

A's News Clips, Friday, December 4, 2009

A's add Fox, Miles to infield equation

Club acquires duo from Cubs for Gray, Minor Leaguers

By John Schlegel / MLB.com 12/4/09

The A's acquired infielders Jake Fox and Aaron Miles from the Cubs on Thursday in exchange for right-hander Jeff Gray and Minor Leaguers Matt Spencer and Ronny Morla.

Fox, who played four positions with the Cubs this past season, batted .259 with 11 homers and 44 RBIs in 82 games and had 17 homers at Triple-A Iowa. Miles, who signed a two-year deal with the Cubs prior to the 2009 season, hit a career-low .185 while struggling with injuries, coming off a .317 season with St. Louis in '08. The A's also received cash considerations in the deal.

"It's a real good trade for everyone," Cubs general manager Jim Hendry said. "Jake will help the A's, hopefully Aaron will get back on track. It gives us three good young players and a power arm with a chance to make the club in Gray."

With Miles and Fox in the fold, the A's have more infield insurance, which is key considering that veteran third baseman Eric Chavez's health is a big question mark and Adam Kennedy could leave Oakland via free agency. The A's also signed third baseman Dallas McPherson this offseason, presumably to compete for the job at the hot corner.

Miles, 32, has played the majority of his big league games at second base but also started 115 games at shortstop. He will be making a homecoming of sorts, having graduated from Antioch (Calif.) High School, not far from Oakland.

Gray went 0-1 with a 3.76 ERA in 24 appearances covering four stints with Oakland in 2009, registering 16 saves in 37 appearances for Triple-A Sacramento.

Morla, 21, went 1-7 with a 4.86 ERA in 17 appearances for Class A Vancouver, 12 as a starter. The 6-foot-4, 200-pound right-hander is 7-15 with a 4.52 ERA in 48 appearances (36 starts) in three Minor League seasons.

Spencer, 23, was acquired by the A's in the 2008 trade that sent pitcher Joe Blanton to the Phillies. The 6-foot-5, 240-pound infielder/outfielder combined to hit .289 with 34 doubles, 19 home runs and 91 RBI between Class A Stockton and Double-A Midland last season.

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Oakland deals for 2 infielders

John Shea, Chronicle Staff Writer 12/4/09

Jake Fox is a hitter with some pop and potential, exactly what the A's like about him.

Four days before the start of the winter meetings in Indianapolis, the A's struck with a five-player trade Thursday, acquiring two infielders, Fox, 27, and Aaron Miles, 32, and sending three prospects to the Cubs.

Miles followed the A's as a kid, lives in Brentwood and graduated from Antioch High School, but it's possible he could be flipped to another team. "I grew up an A's fan. I'm hopeful for an opportunity," Miles said. "That being said, anything can happen at any time in the offseason. I hope to continue to be an Oakland A."

To help convince the Cubs to part with Fox, the A's agreed to take on most of Miles' 2010 salary, \$1.7 million of \$2.7 million.

The most experienced player the A's traded is reliever Jeff Gray, who had a 3.76 ERA in 24 relief outings. The A's also shipped two minor-leaguers, outfielder Matt Spencer and pitcher Ronny Morla.

Miles is a second baseman by trade but has played several positions, as has Fox, who mostly was a third baseman last season. It's a position the A's are targeting with Eric Chavez's health still an issue and Adam Kennedy a free agent but still in the mix. The team signed third baseman Dallas McPherson to a minor-league contract.

Fox hit .259 with 11 homers and 44 RBIs in 82 games for the Cubs and collected 28 homers and 97 RBIs, including his minor-league numbers. He can also play first and left and is a candidate for at-bats as a DH.

"We definitely see him contributing to the major-league team," assistant general manager David Forst said. "He brings a dimension of right-handed power, which we don't have a lot of."

Miles is a career .282 hitter who hit .317 with St. Louis in 2008. He signed a two-year contract with the Cubs but missed time with shoulder and elbow injuries and hit a career-low .185.

A's add to depth in infield

By Janie McCauley, Associated Press

The A's acquired third baseman Jake Fox, second baseman Aaron Miles and cash considerations from the Chicago Cubs on Thursday for three players.

The Cubs got right-handed pitcher Jeff Gray, minor league outfielder Matt Spencer and minor league right-hander Ronny Morla.

The trade gives the A's added depth in the infield. Six-time Gold Glove third baseman Eric Chavez underwent season-ending back surgery last summer.

The A's recently signed free-agent third baseman Dallas McPherson to a minor league contract.

Fox, 27, hit .259 with 11 home runs and 44 RBI in 82 games with the Cubs.

Miles, 32, signed a two-year, \$4.9 million contract with the Cubs last winter, then hit a career-low .185 with no home runs and five RBI in 74 games. He spent two stints on the disabled list. The Chicago Sun-Times reported that the A's will pay \$1.7 million of Miles' \$2.7 million salary in 2010.