

Minor Happenings: De La Cruz-ing In Lake County

Written by {ga=consigliere}
Friday, June 06 2008 7:00 PM -

It's "Minor Happenings" time once again here on the site, and as usual, Tony has a smorgasboard of great info on the Indians top prospects and affiliates in this week's piece. Promising young Lake County hurler Kelvin De La Cruz is really making a name for himself this season, and is Tony's minor league player of the month. Tony also hits on the Adam Miller injury, the Indians extending their affiliation with Kinston, and up and coming prospect David Huff's promotion to Buffalo.



"Minor Happenings" covers the important developments and news in the Indians farm system. While most of the information in this report is from my own research and through interviews I have conducted with organizational personnel, some information in this report is collected and summarized from the various news outlets that cover each team.

For those that missed it, draft extraordinaire Dennis Nosco ran a live blog all day today on [my blog](#) giving flash analysis on the Indians picks and on other things from Day 1 of the MLB Draft.

Denny will be back again Friday to provide another running live commentary of Day 2 of the draft.

He will have a post-draft article or two here at [TheClevelandFan.com](#) in the coming days.

One programming note: This coming Tuesday's edition of the *Minor League Magazine* on STO, Indians Director of Player Development Ross Atkins will wrap up the MLB Draft and talk about some of the top prospects.

Left-hander David Huff will be featured, and a then and now segment on Indians manager Eric Wedge will be shown.

Also, this coming Tuesday I have a big piece coming that will recap a near 45-minute long conversation I had on the phone this past Sunday with a top major league scout. This is significant and was something I wanted to do to sort of balance the talk you get from me and the

Minor Happenings: De La Cruz-ing In Lake County

Written by {ga=consigliere}
Friday, June 06 2008 7:00 PM -

Indians personnel.

We talked about a couple dozen prospects, some quickly, and some for 5-7 minutes.

I'm looking forward to getting this piece out.

And, as always, I'll have some player features in the next week. Players like Roman Pena, Ryan Morris, Erik Stiller, Randy Newsom, Jeff Stevens and Jordan Brown will be featured soon.

The piece on Brown likely will post on this Sunday or Monday.

Indians Minor League Player Of The Month

(for May)

Kelvin De La Cruz (Left-handed Pitcher - Lake County)

3-1, 0.80 ERA, 6 starts, 33.2 IP, 20 H, 3 R, 1 HR, 18 BB, 30 K, .183 BAA

Lake County left-handed starting pitcher Kelvin De La Cruz is really making a name for himself this season. Coming into the season, he was viewed as a promising young prospect who had big helium potential, and to date he has lived up to the billing.

He



has hit a speed bump here and there, had some trouble with walks, but overall he has been dominant. On the year he is 4-2 with a 1.40 ERA in 11 starts, and in all but one start he has allowed no more than one run.

"I feel really good," said De La Cruz in a recent interview at Classic Park in Eastlake.

"[There are] just a couple things I need to work on, like my attitude.

Sometimes something happens in the game, like an error, and I [let it bother me].

I have to control my emotions."

While De La Cruz returns home to the Dominican Republic for a month or two to play winter ball, he spends almost all year stateside. He has lived in New Jersey the last several years with his family where they have picked up their citizenship and also picked up on the English language.

He signed with the Indians at just 16 years old in December 2004 as an undrafted free agent out of the La Vega in the Dominican Republic. His discovery was the product

Minor Happenings: De La Cruz-ing In Lake County

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Friday, June 06 2008 7:00 PM -

of all the hard work the scouts in Latin America have done in unearthing some good talent over the last several years.

"The Indians saw me one time," recalled De La Cruz. "I threw like 50 pitches.

was ready to sign and wanted to do it, but my mother said I didn't have to sign right then.

I said 'you know what mom, I want to sign.'

They gave me \$150,000 and that was fine with me as I wanted to play baseball."

De La Cruz was hurt near the end of the 2006 season as he went through a bout of shoulder tendonitis, but he returned strong last year when he really first became noticed as a prospect. He dominated in just three starts in the Gulf Coast League (3-0, 0.50 ERA), and then went to Mahoning Valley and made 12 starts (2-4, 3.98 ERA).

