



Well, we've finally made it. The long and exciting journey that began almost two weeks ago is complete, and we've reached the cream of the crop in the Indians organization. Most of you can probably guess who the five prospects are that we're going to look at today, but do you know in what order they will appear? Remarkably, we're going to look at no fewer than three players who could end up as major league shortstops down the road, a remarkable number of elite SS prospects for one organization. In addition to the middle infielders, we have a pair of righthanded starting pitchers, one who came over in a trade from the Arizona Diamondbacks and one who was selected in the 2nd round of the 2012 draft out of a Minnesota high school. Thanks for following along with me here on The Cleveland Fan during the 2013 countdown, and I can only hope that you've enjoyed reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it. Now if you'll excuse me, I'm off to pack for Goodyear!

5. Tony Wolters, SS/2B

DOB: 6/9/1992

Height/Weight: 5-10/165.

Bats/Throws: Left/Right

Acquired: 3rd round pick in the 2010 MLB draft

2012 Stats: .260/.320/.404 with 8 HR and 58 RBI in 125 games for high-A Carolina

Scouting Report: When you look at Wolters' overall stat line for 2012, you're probably not blown away. Putting up a .724 OPS with 8 HR isn't usually indicative of a top prospect. But consider that he put up that line as a 20-year old after skipping low-A altogether. Consider that in the month of April, Wolters went 9-69 and started May with a .130/.231/.195 triple slash line. And finally, remember that during all of this Wolters was the youngest player on the Mudcats roster, and was learning a new position in the field (2B). Are you a little more impressed now? Wolters finished 8th in the Carolina League with 30 doubles, led the league with his 8 triples and his .724 OPS was actually good enough to place him in the top-20 overall at the end of the season. He flashed his full potential over 25 games in the month of July, hitting .343/.396/.505 with a pair of home runs. Looking past that end of year triple slash line, Wolters actually had a pretty solid 2012.

Wolters is a maximum effort player who is always going to get the most out of his tools. He hits from the left side and does a nice job making contact, although his power will always be below-average. He has gap-power (46 XBH last year) and does a nice job getting the barrel of the bat on the ball. He has average speed, but it plays up due to his high baseball IQ and baserunning instincts.

In the field, Wolters profiles a little better at 2B than at SS, but will be able to hold down SS if necessary. His arm is average for SS, and he doesn't have elite range at the position. He's a

good athlete, and his footwork is sound. He's a very fundamentally solid baseball player, but some of his raw skills just aren't what you'd traditionally look for out of an all-star shortstop.

Wolters is one of my favorite players in the organization, and I probably have him ranked a little higher than most. He's a gym-rat, grinder, and one of (if not the) hardest working players in the organization. He doesn't have one single skill that jumps out and screams "star" at the next level, but he's at least average across the board and his overall package will always play up due to his work ethic and overall baseball IQ. Wolters' mental toughness was on full display in 2012, as he could have easily succumbed to his terrible month of April and resigned himself to a season-long slump. But he showcased a remarkable ability to adjust to the level of pitching after having skipped low-A, and ended up having a really solid season. If you're bringing your kid to the baseball field and want to give him/her an example to watch before and during the game as to how you should carry yourself on a diamond, Tony Wolters is it.

Glass half-full: He sticks at SS and becomes a 1st division starter

Glass half-empty: A super-utility player that gets most of his action at 2B



4. Mitch Brown, RHP

DOB: 4/13/1994

Height/Weight: 6-1/195 lb.

Bats/Throws: Right/Right

Acquired: 2nd round pick in the 2012 MLB draft

2012 Stats: 2-0, 3.58 ERA, 26 K and 10 BB in 27 2/3 IP for Rookie League Arizona

Scouting Report: Brown was selected out of a Rochester, Minnesota high school in the 2nd round of the 2012 draft. Rarely are players from cold-weather high schools selected that early in the MLB draft, but Brown's skills are special. He's an outstanding athlete with a very clean, easily repeatable delivery who just looks like he was built to be a pitcher. He shows a good feel for pitching, especially for a player with his limited experience. Scouts rave about his makeup, and he was seen as one of the more advanced high school arms available in last year's draft.

Brown throws a 4-seam fastball that sits comfortably in the low-90s and he can reach back for a little more when he needs it. His best secondary offering is his cutter, a pitch that's seen as having a future plus grade. In addition to the cutter, he throws a curveball and a changeup, and of those two pitches the curveball is more advanced at this stage of his career. The deep, 4-pitch arsenal combined with big, athletic frame has scouts and the Indians front office all convinced that Brown should stick in the rotation going forward. He projects as a solid #3 starter who eats innings, and could develop into more if his secondary stuff takes a step forward.

Brown was impressive in his limited work in the complex leagues last year, and is likely ready for his full-season debut with Lake County right out of spring training. There's a chance the Indians keep him in extended spring training while the weather warms up to try and limit stress on his arm, but having pitched in Minnesota as an amateur, Eastlake in April should be no problem for the young righty.

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

Glass half-empty: Fringe #4 starter in a major league rotation



3. Dorssys Paulino, SS

DOB: 11/21/1994

Height/Weight: 6-0/175 lb.

Bats/Throws: Right/Right

Acquired: International free agent in 2011

2012 Stats: .333/.380/.558 with 7 HR, 38 RBI and 11 SB in 56 games between Rookie League Arizona and short season Mahoning Valley.

