

Indians Top 50+ Prospects: #31-40

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, January 02 2008 7:00 PM -

Yesterday we started running Tony's long awaited Top 50 Indians prospects piece, which comprises the majority of this excellent nine installment series profiling the top prospects in the Indians entire minor league system. Today we ramble on to part four of the series and the second portion of the prospect countdown, which unveils prospects #31-40 on Tony's list, and includes a couple of catchers that could be potential heir apparents to Victor Martinez.



This is part four of a nine installment piece profiling the top prospects in the Indians farm system. [Part three](#) yesterday profiled the #41-50 ranked players in the Indians farm system.

All photos courtesy of Carl Kline except where noted below. To get in touch with Carl Kline for photo assistance, please e-mail me at tlastoria@theclevelandfan.com and I will forward his e-mail address to you.

These photos are credited to the following.

Ryan Morris - John M. Setzler, Jr. / MiLB.com

Ryan Miller - Blinn College (TX) Athletic Department

Mike Pontius - Fred Wilke / St. Louis Dispatch

Robbie Alcombrack - Timothy Turner / Aflac.com

Santo Frias - Tony Lastoria / TheClevelandFan.com

All ages as of 04/01/2008.

40. Santo Frias - Right-handed Pitcher

Age: 20 Height: 6'3" Weight: 190 Bats: Right Throws: Right

	W	L	IP	ERA
2007 GCL/Lake	2	3	2.24	11
Career	6	7	1.77	22

Indians Top 50+ Prospects: #31-40

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, January 02 2008 7:00 PM -



Frias on the mound

39. Cirilo Cumberbatch - Outfielder

Age: 21 Height: 6'2"; Weight: 185 Bats: Right Throws: Right

	BIS			
2007 Lake/Akron	.299	84	298	47
Career	.260	229	784	106



History: The Indians signed Cumberbatch as an undrafted free agent in July of 2003 out of Panama City, Panama. He was signed just before his 17th birthday, and made his professional debut in 2004 at Burlington. This upcoming season will be Cumberbatch's sixth year in the organization and his fifth season playing, yet he still will be only 21-years old until the middle of the year.

Indians Top 50+ Prospects: #31-40

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, January 02 2008 7:00 PM -

Strengths & Opportunities: He has grown the past few years and this past year at Lake County started to make a name for himself with a good season. Cumberbatch is solidly built and very strong. He started to swing the bat better last year because he was handling breaking balls much better and using the whole field. The Indians feel he is someone who can develop some good power in a few years because he has a projectable body that should continue to get bigger. Last year at Lake County, he hit the ball hard all year and consistently hit the ball to all fields.

Cumberbatch has very good makeup and is a very hard worker. He is not a burner on the basepaths, but he runs well. Defensively, he is very good running routes to balls, has shown a strong and accurate arm, and can play all three positions. He is more a corner outfielder, but can play center field. He has pull tendencies still, so he needs to continue working on staying in the middle of the field driving balls. Keeping him in the middle of the field will help him stay on breaking balls better because when a player likes to pull the ball he is very susceptible to off-speed stuff because he is trying to get the barrel of the bat out there so much to pull it.

Cumberbatch showed some clutch hitting ability last year, as with runners in scoring position he hit .373 with a .948 OPS in 83 at bats at Lake County. He also finished the season up strong in August, hitting .347 with an .847 OPS for the month.

Outlook: With his growth potential to go along with his work ethic, Cumberbatch is another player to watch this year who may be on the verge of a breakout season. He will most likely start the season in the Kinston outfield.

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

38. Sean Smith - Right-handed Pitcher

Age: 24 Height: 6'4" Weight: 195 Bats: Right Throws: Right

	W	L	ERA	IP
2007 Buffalo	9	7	4.25	24
Career	44	30	3.82	133

Indians Top 50+ Prospects: #31-40

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, January 02 2008 7:00 PM -



37. Wyatt Toregas - Catcher

Age: 25 Height: 5'11" Weight: 200 Bats: Right Throws: Right

	BIS			
2007 Akron	.250	86	284	36
Career	.263	341	1219	177



History: Toregas was selected by the Indians in the 24th round of the 2004 Draft out of Virginia Tech. The Indians added Toregas to the 40-man roster this past offseason to protect him from

Indians Top 50+ Prospects: #31-40

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, January 02 2008 7:00 PM -

the Rule 5 Draft, which gives them a third catching option they have not had on the roster in several years. Since the graduation of Victor Martinez from the minor league system in 2003, the Indians have not had many catching options to turn to in the minors until now.

Strengths & Opportunities: In 2006, Torgas bounced back from a rough 2005 campaign and established himself as one of the Indians top catching prospects after he hit .294 with 8 HR, 52 RBI and an .816 OPS in 309 combined at bats in Kinston and Akron. Last year, Torgas struggled through a season riddled with injuries as he was on and off the disabled list all year with back and elbow injuries and only played in 86 games. The sore right elbow hindered his throwing abilities for the last half of the season, which was the result of a collision with Michael Aubrey while chasing a popup in the infield in early July.