His nerves got the best of him in his first start at Mahoning Valley where he only lasted a third of an inning giving up six runs on one hit and five walks.

He responded really well after that, and in his followup start to that disastrous debut De La Cruz went five no-hit innings and combined with two other pitchers to throw a no-hitter (July 12th, 2007).

"You know, last year sometimes was difficult because I was thinking a lot about the year before having a bad season because I had a little bit of a hurt shoulder," recalled De La Cruz. "I just said, 'you know what I am good, I just have to do my work when I go out there.' I threw like 18 innings and three games, and then they called me up and the first game was real difficult for me in Mahoning. It was just so different. Then I came back and threw a combination no-hitter."

De La Cruz is often referred to as "The Carmona Lefty" because of his close resemblance to current Indian and former Lake County Captain Fausto Carmona. Not only does De La Cruz look just like him on the mound, but his skills, pitching repertoire, makeup and so on are near identical to what Carmona was in 2003 at Lake County.

The only difference is that De La Cruz is left-handed, hence the moniker.

He is also very good friends with Carmona and often asks him for insight into the professional game and lifestyle.

"I told him in spring training that I was playing my first full season and asked him how to stay strong," said De La Cruz. "He told me 'you have to eat a lot, rest and work hard.' So that is what I do now."

Honorable Mentions:

Minor Happenings: De La Cruz-ing In Lake County

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Friday, June 06 2008 7:00 PM -

Randy Newsom (RHP - Akron): 2-0, 0.61 ERA, 11 SV, 15 games, 14.2 IP, 12 H, 9 BB, 8 K, .231 BAA

Wes Hodges (3B - Akron): .347 AVG, 7 2B, 1 HR, 21 RBI, .411 OBP, .860 OPS

Chris Gimenez (C - Akron): .329 AVG, 9 2B, 1 3B, 2 HR, 11 RBI, .484 OBP, 1.055 OPS

David Huff (LHP - Akron): 4-0, 1.08 ERA, 5 starts, 33.1 IP, 22 H, 4 BB, 29 K, .186 BAA

Carlton Smith (RHP- Kinston): 3-1, 1.04 ERA, 5 starts, 34.2 IP, 19 H, 7 BB, 14 K, .160 BAA

Jeremy Sowers (LHP - Buffalo): 3-1, 1.45 ERA, 5 starts, 31 IP, 29 H, 8 BB, 22 K, .250 BAA

Previous Winners:

April: Ryan Miller (LHP - Lake County)

Director's Cuts

This week, Indians Farm Director Ross Atkins provides some thoughts on a potpourri of players in Kinston and Buffalo, and also provides some insight into the thinking with all the minor league free agents they have been picking up:



On Kinston: "This year is a lot of fun to watch because there are some 19 and 20 year olds running around in the Carolina League, and they are playing for the Kinston Indians.

When you put our starting nine and starting five pitchers and take those fourteen players and average them out, we are a year and a half younger than everybody else.

That is a very good sign that they are competitive, we are near .500 and playing good baseball, and our prospects are having good years and doing things we are asking them to do.

When you ask a younger player to make adjustments at a very competitive level and see not only their willingness to do it, but also their success in doing it, that is a very good sign.

This is the first time these guys will not only see pitchers throw 95-96, but also the ability to command a breaking ball as well.

Now guys who do those two things don't typically stay in the Carolina League long, but there are teams that have those type of arms on their team.

This is the first time they are seeing strike-throwing ability, a three pitch mix with a power

Minor Happenings: De La Cruz-ing In Lake County

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Friday, June 06 2008 7:00 PM -

fastball, and these young hitters are having to make adjustments on the fly.

They are walking back to the dugout at times wondering what just hit them, but it is good seeing them go through that and maybe make the adjustment and maybe next time get a hit off that guy.

The other interesting thing about the league is there are only eight teams.

That guy who is throwing 95 for the Myrtle Beach Pelicans will come back around.

