

## Indians Top 50+ Prospects: #21-30

Written by {ga=consigliere}  
Friday, January 04 2008 7:00 PM -

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Tony's ridiculously in depth series on the Indians prospects and his Top 50 list continues on today as he unveils #'s 21-30. As we move forward into the Top 20, the capsules get even more detailed, and we'll run them five at a time instead of ten as we count down to #1. A must read for any diehard Indians fans. And big thanks again to Tony and his crew for all the hard work he put into this.



This is part five of a nine piece installment ranking the Indians top prospects. [Here is a listing of the previous four installments.](#)

[Intro & Prospects Who Just Missed](#)  
[Top 2007 Draft & Dominican Summer League Prospects](#)  
[Top Prospects #41-50](#)  
[Top Prospects #31-40](#)

All photos in this installment are courtesy of Carl Kline. To get in touch with Carl Kline for photo assistance, please e-mail me at [tlastoria@theclevelandfan.com](mailto:tlastoria@theclevelandfan.com) and I will forward his e-mail address to you.

All ages as of 04/01/2008

### 30. Sung-Wei Tseng - Right-handed Pitcher

Age: 23 Height: 5'10" Weight: 195 Bats: Right Throws: Right

	W	L	ERA	IP
2007 Kinston	6	9	4.05	26
Career	6	9	4.05	26

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### 29. Stephen Head - Outfielder/First Baseman

Age: 24 Height: 6'3"; Weight: 220 Bats: Left Throws: Left

	AVG	R	HR	RBI
2007 Kinston/Akron	.256	128	485	86
Career	.258	315	1202	193



**History:** Head was taken in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of the 2005 Draft out of the University of Mississippi. After a very good debut in 2005 where he hit .308 with 10 HR, 50 RBI and an .862 OPS in 57 combined games at Mahoning Valley and Kinston, Head had a disappointing 2006 campaign at

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Kinston hitting only .235 with 14 HR, 73 RBI, and a .696 OPS. Head bounced back in 2007, and more impressively, he finished the year with a bang as in the last ten games of the regular season he hit .361 with 2 HR and 9 RBI, and then carried that into the Eastern League playoffs where he hit .367 with 3 HR, 8 RBI, and had a 1.133 OPS in eight games.

**Strengths & Opportunities:** The ball really jumps off of Head's bat, and may jump off his bat as good as any player in the organization. He has power, but he keeps the ball on a line a lot because he does not elevate a lot of balls. Head's late season surge at the plate can be traced back to him finally getting comfortable with the overhaul in his swing mechanics in 2006, as well as him making adjustments where he has gotten much better with his pitch selection each at bat. Initially, Head was slow to adapt to the adjustments and at times was overly aggressive by trying to do too much too soon, but the new revamped approach to hitting is starting to pay off. Head has a healthy 6:1 at bat to strikeout ratio over his minor league career, and also has a good 1.7:1 strikeout to walk ratio.

Head is an outstanding defensive first baseman, and is the best in the system at the position defensively. Head still profiles as a good major league first baseman as he is a smooth defender and has above average power, but late in the season last year the Indians moved head off first base and put him in right field. He was moved to the outfield because of the depth at first base and because it will benefit him to be able to play more positions. He responded well to the move, and considering that the Indians are loaded with first basemen up and down the system the move creates some versatility for Head and provides a way to get him up to Akron.

With Matt Whitney gone (although likely to be returned), Head may now return to first base more on a full time basis this coming season, although he could still get some continued exposure in the outfield to become more comfortable playing the position and for the Indians to evaluate how he handles it. Head can handle the outfield as he has experience playing there in high school, and it should not be much of a hardship as he is a pretty good athlete.

**Outlook:** In the spring, Head will continue to receive instruction in the outfield. Ultimately, if Head can show he can play some outfield he becomes much more valuable to the Indians because of his power bat and versatility. Being able to play a very good first base defensively, and also hold his own in the outfield makes him valuable to an organization that loves versatile players. Head should return to Akron to start the season.

**Video:** [Head at the plate](#)

## 28. J.D. Martin - Right-handed Pitcher

Age: 25 Height: 6'4" Weight: 205 Bats: Right Throws: Right

	W	L	ERA	IP
2007 Akron	2	3	4.26	9
Career	41	25	3.67	112

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### 27. Jeanmar Gomez - Right-handed Pitcher

Age: 20 Height: 6'3"; Weight: 168 Bats: Right Throws: Right

	W	L	IP	ERA	WHIP
2007 Lake County	11	7	4.80	27	
Career	20	13	3.48	51	



**History:** Gomez was signed as a non-drafted free agent out of Venezuela in April of 2005. As a 17-year old in 2005, the tall and lanky Gomez went 5-3 with a 1.33 ERA in 13 games (61.0 IP) for the Indians Dominican Summer League (DSL) team, and followed that up at age 18 by going

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4-3 with a 2.48 ERA in 11 games (54.1 IP) for the rookie level Gulf Coast League (GCL) Indians. He was the South Atlantic League Pitcher of the Week for the week of 06/04/2007.

