

## Minor Happenings: 2009 Tony Awards

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, October 07 2009 7:00 PM -

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Today, Tony wraps up coverage of the Indians 2009 minor league season with his annual Tony Awards. Inside he named his Offensive Player of the Year, Pitcher of the Year, Comeback Player of the Year, and more. Even with the 2009 season over, Tony will still be busy as he will be travelling to Arizona next week to report on the Happenings in the Indians Fall Instructional League as well as what is going on in the Arizona Fall League. Also, be sure to check out the season finale of Smoke Signals tonight!



*"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.*

Before we have some fun wrapping up the 2009 Indians minor league season with some awards, I have a few quick notes to mention. First off, I will be traveling to Arizona this weekend and will be there for five days next week covering the Instructional League and also the Arizona Fall League. So lookout for a couple of notebooks next week chronicling all I see during my visit to the desert.

Also, Paul Cousineau and I will be on the cyberwaves tonight with [our season finale of Smoke Signals](#). We will talk about these very awards as well as what is in store for the Indians this offseason and in 2010.

## Minor Happenings: 2009 Tony Awards

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Wednesday, October 07 2009 7:00 PM -

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And last, I am not going anywhere as I will continue to have many updates over the next several weeks/months as we press on through the offseason.

Be sure to check back often for updates!

Onto the 2009 Tony Awards....

## Offensive Player of the Year

### The Nominees:

*Jesus Brito (3B - Arizona/Mahoning Valley):*

.353 AVG, 52 R, 19 2B, 10 3B, 3 HR, 43 RBI, 2 SB, 32 BB, 41 K, .998 OPS

*Jordan Brown (1B/OF - Columbus):*

.336 AVG, 65 R, 35 2B, 1 3B, 15 HR, 67 RBI, 2 SB, 30 BB, 64 K, .913 OPS

*Lonnie Chisenhall (3B - Kinston/Akron):*

.258 AVG, 72 R, 31 2B, 3 3B, 22 HR, 92 RBI, 3 SB, 44 BB, 96 K, .797 OPS

*Matt LaPorta (1B/OF - Columbus):*

.299 AVG, 63 R, 23 2B, 2 3B, 17 HR, 60 RBI, 1 SB, 42 BB, 56 K, .917 OPS

*Matt McBride (1B/OF - Kinston/Akron):*

.287 AVG, 72 R, 44 2B, 0 3B, 18 HR, 99 RBI, 1 SB, 29 BB, 57 K, .829 OPS

*Carlos Santana (C - Akron):*

.290 AVG, 91 R, 30 2B, 2 3B, 23 HR, 97 RBI, 2 2B, 90 BB, 83 K, .943 OPS

### The Skinny:

Brito took the rookie level Arizona League by storm where he hit .366 with a 1.081 OPS in 35 games, and when he was promoted to Single-A Mahoning Valley didn't skip a beat hitting .333 with a .875 OPS in 25 games. He came out of nowhere to put up an excellent season, but in

## Minor Happenings: 2009 Tony Awards

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Wednesday, October 07 2009 7:00 PM -

---

the end it was only half of a season.

LaPorta was in Cleveland for about a third of the season so it hurt his stock for such an award, but even still in his two-thirds of a season in Columbus he was one of the top performers in the league and in the Indians system.

McBride was unconscious the first month of the season in Kinston before spending the rest of the year at Double-A Akron and having some success there. He had a wonderful season when you look at his stats as a whole, but a lot of his numbers are inflated because of a ridiculous 31 game stretch to open the season in Kinston where he hit .405 with 6 HR, 36 RBI and a 1.120 OPS.

In his 98 games in Akron he was very pedestrian hitting just .247 with 12 HR, 63 RBI and a .728 OPS.

Brown bounced back from a subpar season in 2008 when he hit .281 with a .754 OPS at Buffalo, and in the process added another trophy to his collection after leading the International League in hitting. Before his callup to Akron in early August, Chisenhall was one of the top players in the High-A Carolina League - if not the best pure hitter in the league.