Baltimore probably has four first-rounders on their team, the Braves have a lot of first-rounders on their team.

There is some good pitching in the league this year, so to see some of our younger hitters like Beau Mills, Carlos Rivero, and Jared Goedert have some success is nice.

Nick Weglarz is a guy where with the things he is doing with his discipline and power against those type of arms is a very good sign.

It is really hard to control our excitement about Nick Weglarz."

On Transactions: "This year has been the busiest of my two years and the busiest I can remember in my 7-8 years in the front office, especially the last couple weeks.

It is just a byproduct of injuries and guys not performing to the level that we had hoped.

It has been extremely reactive.

We have had to react to injuries and fill in certain spots, sign independent ball pitchers and fill that Buffalo team.

We are always trying to get better, whether it is incrementally improving on a right-handed bat for Triple-A or a depth bullpen arm for the major league team.

We are constantly doing that, and when you add on injuries and unexpected poor performances then it just intensifies those needs and the work to be done on that front.

It has been a crazy couple of weeks, and the draft is right in the middle of it."

On Jeremy Sowers: "He has been unbelievable. It is so funny how people talked about starting pitching depth and how much we had of it.

How incredible the amount of starting pitching depth we had, and now we are looking for depth.

It is amazing how valuable it is, someone who can pitch seven to eight innings and take you deep into a game.

Minor Happenings: De La Cruz-ing In Lake County

Written by {ga=consigliere}
Friday, June 06 2008 7:00 PM -

The fact that Jeremy Sowers is sitting in Triple-A for us, who really quite frankly a major league pitcher in Triple-A, is an incredible asset.

He has been incredible.

The up and down, and one start not knowing if he is going down right after and finding out right after that he is right back up.

He had a little bit of bad luck with the timing of his first callup, and Laffey being right behind him and that he would be the odd man out.

How he has handled all that, and handled the up and down and keeping his performance consistent, is really a tribute to his mental strengths and ability to focus."

On Rick Bauer: "He is a really interesting guy. A guy that we were very fortunate was available as a six year free agent. He has three years of major league service, mostly with Baltimore and some with Texas.

A big right-handed power arm with some natural sink and life to his fastball, and has a power breaking ball.

We challenged him to be more consistent in the strike zone recently, and he has done that.

He has shown that he belongs in the major leagues for this challenge, and we are very interested to see how he does in the next few weeks [in Cleveland]."

Indians Minor league Player of the Week

(for games from May 29th to June 4th)

Steven Wright (Right-handed Pitcher - Kinston)

1-0, 2 starts, 0.00 ERA, 12.2 IP, 4 H, 0 ER, 4 BB, 12 K

This award really came down to Wright and Akron left-hander Ryan Edell, and Wright got the nod by a nose. Wright was sensational last Thursday as he threw a complete game shutout allowing two hits, two walks and struck out seven.

Indians Farm



Director Ross Atkins and Minor League Pitching Coordinator Dave Miller were there to witness Wright's dominance and liked what they saw. It was Wright's first career complete game

Minor Happenings: De La Cruz-ing In Lake County

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Friday, June 06 2008 7:00 PM -

shutout, and he is now ranked 1
League in ERA.

st in the Carolina

Wright dominated the opposition with exceptional command of his fastball that he did a great job of keeping down in the zone. He pounded the zone with strikes, kept the ball on a downward plane, and worked his fastball in and out to hitters. By throwing strikes with his fastball, it made his secondary pitches much more effective.

Wright has always had confidence in his slider, which is considered his best pitch, but he is starting to gain a lot more confidence in his curveball lately and he is starting to believe he can throw it in any count.

His dominant start over Frederick was an ironic twist, as while it was the best start of his two year career, Frederick is also responsible for the worst start of his career last August when they pounded him for 11 runs in 1.1 innings. Wright has been one of the most consistent starting pitchers in a system loaded with excellent starting pitching this year. In 10 of his 11 starts he has allowed three earned runs or less, and in four of his starts he has not allowed a run.

On the season he is 2-3 with a 2.17 ERA and has held opposing hitters to a .193 BAA in 12 starts.

