

As 2007 comes to a close, it's time for us Indians fans to take a look towards the future. Starting today, Tony Lastoria will begin to unveil the most comprehensive analysis of the Indians farm system ever created. Detailed bios, stats, and videos on every prospect of note in the Indians farm system. All of which will be ran in parts, then archived here on the site for easy access. Tony begins us on his journey with an explanation of what's coming, and a look at some guys that just missed his Top 50 list.



As 2007 comes to a close, it is time to look toward the future. For Indians fans, that future is not just about 2008 and what happens as the Indians make another push to make the playoffs and win a championship. That future is also on the stars of tomorrow for the Cleveland Indians.

Like it or not, this organization prides itself on developing young talent, and they have and will continue to use that young talent as its lifeline to keep the foundation strong and intact for years to come. Most fans only care about what goes on with the major league team, as ultimately all fans care about is winning a championship. But, there are a lot of things going on underneath the surface, and since we are so often fixated on the results and moves at the major league level, we hardly see or hear about what is going on below.

So with that, I sought to put together a comprehensive listing of the Indians best prospects to help try and bring the players of tomorrow to the attention of the fans a little more, to promote them, and to provide some basic information on them. While the system lacks many blue-chip prospects at the moment, that can change quickly, and the system's biggest strength is the depth and collection of very good, talented players all around the diamond.

Over the course of the next several weeks, we will be releasing our Top 50+ Prospects here at The Cleveland Fan. Due to the excessive length of the scouting reports for each player, and for the project as a whole, this will be broken up into several smaller articles. You will not find a more detailed listing of the top players in the Indians farm system anywhere.

And best of all, it is all here for FREE.

The criteria for inclusion in the prospect rankings is that a player must be rookie eligible still

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(under 50 IP or less than 130 at bats). Service time is not considered, although all players on this list except maybe one player should be under 60 days of major league service time.

Also, while recently signed Japanese pitcher Masahide Kobayashi is "technically" a rookie, I have omitted him from the rankings simply that I believe a Japanese nine-year professional should not be considered a rookie.

Also, I left out all of the 2007 Draft class, except 1st round pick Beau Mills. Mills signed right away, and played almost three full months this year with three different affiliates, so a lot was learned about him this year.

Most of the other draft class signed late, and many others that did sign early just did not get enough exposure or show enough to truly grade them on their early returns.

That said, I decided to run a separate piece as an addendum to this prospect list, which will give brief scouting reports on the top players from the 2007 Draft as well as some of the top players from the Dominican Summer League (DSL) team last year.

Dennis Nosco took the lead on this piece, and it will be the followup to this article and will post on Saturday (12/29) before we dive into prospect list next week.

Anyway, the information in these scouting reports comes mostly from my notes in conversations I have had with various Indians personnel/players over the course of the last eight months. I also included information I collected from interviews Farm Director Ross Atkins has conducted via radio or print, as well some information from other media outlets.

Before we get to the first list, I just wanted to give a special thanks to the Cleveland Indians and their affiliates for their help during last season and this offseason. It is hard to give the fans a true representation of the Indians organization from the front office all the way down to the coaches and players, but it is first class all the way.

Everyone I have ever spoken to has been very helpful and more than gracious, even in times of my unneeded persistence.

I also want to give a special thanks to Dennis Nosco, Darren Lewis, and Art Gold for their help on this endeavor. Most should know Denny as he is another site writer, but Darren and Art are loyal fans of the farm system and follow it with passion and I sought them out for their help.

Really, it was a collaborative effort with all of them in coming up with this list, and I initially set out to work together with a few people to be sure I got most of the varying viewpoints covered and was not just putting out "my" list.

In many cases, I found I was undervaluing or overvaluing a guy too much, and they helped a ton in drawing up this list from start to finish.

I also have to give a big thanks to site owner Rich Swerbinsky for his continued support and for

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allowing me to do this on his site.

Most importantly, a big thank you to my wife and kids for putting up with me the past two months as I spent most of my free time on this project.

And, a special thank you to Carl Kline for providing almost all of the pictures for this listing. Except for five to seven of the 60-some players, Carl gets credit for all photos. If you are interested in reaching Carl for work on a project you are working on, please e-mail me at tlastoria@theclevelandfan.com and I will put you in touch with him.

With all that out of the way, today we kick off the listing of The Cleveland Fan Top 50+ Prospects with the "plus" portion, as in the players who "just missed" the list. These players are listed alphabetically, and are the players who just missed inclusion in the Top 50. It should be noted that two other players, outfielder Brian Barton and first baseman Matt Whitney also missed the list because they are no longer a part of the organization after being selected in the Rule 5 Draft a few weeks ago. As an FYI, Barton would have been 17th and Whitney 7th in the rankings.

Also, these scouting reports will be kept on [my blog](#) for easy, quick access, and I will also be throwing up some sneak peaks at the Top 50 list there as well before I provide them here on this site.

