

Minor Happenings: Stanford Makes His Pitch For Big League Job

Written by {ga=consigliere}
Wednesday, April 18 2007 7:00 PM -

Lastoria recaps another week that was in the Indians farm system, as he touched on the resurgence of lefty Jason Stanford, the dominance of righty Jeff Stevens, the quality pitching up and down the Indians farm system, and how the horrific events at Virginia Tech hit home in the Indians farm system. Transaction updates and other news is shared, as well as recaps of the Buffalo and Lake County squads.



'Minor Happenings' covers the important developments and news in the Indians farm system. Information in this report is collected from the various news outlets that cover each team, some national news, and in some cases from private sources connected to the Indians organization.

TheClevelandFan.com Minor League Player of the Week

Jason Stanford (Left-handed Pitcher - Buffalo): 2-0, 0.00 ERA, 13 IP, 4 hits, 4 BBs, 13 Ks, .093 BAA



Say hello to Mr. Bison. Stanford is appearing in a Bisons uniform for the seventh consecutive season, which is a modern day record in Buffalo. But, Stanford appears to be making the most of what should be his last year in Buffalo. In his first two starts, Stanford has been outstanding in not allowing a run in 13 innings and held opposing batters to a .093 batting average against. His start yesterday was almost perfect, as he went seven shutout innings and allowed only one hit and two walks while striking out seven on just over 90 pitches.

It has been nearly three years since Stanford was shutdown early in 2004 with arm issues which eventually led to him undergoing Tommy John surgery later in 2004. Last year was Stanford's first full year back, and he pitched well in Buffalo going 6-6 with a 4.01 ERA and .242

Minor Happenings: Stanford Makes His Pitch For Big League Job

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, April 18 2007 7:00 PM -

batting average against. This year, he appears to be on a mission to show he is completely healthy and ready to be considered for a big league job again in Cleveland or somewhere else.

Hodges On the Rise

Kinston third baseman Wes Hodges is on the fast-track to the major leagues. Hodges is a player who was born to hit. I mean, this



guy broke the hamate bone in his left wrist his senior year in high school, but instead of missing the year he taught himself to hit from the left-side of the plate and hit .430 that year. But, like so many other promising prospects, carrying his hitting success from college and high school to the professional ranks is a tall order to fulfill. Also, you have to be fortunate enough to stay healthy.

Hodges is an advanced hitter with above-average power potential, so the Indians started Hodges professional career in advanced Kinston which shows how much of an advanced player they think Hodges is. With Kevin Kouzmanoff being sent packing to San Diego in the Josh Barfield trade last November, and Andy Marte in Cleveland, Hodges is the top third base prospect in the system. If he stays healthy and performs, he is someone who could push Marte for a job as soon as mid-2008. There is no one above him blocking him, so he could move up quickly in the organization and could get meaningful at bats in Akron this year, with an outside shot at getting some in Buffalo as well.

Hodges has missed the K-Tribe's last five games with a tweak in his hamstring.

Tragedy Hits Home For Toregas

The horrific events that transpired Monday at Virginia Tech permeated its way into the Indians farm system, as Akron catcher Wyatt Toregas is a former Virginia Tech Hokie, playing three seasons there before being drafted by the Indians in 2004.



Not only did Toregas have a connection to friends and faculty at the university, but his 19-year old sister Nancy is a sophomore at Radford University, which is roughly 30 miles from the school. She also occasionally visits Virginia Tech. When he heard of the events, Toregas was

Minor Happenings: Stanford Makes His Pitch For Big League Job

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, April 18 2007 7:00 PM -

able to get in touch with her right away and was relieved to find out she did not have any classes that day, nor was anywhere near the Virginia Tech campus. Toregas mentioned to the Akron Beacon Journal that he "has about 30 friends who either still attend school or work in the athletic department" at the school. He also got into contact with some of his friends while they were still locked down in their classrooms.

Toregas also roomed all three of his years at the West Ambler Johnston dormitory, which is where the shootings began Monday. Toregas is so connected to the university and area, that he moved back to the area last year.

Choy Foo Honored

Infielder Rodney Choy Foo had a heck of a first week in Akron. He was named the Eastern League Player of the Week



after hitting .524 (11 for 21) with a double, triple and two home runs - including a grand slam - and nine RBIs. To date, in nine games Choy Foo is hitting .464 (13 for 28) with two home runs and 10 RBIs. The award and early success could be a result of a recently discovered focus in the wake of tragedy as he is playing with a heavy heart this year after the native Hawaiian lost his brother in a car accident this past offseason. This is Choy Foo's eighth year in the Indians organization after being drafted in 2000.

Buzachero's Last Chance

It is a new year and season, and with that the Indians have clean the slate and given Akron right-handed relief pitcher Bubbie Buzachero another chance.