Honorable Mentions: Ryan Edell, LHP, Akron (2-0, 0.63 ERA, 2 starts); Brad Snyder, OF, Buffalo (.421 AVG, 0 HR, 3 RBI); Cirilo Cumberbatch, OF, Kinston (.333 AVG, HR, 7 RBI); Alex Castillo, C, Kinston (.438 AVG, HR, 6 RBI); Roman Pena, OF, Lake County (.353 AVG, HR, 6 RBI)

Previous Winners:

5/22 to 5/28: Chris Archer (RHP - Lake County)
5/15 to 5/21: David Huff (LHP - Akron)
5/8 to 5/14: Steven Wright (RHP - Kinston)
5/1 to 5/7: Jeremy Sowers (LHP - Buffalo)
4/24 to 4/30: Jose Constanza (OF - Akron)
4/17 to 4/23: Hector Rondon (RHP - Kinston)
4/10 to 4/16: Wes Hodges (3B - Akron)
4/3 to 4/9: Kelvin De La Cruz (LHP - Lake County)

Off The "Snyde"

Outfielder Brad Snyder has been on a roll of late in Buffalo. In his last ten games he is hitting .444 (16-for-36) and in seven of his last eight games he has collected two or more hits in a game. During that period, Snyder had a stretch of five straight multi-hit games and in the last week he has raised his average 59 points from .203 to .262. H is 20 extra base hits are second on the team only to second baseman Josh Barfield (21).

Minor Happenings: De La Cruz-ing In Lake County

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Friday, June 06 2008 7:00 PM -

On the season Snyder is hitting .262 with 4 HR, 24 RBI and a .761 OPS.

Snyder's recent success is a result of a shift in his approach at the plate where he has focused on being much more aggressive but selective at the same time in knowing what he wants to hit when he steps into the batters box. What this means is he has gone from going up there hacking to now having a better plan knowing what pitches he wants to aggressively attack.

Whatever good Snyder does this year might be too little too late for him in the Indians organization. With a surplus of like-outfielders already in Cleveland, and him being out of options after this year, it is very unlikely he sticks with the team at the end of spring training next year. Being out of options, if the Indians wanted to send him to Buffalo at the end of spring training he would first have to be removed from the 40-man roster and clear waivers before they could outright assign him to Buffalo. In fact, he may not even last in the organization that long as the Indians have several decisions looming on who to roster for protection in the Rule 5 Draft this December, and Snyder could be a roster casualty to protect someone they find more of a long term fit.

Even still, given Snyder's struggles, it is very possible another team will not claim him (they would have to put him on their 40-man roster) and he sticks in Cleveland next year as a non-major league rostered player.

Indians Extend Agreement With Kinston

On Wednesday the Cleveland Indians announced that they have renewed their player development contract with Single-A affiliate Kinston. The new agreement carries the Indians affiliation with Kinston through the 2010 season, which currently the two have an

unprecedented 22nd year affiliation. "Our relationship with the Kinston Indians is outstanding"; said Ross Atkins, Cleveland's Director of Player Development.

"We are as happy as we could be.

Minor Happenings: De La Cruz-ing In Lake County

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Friday, June 06 2008 7:00 PM -

This relationship is one I see continuing for a long time."

The affiliation between Kinston and the Cleveland Indians has enjoyed unprecedented success both on and off the diamond. Over the last fifteen complete seasons, Kinston has the highest winning percentage of any team in Minor League Baseball. Since the first year of affiliation in 1987 (21 complete seasons), the K-Tribe qualified for the Carolina League playoffs 16 times, never missing the playoffs in back to back seasons. Currently, Kinston has made the Carolina League playoffs seven straight years, the longest streak in Carolina League history.

Kinston has won five Carolina League Championships and 11 Carolina League Southern Division Titles as a Cleveland affiliate.

Over the last four complete seasons the K-Tribe has won 336 games, the most in all of Minor League Baseball. "The managers, coaches and players we deal with every year are some of the best people in baseball," said Shari Massengill, Kinston General Manager.

"It has been a strong relationship spanning three decades and we are pleased to continue it into a fourth."

