

Minor Happenings: Indians Survive Rule 5

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Tuesday, December 16 2008 7:00 PM -

Tony is back with another update on what is going on down on the farm. He fills us in with the results of last week's Rule 5 Draft, has some additional news on former Indians right-handed pitching prospect J.D. Martin who signed with the Nationals, recaps his radio interview with Randy Newsom and talks about his upcoming interview with Rob Bryson, and has up-to-date Winter Ball stats for the entire Indians organization. He also fills us in on his upcoming Indians Top 50 Prospect list and when we should be seeing it, as well when his prospect book should be available!



The Indians did not lose anyone in the major league phase of the Rule 5 Draft [as predicted here last Wednesday](#)

. Contrary to what some have said in the media the past few days, this is NOT an indictment on the lack of talent in the Indians system just because no one was drafted. All it means is the Indians protected the right guys and that their eligibles list was not strong with what clubs are looking for: major league caliber players, preferably high upside arms for the bullpen. Aside from Jordan Brown and maybe Randy Newsom, no one that was eligible was really major league ready.

Fans have a tendency to believe that teams look to pluck players from the Rule 5 just to stash them and not use them all year, which is not the case except in the most rare of circumstances when a Single-A high upside pitcher may be exposed. Bottom line, the teams want players that can come in right away and contribute in some way, and a high percentage of the picks are relievers which was the case again this year as over 60% of the picks were relievers, just like in the five years prior. The Rule 5 Draft has really become a hunting ground for relief pitching.

In any case, the Indians did lose two minor leaguers in the Triple-A phase of the draft, right-handers Carlos Arias (Royals) and Rafael Quintero (Pirates). Not much is known about

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either player, other than Quintero is a converted shortstop who had some good numbers last year in the DSL (5-1, 1.36 ERA, 23 games, 46.1 IP, 44 H, 5 BB, 48 K). But, having not even played stateside yet, it is hard to know much about him or what we really lost. The same goes for Arias, who did okay at Mahoning Valley this year (1-2, 3.41 ERA, 22 games, 29 IP, 30 H, 14 BB, 38 K). Both have been in the Indians farm system for at least five years and both haven't pitched a game for a full season team yet, so they do not appear to be much of a loss.

Apparently Farm Director Ross Atkins - who signed Arias when he was the Tribe's Latin America coordinator - felt the same way as he said the Indians had decided the innings they would eat up in 2009 were better served elsewhere. "We look at that [innings] value and would rather give that value to our amateur and Latin American scouts and see if we can keep filling in guys we'll have a few more years of protection with," Atkins said in a statement released by the team. "[Quintero and Arias] are good baseball players, but we'd rather give those innings to guys who we have more years of control with."

More On Martin

Here is one final nugget on former Tribe farmhand right-hander J.D. Martin who signed with Washington over a week ago.

According to someone close to Martin, it was very tough for him to leave the Indians as after being with them for eight years they were like his family. He is truly gracious for the way the Indians were patient with him in his recovery from Tommy John surgery, and he wanted to express his thanks to the Indians fans who have supported him over the years. He had 13 teams call him on the day free agency started and after a lot of phone calls and researching the situation he felt the best solution for him was to leave the Indians and sign with the Nationals because they offered him the best chance to reach the big leagues this year. While he understands it is a business, he did feel somewhat insulted with the way he was handled last year. As I said last week, much luck to J.D. with the Nationals!

Smoke Signals!

[Right-handed reliever Randy Newsom was our guest](#) this past week on an extended edition of Smoke Signals which ran for 1 hour and 40 minutes. We talked about the recent signing of closer Kerry Wood and the Gutierrez trade which netted the Indians right-handed reliever Joe Smith and infielder Luis Valbuena. In addition to that we sat down and talked to Newsom for about 40 minutes and covered everything from the Rule 5 Draft, winter ball, his 2008 season, his future, his company Real Sports Interactive, and so much more. Click on the hyperlink to listen to the podcast!

This week, right-hander Rob Bryson will be our guest on the [Thursday December 18th edition](#) of the show at 9:30pm. Bryson was one of the players obtained in the Sabathia trade and we'll obviously talk about the trade and the recent surgery he underwent to repair a torn labrum which could have him shelved for most of the 2009 season. And of course we'll talk about lots more.

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One programming note is we will not have shows on Thursday December 25th and Thursday January 1st for obvious reasons, but the show will be back in its regular slot on Thursday January 8th. To compensate for the loss of two shows on Christmas and New Years, a special edition will air on Monday December 29th from 9:30-10:30pm and left-hander Ryan Morris is expected to be our guest. Guests in January are expected to be Nick Weglarz, Frank Herrmann, Matt McBride, and Josh Tomlin.

2009 Prospect Rankings & Book Coming Soon!

I have received many inquiries on when the rankings for the 2009 season will come out and if there will be another book this year and if so when it will be available. The quick answer to that is yes my 2009 Indians Top 50 Prospect list on the site is coming, and yes there will be another book.

