Jerad Head is like that handy friend or relative who knows how to fix anything. He may not be greatly skilled in one particular trade, but knows all the trades well and how to do anything. So far this season, Head has seen extensive time at four different positions for the AA Akron Aeros, and appears to be being groomed by the Indians as a potential utility player. Tony had a chance to sit down and interview Head in a recent trip out to Canal Park in Akron.

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This is much how the Double-A Akron Aeros have used Head this year in the lineup, either filling in at a position full time because of injury to someone else or playing almost everyday but moving around the diamond to a different position seemingly every day.

So far this season, in 79 games played Head has played 35 games in the outfield, 24 at third base, 16 at second base, and four games at first base. Last year at High-A Kinston he played 33 games in the outfield, 26 at third base, six games at second base, and 18 games at first base. On top of that, he also can play shortstop in a pinch as he has worked out at the position in spring training this year.

"Right now if I am going to make it [to the big leagues], I think this is what I have to do," said Head in a recent interview about his use as a utility player. "I have to prepare everyday to be ready for whatever position they play me at."

Some players have made a career out of being a valuable utility player, and a prime example of that is current Indians utility man Jamey Carroll. Some have even used the utility player role to get established in the big leagues and

eventually have become solid regulars. Former Indians third baseman Casey Blake is an example of such a player.

Either way, adjusting and learning how to handle such a role is not easy, and most players don't handle it well be it pride because they feel less valued or just because they can't get into a regular routine at one position.

"The first year I was doing this I didn't know how to handle it and how to prepare for it," recalled Head. "One day you are in the infield or the outfield, or in the middle of a game you make a switch [to another position]. Now I have learned to prepare myself to play outfield or infield. I think right now I am getting real comfortable at every position as there is really no position that I can say I am tentative at."

In addition to being able to play anywhere in the infield and at the corners in the outfield, Head also can play some catcher. He spent all of spring training in 2008 working behind the plate, and while he has yet to play an actual game as a catcher, he now has the skill to be a serviceable emergency third catcher. He stays sharp behind the plate by catching a few bullpens here and there to stay on top of it in case the need arises where has to play there someday.

With the ability to play almost anywhere in the field, Head's handiness as sort of a 10th man is where his true value in the organization lies.

"If that is what it is going to take then that's what I am going to do," said Head. "To help these guys and do whatever they ask me to do. I am comfortable at any place now and it is not something I go into fearing. I'm not worrying about who is ahead of me or what's going to happen tomorrow, next week or next year. It's just thinking about getting better everyday and preparing yourself."

So far this season, Head has shown to be a productive bat for a utility player hitting .282 with 6 HR, 34 RBI and a .779 OPS in 79 games this year for Akron. He doesn't possess above average speed that most teams like in a utility player, but his bat helps neutralize this shortfall as he has some pop in his bat and he can be a run producer.

"It is going good," said Head of his season so far at the plate. "It is a long season, and I am just trying to get through the ups and downs, stay level,

and get better everyday."

Head got off to a good start offensively hitting .350 with a .972 OPS in 13 April games, and has used that as a springboard to a very solid season to date. He had a bit of a hiccup in May (.253 AVG, .692 OPS), but rebounded well in June (.277 AVG, .751 OPS) and July (.315 AVG, .881 OPS).

"I was comfortable to start the year," said Head. "I had a lot of confidence as far as getting hits here and there. I got into a little bit of a rut [in May], and was just not where I wanted to be. [Watching video] I saw some things that needed adjustments and have been doing that since. The game is humbling. I mean, if you hit .300 you are successful, which is 70% failure. But you are going to have your ups and downs as far as how you rebound from those slumps and the sooner you get out of that you will become a better hitter. It has a lot to do with discipline in seeing your pitches and executing on the pitcher's mistakes."

Head's primary focus this year has been developing into a better hitter knowing when and when not to be aggressive all the while staying under control.

"Especially at this level it always comes back to hitting," said Head. "I am just trying to be aggressive, but stay under control by swinging at better pitches and improving my plate discipline. By shrinking the zone you are going to hit better if you are in the zone every time."

Saying you want to improve your plate discipline is one thing. Some players have to work a lot harder at it than others as for some it is a much more natural skill. For a player like Head, it takes time and patience working with coaches and

watching video almost daily.

"It is more or less thinking about what pitch in that count you want to hit," explained Head. "If it is not the pitch you are looking for with less than two strikes you are not going to swing at it. It is also knowing your pitcher. If he is a sinkerball pitcher you want to stay off balls that start middle down. If the guy has a slider you can look for something up. It is just preparing yourself for what they have and knowing your strengths. Not getting outside of yourself and doing things you know you can't do."

No matter what happens for Head, getting to Double-A is a very big accomplishment for a player who four years ago was an undrafted free agent signing out of Washburn University (KS) in 2005. He has paid his dues and proved his worth, and if all goes well should continue to fill the utility role at Triple-A Columbus next year and could eventually get a shot in Cleveland anytime next year or thereafter.

Head doesn't get too caught up in his numbers and instead is just concentrating on finishing up the season strong and using it as a good stepping stone into next year.

"If you are thinking about your numbers you are not going to have successful at bats day in and day out," said Head. "What you want to do is just get better everyday, so when the year wraps up you are going to be where you want to be."

As the Indians Head of Utilities, he is exactly where he should be.