Had he not been called up, Chisenhall likely would have been named the league's MVP.

Santana had a dominating year at Akron and was the leader in their charge to the Eastern League Championship, and along the way he won his second consecutive league MVP award.

*And the Tony Award goes to: **Carlos Santana***

Remember, this award is given out strictly on the merits of the player's offensive performance so defense is not included in the equation (otherwise Santana would be the runaway winner). This award came down to the trio of Brown, Chisenhall and Santana, and at the beginning of August it looked like it would go down to the wire between these three.

## Minor Happenings: 2009 Tony Awards

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Wednesday, October 07 2009 7:00 PM -

---

Things changed in August as Brown missed about three weeks with a shoulder issue which hurt his overall production numbers and Chisenhall was promoted to Akron where he struggled in 24 games there hitting .183 with a .625 OPS.

Meanwhile, Santana continued to pile up the numbers and produce, and was a model of consistency all season. There were some question marks going into the season on whether or not he was for real since the Dodgers gave up on him pretty easily for Casey Blake, but this year he proved all the doubters wrong and few question marks remain.

The scary part is Santana has only tapped into his potential offensively where he has the potential to be a .280-.300 hitting, 25-30 HR, and 100 walk catcher in the big leagues.

He is no doubt the Indians best prospect, and should be the regular everyday catcher in Cleveland by the end of next season.

## Pitcher of the Year

### The Nominees:

*Eric Berger (LHP - Kinston/Akron):*

10-9, 2.50 ERA, 27 GS, 144.0 IP, 125 H, 61 BB, 133 K, 1.29 WHIP, .233 BAA

*Paolo Espino (RHP - Lake County/Kinston):*

11-8, 3.01 ERA, 28 G, 134.2 IP, 110 H, 36 BB, 117 K, 1.08 WHIP, .220 BAA

*Jeanmar Gomez (RHP - Kinston/Akron):*

12-6, 3.30 ERA, 26 GS, 147.1 IP, 134 H, 45 BB, 124 K, 1.21 WHIP, .242 BAA

*T.J. House (LHP - Lake County):*

6-11, 3.15 ERA, 26 GS, 134.1 IP, 127 H, 49 BB, 109 K, 1.31 WHIP, .250 BAA

## Minor Happenings: 2009 Tony Awards

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*Alexander Perez (RHP - Lake County/Kinston):*

6-6, 2.99 ERA, 23 GS, 114.1 IP, 101 H, 33 BB, 107 K, 1.17 WHIP, .234 BAA

*Hector Rondon (RHP - Akron/Columbus):*

11-10, 3.38 ERA, 27 GS, 146.1 IP, 143 H, 29 BB, 137 K, 1.18 WHIP, .256 BAA

*Josh Tomlin (RHP - Akron):*

14-9, 4.16 ERA, 26 GS, 145.0 IP, 149 H, 27 BB, 125 K, 1.21 WHIP, .266 BAA

### The Skinny:

Perez was sidelined for most of the last five weeks of the season with a minor arm injury, and House pitched much better than his numbers and record indicate. Both pitchers did about all you could ask from a couple of 19-year old pitchers in a league where opposing hitters were two to three years older than them on average.

House and Perez more than solidified themselves as the Indians top two pitching prospects in the lower levels of the system and two to watch going forward.

Tomlin finished second in Akron franchise history with 14 wins in a season, and was the anchor of the Akron pitching staff all season. He was also 2-0 with a 1.93 ERA in two postseason starts. He went out and put up quality outing night after night, and in the process piled up a lot of innings and wins.

Espino rebounded from a rough 2008 campaign to go 9-6 with a 2.59 ERA in 22 starts in Kinston.

He had a promising bounce back year in a return trip to Kinston, and improved his prospect status as a result where he probably still fits best as a reliever down the road.