Wild Wednesday

It was a wild Wednesday night down on the Indians' Farm. While Lake County's game for first place in the division with Delmarva was postponed, there was some history and near-history made in Buffalo and Akron.

In Buffalo, the Bisons did absolutely nothing for eight innings as they were shutout and held to four singles and had only one runner



get past first base all night. They were down 6-0 going into the bottom of the 9th inning, but then managed to put up an incredible rally scoring six runs on six hits in the 9th to tie the score at 6-6.

In the top of the 10th they gave up a run to Rochester, but trailing 7-6 in the bottom of the 10th Buffalo stormed back for two runs.

Outfielder Brad Snyder got the game winning RBI as he hit a no-out single with the bases loaded that one hopped the outfield wall.

The six-run comeback is the second largest ninth-inning comeback in Buffalo's Modern Era, with the record-setter coming almost a year ago against Pawtucket on May 5, 2007 when they

Minor Happenings: De La Cruz-ing In Lake County

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Friday, June 06 2008 7:00 PM -

trailed Pawtucket 14-6 going into the bottom of the 9th inning and scored nine runs to win 15-14.

Three hours down I-90 and I-77 to Akron, left-hander Ryan Edell flirted with history. Edell carried a perfect game into the eighth inning, but after 22 consecutive outs and five outs away from the first perfect game in the Eastern League in 65 years, the bid came to an end.

After a long battle at the plate where the count went full and the opposing hitter spoiled three good pitches with two-strikes, Edell finally missed high and away for a walk.

The next batter hit a single to end the no-hit bid, and then the next batter hit a blooper down the left field line which broke up the shutout, and after that Edell was removed.

Edell was sensational all night where he did not go to three balls on any hitter until the sixth inning, and he did not allow a ball to leave the infield until a fly out ended the fourth inning.

He finished the night going 7.1 innings and allowed one run, two hits, one walk, and struck out five.

Carlton In Charge

Kinston right-hander Carlton Smith just completed a fabulous month of May where he went 3-1 with a 1.04 ERA, and if not for David



Huff and Kelvin De La Cruz, Smith would have ran away with the Player of the Month Award for May. Smith has certainly come a long way this season, as in five April starts he did not allow less than three runs in any start and was 0-1 with a 7.61 ERA for the month. However, in his five May starts he went at least six innings in every start, and all but one he went at least seven innings.

He allowed two runs in one start, and in all the rest gave up just one or no runs.

Smith is not exactly blowing away hitters, as he only had 30 strikeouts in 65 innings pitched this year. He is a sinker-baller and pitches to contact, so a lot of his success depends getting groundballs (2.06 G/F), the defense around him, and some luck. The 6'2" 205-pound Smith was a 21st-round draft pick out of Piscataway (N.J.) High School in 2004 and is quiet by nature and keeps to himself.

He has an excellent work ethic that was instilled in him by his brother and father.

Minor Happenings: De La Cruz-ing In Lake County

Written by {ga=consigliere}
Friday, June 06 2008 7:00 PM -

His brother Corey Smith is a former Indians 1st-round pick in 1999, and his father played professionally in the Baltimore Orioles organization.

Huff To Buffalo

Congratulations to left-hander David Huff on his promotion to Triple-A Buffalo on Tuesday evening. Huff's ascent up the minor league ladder has been astonishing given the fact that he is now in Triple-A, yet he has only 26 career minor league starts and 133 career



minor league innings pitched since being drafted in the 1st round of the 2006 Draft out of UCLA. His rapid climb is a testament to his ability, hard work, and shows just how major league ready he really was coming into the draft in 2006.

In his final start in Akron on Saturday, Huff was his usual dominant self as he retired the first 11 hitters he faced and carried a no-hitter into the fifth inning. He finished the game going 6.2 innings and allowing just one run on four hits while striking out seven.

Huff lowered his ERA to a league-leading 1.92 and capped off an outstanding May where in five starts he was 4-0 with a 1.08 ERA and did not allow more than two runs in any start.