For those unaware, Buzachero had a crippling effect on the Aeros playoff run last year which may have prevented Akron from repeating as League Champions. Buzachero, known as Buzz by teammates and coaches, got into a locker room fight with second baseman Eider Torres just days before the start of the playoffs. The scuffle left Torres with a broken jaw and out for the playoffs, which was a huge loss since Torres was a table-setter at the top of the Akron lineup.

Minor Happenings: Stanford Makes His Pitch For Big League Job

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, April 18 2007 7:00 PM -

And, the fight also led to Buzachero being sent home and put on the restricted list. Having Buzachero not available for the playoffs was another costly blow, as he was one of the Aeros best relievers last year.

Buzachero is regretful of what happened, and is looking to move on. And, the Indians have obliged giving him another (final?) chance. Buzachero is now the Akron closer, and in four appearances is 1-0 with one save and a 0.00 ERA in 4.1 inning pitched, and has given up only three hits, no walks, and struckout six. Torres left the organization as a six year minor league free agent and signed with the Baltimore Orioles.

Mr. No Decision

Scott Lewis once again has been plagued by tough luck. Lewis has pitched well in his first two starts at Akron this year, and went six



innings last night without allowing a run on two infield singles. Yet, he has not been involved in a decision. Lewis has been on a strict 70 pitch count since the start of last year, which has had a hand in him receiving so many no decisions last year and this year because he only goes five to six innings a start. Still, he has often left after the fifth or sixth inning after allowing almost no one to score. Last year, Lewis was 3-3 with a 1.48 ERA in 27 starts, and this year he is 0-0 with a 1.86 ERA in two starts. In 29 combined starts the last two years, he has 23 no decisions.

The Untouchable



Remember that afterthought of a player to be named later the Indians eventually got for Brandon Phillips last year? You probably don't, so I'll remind you: his name is Jeffrey Stevens. Stevens is a marginal right-handed pitching prospect, although, if he continues like he has with Kinston the first two weeks of the season, he could start to get some prospect love. In four appearances out of the K-Tribe bullpen, Stevens has pitched 11 innings allowing only two hits and one walk with 14 strikeouts. His WHIP is a microscopic 0.27 and opponents are only hitting .061 off of him. Stevens is not exactly an overpowering pitcher, as his fastball sits at around 90-91 MPH, but he does have four quality pitches in his arsenal and commands them well. In 30

Minor Happenings: Stanford Makes His Pitch For Big League Job

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, April 18 2007 7:00 PM -

games last year in the Red and Indians systems, Stevens went 9-7 with a 4.42 ERA.

Cabrera Settling In

As noted previously on here, the Indians sent shortstop Asdrubal Cabrera to Akron this year because of players with more experience



ahead of him at Buffalo and to work on his plate discipline. With players like Hector Luna, Luis Rivas, and Joe Inglett at Buffalo the Indians felt it best to send Cabrera to Akron where he could play everyday. The biggest factor is the need to work on his offense, and a trip to Double-A for the first time in his career may help. He is off to a solid start in Akron hitting .371 (13 for 35), and last night extended his hitting streak to nine games and also got the game winning hit in extra innings.

Laffey Continues To Roll



Akron Aeros left-handed starter Aaron Laffey is off to an impressive start. In two starts, he is 1-0 with a 1.50 ERA and has allowed only four hits and two walks while striking out eight in 12 innings pitched. Laffey broke through last year with a nice year at Kinston and Akron where he went a combined 12-4 with a 3.16 ERA in 29 appearances (23 starts), and he has carried over last year's success into the start of this season. Laffey is not an overpowering pitcher as his fastball tops out at 87-88 MPH, but he compliments it well with an above average slider and changeup.

Cliff Notes

Indians left-handed starter Cliff Lee is still on a rehab assignment recovering from a strained abdominal muscle. On Monday, Lee



worked three shutout innings against players in extended spring training in Winter Haven. Lee threw 51 pitches and did not walk a batter while striking out six. Lee has been effective, but most importantly is pain free.

Minor Happenings: Stanford Makes His Pitch For Big League Job

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, April 18 2007 7:00 PM -

Lee is scheduled to make another rehab start tomorrow or Saturday possibly for Triple-A Buffalo in Toledo, and is scheduled to throw 65 to 70 pitches. Lee will make one more rehab start mid-week next week, and if he is cleared is expected to be activated around April 30th and be inserted into the Indians rotation.

Where Are They Now: Jeremy Guthrie



The once promising right-handed pitcher the Indians took in the first round of the 2002 Draft was released by the Indians this past offseason and claimed by the Baltimore Orioles. Guthrie won a job on the Orioles pitching challenged roster pitching out of the bullpen, and to date is 1-0 with a 3.38 ERA with a 1.63 WHIP in eight innings pitched.