Berger picked up right where he left off last year in his professional debut in Mahoning Valley and Lake County (2-0, 2.11 ERA, 10 GS). Gomez made his mark with a perfect game in May, but he had a breakout season overall as a prospect and was named the Eastern League Pitcher of the Year. Rondon breezed through Double-A and

## Minor Happenings: 2009 Tony Awards

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Wednesday, October 07 2009 7:00 PM -

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dominated the league, and had a lot of immediate success when he was promoted to Columbus midseason.



*And the Tony Award goes to: **Hector Rondon***

This was a three-man race between Berger, Gomez and Rondon. Rondon was the runaway choice as the organization's Pitcher of the Year through the first half of the season, but the consistency of Berger and Gomez all season made it a lot closer by the end of the season.

Berger had only a handful of tough outings and all year he seemingly went out every fifth day and went five to six innings while holding the opposition to one or two runs.

He even adjusted well to a midseason promotion to Akron where after struggling in his first outing he settled in and was business as usual the rest of the season.

Gomez was largely consistent all season, though he was extra special in May (2.91 ERA) and June (2.83 ERA).

He took arguably the biggest step of any pitcher in the organization and is now considered major league starting depth next season (he will be rostered this offseason).

There was no clear cut winner from a numbers perspective as just based on numbers, Berger, Gomez, and Rondon should all share honors as Pitcher of the Year. But, of all the pitchers Rondon showed the most and when he was on he was filthy.

When all was said and done, Rondon had the best year of any pitcher in the organization.

His final numbers suffered from what looks like some fatigue the final two weeks of the season when he got knocked around in two of his final three starts for Columbus.

## Minor Happenings: 2009 Tony Awards

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Wednesday, October 07 2009 7:00 PM -

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Rondon used a breakout performance in the second half of the season last year in Kinston as momentum where from the start of spring training this year he had people buzzing over him. This season h

is fastball showed much improved life, his command and control was noticeably better, and his secondary pitches continued to improve.

He pitches to contact as he is almost always in the zone, so he gives up some hits but also limits the walks, and he has the stuff to put hitters away and make them swing and miss.

He's the best pitching prospect in the upper levels of the Indians system, and should make a big contribution to the Indians pitching staff in 2010.

## Reliever of the Year

### The Nominees:

*Brian Grening (RHP - Mahoning Valley/Lake County/Akron/Columbus):*

4-0, 3 S, 1.68 ERA, 28 G, 48.1 IP, 35 H, 20 BB, 58 K, 1.14 WHIP, .206 BAA

*Frank Herrmann (RHP - Akron/Columbus):*

4-4, 2 S, 2.95 ERA, 49 G, 106.2 IP, 110 H, 18 BB, 62 K, 1.20 WHIP, .269 BAA

*Francisco Jimenez (LHP - Arizona/Lake County):*

8-0, 1 S, 2.28 ERA, 19 G, 47.1 IP, 40 H, 7 BB, 59 K, 0.99 WHIP, .230 BAA

*Josh Judy (RHP - Kinston/Akron):*

4-3, 14 S, 2.83 ERA, 41 G, 54.0 IP, 39 H, 18 BB, 70 K, 1.06 WHIP, .201 BAA

*Matt Langwell (RHP - Lake County):*

1-4, 4 S, 1.97 ERA, 45 G, 68.2 IP, 54 H, 22 BB, 68 K, 1.11 WHIP, .217 BAA

## Minor Happenings: 2009 Tony Awards

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Wednesday, October 07 2009 7:00 PM -