While the move is unofficial (I reported it on [my blog Tuesday night](#)), it should become official sometime Friday as he is expected to make his Triple-A debut on the mound that night.

Tomlin Impresses In Spot Start

Kinston right-hander Josh Tomlin made a spot start at Triple-A Buffalo on Tuesday night and put forth a strong effort going seven



innings and allowing three runs on six hits, one walk and struck out three. He pounded the zone throwing 50 of his 79 pitches for strikes, and he was very efficient (79 pitches, 7 IP).

Minor Happenings: De La Cruz-ing In Lake County

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Friday, June 06 2008 7:00 PM -

After the game Tomlin was sent back to Single-A Kinston, but he left a lasting impression with many of the coaches at Buffalo and Indians officials with how well he pitched under control jumping up two levels.

Tomlin made few mistakes, and the ones he did he paid for dearly. He learned you do not get away with many mistakes at the Triple-A level as he left two pitches over the plate that were hit for solo home runs. But, other than that, Tomlin was great and he had good command of his fastball to both sides of the plate.

Tomlin is a guy you hear very little about because he does not have eye-popping stuff, but he wins (25-7 career record) and does a great job of hitting his spots and attacking the strike zone.

While he was sent back to Kinston, it should only be temporary as he could be on the move to Double-A Akron very soon.

With the Single-A teams about a week and a half from their All-Star breaks and the minor league season really at its midpoint, there should be a lot of roster movement up and down the system in the next two weeks.

Tomlin certainly seems like someone who could be on the move to Akron.

Award Winners

The Indians had a couple players win league player of the week honors this past week. In Buffalo, left-hander Jeremy Sowers was

the International League Pitcher of the Week for the period of May 26 to June 1. Over that period, Sowers went 2-0 with a 0.69ERA in his two starts and on the year he is now 4-3 with a 2.08ERA.

His ERA is the fourth-lowest in the league.

On May 27th Sowers threw six shutout innings and allowed eight hits, one walk and had five strikeouts.

On June 1st, Sowers allowed one run in seven innings.

In Akron, right-handed closer Randy Newsom was named the Bank of America Eastern League Pitcher of the Week for the period of May 26 to June 1. Newsom appeared in five games and recorded three saves and two wins with a 1.80 ERA in five innings of work, and on the season

Minor Happenings: De La Cruz-ing In Lake County

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Friday, June 06 2008 7:00 PM -

is 3-0 with a 1.08 ERA and 16 saves.

Newsom now leads the Eastern League in saves and games pitched (25), and he also smashed the Akron saves record and now has 34 in his Akron career.

Newsom should be on the move to Buffalo very soon.

Transactions Log

What a crazy week throughout the system with transactions. With players signing from the draft and being assigned to teams in the coming weeks, there should be a lot more movement this month. Here is a quick rundown

of the transaction activity this past week:

On Friday, right-hander Joaniel Montero was sent from Akron to Lake County and outfielder Nathan Panther was activated from extended spring training and placed back on the Akron roster.

On Saturday, catcher Richard Martinez was added to the Lake County roster and outfielder Ramon Hernandez was reassigned to extended spring training.

On Sunday, Buffalo infielder Andy Gonzalez was put on the disabled list with a left hamstring strain and infielder Chris De La Cruz was promoted to Buffalo from Kinston.

On Monday, right-hander Jeff Stevens was promoted to Buffalo and left-hander Reid Santos was reassigned from Buffalo to Akron. Also, right-hander Josh Tomlin was promoted from Kinston to make a spot start at Buffalo and right-hander Jensen Lewis was called up to Cleveland. Also, right-handed pitcher J.D. Martin was promoted to Buffalo and right-handed pitcher T.J. Burton was activated from extended spring training to take Martin's spot on the Akron roster.

On Wednesday, first baseman Michael Aubrey was activated in Buffalo and right-hander Josh Tomlin was re-assigned to Kinston.

Affiliate Notebook



Buffalo Notes (28-33, 4th place, 9 GB): As mentioned last week, right-hander Adam Miller will be out until the end of July. If all goes well with his recovery, he could go on a return-to-throw program but word is that he would not go to Buffalo but instead go to Cleveland.

