



One of my personal favorite prospects will be highlighted in today's installment of the prospect countdown. I'll give you a hint; he plays a position that starts with "C" and ends with an "R." In addition to another backstop with a bright future, we'll look at a 2012 draft pick who grew up in Alaska and is trying to buck the trend and play professional baseball, a player who missed all of 2012 due to injury, another power righthanded reliever and a 3B-turned-OF who has one of the prettiest swings in the entire organization, non-Chisenhall division.

25. Dylan Baker, SP

DOB: 4/6/1992

Height/Weight: 6-2/215 lbs

Bats/Throws: Right/Right

Acquired: 5<sup>th</sup> round pick in the 2012 draft

2012 Stats: 0-1 with a 4.12 ERA, 30 K and 15 BB in 24 IP for Rookie Arizona

Scouting Report: Baker was drafted in the 5<sup>th</sup> round in last year's draft out of Western Nevada College. With Western Nevada his 2<sup>nd</sup> year, Baker went 13-0 with a 1.91 ERA, striking out 126 in 84 2/3 IP. For his efforts in college, Baker was named as the Senic West Athletic Conference Pitcher of the Year. He grew up in the baseball hotbed of Juneau, Alaska, and led his high school team to a pair of state titles. He signed early enough to get some time with the Rookie League Arizona Indians, starting eight games and striking out 11.2 batters per 9 innings pitched. Baker's favorite baseball movie growing up was Major League, so he and the Indians seem meant to be.

Coming out of college last year, Baker was seen as one of the top junior college arms available. He's a big, strong kid with above-average velocity with a fastball that sits consistently between 91-94 MPH and has touched 97. He throws from high, over the top arm angle and the pitch has nice plane and sink. His best secondary offering is a hammer 12-6 curveball that really falls off the table as it comes in on hitters. In addition to the curve, he throws a changeup that still needs work but has flashed plus with excellent fade down and away from righthanded hitters. If the change can become more consistent, Baker will have a much better chance to stick in the starting rotation long-term. If not, then he's likely headed to the bullpen as a power two-pitch reliever.

Baker is one of very few baseball players to come out of Alaska, and he actually walked on to his junior college baseball team in 2011. Going from a JuCo walk-on to a 5<sup>th</sup> round draft pick in a single season is pretty remarkable, and shows how hard Baker is willing to work to get to the next level. Some experts had him getting drafted as early as the 2<sup>nd</sup>

round, so the Indians were happy to have an opportunity to select him as late as they did last year. He should start out 2013 in the Lake County rotation, so Northeast Ohio fans will have an opportunity to get an up close and personal look at the powerful righthander.

Glass half-full: A solid #3 starter in a major league rotation

Glass half-empty: A 2-pitch power reliever



24. Austin Adams, SP

DOB: 8/19/1986

Height/Weight: 5-11/185

Bats/Throws: Right/Right

Acquired: 5<sup>th</sup> round pick in the 2009 draft

2012 Stats: DNP

Scouting Report: Adams ranked as the #4 prospect on this list last season, but suffered a shoulder injury and was unable to pitch in 2012. Prior to the injury, Adams had a triple-digit arm, touching 100 MPH when he really reached back for something extra. His fastball sat comfortable in the mid-90's, as well as a plus slider, a curveball and a changeup. He had a starter's arsenal, and when he was commanding his fastball and not walking hitters he looked like a potential #2 starter in a major league rotation.

Adams had shoulder surgery last spring, and wasn't able to throw a single competitive pitch in 2012. He has worked hard to rehab and come back from the injury, but shoulder injuries are particularly tough to predict. If Adams had Tommy John surgery, I'd be much more comfortable with his potential in 2013 and down the road. But shoulder injuries have a lower track record of success than the more tried and true TJ surgery. Adams is doing everything he can to work his way back to health, but sometimes things are just beyond a players control.

Adams is an excellent athlete, having played shortstop in addition to pitching while he was playing for NAIA Faulkner College. He uses his lower half well to generate velocity, so hopefully he can use his legs to take some of the stress off of his shoulder. If Adams is back to his old self, he's a top-10 prospect in the organization with a chance to pitch in the Indians rotation. If not, hopefully he can at least salvage a role in the bullpen. I really have no idea what to expect out of Adams this season, so this ranking is more of a guess than anything else. Hopefully he can overcome the shoulder injury and his velocity can bounce back to pre-2012 levels.

Glass half-full: Adams overcomes the injury and pitches in a major league rotation

Glass half-empty: The injury saps Adams of his velocity and he's unable to make it to The Show





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