likes. So it appears Boston has turned its attention back to Cincinnati to see if it can put together a deal for left fielder Austin Kearns. The Red Sox then would turn around and deal Kearns to Cleveland for Crisp, with several other players (yet to be determined) also switching area codes.

Cleveland also is believed to have talked directly with the Reds about Kearns. While interim GM Brad Kuhlman has told a number of teams this week that he has the authority to make a trade, other baseball people who have talked to new Reds owner Bob Castellini say Castellini is reluctant to rush into a major deal just days after taking over the club.

The team that may come out worst in all of this, though, is the Phillies. Had the original trade gone through, they would have wound up trading outfielder Jason Michaels to Cleveland for reliever Arthur Rhodes.

But an official of one team in touch with the Phillies said they were "not real optimistic" about coming away with Rhodes or any other reliever, because they feared their portion of the trade was "disintegrating." That's because if Cleveland holds onto Crisp or winds up dealing for an outfielder like Kearns, it no longer would need Michaels. The Phillies then would probably hang onto Michaels until spring training and shop him for a setup man in the spring.

Jayson Stark is a senior writer for ESPN.com.