



As we close out the bottom half of our countdown, there are some really intriguing prospects who are starting to emerge here. Today, we're going to look at not just one, but two giant lefthanded pitchers who are trying to rise through the organization after signing as international free agents. We're going to talk about a pitcher-turned-outfielder with (as you'd expect) a cannon for an arm in RF. We'll look at the only player in the C.C. Sabathia trade who has yet to play in the major leagues. Finally, we'll look at a player who's power exploded in 2012 in a most unexpected way, putting him on the threshold of a call-up to the major league roster.

35. Elvis Araujo, LHP

DOB: 7/15/1991

Height/Weight: 6-6/215 lb.

Bats/Throws: Left/Left

Acquired: International free agent in 2008

2012 Stats: 7-10, 5.00 ERA, 111 K and 61 BB in 135 IP with Lake County

Scouting Report: Araujo signed with the Indians as an international free agent out of Venezuela in 2008, and as a 16 year old threw 57 innings with the Indians Dominican Summer League team. He posted a 1.89 ERA in those 57 tantalizing innings, then proceeded to miss the 2009-2010 seasons with various arm ailments. Araujo had Tommy John surgery in 2009, and was finally healthy enough to pitch in 2011 when he threw 63 innings with the Rookie League Arizona Indians, and then made two starts with Mahoning Valley at the end of the season. His 135 innings in 2012 eclipsed his previous career high by a whopping 66 IP, and Araujo seemed to tire in the 2nd half of the season. His ERA after the all-star break was more than a full run higher than in the first half of the year, and a lot of that can likely be put down to fatigue. His 2012 numbers weren't great, but 6'6" lefties don't exactly grow on trees, and Araujo is going to be given every opportunity to succeed now that he's finally healthy and pitching again.

Araujo fastball sits consistently in the 90-93 MPH range, and has touched 95. Coming from his 6'6" frame, the pitch has excellent down action and comes in on a difficult plane for hitters to handle. His best secondary pitch is his slider, which has flashes of an above-average pitch but still needs to be refined. He also throws a changeup that lags behind the slider, and is a pitch that needs to be developed in order for him to have a starter's arsenal. When he's commanding all three pitches in the strike zone, Araujo can be a hitter's worst nightmare. Unfortunately, as evidenced by his 4.1 BB/9 IP last year, those outings were few and far between.

Araujo had a great start to the 2012 season, going 2-4 with 45 K and 20 BB in 53 2/3 IP in April and May. Despite the 2-4 record, he allowed just 19 earned runs for an ERA just above 3.00. Things fell apart in June for the big lefty, as his ERA ballooned to 8.71 in 20 2/3 IP that month. He pushed through it and pitched the rest of the season, but it was clear the innings jump was

difficult for Araujo to handle. He's drawn comparisons to C.C. Sabathia because of his size and the fact that he throws left handed, but Sabathia was pitching in the major league playoffs as a 20-year old, while Araujo was struggling in the Midwest League. He's still just 21 and has plenty of time to fix some of his issues, and if he can improve on his command (especially of his secondary offerings) Araujo could be right back in the Indians top-15 next offseason. He will hopefully pitch the entire 2013 season for the Carolina Mudcats, and should be more ready to handle the rigors of pitching 100+ innings than he was in 2012.

Glass half-full: A big, durable, middle of the rotation starter

Glass half-empty: A 6'6" lefty out of the bullpen would be fun to have, no?

34. Luis Lugo, LHP

DOB: 3/5/1994

Height/Weight: 6-5/200 lb.

Bats/Throws: Left/Left

Acquired: International free agent in 2010

2012 Stats: 2-4, 4.50 ERA with 51 K and 21 BB in 42 IP for Rookie Arizona

Scouting Report: Lugo is a big, young lefty who posted some impressive strikeout numbers as an 18-year old with the Rookie League Arizona Indians last year. Born and raised in Venezuela, an area that the Indians have been going to more and more for international signings in recent years. Lugo has thrown 78 2/3 innings as a professional between the Dominican Summer

League and the Arizona League, and he's recorded 95 strikeouts, but also walked 45 hitters since entering the Indians organization.

Lugo is a big kid at 6'5", 200 lb, and can afford to add quite a few pounds to his athletic frame. His fastball velocity sits between 87-91 MPH, and he's a guy who the Indians expect to make a jump in velocity as he gets stronger in the next year or two. He compliments the fastball with a curveball and a changeup, and the curve is further ahead right now than his fastball. He's going to have to improve both pitches to remain in the starting rotation, but the talent and ability are there and there's no reason that he can't be a three-pitch pitcher down the road.

Lugo is one of the few guys in the organization that I haven't seen pitch before, and I'm really excited to get my eyes on him in Goodyear later this month. He has the size and ability that GM's dream about, and the fact that he throws from the left side is just an added bonus. He's put up some impressive numbers in the organization so far during his young career, and if he can improve his command and control as he refines his delivery, things are only going to get better for the young southpaw. Lugo will likely remain in Goodyear for extended spring training until June, when he should be a member of the Mahoning Valley Scrappers starting rotation. He's an intriguing arm right now who could make a big jump on this list with a solid 2013, especially if he can get his fastball up in the low to mid-90's with a little more consistency.

Glass half-full: A starting pitcher. That's about as specific as I can get right now.

Glass half-empty: A reliever. Seriously, who knows at this point?





[Follow @Gorila31](#)