When the Indians traded Jhonny Peralta on Wednesday night it left a wide open competition for the vacant third base position on the team.

While top rated prospect Lonnie Chisenhall is expected to become the everyday guy there by the end of next season, the Indians have a need to fill the position in the short term, hence why the likes of Luis Valbuena, Jayson Nix, and Andy Marte will get some looks there the next few weeks.

But the trade of Peralta likely opened the door for someone else to get a shot in Cleveland in the near future, that being the hot hitting Triple-A Columbus third baseman Jared Goedert.

Goedert, 25, is having the best season by far of his five year career. Since being drafted in the ninth round of the 2006 Draft out of Kansas State University, he has always had problems staying healthy and consistent. But this season everything has come together with his health and performance as in 91 combined games between Double-A Akron and Columbus he is hitting a blistering .312 with 24 HR, 68 RBI and a .980 OPS.

"Yeah, things are going pretty well," said Goedert about his season to date in a recent interview for the IPI. "I am just trying not to do anything extra and just trying to keep things simple. I realized at the beginning of the year I was not necessarily going to be an everyday guy, so [focused] my approach and attitude to try and take advantage of the opportunities I did get, and I have gotten plenty of opportunities and been fortunate to have success when I got them."

Goedert had a nice start to his season in Akron where in 44 games there he hit .325 with 7 HR, 32 RBI, and a .922 OPS, but it is his performance since his promotion to Columbus in June which has gained the attention of most Tribe fans everywhere. In 47 games at Columbus he is hitting .300 with 17 HR, 36 RBI and a 1.029 OPS.

While Goedert is happy to be in Columbus and continuing to play well, he won't be satisfied until he reaches his goal of making the big leagues.

"I am definitely excited to be here [in Columbus], "said Goedert. "It is a step in the right direction instead of the other way around. At the same time I am not playing just to be here. I am definitely glad with how the season has gone to this point, but I am still not satisfied."

Coming into the season Goedert was not a highly valued prospect, but his hard work and determination has paid off as he has put himself back on the big league map, a map he was once on back in 2007 but had fallen off of after injury plagued seasons in 2008 and 2009 and some sub par performance as well. In fact last season at Akron where he hit .224 with 5 HR, 37 RBI and had a .657 OPS in 92 games was probably the lowest point of his career.

"Yeah, honestly, that's a good way to put it," said Goedert. "Just like this year, last year I felt like I had a good spring training and I felt good going into the season and then the sixth game of the year I popped my oblique and then it never came back to where I wanted it to be. It was a very frustrating year."

Goedert has battled shoulder problems almost his entire professional career, and those shoulder issued affected his swing to the point his numbers dipped considerably in Akron last year, and also ended up being very pedestrian in Kinston the two previous years. But, when healthy he has hit, as demonstrated by his sensational two month campaign at Low-A Lake County in 2007 where he hit .364 with 16 HR, 51 RBI and a 1.191 OPS in 46 games.

"I think it just took this long to get his swing and confidence back," said Indians' Farm Director Ross Atkins. "I think initially what it took was a lot of time working through pain and finding exactly where he could swing the bat without pain, and then getting to the point where he was pain free enough to have the most efficient and productive swing possible. I think it was just the time that it took because he came into spring training [this year] and our hitting coordinator and hitting coaches all said to a man, 'wow, Jared has his swing back". Sure enough, five games into spring training he had several home runs and was having great days and he has just continued that from day one of the season."

Goedert agrees that health has been a big key this year, but also feels he was able to work on his swing a little in the offseason to where he was comfortable with knowing how to get it back on track when things started to south at the plate.

Goedert's wife got a teaching job in Manhattan - which is where his alma mater Kansas State University is located - and he used the opportunity to workout at the university and work on things with the hitting coach there. Not much was changed with his swing, but he was able to develop a good base and figure out some keys to help him get his swing back when things tend to get off a little bit.

"I think [being healthy] is a big part of [my performance this year]," said Goedert. "I think I was also able to work on a couple of things last offseason swing-wise and kind of take into spring training. I had some things click in spring training. A lot of it has to do with figuring out a couple of keys to where if I ever do get a little off I can sort of resort back to those and make a quicker adjustment and not be off as long as I have been in the past. So I think the combination of staying healthy and ironing out a couple of things with my swing has been the major cause."

Injuries are a part of the game, and sometimes players just need to play through some of the minor aches and pains that come from playing everyday. With some of the more significant injuries, they can not only be a setback for the player while they are on the disabled list trying to rehab and be cleared for game action, but also hinder them throughout the rest of the season as the player tries to get back to where they were prior to the injury. A lot of times not ever getting back up to speed or at 100% can be devastating to the effectiveness for a player, and Goedert witnessed that firsthand last year.

"I think an injury does affect you, and knowing that it can have that affect on you I think that while you are dealing with it you try to tell yourself to stay mentally in the game and do as much as you are allowed to physically," said Goedert. "But it is just not the same as being able to go out there day in and day out and work on your swing or work on groundballs staying in the rhythm of the game and the day to day stuff. So it's very tough."

While the offense at the moment is not a concern at all, it is Goedert's defense the Indians still want him to work on before they consider calling him up to Cleveland. He has never been highly regarded as a defender as the potential with the bat has always been his best asset. In addition to the defense, he has also worked on his two-strike approach this year to remain just as aggressive with two strikes as he is early in counts.

"I think I have been aggressive this year early in counts and in hitters counts, which has helped out a lot and I think as a result though I am striking out a little more than I would like to," said Goedert. "In the past I maybe tried to do a little less with two strikes and now I am still trying to stay pretty aggressive so I think the combination of those two things is the result, but I still would like to strikeout less. [So I want] to have a little better two-strike approach offensively, and then do the same thing everyday defensively to get my feet moving and making good throws across the diamond."

After his offensive explosion in 2007 at Lake County, the Indians tried him out at second base in order to more quickly advance him through the system. There is some thought that the shoulder issue lingered as long as it did because of the position switch, and now that he is as healthy as he has been in years, it seems unlikely the Indians will use him in the future at second base except in emergency. He did play some outfield this spring and in a few games in Akron to experiment with adding some addition versatility to his defensive game.

"Yeah, they actually talked to me about [playing the outfield] as being a possibility in spring training," said Goedert. "So I was able to work with [Gary] Thurman, our outfield coordinator, and I got a few innings in during spring training and then worked out there a little bit during batting practice. I came in there one day and I was in left field in the lineup, which was fine, I enjoyed it. I have played third more than any other position in my life, so I feel comfortable there, but at the same time I don't mind bouncing around either as it keeps things fresh. So really I try to play wherever."

As for any goals this year, Goedert is quick to note he is not a numbers guy and just pays more

attention to the day to day grind with maintaining consistency in his game.

"My goal has been and hopefully will continue to be day in and day out continuing to have the same approach, making adjustments quickly, and just trying to come here everyday and get better with something to work on and just have a good at bat every time," said Goedert. "That would be my goal to continue with that approach the rest of the season and let the numbers add up where they end up."

Of course a call up to Cleveland is another goal, one that appears to be on the immediate horizon and to occur sometime later in August and definitely by September.

"I see that as being completely out of my control," says Goedert. "I am not going to worry about it. I know it is never going to be a possibility if I can't take care of business where I am at right now, so I have tried to focus all of my attention here."

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