**Strengths & Opportunities:** In his first three seasons in the Indians farm system Gomez has been outstanding. At the end of last season, Gomez showed increased arm strength and has good potential for future strength gains for plus arm strength. He shows a feel for a three pitch mix at times, with a good fastball, curveball and changeup. His fastball consistently clocks in at 87-90 MPH and tops out at 93 MPH. His curveball has 11-5 break, and shows good potential. His changeup is an average pitch with sink and fade, and he has good command of it.

He has average command and control right now, but has the possibility of having plus command/control in the future. Gomez finished the year strong and showed improvement in his fastball velocity as it was higher than it was at the beginning of the season. As one of the youngest players in the league, he hung in there, competed and in the second half made a lot of strides. He made every start, and the Indians never had to back him off his starts. He stayed healthy showing durability, and got better as the season went on.

Gomez struggled before the All Star break last year, where in 13 starts he went 5-6 with a 6.51 ERA and opponents hit .310 off of him. He followed that up with a strong second half showing as after the All Star break in 14 starts he was 6-1 with a 3.27 ERA and opponents only hit .247 off of him. Being so young, inconsistency is one of the major growing pains for pitchers his age, and is something he will need to get a handle on going forward. Also, he spent most of last season learning on the job, and this year will continue with improving his mechanics on the mound, repeating his delivery, and throwing strikes more consistently.

**Outlook:** Gomez is the youngest of the Latin Trifecta which also includes Kelvin De La Cruz and Hector Rondon. He has considerable upside, and his growth potential in size and stuff is very good. He should move up to Kinston in 2008 as a member of the starting rotation.

**Video:** [Gomez on the mound](#) .

## 26. Paolo Espino - Right-handed Pitcher

**Age:** 21 **Height:** 5'10" **Weight:** 190 **Bats:** Right **Throws:** Right

	W	L	IP	ERA	WHIP
2007 Lake County	4	5	3.66	33	
Career	4	5	3.66	33	

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### 25. Chris Nash - First Baseman

Age: 21 Height: 6'5" Weight: 230 Bats: Right Throws: Right

	BRS			
2007 GCL/Mahoning	.303	63	228	32
Career	.303	63	228	32



**History:** The Indians selected Nash in the 24th round of the 2006 Draft out of Johnson County Community College (KS). Last year was his first professional season as he did not play in 2006 after signing because he was hurt when the Indians signed him.

**Strengths & Opportunities:** Nash came out last year and had a really good extended spring,

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played well in the Gulf Coast League and Mahoning Valley, and did really well in the instructional league this offseason. He is a huge first baseman who should continue to fill out as he matures. His big frame, strength, and size at 6'5" 230 at 21 years of age make him very projectable to be a big power hitter. Last year, in 238 at bats he only hit three home runs, but he piled up 20 doubles which is a clear sign that the power is there and may be on the verge of emerging as he matures and becomes more accustomed to the feel of wood bats.

Nash is an intelligent kid who handles himself really well and is a hard worker. Even with his enormous size, Nash is very athletic and moves very well around the bag at first base. He made a lot of progress in the instructional league and during the year at first base and has become a solid defender at the position.

One problem Nash had last year was not getting good leverage with his legs or using his lower half really well. Once he learns how to use his lower half and get better leverage with his front side and not come off the ball, we could see a power explosion from him. He is also still working on staying on breaking balls and using the whole field since he still likes to pull the ball. The Indians believe he can be a power hitter, but they will let it come naturally and not force him into one. In the meantime, the focus is on Nash learning to get his pitch and hitting it where it came from. The Indians will also continue instruction with him on plate discipline, pitch recognition, as well as staying on and driving through the ball.

**Outlook:** After a very good debut season last year, Nash has put himself in a position where he has been noticed and for people to look at him. His progression this year should be interesting. He is one of the top candidates to have a breakout campaign in 2008, and he will likely start the year in Lake County.

**Video:** [Nash at the plate](#) .

## 24. Chris Gimenez - Catcher

**Age:** 25 **Height:** 6'2" **Weight:** 190 **Bats:** Right **Throws:** Right

	<b>OPS</b>			
<b>2007 Kinston/Akron</b>	.264	113	382	76
<b>Career</b>	.261	387	1355	225

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[Gimenez at the plate](#) [Gimenez taking batting practice](#)

### 23. Michael Aubrey- First baseman

Age: 25 Height: 6'0" Weight: 195 Bats: Left Throws: Left

	AB	R	H	RBI
2007 Kinston/Akron	65	256	37	
Career	243	906	134	



**History:** Aubrey was a 1<sup>st</sup> round pick by the Indians in the 2003 Draft out of Tulane University. Aubrey's season last year once again got off the wrong way because of an unfortunate hamstring injury he suffered at the end of spring training. The hamstring injury was yet another

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injury to his laundry list of injuries over his career, and the Indians took it slow with him in his recovery and didn't push him. When he was finally 100% running the bases in extended spring training games, they moved him to Kinston near the end of May where he tore up the league in a brief two week stint there by hitting .400 (20-50) with 5 HR, 11 RBI and a 1.292 OPS in 13 games. The Indians quickly moved him to Akron where he stayed the rest of the year.