Torgas has ability with the bat, and a little bit of power pull side. Toward the end of last season Torgas learned to hit the ball to right field and made strides in using the whole field. He became a good situational hitter moving runners. When you can catch and throw like Torgas does it allows the Indians to give his offense more time to develop. He is a leader, and he gives maximum effort and everything he has.

Torgas is an excellent defensive catcher that can control a running game. He consistently averages 1.85 seconds on throws to second base, which is much better than the major league average of 2.0 seconds. Torgas is the best defensive catcher in the Indians system, and he has been ranked as the best defensive catcher in the league he played in the last two years. He moves well behind the plate, handles a pitching staff well, and calls a good game.

Torgas has the potential to be an adequate hitter, which to go along with his outstanding defense that has Indians officials excited, makes him very valuable. Going forward, while Torgas performed well against left-handed pitching (.822 OPS) he will need to shore up his approach against right-handed pitching (.649 OPS) to be successful at Triple-A and beyond.

Outlook: Torgas is a player that continues to rise in the Indians farm system, and continues to improve physically each year. With Torgas rostered and most likely in Buffalo next year, the Indians have a viable backup catching option to turn to if Martinez or Kelly Shoppach are injured.

36. Ryan Edell - Left-handed Pitcher

Age: 24 Height: 6'1" Weight: 215 Bats: Left Throws: Left

	IP	W	L	ERA	WHIP
2007 Kinston	11	6		3.70	31
Career	14	11		3.44	51

Indians Top 50+ Prospects: #31-40

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, January 02 2008 7:00 PM -



35. Frank Herrmann - Right-handed Pitcher

Age: 23 Height: 6'4" Weight: 220 Bats: Left Throws: Right

	W	L	IP	ERA	WHIP
2007 Kinston	11	5	4.01	26	
Career	15	11	3.99	52	



History: The Indians found a hidden gem in 2004 with undrafted free agent outfielder Brian Barton, and it appears that lightning has struck twice with Herrmann. An economics major at

Indians Top 50+ Prospects: #31-40

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, January 02 2008 7:00 PM -

Harvard, Herrmann went undrafted and was signed by the Indians in August of 2005. In Herrmann's debut season in 2006 he went 4-6 with a 3.90 ERA in 26 starts for Single-A Lake County, and he used his success in Lake County as a stepping stone into last season in Kinston. At Kinston last year, Herrmann was named to the Carolina League All Star team.

Strengths & Opportunities: Herrmann is a physically imposing pitcher, armed with a power sinking fastball that sits in the low-90s, slurve breaking ball and decent changeup that has good movement. The key to Herrmann's success is his bulldog mentality and his intelligence in coming up with a good game plan to attack hitters. At times he can be too quick to the plate which can lead to him leaving the ball up in the zone, but he is a consistent strike thrower and he pitches to contact. Herrmann is also very durable, and he saw his velocity increase some last season as he was topping out as high as 93 MPH many times late in the season and averaging 91-92 on the radar gun, whereas in 2006 he only averaged 90 MPH.

The Indians felt Herrmann showed a lot of improvement in 2007. When he came into the organization, he was very raw and the Indians had to break him down by completely re-developing his delivery and overhauling his four pitch mix to a more simplified three pitch mix of a fastball, slider and changeup. He was also more a collapse, drop and drive guy when he came into the organization, but the refined delivery got him to stay taller in 2007. Last season at Kinston, the focus was mostly on continuing to refine his delivery and how he attacked hitters. While he is comfortable throwing his changeup to lefties, he continues to work on throwing his changeup in on right-handers. He also worked on throwing his two-seam fastball in on right-handers to get them off the plate.

His strength, durability and ability to throw strikes are definitely key assets for him where even with average stuff he could be a solid backend of the rotation innings eater in the majors. Ultimately, what will separate him from being a long term bullpen guy or staying a starter is the development of his breaking ball. Herrmann has dedicated the offseason to working on the pitch. Herrmann is a fly-ball pitcher (0.87 G/F ratio in 2007 and 1.05 G/F ratio in 2006), and doesn't miss many bats (5.94 career K/9), so it will be interesting to see how he does as he moves up to Double-A and beyond.

Outlook: Herrmann was actually heavily recruited coming out of high school as a football player to play quarterback and safety, and at Harvard he was supposed to play both football and baseball but ended up just playing baseball because of the demands academically. All signs point to him making an address change to Akron to start the year and staying in the starting rotation.

