

## Minor Happenings: Mills Makes Case For MVP

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Thursday, August 21 2008 7:00 PM -

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It's Minor Happenings time once again, and in this week's edition, Tony hits on the MVP season that Indians 2007 first round pick Beau Mills is putting together in Kinston. T also reports on the playoff races that Akron and Kinston find themselves in, and updates us on how Nick Weglarz fared in the Olympics for Team Canada. Also, tonight, Tony and Paul Cousineau hit the airwaves for their regular Thursday night internet radio show ... the newest venture for us here in 2008.



*'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.*

Things get back to normal today as *Happenings* posts in its regular time slot. In case you missed it, there were three different editions posted last week with one centered on

[my visit to Winter Haven](#)

to see the GCL squad, one centered on

[my visit to Myrtle Beach](#)

to see Kinston, and the other a quick update on the important news and notes

[over the weekend](#)

I was also able to post one of my player articles in queue on

[Mike Pontius](#)

this past Tuesday, and there are still many more to come.

Also, as a reminder, [Paul Cousineau](#) and I will take another crack at radio tonight when our show

*Smoke Signals* airs on [The Cleveland Fan Live](#)

from 9:00pm to 10:00pm EST.

The show name and some ideas are still being tested out, but if you were around last week you'll see a lot of changes and additions that hopefully help bring the broadcast up a level or two.

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More importantly, I should be a lot healthier tonight although I still have a nasty cold.

These shows are still in a test phase, but please check them out. Once they end, they are immediately archived so you can listen right there on-line or download the show as an MP3.

I'll be heading out to Lake County this evening to do some interviews with some players and coaches, so I may even air one tonight.

### Indians Minor League Player Of The Week

*(for games from August 14th to August 20th)*

#### Beau Mills (First Baseman - Kinston)

*.392 AVG (11-for-28), 5 R, 2 2B, 1 3B, 3 HR, 8 RBI, 3 BB, 9 K*



Kinston first baseman is putting the finishing touches on what looks like will be an MVP season for him this year in the Carolina League. So far this month, Mills is hitting .357 with 4 HR, 16 RBI and a 1.073 OPS in 16 games, and has all but locked up the league MVP award.

Mills hit .268 with 9 HR, 47 RBI and an .821 OPS before the All-Star break, but in the second half he has been red hot hitting .337 with 12 HR, 42 RBI, and a .995 OPS.

He is currently 1st in the Carolina League in home runs (21) and RBI (89), 3rd in doubles (34) and slugging percentage (.515) and hits (139), 4th in OPS (.891), 5th in runs (78), and 7th in hitting (.296) and on-base percentage (.376).

Mills' outstanding season puts to rest any questions there may have been about his ability as a hitter coming out of little know Lewis-Clark State as a first round pick of the Indians last year. He now is clearly part of what has become a crowded group of gifted hitters at the top of the Indians prospect list.

While things can always change, Mills is expected to finish the season in Kinston and participate in their playoffs (if they make it) and then start the year next season in Akron.

#### Honorable Mentions:

J.D. Martin (RHP - Akron): 2-0, 0.00 ERA, 10.2 IP, 7 H, 3 BB, 7 K

Shawn Nottingham (LHP - Kinston): 1-1, 1.93 ERA, 14 IP, 7 H, 1 BB, 16 K

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Lucas Montero (OF - Kinston): .500 AVG (13-for-26), 8 R, 1 2B, 1 3B, 0 HR, 7 RBI, 4 SB  
Matt Brown (OF - Lake County): .524 AVG (11-for-21), 3 R, 1 2B, 0 HR, 3 RBI  
Cord Phelps (2B - Mahoning Valley): .500 AVG (9-for-18), 8 R, 3 2B, 2 3B, 0 HR, 3 RBI  
Lonnie Chisenhall (SS - Mahoning Valley): .600 AVG (12-for-20), 5 R, 3 2B, 0 HR, 7 RBI

### Previous Winners:

08/07 to 08/13: John Drennen (OF - Kinston)  
07/31 to 08/06: Carlos Santana (C - Kinston)  
07/24 to 07/30: Matt Brown (OF - Lake County)  
07/17 to 07/23: Michael Aubrey (1B - Buffalo)  
07/10 to 07/16: Niuman Romero (3B - Kinston)  
07/03 to 07/09: Nick Weglarz (OF - Kinston)  
06/26 to 07/02: Stephen Head (1B/OF - Akron)  
06/19 to 06/25: Trevor Crowe (OF - Akron)  
06/12 to 06/18: Chris Gimenez (C - Akron)  
06/05 to 06/11: Jim Deters (RHP - Kinston)  
05/29 to 06/04: Steven Wright (RHP - Kinston)  
05/22 to 05/28: Chris Archer (RHP - Lake County)  
05/15 to 05/21: David Huff (LHP - Akron)  
05/08 to 05/14: Steven Wright (RHP - Kinston)  
05/01 to 05/07: Jeremy Sowers (LHP - Buffalo)  
04/24 to 04/30: Jose Constanza (OF - Akron)  
04/17 to 04/23: Hector Rondon (RHP - Kinston)  
04/10 to 04/16: Wes Hodges (3B - Akron)  
04/03 to 04/09: Kelvin De La Cruz (LHP - Lake County)