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*Chen Lee (RHP - Kinston):*

4-6, 2 S, 3.35 ERA, 45 G, 83.1 IP, 67 H, 28 BB, 97 K, 1.14 WHIP, .220 BAA

*Vidal Nuno (LHP - Arizona/Mahoning Valley):*

5-0, 2.39 ERA, 17 G, 64.0 IP, 53 H, 15 BB, 59 K, 1.06 WHIP, .223 BAA

*Vinnie Pestano (RHP - Akron):*

2-3, 24 S, 2.86 ERA, 34 G, 34.2 IP, 30 H, 13 BB, 31 K, 1.24 WHIP, .234 BAA

*Carlton Smith (RHP - Akron):*

6-2, 3 S, 2.72 ERA, 37 G, 79.1 IP, 68 H, 23 BB, 40 K, 1.15 WHIP, .230 BAA

*Steve Smith (RHP - Lake County/Kinston):*

2-3, 26 S, 2.33 ERA, 49 G, 54.0 IP, 43 H, 15 BB, 63 K, 1.07 WHIP, .216 BAA

*Erik Stiller (RHP - Akron):*

8-3, 3.23 ERA, 41 G, 69.2 IP, 56 H, 30 BB, 68 K, 1.23 WHIP, .215 BAA

*Neil Wagner (RHP - Akron):*

1-3, 2 S, 2.95 ERA, 61.0 IP, 48 H, 32 BB, 69 K, 1.31 WHIP, .214 BAA

*Steven Wright (RHP - Akron/Columbus):*

10-0, 2 S, 2.48 ERA, 38 G, 87.0 IP, 77 H, 20 BB, 68 K, 1.11 WHIP, .234 BAA

### **The Skinny:**

As you can see with the above listing there were a lot of outstanding relief performances in the system this year. So rather than limit it to the top six or seven guys, I included all of the very

## Minor Happenings: 2009 Tony Awards

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, October 07 2009 7:00 PM -

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deserving performances this year.

To make a few quick notes about some of the nominees, Pestano was in the midst of an outstanding record-breaking season in Akron as the closer before his season ended prematurely in mid-July because of an elbow injury. Grening pitched at four different levels and showed versatility not only being able to pitch in any role, but being able to fill in as needed on a whim. Carlton Smith, Stiller, and Wagner had excellent years in what was an outstanding collection of bullpen arms in Akron. Herrmann and Wright both transitioned well to a bullpen role and could be on the verge of a major league opportunity at some point next season.

As a 48th round pick Nuno was the surprise of the 2009 Draft, and Langwell was a consistent force all season in Lake County.

The Indians were extremely happy with Lee's transition to pitching in his professional debut stateside after signing out of Taiwan last September.

*And the Tony Award goes to: **Josh Judy***

The three best performances of the season based on numbers, stuff, role, and improvement belong to Jimenez, Steve Smith, and Judy. Like with Brito, Jimenez came out of nowhere to put up some eye-popping numbers where in 19 combined outings for Arizona and Lake County he piled up 59 strikeouts to just seven walks in 47.1 innings pitched.

Smith took the bull by the horns as the closer in Lake County and went from an afterthought as a prospect when the season started to someone who is now a legit bullpen prospect and a guy to keep an eye on going forward.

He doesn't throw hard, but uses his very good control and an excellent changeup to get hitters out.

## Minor Happenings: 2009 Tony Awards

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, October 07 2009 7:00 PM -

---

In the end, Judy just took things to a completely different level this year. He was already an intriguing relief pitching prospect after a breakout campaign last year in Lake County when he was 12-1 with a 3.26 ERA and had 97 strikeouts in 88.1 innings, but there were some doubters who wanted to see if he could continue that success and improve this season.

Several Indians officials felt he was one of the most improved pitchers in the system this season, mostly because his fastball location improved a lot and his breaking ball was a lot better.

He has the demeanor to handle pitching late in games, and is a backend bullpen prospect the Indians are intent on developing for their big league pen.

## Rookie of the Year

### The Nominees:

*Casey Frawley (2B - Arizona/Mahoning Valley):*

.301 AVG, 27 R, 10 2B, 2 3B, 2 HR, 25 RBI, 2 SB, 16 BB, 41 K, .761 OPS

*Jordan Henry (OF - Mahoning Valley):*

.286 AVG, 48 R, 12 2B, 0 3B, 0 HR, 23 RBI, 22 SB, 49 BB, 37 K, .743 OPS

*T.J. House (LHP - Lake County):*

6-11, 3.15 ERA, 26 GS, 134.1 IP, 127 H, 49 BB, 109 K, 1.31 WHIP, .250 BAA

*Chen Lee (RHP - Kinston):*

4-6, 2 S, 3.35 ERA, 45 G, 83.1 IP, 67 H, 28 BB, 97 K, 1.14 WHIP, .220 BAA

*Vidal Nuno (LHP - Arizona/Mahoning Valley):*

5-0, 2.39 ERA, 17 G, 64.0 IP, 53 H, 15 BB, 59 K, 1.06 WHIP, .223 BAA

## Minor Happenings: 2009 Tony Awards

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Wednesday, October 07 2009 7:00 PM -