With that, here are the player listings:

Jose Constanza - Outfielder

Age: 24 Height: 5'9" Weight: 150 Bats: Switch Throws: Left

	AVG	R	HR	RBI
2007 Kinston	.274	112	445	71
Career	.311	447	1719	310

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[Constanza at the plate](#)

Adam Davis - Second Baseman

Age: 23 Height: 5'9" Weight: 185 Bats: Switch Throws: Right

	OPS			
2007 Lake County	.266	127	500	95
Career	.247	192	753	132



Davis is a switch-hitter taken in the 3rd round of the 2006 Draft out of The University of Florida. In his professional debut in 2006 at Mahoning Valley, Davis struggled to get untracked and hit only .218 with 1 HR, 15 RBIs, 9 stolen bases and a .574 OPS in 254 at bats. Last year at Lake County, Davis showed promise and hit .266 with 6 HR, 41 RBI, 22 stolen bases and a .747 OPS in 500 at bats. He showed marked improvement in the second half of the season, as he hit only .249 with 1 HR, 15 RBI, 8 stolen bases and a .709 OPS before the All Star break, and hit .281 with 5 HR, 26 RBI, 14 stolen bases, and a .780 OPS after it. Davis is a scrappy player with very good speed and works counts well, and he sprays the balls to all fields and has some pop in his bat. He has good instincts in the field, is quick to the ball, and showcases a strong arm. While he primarily plays second base, his strong throwing arm will allow him to play shortstop or even third base with not much of a problem. He strikes out a lot (113), but he takes walks (74) and scores runs (95). Down the road his size and athleticism will probably limit him to being a utility

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player. He should open the season in Kinston splitting time at second base, shortstop and possibly third base.

James Deters - R Right-handed Pitcher
Age: 24 Height: 6'4" Weight: 180 Bats: Right Throws: Right

	WHIP			
2007 Kin/Buf	12	4	2.50	34
Career	27	17	2.88	76



The Indians selected Deters in the 7th round of the 2005 Draft out of Calvin College (MI). Deters finished last season 12-4 with a 2.24 ERA in 33 appearances (10 starts) for Kinston, and held opponents to a .232 batting average and struck out 66 in 112.1 innings pitched. He won the Carolina League ERA Title with the 2.24 ERA. He has also proven to be durable and versatile, as he led the organization in innings pitched in 2006 (167.2) and then last year pitched out of the bullpen most of the year. Deters throws a fastball that tops out around 90 MPH, and compliments it with a curveball and changeup. His biggest strength is his consistency, makeup, and his ability to throw strikes (career 1.81 BB/9). Deters is another example of a pitcher who has put up great stats, but still is an uncertainty in the system because he lacks an overpowering pitch he can rely on to consistently get hitters out. In his three year professional career, he is now 27-17 with a 2.88 ERA and 1.21 WHIP in 76 career appearances (52 starts), but he does not miss many bats (5.75 K/9 career) and he does not induce a lot of groundballs (1.36 G/F in 2006 and 1.23 G/F in 2007). He will have a harder time getting hitters out consistently as he moves up the minor league ladder since he will face more advanced hitters. His role for 2008 is unknown, but he should start the year as a swing man for the Akron pitching staff.

Video: [Deters on the mound](#) .

Todd Martin - First Baseman/Outfielder
Age: 24 Height: 6'3" Weight: 210 Bats: Left Throws: Left

	OPS			
2007 Mahoning Valley	.360	54	197	27
Career	.340	69	235	35

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[Marin at the plate](#), [taking batting practice](#)

Matt Meyer - Left-handed Pitcher

Age: 23 Height: 6'0" Weight: 205 Bats: Left Throws: Left

	W	L	IP	ERA	SO
2007 Lake/Kinston	3	4	3.31	43	
Career	5	6	2.93	62	



The Indians selected Meyer in the 15th round of the 2006 Draft out of Boston College. Meyer quickly impressed in his professional debut that same year in Mahoning Valley when he made 19 appearances out of the bullpen and went 2-2 with 2 saves and a 1.98 ERA, and also held opposing hitters to a .230 average and struck out 31 batters in 27.1 innings pitched. The results in 2007 were mixed, as he carried the dominance over to Lake County where in 11 appearances he put up a 0.50 ERA, held opposing hitters to a .182 batting average, and struck out 20 batters in 18 innings pitched. Upon moving to Kinston, Meyer struggled some going 3-4 with 3 saves and a 4.32 ERA, and held opposing hitters to a .258 batting average while striking out 58 in 50 innings pitched. Meyer throws from a three-quarters arm slot, throws a low 90s fastball that gets up to 93 MPH, and compliments it with a deceptive slider. Meyer has trouble with right-handers but is very tough on lefties, which is why scouts project him as a lefty specialist down the road. In his short minor league career, Meyer has shown the ability to pile

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up strikeouts (10.29 K/9 career), but he also piles up the walks (4.91 BB/9 career). He needs to continue working on his fastball command, and tighten up his slider. The Indians are excited about his potential, and he made a great showing in the Fall Development Program. He will likely open the year in the Akron bullpen, although a return trip to Kinston to start the year is not out of the question.