Scouting Report: Yes, folks, that DOB is correct; Dorssys Paulino was born after Jacobs Field opened for play in the 1994 season. Please excuse me while I go lie down and think about that for a second. Paulino was the Indians big money signing out of the Dominican Republic in 2011, and some analysts suggested at the time that the Indians overpaid to sign the young infielder to a \$1.1 million bonus. Those same analysts are now ranking Paulino among the Indians top-3 prospects, as he demolished complex league pitching on his way to a brief cameo in the short-season New York-Penn League against kids 3-5 years older than him. After putting up a 1.015 OPS in 41 games in the complex league, he was more mortal with the Scrappers, posting a .713 OPS in 15 games with Mahoning Valley. Still, a 17-year old playing in the NYPL is an impressive feat and a harbinger of future success at higher levels.

Paulino projects to have a plus hit tool and at least average power, and could be a .300 hitter with 15-30 HR per season at the big league level. He's strong for his age and size, and has extremely quick wrists that help him stay inside the baseball well and drive it to all fields. He does a great job barreling the baseball, and consistently makes loud contact. He doesn't struggle against secondary stuff as much as many young Dominican hitters typically do, and he has the makings of a solid approach. In the complex leagues, he struck out 31 times and walked 15, but that ratio rose to 14/3 in the NYPL as he ran into more developed pitchers with better breaking balls. Still, for a 17-year old, Paulino's season with the bat was outstanding. He projects to have all-star level offensive skills.

The issue with Paulino at this stage of his career is his glove. The Indians signed him as a shortstop, and he played there throughout the 2012 season. He was charged with 25 errors in 46 games though, a number that can't continue if he hopes to play SS at the highest levels. I haven't seen much of Paulino in the field at this stage of his career, but the scouting reports indicate that he's stiff in the field and his hands aren't yet soft enough for the position; kind of the anti-Lindor. He's being projected as more of a 3B or 2B than a shortstop, which would limit the upside of his overall package. Still, Paulino is just 18 years old, so I think it's a bit premature to say he'll never play SS. It's an uphill road and his defense needs a lot more work than his

offense, but I'm not ready to demand a position change at this point in the youngster's brief career.

The Indians could get aggressive with Paulino and start him right off with low-A Lake County, but I think that keeping him in extended spring training and letting him get more at bats in the NYPL is a better course of action for a player with his experience. Paulino is talented, but his approach still needs work and he needs as many repetitions as possible both in the batter's box and in the field. Still, after his dynamic debut in 2012, the Indians front office will be tempted to see what he can do in the Midwest League, especially if he comes out and dominates in spring training the way he did in the complex leagues last year.

Glass Half-Full: An offense-oriented shortstop who wins a Silver Slugger or six

Glass Half-Empty: An offense-oriented 2B or 3B



2. Trevor Bauer, RHP

DOB: 1/17/1991

Height/Weight: 6-1/185 lb.

Bats/Throws: Right/Right

Acquired: Via trade from Arizona in three-way deal involving Shin Soo-Choo.

2012 Stats: 1-2 with a 6.06 ERA, 17 K and 13 BB in 16 1/3 IP for Arizona; 12-2 with a 2.42 ERA, 157 K and 61 BB in 130 1/3 IP between AA Mobile and AAA Reno.

Scouting Report: Acquired this winter in the three-team deal that sent Shin Soo Choo to Cincy and resulted in both Bauer and Drew Stubbs relocating to Cleveland, Bauer has a higher ceiling than any other pitcher in the Indians organization. Bauer was the #3 overall pick in the 2011 draft, coming off of a college season in which he won the Golden Spikes Award as the nation's top collegiate baseball player. He pitched 25 2/3 innings in the Diamondbacks system in 2011, then went out and dominated hitters at both AA and AAA in 2012 on his way to a big league call-up less than a calendar year after he was drafted. Bauer struggled in the majors, trying to pitch through a groin injury and clashing with some of his teammates in the clubhouse, but for a 21-year old in his first season of professional baseball, making it to The Show is a pretty impressive accomplishment in and of itself.

Bauer's stuff is electric; he features a 4-seam fastball that sits comfortably in the mid-90's, and has nearly as much arm-side run as a typical 2-seamer. In addition to the fastball, he features a curveball, splitter, slider and changeup. If he tried to throw any more pitches (and he has in the past, including a "reverse slider" that has action similar to a screwball), Carlos Santana and Lou Marson would have to start growing more fingers. The curveball is his best secondary offering, a hard, mid-80's pitch that grades out as a true plus-plus pitch. The rest of his repertoire ranges from average to above average, and all of his pitches at least flash plus. It's an impressive arsenal with which Bauer can attack hitters, and he can sometimes try too hard to strike everyone out rather than trusting his stuff and pitching to contact.

Bauer has an...interesting workout regimen. He's famous for throwing a lot of pitches in his bullpens between starts, and his pre-game ritual is that of legend. Like many starting pitchers, Bauer plays long-toss before the game to help loosen his arm up. Unlike many starting pitchers, Bauer's long-toss is played from foul line to foul line, a distance of over 450 feet. That's a long

way to throw a baseball, especially as many times as Bauer does it. Then in between innings, Bauer's first warm up toss to the catcher is delivered via crow hop. It's strange, fun and impressive to watch, and I think that once he gets to Cleveland he's going to be a real fan favorite. Between guys like Bauer, Pestano, Kipnis, Masterson and Swisher, manager Terry Francona is going to have his hands full. But having famously dealt with the Red Sox self-professed "bunch of idiots," I think he'll handle it just fine.

Bauer should have a shot at a spot in the rotation out of Goodyear, but there's a good chance he'll get some time with AAA Columbus to gain seasoning and not accrue service time. Either way, he'll pitch in Cleveland at some point in 2013, and should be a mainstay in the rotation for many years to come. He's got true ace potential, and if the Indians window of contention is going to crack open anytime soon, it will be because Bauer is leading the way at the front of the pitching staff.

Glass Half-Full: Ace. Top of the rotation, #1 starter

Glass Half-Empty: An eccentric #3



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