Minor Happenings: De La Cruz-ing In Lake County

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Friday, June 06 2008 7:00 PM -

He is rehabbing the injury under the close watch of the Indians medical staff in Cleveland. ... On Friday, the Indians signed right-hander Dan Reichert out of the Atlantic League (Independent).

Reichert has pitched in 51 major league games from 1999-2003 with the Royals and Blue Jays (21-25, 5.55 ERA, 2 SV, 395.1 IP, 240 K).

He last pitched in the minors in 2005 as he has been in Independent League ball the last three seasons. ... In two appearances, right-hander Jeff Stevens has pitched four innings and given up three runs on three hits, one walk and struck out six. ... First baseman Jordan Brown is hitting .272 with 0 HR, 12 RBI and a .713 OPS. ... First baseman Ryan Mulhern is hitting .252 with 4 HR, 20 RBI, and a .729 OPS. ... Catcher Wyatt Toregas is hitting .198 with 2 HR, 20 RBI, and a .571 OPS.



Akron Notes (30-26, 3rd place, 3.5 GB): Left-hander Chuck Lofgren has had an inconsistent season so far, but scouts still love his skills and tools and feel he has correctable flaws in his delivery that can get him straightened out. Lofgren and Akron pitching coach Tony Arnold have worked extensively on getting his fastball command under control and to keep it down in the zone.

Lofgren took a step in the right direction on Sunday when he went five innings and allowed only one run.

On the season he is 1-3 with a 5.54 ERA in 11 starts. ... First baseman Matt Whitney has gotten off to a slow start this year, hitting only .242 with 4 HR, 18 RBI and a .698 OPS.

He has slowly started to pick things up at the plate, and one of the keys to his improved numbers is that he has been using the whole field and not being such a dead-pull hitter. ... On Friday, right-hander Kevin Dixon worked six strong innings and allowed two runs on four hits, walked three and tied his career-high with nine strikeouts.

On the season, Dixon is 2-4 with a 4.37 ERA in 10 starts. ... Right-hander Frank Herrmann, fresh off his one-start stint in Kinston over Memorial Day weekend, returned to the Akron rotation last week and went a solid seven innings allowing one run on eight hits, two walks and struck out six.

On the season, Herrmann is 5-3 with a 5.46 ERA in 11 starts. ... Akron entered May with a 10-14 record (5.5 games out of first) and were struggling at the plate (.247 AVG) and on the mound (4.70 ERA).

Things changed in May as they went 18-10, warmed up at the plate (.267 AVG) and were much

Minor Happenings: De La Cruz-ing In Lake County

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Friday, June 06 2008 7:00 PM -

more stingy on the mound (3.74 ERA).



Kinston Notes (28-29, 2nd place, 10 GB): Last Thursday, shortstop Carlos Rivero rolled his ankle during pre-game activities. He has been out of the lineup since, although not put on the disabled list.

He is still considered day-to-day with ankle soreness and the organization is being very careful with putting him back in the lineup.

On the season Rivero is hitting .274 with 1 HR, 24 RBI and a .677 OPS. ... On Sunday, first baseman Beau Mills and infielder Jared Goedert saw their modest 10-game on-base streaks end.

Mills is hitting .255 with 5 HR, 33 RBI and a .780 OPS, and Goedert is hitting .269 with 4 HR, 30 RBI and a .728 OPS. ... Left-handed reliever Dan Cevette earned his first career save on Friday night.

The lefty has worked his way back from shoulder issues last year and this season and is now throwing pain free, and he even got it up to 94 MPH a few times this past week.

On the season, Cevette is 1-1 with a 3.09 ERA in 10 appearances, and more impressive is his 18 strikeouts in 11.2 innings pitched. ... Catcher Alex Castillo is quietly having a good season, hitting .254 with 4 HR, 26 RBI and a .761 OPS in just 130 at bats. ... Outfielder Nick Weglarz is hitting .270 with 5 HR, 21 RBI, and an .839 OPS.