Roman Pena - Outfielder

Age: 21 Height: 6'0" Weight: 190 Bats: Left Throws: Left

	AVG	RBI	HR	OPS
2007 Lake County	.240	123	455	58
Career	.259	179	660	91



The Indians drafted Pena out of high school in the 9th round of the 2005 Draft, and after not playing professionally in 2005 he made his professional debut in 2006 with the GCL Indians. That season, in 205 combined at bats in the GCL and Lake County, Pena hit .302 with 7 HRs and 26 RBIs. Pena is an exciting left-handed hitter who has line-drive power to all fields. He has average range in the outfield, but has a very strong arm due to his experience as a pitcher in high school where he consistently clocked in at around 85-88 MPH. With his power arm and electric bat, he projects as a good right fielder; however, he is lacking in size. Going forward, Pena will need to work on his approach at the plate, namely his plate discipline where in 660 career at bats he has struck out 205 times, which is about once every three at bats. This offseason, through 12/25 Pena is hitting .259 (34-135) with 3 HR, 12 RBI and a .757 OPS in the Mexican Winter League. Pena will likely start the season in the Kinston outfield.

Video: [Pena at the plate](#) .

Jason Smit - Second Baseman

Age: 18 Height: 6'0" Weight: 165 Bats: Right Throws: Right

	AVG	RBI	HR	OPS
2007 GCL Indians	.214	35	117	10
Career	.214	35	117	10

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[Smile at the plate](#)

Josh Tomlin - Right-handed Pitcher

Age: 23 Height: 6'1" Weight: 175 Bats: Right Throws: Right

	W	L	ERA	IP
2007 Lake/Kinston	11	4	3.36	32
Career	19	6	2.89	47



Tomlin grew up in East Texas and went to Angelina Junior College before transferring to Texas Tech, and was drafted by the Indians in the 19th round of the 2006 Draft. A sprained ulnar collateral ligament in his pitching elbow in 2006 sidelined him for six weeks and ultimately hurt his status for the draft. While he was disappointed going into the draft and sliding to the 19th round, he signed with the Indians quickly and made an impressive professional debut that year in Mahoning Valley going 8-2 with a 2.09 ERA and held opposing batters to a .196 batting average, and had 69 strikeouts in 77.1 innings pitched. He finished first in the NY-Penn League that year in starts (15), second in wins (8), and third in ERA (2.09). He was named a NY-Penn League Mid-Season All Star. Last year, Tomlin went 11-4 with a 3.36 ERA, held opposing hitters to a .250 batting average and had 109 strikeouts in 131.1 innings pitched. He was also named a South Atlantic League Mid-Season All Star. Tomlin started last season in Lake County where he initially pitched out of the bullpen, but was moved into the starting rotation around mid-season. Tomlin has a three pitch mix where he throws a fastball that consistently clocks in at 85-89 MPH, sometimes touching 90 MPH, and he also throws a slider and

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changeup. Right now, Tomlin is still working on some improvements with his delivery and harnessing the control of his fastball. He needs to get out in front of the ball, finish his pitches, and stay balanced by using his legs more. It is not certain if Tomlin will remain in the starting rotation or move to the bullpen. Tomlin has great stats, but his questionable role, average tools, and so much depth in the system pushed him just off the Top 50 List. Tomlin will likely start the year in Kinston with a yet to be determined role in the bullpen or starting rotation.

Neil Wagner - Right-handed Pitcher

Age: 24 Height: 6'0" Weight: 195 Bats: Right Throws: Right

	WHIP			
2007 Lake/Kinston	1	4	3.44	50
Career	1	5	2.78	76



The Indians drafted Wagner in the 21st round of the 2005 Draft out of North Dakota State University. Wagner might be a sleeper, and someone to keep an eye on. In 2006 at Mahoning Valley, Wagner racked up 17 saves and posted a 1.39 ERA while holding opposing hitters to a .143 average and struck out 50 hitters in 32 innings. Wagner closed in college, and at this point it appears the Indians intend to develop him as a late inning reliever. Outside of Adam Miller, Wagner arguably has the most explosive fastball in the system that touches 96-98MPH consistently. He shows good control (2.24 BB/9 rate) and the ability to put players away with his dominating fastball (10.50 K/9). While he controls his fastball well and can blow it by hitters, the key to him becoming a bonafide relief prospect will be the development of at least one secondary pitch, which he has struggled with. Wagner was sent the Hawaii Winter League this offseason to primarily work on his two offspeed pitches, a breaking ball and changeup. Under normal circumstances, he would feature his fastball, but since he was sent to Hawaii with specific development goals to work on his secondary pitches, he threw often and was hammered. Still, while his stats were brutal (9.68 ERA in 12 appearances), Wagner showed some progress with the pitches. Wagner most likely will start the 2008 season in the Kinston bullpen, although could start in Akron.

Video: [Wagner on the mound](#) .

Up Next:

Saturday December 29th: The Top Prospects from the 2007 Draft & Dominican Summer League (DSL)

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