

2009 Indians Top Prospects: #75-71

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Tuesday, January 27 2009 7:00 PM -

Tony is back with another installment of the Indians 2009 Top 100 Prospect Countdown, this time touching on #75-71 with the names of Recknagel, Sanchez, Pena, Landis and Drennen. Also, Tony's new book titled the "2009 Cleveland Indians Top 100 Prospects & More" went to print on Monday and is available for purchase. He has all the details inside on how to order the book and what it will cost. And don't forget to tune into Smoke Signals on Thursday when catcher Matt McBride makes a guest appearance.



We are back with another installment of the Indians 2009 Top 100 Prospect Countdown. It has been a few days since the last posting, so for those who need a refresher or missed one of the listings the first time around, click on one of the links below:

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Also, the 2009 Cleveland Indians Top 100 Prospects & More book went to print on Monday and is available for purchase. An article will be posting here at TheClevelandFan.com and SportsTimeOhio.com in the next few hours with details of how to purchase the book. Until then, check out [my post on my blog with the instructions on how to order](#) . One book is \$17.95 and this includes all shipping/handling in the US, and for each additional book in the same order they are \$14.95. Payment can be made by US Mail by check or money order, or through PayPal via check or credit card. Anyone interested in getting a copy, e-mail me at tlastoria@indiansprospectinsider.com

All of these scouting reports will be stored individually for easy access on my blog at the [Indian](#)

[s Prospect Insider](#)

, and lots of other goodies like stat links and videos for nearly every player will be housed there.

75. Nate Recknagel - Catcher/First Baseman

Born: 04/26/1986 - Height: 6'2" - Weight: 220 - Bats: Right - Throws: Right

Year	Age	Team	Lvl	G
2008	22	U of Michigan	C	58
2008	22	GCL Indians	R	1



History: Recknagel was a 19th round pick in the 2008 Draft out of the University of Michigan.

Strengths & Opportunities: Recknagel has very good power and strength, and set a Michigan home run record with 23 last year. He also showed an advanced approach at the plate with a 33:30 walk to strikeout ratio at Michigan last year. The Indians sent him out to the Instructional League to work on catching, so at the outset it looks like he will initially break in and be developed as a catcher. He is challenged defensively at first base where he is a below average defender who needs a lot of work, so for now he is a better asset behind the plate where his good arm can be better utilized. He did not play until the final week of the season for the rookie level GCL Indians - playing in just one game - since he spent most of his time over the summer rehabbing a broken hamate bone in his left wrist that he suffered in the college regionals right before the draft.

Outlook: The Indians have a lot of catching depth in the system, particularly in the lower levels. That said, Recknagel's power is hard to overlook and he will likely be given a chance as a starting catcher and open the 2009 season as the starting catcher at Single-A Lake County.

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74. Karexon Sanchez - Infielder

Born: 08/22/1987 - Height: 5'11" - Weight: 175 - Bats: Switch - Throws: Right

Year	Age	Team	Lvl	G
2006	18	DSL Indians	R	70
2007	19	GCL Indians	R	48
	19	Mahoning Vy	A-	11
2008	20	Lake County	A	116
		Career		245



History: Sanchez was signed as an undrafted free agent in March 2006 out of Venezuela.

Strengths & Opportunities: Sanchez played a lot of third base the last two seasons with the GCL and Lake County teams, but he can actually play the middle infield as well where he plays a lot of second base and can hold his own at shortstop. He is extremely athletic, a good runner, has a plus arm, and his hands are coming. Playing defense will be something he has to be good at, but the bat is there. He has some good hands at the plate with occasional pop. He is young and is still trying to get himself acclimated to the everyday pro ball game that comes with a full season. While there is certainly a lot of projection in such a comp, people talk about Robinson Cano when they look at his tools and see him play.

Outlook: Sanchez projects as a utility player down the road, and should open the 2009 season at advanced Single-A Kinston.

73. Roman Pena - Outfielder

Born: 09/02/1986 - Height: 6'0" - Weight: 190 - Bats: Left - Throws: Left

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Year	Age	Team	Lvl	G
2006	19	GCL Indians	R	43
	19	Lake County	A	13
2007	20	Lake County	A	123
2008	21	Lake County	A	113
	21	Kinston	A+	16
		Career		308



History: Pena was a 9th round pick in the 2005 Draft out of Montgomery High School (CA). After not playing professionally in 2005 he made his professional debut in 2006 with the rookie level GCL Indians.

Strengths & Opportunities: Pena is an exciting left-handed hitter who has line-drive power to all fields. He has average range in the outfield, but has a very strong arm due to his experience as a pitcher in high school where he consistently clocked in at around 85-88 MPH. With his power arm and electric bat, he projects as a right fielder. He showed more confidence and intelligence as a hitter in a return trip to Single-A Lake County last year. He made some adjustments at the plate that resulted in him being more balanced and able to stay on the ball a little bit longer, and he was not trying to pull off the ball as much. The problem to date with Pena is his inconsistency with his swing and approach at the plate as well as his smallish size for a corner outfielder. Going forward, Pena will need to continue working on his approach at the plate, namely his plate discipline where in 1140 career at bats he has struck out 327 times, which is once every 3.5 at bats.