**Strengths & Opportunities:** The question is not whether Aubrey can hit, it is whether he can stay healthy because when he plays he performs. In 243 career minor league games, he has hit .301 with 39 HR, 178 RBI, and .876 OPS. When he is healthy, he is a superior defender and good hitter with gap power. But, staying on the field to put up those numbers has been his problem. Aubrey has endured many long spells on the disabled list with leg and back issues and those 243 games played have come over four and a half seasons (roughly 630 possible games). In 2005, chronic back issues limited Aubrey to just 28 games and his season ended in May. In 2006, for the second straight year, he was lost early in the season when he injured himself sliding into second base and suffered a surface fracture on his right knee joint.

Throughout the 2007 season Aubrey had trouble running and clearly showed he was favoring his hamstring and groin which he had injured earlier in the year. For really the first time, Aubrey played through the pain and managed to stay on the field for most of the rest of the season. This approach to get him to stay on the field and battle through the injuries was in part due to the Indians pushing him to play every day and to see if he could play through the injury issues. Aubrey was regularly found in the trainer's room hours before and after every game for treatment, and after games he looked like he went through a war as he had huge ice packs practically wrapped around his entire lower body to help treat the nagging abdominal, groin and hamstring issues.

At the end of the year Aubrey did suffer an abdominal strain which sidelined him a short time, but he was healthy enough to come back and play for the stretch run and in eight playoff games hit .344 with 2 HR and 10 RBI. The Indians were encouraged with the way Aubrey was able to stay healthy and on the field for most of the last three months of the season, and as they hoped, Aubrey took the opportunity in the offseason to get more at bats and games in by playing in the Arizona Fall League (AFL). Aubrey played well in the AFL and showed off his offensive potential by hitting .275 with 5 HR, 11 RBI and an .858 OPS in 91 at bats.

**Outlook:** If Aubrey can find a way to stay healthy, he still may be able to salvage his once promising baseball career and be an impact player. But, the man has been a china doll since being drafted by the Indians, and this year might be Aubrey's last chance in the organization (last option year). Aubrey made it through the Arizona Fall League this offseason unscathed, which is encouraging, and barring another injury setback he will most likely split time at first base and designated hitter in Buffalo this year.

**Video:** [Aubrey at the plate](#)

## 22. Hector Rondon - Right-handed Pitcher

Age: 20 Height: 6'3" Weight: 165 Bats: Right Throws: Right

	W	IP	ERA	WHIP
2007 Lake County	7	10	4.37	27
Career	13	17	3.83	53

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### 21. Reid Santos- Left-handed Pitcher

Age: 25 Height: 6'1" Weight: 170 Bats: Left Throws: Left

	W	L	ERA	WHIP
2007 Akron	8	3	2.72	39
Career	20	16	3.89	139



**History:** Santos is from Wahiana, Hawaii and was taken by the Indians in the 13<sup>th</sup> round of the 2002 Draft out of Saddleback College (Mission Viejo, CA). Santos broke onto the prospect scene in 2006, where he put up a good season in Kinston by going 2-0 with 4 saves and a 3.44

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ERA, and held opposing hitters to a .223 batting average and struck out 65 in 70.2 innings pitched. He got a late season callup to Akron and was dynamite, as in nine appearances he had a 2.61 ERA and did not walk a batter and struck out 20 in just 10.1 innings pitched.

**Strengths & Opportunities:** Santos is not overpowering in that his fastball sits around 91-92 MPH, but for a little guy he throws harder than you think. His fastball has good velocity, and he has a good assortment of secondary pitches with a slider, curveball and changeup. His changeup is good enough to where it really plays up the speed of his fastball, and he has the ability to strikeout hitters with his fastball, slider and changeup. He is a strike-thrower and has very good command and location of his pitches to all areas of the strike zone. His durability is also helped because of a low effort delivery.

Santos was much like a super utility pitcher last year in Akron as he pitched in every role conceivable be it in middle or long relief, setup man or closer, or in the starting rotation, and his versatility to the Akron staff was invaluable. Santos started the year as a setup man in the Akron bullpen, then moved to the closer's role when Bubbie Buzachero was called up to Buffalo, and then finally settled into the starting rotation when J.D. Martin was sidelined with an injury.

Santos has a great attitude, and his versatility to pitch out of the bullpen or as a starter - especially since he is left-handed - makes him very valuable to the Indians as a possible swing man down the road. The Indians see him as an early lefty out of the bullpen because he has the pitches to come in and attack both right-handed and left-handed hitters. The Indians really liked how he finished off the season in Akron in 2006 and how he came into the 2007 season and picked up right where he left off. He went to the Hawaii Winter League in the offseason to get more work in, pitching in 13 games and compiling a 5.24 ERA with 26 strikeouts in 22.1 innings pitched.

**Outlook:** Santos is yet more bullpen depth the Indians appear to be grooming in the minors. Santos' ability to handle multiple roles in the bullpen and adapt to constant change put him on the fast track to Cleveland as he was recently rostered by the Indians when they added him to the 40-man roster this offseason. He will likely start the year in the Buffalo bullpen.

**Up Next:** Indians Top 50+ Prospects #16-20