Video: [Herrmann on the mound](#)

34. Robbie Alcombrack - Catcher

Age: 19 Height: 6'0" Weight: 205 Bats: Right Throws: Right

	BES			
2007 GCL/Lake	.239	40	134	21
Career	.223	75	242	31

Indians Top 50+ Prospects: #31-40

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, January 02 2008 7:00 PM -



33. Ryan Miller - Left-handed Pitcher

Age: 21 Height: 6'0" Weight: 195 Bats: Left Throws: Left

GCL/MAHONING				
	IP	W	L	ERA
2007 GCL/Mahoning	4	4		3.83
Career	4	4		3.83



History: The Indians selected Miller in the 36th round of the 2006 Draft out of Blinn College (TX). Miller was a draft and follow player and had a commitment to pitch for and attend the University of Arkansas in the fall of 2007, but chose to sign with the Indians in May 2007. As a freshman at Blinn College, Miller went 6-3 with a 3.01 ERA and 83 strikeouts in 68.2 innings in 2006, and as a sophomore in 2007 went 9-0 with a 2.05 ERA and 105 strikeouts in 85.1 innings (15 starts).

Indians Top 50+ Prospects: #31-40

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, January 02 2008 7:00 PM -

Strengths & Opportunities: Miller's professional career got off to a rocky start in at Mahoning Valley, going 0-2 with an 18.69 ERA in three starts to start last season. The Indians quickly reassigned him to the Gulf Coast League (GCL) in early July and he seemed to settle in better and pitch with more confidence as he dominated GCL hitters. In nine starts, Miller went 4-2 with a 2.40 ERA and a .160 batting average against (BAA) with 44 strikeouts in 45 innings.

Miller will not blow you away as his fastball sits around 87-91 MPH, but he has a deep mix of pitches in that he also throws a curveball, slider, and changeup. His curveball is his best secondary pitch, has good traditional 12-6 break, and he commands it well to where the Indians feel that Miller's curveball will be a good serviceable major league pitch in the future. His power slider has less break, but it is quicker and more of a pitch he uses to backdoor right-handers and to attack left-handers.

Miller's velocity changed throughout the season last year and did not remain consistent, although it could have been the result of pitching so many innings in college in the spring (85+ innings). He needs to continue to get stronger and work on his fastball command as he walked a lot of batters in college (45 in 85 innings last year). Miller's changeup is a work in progress, and he will continue to get a lot of work in developing the pitch to see where it goes.

Outlook: Miller is yet more good young left-handed pitching depth in the system, and he made a solid debut last year. He will try to use his success from last season as a springboard going into his first full season with the Indians organization this coming year, and likely will open the season in the Lake County rotation.

32. Mike Pontius - Right-handed Pitcher

Age: 20 Height: 6'2" Weight: 235 Bats: Right Throws: Right

	W	L	IP	ERA	SO
2007 GCL/Lake	0	3	5.03	20	
Career	0	3	5.03	20	



History: The Indians selected Pontius in the 43rd round of the 2006 Draft out of high school (MO). Pontius signed in August of 2006, and made his professional debut last year starting in the Gulf Coast League (GCL) before he finished up in Lake County. He held opposing hitters to a .246 batting average against, and had 40 strikeouts in 34 innings pitched.

Indians Top 50+ Prospects: #31-40

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, January 02 2008 7:00 PM -

Strengths & Opportunities: Pontius is a strongly built kid who looks like he should be playing football, and is armed with power stuff, has no fear, and could be a closer type down the road. Pontius has plus-plus arm strength and a blazing fastball that consistently clocks in at 94-96 MPH, and tops out at 97 MPH. His fastball is part of a three-pitch mix where he also throws a curveball and changeup.

Pontius is still very young and learning how to throw his curveball and changeup, as he got by in high school just throwing fastballs since no one could touch it. At this point it is too early to tell what he will have with his curveball and changeup, but the curveball has shown good depth, has sharp 11-5 break, and can be an out pitch at the major league level. His changeup is still a work in progress, and he also experimented with a cutter last season with mixed results.

The Indians do not want to pigeonhole Pontius as a backend reliever yet as he still is only 20 years old, but he has a hard time repeating his delivery. With his fastball and issues with his delivery mechanics, it makes him an ideal candidate for a backend bullpen role down the road, possibly even closer. To be a starter, a pitcher has to be able to repeat his delivery and have at least three pitches. The Indians want to keep him a starter as long as possible because staying in the rotation provides many more opportunities to pitch into jams and see every game situation, where as a reliever a lot of times a pitcher will come in with a clean slate and there is only so much he can learn in the limited amount of innings he works. If a pitcher can get out there five or more innings a start, he goes through a gamut of game situations and defensive positioning. Going forward, he needs to keep working on his fastball command and cleaning up his delivery mechanics.

Outlook: Last year Pontius pitched out of the bullpen, but there is no guarantee he will start in the bullpen in 2008 and may end up in the starting rotation in order to stretch him out. While the Indians will not commit to it now, Pontius is most likely destined for a relief role, and should open the season at Lake County.

31. Ryan Morris - Left-handed Pitcher

Age: 20 Height: 6'3" Weight: 175 Bats: Left Throws: Left

	W	L	IP	ERA	WHIP
2007 GCL/Lake	3	2	3.89	14	
Career	4	7	4.23	23	