### **Down The Stretch They Come**

With a about a week and a half left in the regular season, both Double-A Akron and advanced Single-A Kinston are in the thick of a playoff race to get in the playoffs for each of their respective leagues. Akron can qualify for the playoffs by either winning the



Eastern League's Southern Division or finishing second in the division. Currently at 74-57, Akron is in second place three games in back of division leading Bowie, but has a commanding six game lead over third place Harrisburg. Even though they have lost seven of their last nine games they would still need a complete collapse to blow a playoff spot with 11 games to go.

Their magic number to clinch a playoff spot is six.

Unlike Akron, Kinston is in a dogfight for the final playoff spot in the Carolina League and is in danger of breaking their league record seven straight postseason appearances that they had

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coming into this season. Currently Kinston is 33-25 and in third place in the Carolina League's Southern Division and sit 5.5 games behind Myrtle Beach for the division lead, and are just a half game behind second place Winston-Salem.



Single-A leagues are broken up into two halves where the winner of the division in each half gets a playoff bid. In the event a team wins both halves (like Kinston did last year) then the team in the division with the best second half record qualifies for the playoffs.

Since Myrtle Beach won the first half crown, the playoff bid will go to the second place finisher which will be Winston-Salem or Kinston.

With 11 games left Kinston has very little chance of overtaking Myrtle Beach for the division crown, but they have an important four game set with Winston-Salem coming up at the beginning of next week which should determine the playoff fate for both teams.

Kinston has never reached the playoffs via the wild card, and their magic number to clinch a playoff spot is 12.

### Weglarz To Return Soon

Kinston outfielder Nick Weglarz has had a good year growing not only physically but as a hitter as well. Before leaving the Indians organization for the Olympics on July 27th, Weglarz was hitting .273 with 10 HR, 38 RBI and an .839 OPS in 99 games for Kinston.



While he has become a popular favorite among prospect experts, he still feels like he could be putting up better numbers this year.

“The numbers I was hoping to get to this year could be a little better,” said Weglarz in a recent interview. “I haven't walked that much lately, but I am still taking a good approach into each at bat. There are a couple things with my swing I need to iron out. Once I get more consistent with that I will be fine.”

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Weglarz has unbelievable power, but his home runs are down a little more than where they were expected to be at this point in the season. Part of that is the result of the pitching dominated Carolina League and pitchers working around him in walking him 67 times.

"It took a little getting used to [with the change in leagues]," said Weglarz. "I drew a bunch of walks at the beginning of the season.

They were pitching away a lot and once I showed them I could go away then they started coming back in.

It's tough as going from Low-A to High-A is a big jump.

Here all the pitchers are experienced pro ballplayers and they don't really miss as much here as in Low-A.

You almost need to stay one step ahead of the team and pitcher you are playing.

Each team has their different styles on how to attack hitters, and you just try to change your plan accordingly.

It takes a little getting used to, but in the big leagues and Triple-A they are going to know exactly how to pitch you, so when I get that far I have to know how to do that."

Weglarz just finished up pool play with Team Canada in the Olympics. He put on an impressive power display against gold medal favorite Cuba going 4-for-4 with two home runs and three RBI, and in the Olympics hit .400/.483/.720 in seven games.

His first home run against Cuba was just to the left of dead-center and hit the top of a flag pole traveling an estimated 470 feet.

Canada did not advance to the medal round, so Weglarz is expected to return to Kinston sometime in the next few days although there is an outside shot he could go directly to Akron.

The Indians did not tell him what to expect when he comes back, so he knows just as much about his roster situation as the fans.

### Beam Me Up Scotty

Left-hander Scott Lewis finally moved on from Double-A Akron to Triple-A Buffalo last Thursday.

It was a well deserved callup, as in 13 starts at Akron he was 6-2 with a 2.33 ERA.

Prior to his callup, Lewis was named Bank of America Eastern League Pitcher of the Week for the week ending August 10th.

Lewis was unbeatable in two starts for the week working 13.1 innings and allowing just



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Akron Aeros (7-6, 57-90) hit for 600 RBIs in the first half of the season. Full-time starter and MVP candidate Mike Mills was having some problems with



Kinston Indians (22-25, 82-110) are 5-5 in their last 10 games. On Aug 20, 2008, the Indians beat the Jays 1-0. This



Lake County (17-20, 66-110) are 1-2 in their last 3 games. On Aug 20, 2008, the Captains beat the Jays 1-0. This



Scrappers (26-33, 5th place, 9-5 GB) - Five Scrappers were named to the 1st with a



Indians (25-22, 5th place, 7-0 GB) and DSL Indians (36-6, 6th place) beat