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*Roberto Perez (C - Arizona/Mahoning Valley/Lake County):*

.313 AVG, 37 R, 14 2B, 0 3B, 3 HR, 37 RBI, 4 SB, 25 BB, 51 K, .842 OPS

### The Skinny:

This is a new award this year, and is given out to players who made their professional debut this season. This mostly pertains to 2009 Draft picks, but there were a couple of 2008 Draft picks (House, Perez) who signed late last year and did not play, and also Lee was an international free agent signing after the season last year. Of note, outfielder Jason Kipnis is not included in this listing because of his limited time with Mahoning Valley because he signed so late.

Perez came out of nowhere to put up an impressive batting line, though a lot of that was in the Arizona League which is very favorable to hitters. Even still, he showed some ability with the bat and the Indians were very happy with the entire package he showed behind the plate defensively and in handling a pitching staff.

Frawley was an unheralded draft pick who not only hit in Arizona but also hit in Mahoning Valley, and his production defensively and offensively at second base for Mahoning Valley was a significant improvement over the guy he replaced in Lurvin Basabe.

Lee had over three times as many strikeouts than walks and averaged more than a strikeout an inning, and showed he is ready to take on Double-A and perhaps Triple-A hitters in 2010. Henry is a pure center field prospect, and he showed all the tools with excellent range, a solid arm, outstanding plate discipline, and lots of speed.

He finished the year with 12 more walks than strikeouts, though at this stage is more a slap hitter looking to put the ball in play and just get on base.

Nuno came in and was very ordinary in Arizona (0-0, 5.14 ERA, 4 G), but upon being called up to Mahoning Valley took off and put together an impressive showing there (5-0, 2.39 ERA, 13 G).

## Minor Happenings: 2009 Tony Awards

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, October 07 2009 7:00 PM -

---



*And the Tony Award goes to: **T.J. House***

House benefits in this case by having a full season to play this year as the only other player to play more than half a season this year was Lee in Kinston. But make no mistake about it, House is very deserving. He only finished 6-11 on the year, but many times he did not get any run support in games and he often went five or six innings and allowed one or two runs.

The Indians paid a big price to woo him from going to college at Tulane, and their investment at this point looks like it has paid off.

He has the makings of three above average pitches, with the potential to add more velocity to his fastball which already sits in the low 90s.

His slider is a plus pitch and a weapon for him, and he made some strides with his changeup this year.

He pitches well beyond his years and it showed itself on the mound and in the dugout this year when he was not pitching as he was always tuned into the game action watching the pitchers and hitters from both teams to try and pickup an advantage to use on hitters the next time he faces them. House is one of the Indians best pitching prospects in the lower levels of the system, and is someone we will continue to hear a lot about the next few years.

## **Comeback Player of the Year**

## Minor Happenings: 2009 Tony Awards

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, October 07 2009 7:00 PM -

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### The Nominees:

*Jordan Brown (1B/OF - Columbus):*

.336 AVG, 65 R, 35 2B, 1 3B, 15 HR, 67 RBI, 2 SB, 30 BB, 64 K, .913 OPS

*John Drennen (OF - Akron):*

.273 AVG, 55 R, 29 2B, 6 3B, 8 HR, 45 RBI, 1 SB, 33 BB, 69 K, .774 OPS

*Paolo Espino (RHP - Lake County/Kinston):*

11-8, 3.01 ERA, 28 G, 134.2 IP, 110 H, 36 BB, 117 K, 1.08 WHIP, .220 BAA

*Chuck Lofgren (LHP - Akron/Columbus):*

9-11, 4.15 ERA, 25 GS, 141.0 IP, 118 H, 48 BB, 93 K, 1.18 WHIP, .223 BAA

*Matt McBride (1B/OF - Kinston/Akron):*

.287 AVG, 72 R, 44 2B, 0 3B, 18 HR, 99 RBI, 1 SB, 29 BB, 57 K, .829 OPS

### The Skinny:

Drennen looked like he was on the outs as a prospect after a very disappointing 2008 campaign in Kinston when he hit .235 with a .631 OPS, but he came back strong this season and had a very solid year. He's been in the Indians system for awhile now and he just turned 23 years old in late August, so his days as a prospect are far from over. He was consistently good all season, and was simply electric in September where in 13 combined games in the regular season and playoffs he hit .377 with 6 home runs.

Lofgren was left for dead by a lot of pundits last year after his career seemingly bottomed out with a subpar season and poor performance in the Arizona Fall League (0-3, 32.14 ERA, 10 games, 7.0 IP, 19 H, 18 BB, 6 K), but he came back this year in better shape and a determination to re-establish himself as one of the Indians top pitching prospects. He

## Minor Happenings: 2009 Tony Awards

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, October 07 2009 7:00 PM -

---

dominated at Akron the first two months of the season, and he actually pitched much better than his Columbus numbers indicate as he was the victim of two awful outings against Toledo.

McBride's 2008 season was wrecked because he was still recovering from shoulder surgery the previous offseason. He came back at 100% this year, and a position change to the outfield and first base did not affect him as he came out smoking hot in Kinston hitting over .400 the first month of the season.

Espino struggled through a rough season in 2008 because of a shoulder injury and problems with consistency, but came back this year with a renewed focus and put himself back on the prospect map.

*And the Tony Award goes to: **Jordan Brown***

Brown bounced back from a disappointing 2007 campaign in Buffalo with a performance this year that was very similar to his MVP seasons in 2006 and 2007. In fact, his season this year is almost a carbon copy of the MVP season he had at Akron in 2007 where he hit .333 with 11 HR, 76 RBI, and a .906 OPS.

He actually hit a little better this season than he did in 2007 at Akron, and it shows he is back and that 2008 was an outlier.

He has proven to be a very capable hitter, piles up doubles, shows the occasional ability to take the ball out of the yard, and has an exhausting approach at the plate that wears a pitcher down because he battles on every pitch.

His defense was scrutinized this season, but someone will find a place for his bat in a big league lineup next season at some point, be it in Cleveland or somewhere else (he will be rostered, but could be traded).

