
Days after surgery, Shane Victorino is optimistic about a speedy recovery

Published: August 08, 2014 08:37 PM

BY TIM BRITTON

Journal Sports Writer

tbritton@providencejournal.com

ANAHEIM — Sporting a Hawaiian shirt, his characteristic bright sneakers, a backpack and a smile, Shane Victorino sure didn't look like someone just a few days removed from back surgery.

Victorino was back in the Red Sox clubhouse on Friday, roughly 72 hours after undergoing a discectomy in his lower back to fix a pair of herniated discs. The outfielder, who is done after just 30 games this season, is upbeat about his chances to make a full recovery in time for spring training and to return to the player he was in 2013.

"I'm very confident. I'm beyond confident," Victorino said about being himself again in the field. "I don't doubt any point that I can go back to being the player I am."

Victorino will be re-evaluated on Monday in Los Angeles by Dr. Robert Watkins, who performed the surgery.

For Victorino, the hope is that solving the problem in his lower back will translate to better health throughout his base. He hit the disabled list twice this season because of hamstring strains, and the thought is that perhaps his legs will be stronger now that they're not compensating for back pain.

"We hope that's all part of it," he said. "The back, the hammy — everything in that lower half is all connected. Those shooting pains down my leg are gone now. I don't know if that's one of the reasons that have caused the weakness in my hammy. I'm not a doctor, but you'd obviously assume that's all connected.

"Hopefully this is the last of a lot of what we've dealt with the last two years."

Undergoing the surgery with two months remaining in the season was easier for Victorino given the team's status out of contention.

"Understanding the circumstances we were in made the decision a little bit easier," said Victorino. "It definitely wasn't something that I wanted to do. I saw some of the guys today and told them it's not fun watching. Understanding where we're at and what we're focusing on, it was the time for me to get this done and be ready for 2015."

Victorino's only therapy for the next month will be walking. He's been instructed not to bend, lift or twist, and he comically acted out how rigidly he has to lay down in a bed each night. Nevertheless, the expectation is that Victorino will be 100 percent for the start of spring training.

"They said it's a three-to-six month process. My goal is to make it three-to-four months," he said. "The position that we're in, we can take more rather than less. From what was told to me, I'll be ready to full speed even before spring training and hopefully by the beginning of the year."

2015 shapes up to be quite an interesting season for Victorino. He'll turn 34 on the last day of November, and he'll be entering the final season of the three-year deal he signed with Boston in December 2012. The additions of Allen Craig and Yoenis Cespedes as corner outfielders could complicate where and how much Victorino plays.

"I have every intention of being the right fielder next year," Victorino said, adding that he'd of course be willing to play anywhere. "If you look at the picture of what's happening and some of the trades and getting these guys, these guys aren't going to be available on the free-agent market. So I get the picture that was kind of put together in getting those guys."