

Josh Is No Punch And Judy Pitcher

Written by {ga=consigliere}

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The bullpen for the Indians class A affiliate Lake County Captains had a spectacular year, and just about every member of it emerged as an upper tier prospect for the Indians this season. One pitcher that was a part of the Lake County bullpen for almost the entire year who has turned out to be a hidden gem is right-hander Josh Judy, and he just may end up being the best of the bunch. Tony had a chance to speak with him on a recent trip to Eastlake.



Practically every pitcher in the bullpen at Single-A Lake County this year emerged and put themselves on the prospect map as far as reliever pitchers go. Right-hander Rob Bryson was the most publicized because he came in the C.C. Sabathia trade, right-hander Vinnie Pestano racked up a ton of saves on the year, right-hander Mike Pontius got off to a sensational start early in the year and can throw a ball through a brick wall, and left-hander John Gaub was a strikeout machine all year.

One pitcher that was a part of the Lake County bullpen for almost the entire year who has turned out to be a hidden gem is right-hander Josh Judy, and he just may end up being the best of the bunch.

Hidden gem is not the word. Judy is from the small town of Morgantown, WV which is known mostly as the home of West Virginia University. As a diehard Mountaineers fan growing up, Judy was all set to go to school there, but not to play baseball.

Judy was not scouted much out of high school, and at the last minute decided to go to school at the Indiana Institute of Technology to play baseball.

Raise your hand if you have ever heard of that school.

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"Actually, Indiana Tech got a hold of me through a showcase with a guy I was working with in the offseason out of high school," said Judy. "It was pretty much the only place I got an offer to play."

Players at big time programs obviously get more exposure, but baseball has proven over time it doesn't really matter where you go to college to play baseball because if you have talent the scouts will find you. And that is exactly what happened with Judy at Indiana Tech, and he has become a great find since being taken in the 34th round of the 2007 Draft by the Indians.

"That is definitely how baseball is, and if you have what it takes someone will see you," said Judy. "My sophomore year we had a new coach come in who actually played in the minors with the Reds organization for awhile and played in Double-A, so he had some connections. He would usually hold a Scout Night in the fall and 20 to 30 guys would come out and then we would go out and throw.

They would have the guns up and sit behind us and stuff like that, so I guess that is how I [was found].

It was definitely awesome [to get drafted] and one of the greatest feelings on Earth.

Just coming from a small town and going to a small college and being able to get that opportunity is overwhelming."

The 6'4" 200-pounder is yet another power arm in the system as his fastball has great life and consistently sits around 92-94 MPH and has topped out as high as 96 MPH when he was in college. He complements his plus fastball with a very good slider that has a nice sharp break to it and late movement. Judy used to throw a curveball for his third pitch, but that was tabled for a changeup that he spent a lot of time this year working on between outings.

"They actually bagged my curveball that I used to throw," said Judy. "So we no longer throw that and just go fastball-slider.

I started to work on a changeup this year too so that I have that third pitch.

It has come a long way because I never threw one in college as I just threw fastball-curveball-slider and occasionally threw a two-seamer.

If I can get that changeup going it will be a solid [addition to my pitch mix]."

Lake County Pitching Coach Ruben Niebla was really impressed with what he saw from Judy this season. Niebla spent time with Judy this year teaching him how to sink the ball better, which down the road is really going to help him attack left-handed hitters and get easier outs.

He also worked with Judy on tightening up his slider as it has a tendency at times to flatten out which gets him in trouble.

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