

Brett Lawrie finding his footing in first season with Athletics

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By Israel Fehr

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SEATTLE – Make no mistake about it: the only thing that changed for Brett Lawrie this offseason was the colour of his uniform.

Lawrie swapped Toronto's blue-and-white for Oakland's green-and gold-after the Blue Jays traded him to the Athletics in a package deal for Josh Donaldson, but that hasn't stopped the energetic 25-year-old third baseman from bringing the same swagger, energy, and mindset he's always had to his new surroundings.

"Everyone's been very welcoming here," Lawrie told Yahoo Canada Sports earlier this season in the visitor's clubhouse in Seattle. "I'm happy to be in the spot that I'm in right now and I'm glad to be part of a group like this."

But even with the warm welcome from his current colleagues, it hasn't necessarily been the easiest transition. Whether it was finding himself at the [centre of the fiery weekend in Kansas City after an aggressive slide](#) or having his [broken bat fly into the crowd at Fenway Park and severely injure a fan](#), there have been some difficult circumstances to deal with early on in his A's career.

It took some time for Lawrie to get going at the plate, too. He had a .661 OPS over his first two months in Oakland, but a hot June brought his 2015 hitting averages to a respectable .280/.315/.410. However, the challenge remains finding that desired level of consistency.

"He brings a lot of energy to the table and he loves to play," said Athletics manager Bob Melvin. "It's all about him getting a good ball to hit, being selective, and laying off pitches out of the zone."

One difference so far in Oakland is that Lawrie has been relatively healthy. He's missed a few games here and there to rest an aching back, but he's avoided the serious injuries he couldn't seem to side-step while with the Blue Jays.

The results still aren't quite where he would like them to be, but now in his fourth big-league season Lawrie is finally putting all the pieces together on what it takes to be a professional.

"It's continuous learning," said Lawrie. "Being able to build a routine and do it on a consistent basis. It's important to keep a good mentality. I think the biggest thing is to continue moving forward, keep positive, and keep having fun."

Lawrie plays the game on the edge and he's not about to apologize for it. It's gotten him this far and it will take him to where he's going next. Whether that's up, down, or around and back again is anyone's guess. His talent and athleticism is evident. There are many days where he looks like an All-Star. Other days, not so much.

The Blue Jays are better off with Donaldson, who has played himself into the AL MVP conversation in Toronto, but Lawrie is probably better off in Oakland. He still has a ways to go as he continues to ride the highs and lows, the same ones he rode with the Jays, but it appears he's closer than ever to breaking through and being a consistently productive player.

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