At the moment, I am knee deep in finishing off all the scouting reports for what looks like around 125 players. I may rank up to 75 or 100 players, but right now I only plan to rank 50 with all the other players listed for informational purposes. Because of the additional scouting reports and research, along with the Rule 5 Draft which took up more time than I had anticipated, my goal to get the rankings and prospect book out by mid-December just is not going to happen.

Right now the planned timeline for the rankings and book is to kickoff the rankings New Year's week, starting on Monday December 29th on [my blog](#) . I plan to start unveiling a lot of the honorable mentions and non-ranked players that week, and then start a daily countdown with #50 posting on Monday January 12th or 19th and counting down each day with a new prospect until #1 is reached sometime in early March. If I go with 75 ranked players, the ranking will likely start on January 5th.

I will be posting an article here on TheClevelandFan.com after each set of five players are released.

One thing to note here is while all these scouting reports will be housed here and on my blog by the end of March, they will all be available in the book which should be available for sale sometime in early-to-mid January. So, for those that want the early 1-2 month scoop on the rankings and scouting reports, or for those who just want all the prospect information in a neatly bound book, it will definitely be available again this year.

I always get questions from readers on how they can show their support for the prospect information provided on the two sites. Well, buying the prospect book is about the best way you can show your support for what should cost no more than \$15 out of pocket this year (including shipping) for a copy. Although I have to say I am not sure what the final cost will be since the book will be noticeably larger with around 50 more scouting reports and some additional other information pieces to be included which should make it 30-50 pages bigger.

I'll have more firm details on all this by the end of the month, but I wanted to get those who are interested in the rankings up to speed. So expect more book news in the coming weeks on my blog, and the prospect rankings to kick up here real soon! Any questions or suggestions for the book/rankings, e-mail me at tlastori@indiansprospectinsider.com

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Winter Ball Update

Here are the current statistics for Indians players playing in winter ball. Stats are updated through 12/16 and indicate players' season is over.

Special thanks to Darren Lewis for compiling and posting these updated stats on my blog every Wednesday and Sunday.

VENEZUELAN WINTER LEAGUE

RHP Randy Newsom - 4G, 2.2IP, 7H, 7R/ER, 3BB, 1K, 23.62ERA

OF Matt LaPorta - 17G, .164(11-for-67)/.250/.299/.549, 3 2B, 2HR, 12RBI

INF Asdrubal Cabrera - 8G, .346(9-for-26)/.500/.538/1.038, 2 2B, HR, 6RBI

INF Luis Valbuena - 43G, .290(36-for-124)/.357/.524/.881, 8 2B, 3 3B, 5HR, 20RBI

RHP Edward Mujica - 14G, 16IP, 22H, 13R/ER, 2BB, 12K, 7.31ERA

INF Nuiman Romero - 30G, .278(25-for-90)/.347/.289/.635, 2B, 8RBI

INF Karexon Sanchez - Has not yet played.

RHP Hector Rondon - Has not yet played.

RHP Jeanmar Gomez - Has not yet played.

DOMINICAN WINTER LEAGUE

1B Jordan Brown - 9G, .241(7-for-29)/.324/.276/.599, 2B, 4RBI

C Chris Gimenez - 20G, .211(12-for-57)/.430/.456/.887, 2 2B, 4HR, 11RBI

RHP Adam Miller - 8G(5GS), 29IP, 28H, 16R, 14ER, 6BB, 27K, 4.34ERA

LHP Scott Lewis - 5G, 22IP, 25H, 14R, 13ER, 6BB, 26K, 5.32ERA

LHP Tony Sipp - Has not yet played.

RHP Fausto Carmona - 6G, 32.2IP, 31H, 16R/ER, 10BB, 28K, 4.41ERA

3B Andy Marte - 20G, .267(20-for-78)/.321/.320/.641, 4 2B, 6RBI

LHP Rafael Perez - Has not yet played.

C Carlos Santana - Has not yet played.

OF Jose Constanza - Has not yet played.

OF Lucas Montero - 32G, .210(13-for-62)/.380/.339/.718, 3 2B, 3B, HR, 6RBI

C Alex Castillo - 8G, .231(3-for-13)/.333/.308/.641, 2B

RHP Joaniel Montero - Has not yet played.

INF Jhonny Peralta - 16G, .333(22-for-66)/.380/.439/.819, 4 2B, HR, 11RBI

MEXICAN WINTER LEAGUE

OF Roman Pena - 56G, .248(41-for-165)/.349/.418/.767, 11 2B, 3B, 5HR, 23RBI

PUERTO RICAN WINTER LEAGUE

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SS Kevin Fontanez - Has not yet played.

OF Andy Gonzalez - 28G, .354(34-for-96)/.476/.490/.965, 5 2B, 3B, 2HR, 14RBI

RHP Edward Buzachero - 13G, 19.1IP, 18H, 6R, 4ER, 6BB, 17K, 1.86ERA

OF Jason Cooper - 25G, .227(20-for-88)/.370/.398/.768, 7 2B, 3B, 2HR, 18RBI

Photo courtesy of Ken Carr