He also has 48 walks in 55 games. ... Right-handed closer Luis Perdomo is 2-1 with a 1.11 ERA and 12 saves in 23 appearances.

In 32.1 innings he has 31 strikeouts and a 0.93 WHIP.



Lake County Notes (34-24, 1st place, 0.5 GU): The Captains have lost five games in a row, and with a half game lead with 12 games to go in the first half they are going to be in a dogfight to win the South Atlantic League's (SAL) Northern Division. ... The SAL All-Star game is on Tuesday June 17th in Greensboro, NC. Lake

Minor Happenings: De La Cruz-ing In Lake County

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Friday, June 06 2008 7:00 PM -

County manager Aaron Holbert will manage the North squad, and Lake County pitching coach Ruben Niebla and hitting coach Jim Rickon will join Holbert on the coaching staff.

Five Lake County players were selected to the team:

left-handed starters Ryan Miller, Kelvin De La Cruz, and Ryan Morris, right-handed closer Vinnie Pestano, and outfielder Roman Pena. ... It was not a good week for the Captains as left-handers Ryan Morris and Ryan Miller suffered their first losses of the season.

On Saturday, Morris (6-1, 2.30 ERA) went five innings and gave up three runs on five hits, walking three and striking out five.

On Tuesday, Miller (7-1, 1.41 ERA) went five innings and gave up two runs on five hits, one walk and struck out five. ... On Friday, Kelvin De La Cruz was sensational once again throwing six shutout one-hit innings and left the game with a 4-0 lead going into the 7th inning.

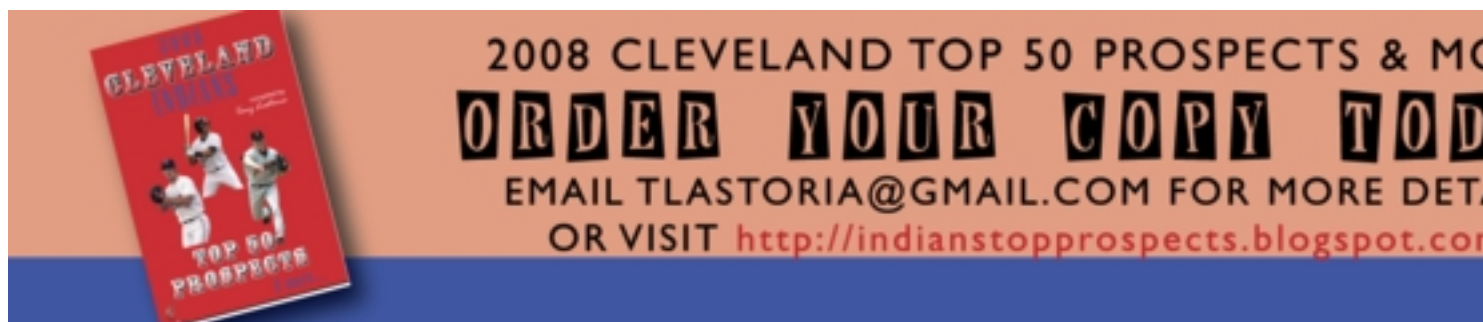
The Lake County bullpen then imploded as right-handers Josh Judy and Joanniel Montero combined to pitch three innings and give up a whopping 13 runs and 15 hits. ... First baseman Dustin Realini continues to carry a hot bat and is now in the midst of a 23-game on-base streak.

His 12-game hitting streak came to an end on Friday, and it is the longest hitting streak on the team this year.

On the season, Realini is hitting .307 with 3 HR, 25 RBI, and a .854 OPS. ... On Thursday, first baseman Chris Nash was put on the disabled list with right shoulder inflammation.

He is expected to be out for two to three weeks.

Photos courtesy of Ken Carr, Lake County Captains, Kinston Indians, Akron Aeros, and Buffalo Bisons.



2008 CLEVELAND TOP 50 PROSPECTS & MORE
ORDER YOUR COPY TODAY
EMAIL TLASTORIA@GMAIL.COM FOR MORE DETAILS
OR VISIT <http://indianstoprospects.blogspot.com>