Buffalo Roundup

Buffalo is off to a good start at 8-2 and in first place in the North Division of the International League. Buffalo has posted a team ERA of 2.44 the first ten games, which is tops in the league, and is hitting .272 as a team (4th).

On the pitching front, Adam Miller is off to a hot start, as in two starts he is 2-0 with a 2.77 ERA. After a so-so first start, Miller was back to form this past Sunday throwing a complete game six-hitter allowing only one run, striking out six and retiring 16 of the final 18 batters he faced. Rafael Perez also has been good in the early going, as in two starts he is 1-0 with a 1.69 ERA, although he has been a little erratic in walking six batters in 10.2 innings pitched. Other pitchers of note:



Juan Lara: 3 games, 0-1, 1.80 ERA, 5 IP, 3 Ks, 1.80 WHIP

Eddie Mujica: 4 games, 0-0, 4 saves, 0.00 ERA, 4 IP, 4 Ks, 0.50 WHIP

Brian Sikorski: 4 games, 0-0, 0.00 ERA, 4 IP, 6 Ks, 0.75 WHIP

Mike Koplove: 5 games, 0-0, 0.00 ERA, 4.1 IP, 4 Ks, 0.92 WHIP

On the offensive side of things, Shin-Soo Choo got off to a torrid start before being sidelined with a shin injury after a collision at the plate. Choo is not expected to miss much time, and is hitting .429 (8 for 21) with two doubles, two stolen bases and six RBIs in eight games. The same can't be said for outfielder Brad Snyder. Snyder is also day to day with an ankle injury, but is only hitting .200 (4 for 20) with two doubles, two stolen bases, and two RBIs. He also has struckout 10 times in 20 at bats. Other hitters of note:

Minor Happenings: Stanford Makes His Pitch For Big League Job

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, April 18 2007 7:00 PM -

Ben Francisco: .343 (12 for 35), 4 2Bs, 1 HR, 5 RBIs, 3 SBs, .995 OPS
Ryan Mulhern: .313 (10 for 32), 3 2Bs, 2 HRs, 9 RBIs, .965 OPS
Luis Rivas: .316 (12 for 38), 2 2Bs, 1 3B, 1 HR, 4 RBIs, 2 SBs, .895 OPS
Hector Luna: .226 (7 for 31), 0 2Bs, 1 HR, 5 RBIs, 1 SB, .620 OPS

Captains Log

First baseman Matt Whitney took the collar last night for the first time, ending a nine game hitting streak. On the year, he is hitting .325 (13 for 40) with two home runs and eight RBIs. Right-handed starter Mike Eisenberg is off to a slow start as he is 0-2 with a 12.00 ERA in two starts, although was much better in his second start. Hector Rondon, 19, bounced back from a rough first start to throw six shutout innings and only allow two hits and two walks while striking out two in his second start.

Here is a quick update on how several notable hitters and pitchers are performing to date:



Matt McBride (C): .395 (15 for 38), 2 2Bs, 0 HRs, 11 RBIs, 1.000 OPS
Lucas Montero (OF): .378 (17 for 45), 4 2Bs, 2 3Bs, 0 HRs, 5 RBIs, 3 SBs, .984 OPS
Jared Goedert (3B): .316 (12 for 38), 3 2Bs, 5 HRs, 10 RBIs, 1.224 OPS
Neil Wagner (RHP): 5 games, 0-1, 2 saves, 3.18 ERA, 5.2 IP, 5 Ks, 1.59 WHIP
Matt Meyer (LHP): 4 games, 0-0, 0.00 ERA, 4.2 IP, 7 Ks, 1.50 WHIP

Parting Shots

Catcher Armando Camacaro has yet to appear in a game this season, but he has been active on the transaction wire. Last week, he was transferred from the Akron disabled list to Buffalo, then a few days later was sent back to the Akron disabled list. Camacaro was bounced around because of the uncertainty of Victor Martinez's injury in Cleveland and whether Buffalo catcher Mike Rose would be needed in Cleveland. ... Buffalo third baseman Keith Ginter is the only Bisons player to reach base safely in all ten games his year. ... Infielder Joe Inglett was added to the Buffalo roster this week and activated, and infielder Trent Durrington (lower back) was placed on the disabled list. ... Buffalo outfielders Shin-Soo Choo (shin) and Brad Snyder (ankle) have sat out the last two games, although the injuries are considered minor. Both are day to day. ... Buffalo pitchers allowed their first home run of the season after eight games and 72 innings when Buffalo starter Jeff Harris was taken deep in the fifth inning Tuesday night. ... Akron right-hander J.D. Martin's scoreless inning streak came to an end in the first inning in his start this week, officially stopping it at 28.1 scoreless innings. ... The Indians signed right-handed pitcher Tim Drew to a minor league contract. ... First baseman Alan Zinter was released.

Minor Happenings: Stanford Makes His Pitch For Big League Job

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, April 18 2007 7:00 PM -