Outlook: Pena has been slow to move up since he initially wowed the Indians and scouts with his performance in the GCL in 2006. He will need a very good season in 2009 to bring his stock back up some, and should open the season in the advanced Single-A Kinston outfield.

72. Kyle Landis - Right-handed Pitcher

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Born: 05/30/1986 - Height: 6'1" - Weight: 185 - Bats: Right - Throws: Right

Year	Age	Team	Lvl	W
2007	21	Mahoning Vy	A-	1
2008	22	Lake County	A	2
	22	Kinston	A+	0
		Career		3



History: Landis was an 18th round pick in the 2007 Draft out of the University of Pittsburgh. At Pittsburgh, Landis was a dominating reliever where he went 4-4 with a 2.12 ERA in 51 innings pitched his final season there.

Strengths & Opportunities: Landis has been a performer so far in his two year career where in his professional debut at short-season Single-A Mahoning Valley in 2007 he compiled a 0.33 ERA in 20 appearances and followed that up last year at Single-A Lake County with a 1.97 ERA in 38 appearances. He is very similar to David Riske where he has a deceptive live fastball that sits in the low 90s and is able to spot it up to both sides of the plate. He excels at pounding the zone with strikes, has good command of his fastball, and has an arm that bounces back well. The Indians are working on getting him to learn to sink the ball with a two-seam fastball so he can get it in under a right-handed hitter's hands. If he can do that with his slider going away from them he could take his early success as a professional and continue it in the higher levels of the system.

Outlook: Landis should open the 2009 season in the advanced Single-A Kinston bullpen.

71. John Drennen - Outfielder

Born: 08/26/1986 - Height: 5'11" - Weight: 185 - Bats: Left - Throws: Left

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Year	Age	Team	Lvl	G
2005	18	Burlington	R	51
2006	19	Lake County	A	67
	19	Kinston	A+	31
2007	20	Kinston	A+	131
2008	21	Kinston	A+	117
		Career		397



History: Drennen was a supplemental 1st round pick in the 2005 Draft out of Rancho Bernardo High (CA). Knowing he had a scholarship in hand to attend and play at UCLA, the Indians quickly signed Drennen for \$1 million.

Strengths & Opportunities: Drennen has a compact build with good power and also creates a nice smooth bat path with his swing. However, as he has matured he has not developed the power some in the organization thought he would when they drafted him and is still more of a gap hitter. He is an extremely hard, intelligent worker with a motor that does not stop, and is very aggressive at the plate, on the bases and in the field. He has also proven to be a very durable player, missing only a few weeks of action in 2006 with a thumb injury. His playing style, build and ability often has been compared to Jeremy Reed, and some have compared him to former Indian Brian Giles.

Drennen is a bit showy at times and sometimes gets wrapped up thinking of the big ball at the plate, which sometimes leads to him trying to do too much with the bat. Kinston Hitting Coach Jon Nunnally worked closely with him the last two years on getting him to calm down at the plate and keep his head down on the ball to drive it back through the middle of the field. He does a lot of damage on the inside part of the plate, but pitchers have made the adjustment against him and just stay on the outside part of the plate which has given him trouble. He has struggled a lot with recognizing the changeup. He is still working on getting a better load at the plate so that he has more power overall and against left-handed pitching can drive balls the other way. He has good instincts as a runner, but only has slightly above average speed and needs to continue to work on his defense and baserunning. His biggest weakness is his

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defense, as his arm is below average and his range in the outfield is limited, which will likely limit him to left field in the future.

Outlook: Drennen returned for his third season in Kinston for the 2008 season, but his numbers took a nosedive. The dramatic decline in his numbers in his third year at the same level begins to make you wonder if he has simply reached his ceiling or that his heart may no longer be in it. There is no doubt that he may have been frustrated having to return to Kinston for a third straight year, but with numbers like he had in 2008 and no signs of development or improvement he now could very well find himself on the bubble and a potential roster casualty by the end of spring training. The Indians have a plethora of good outfield prospects in the upper levels of the organization, so he is going to have to work hard in spring training to stick in the organization and salvage his career, or risk being released and just end up being "that minor leaguer who hit a home run off Roger Clemens" a few years ago. In any case, he needs to be moved up to Double-A Akron in 2009 to see if it puts a spark into him and saves his career, and the guess here is he will get that chance and will open the 2009 season in the Akron outfield.

All photos courtesy of Ken Carr except Nate Recknagel photos courtesy of the University of Michigan Athletic Department.

Up Next: #70-66