## Minor Happenings: 2009 Tony Awards

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, October 07 2009 7:00 PM -

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## Biggest Breakthrough

### The Nominees:

*Jesus Brito (3B - Arizona/Mahoning Valley):*

*.353 AVG, 52 R, 19 2B, 10 3B, 3 HR, 43 RBI, 2 SB, 32 BB, 41 K, .998 OPS*

*Bo Greenwell (OF - Mahoning Valley/Lake County):*

*.296 AVG, 34 R, 18 2B, 1 3B, 2 HR, 30 RBI, 9 SB, 23 BB, 25 K, .766 OPS*

*Francisco Jimenez (LHP - Arizona/Lake County):*

*8-0, 1 S, 2.28 ERA, 19 G, 47.1 IP, 40 H, 7 BB, 59 K, 0.99 WHIP, .230 BAA*

*Vidal Nuno (LHP - Arizona/Lake County):*

*5-0, 2.39 ERA, 17 G, 64.0 IP, 53 H, 15 BB, 59 K, 1.06 WHIP, .223 BAA*

*Alexander Perez (RHP - Lake County/Kinston):*

*6-6, 2.99 ERA, 23 GS, 114.1 IP, 101 H, 33 BB, 107 K, 1.17 WHIP, .234 BAA*

*Steve Smith (RHP - Lake County/Kinston):*

*2-3, 26 S, 2.33 ERA, 49 G, 54.0 IP, 43 H, 15 BB, 63 K, 1.07 WHIP, .216 BAA*

*Russell Young (LHP - Lake County/Kinston):*

*6-7, 3.46 ERA, 26 GS, 143.0 IP, 143 H, 25 BB, 90 K, 1.17 WHIP, .260 BAA*

### The Skinny:

Young came out of nowhere to go from a depth starting option when the season opened in April for him in Lake County, to being one of the rocks of the Kinston staff by season's end. He is more of a crafty lefty, but over the course of the season he proved to be an interesting pitching

## Minor Happenings: 2009 Tony Awards

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, October 07 2009 7:00 PM -

---

prospect because of his command of the strike zone and is yet more pitching depth the Indians have in the middle levels of the system.

Drafted out of high school three years ago, Greenwell took a significant step in his growth as a player this year.

He only played half a season, but his raw abilities are starting to translate and he showed his potential in Mahoning Valley and Lake County this year.

Nuno showed versatility as a starter and reliever, and performed at a level much higher than originally anticipated. Next year will be telling in what the Indians really have in him, but he certainly jumped right into the conversation as a pitching prospect. The question is whether his advanced pitching ability took advantage of some inexperienced hitters at the short-season levels.

Smith had a near record-breaking season in Lake County falling just short of the saves record for the club.

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eyond the saves, he proved to be tough on both lefties and righties, and showed a good fastball-changeup combo which gave hitters fits.

Brito showed an ability to put the bat on the ball and make consistent, hard contact and really emerged as a lower level hitting prospect to keep an eye on in 2010. He has some good power to where the Indians believe he could eventually become a 20 home run a year hitter in the big leagues. Jimenez is

small in size, and looks a lot in build like Tony Sipp.

He doesn't have the stuff Sipp has but has shown a much better handle of commanding the zone than Sipp did at 21 years old and he could be a fast-moving left-handed reliever in the system next year because of that.

## Minor Happenings: 2009 Tony Awards

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, October 07 2009 7:00 PM -

---

*And the Tony Award goes to: **Alexander Perez***

Perez did not make as big a splash this season as left-hander Kelvin De La Cruz did last year, but there is no doubt he elevated his prospect status as one of the top pitching prospects in the organization and potentially a top ten prospect overall in the system. He is a prime example of why stats don't always show what you have in a pitcher as had you looked at his numbers in the GCL last year when he was 2-4 with a 4.26 ERA you may have overlooked him.

He has always had an advanced ability to throw his changeup and curveball, and as he matures his fastball could become a third weapon in his arsenal.

His ability to throw strikes and get hitters out with plus secondary stuff was the key to his success this year, and going forward it is all about developing his confidence in his fastball.

## Biggest Disappointment

### The Nominees:

*Matt Brown (OF - Kinston):*

.268 AVG, 22 R, 9 2B, 1 3B, 1 HR, 25 RBI, 2 SB, 27 BB, 34 K, .703 OPS

*Kelvin De La Cruz (LHP - Arizona/Kinston):*

2-2, 4.58 ERA, 5 GS, 19.2 IP, 16 H, 7 BB, 24 K, 1.17 WHIP, .222 BAA

*Stephen Head (OF - Columbus):*

.247 AVG, 30 R, 16 2B, 0 3B, 7 HR, 34 RBI, 1 SB, 17 BB, 35 K, .668 OPS

*Wes Hodges (3B - Columbus):*

.269 AVG, 34 R, 26 2B, 0 3B, 5 HR, 40 RBI, 8 SB, 21 BB, 65 K, .704 OPS

## Minor Happenings: 2009 Tony Awards

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, October 07 2009 7:00 PM -

---

*Ryan Miller (LHP - Lake County/Kinston):*

0-3, 10.22 ERA, 18 G, 34.1 IP, 35 H, 42 BB, 41 K, 2.24 WHIP, .259 BAA

*Carlos Rivero (SS - Akron):*

.242 AVG, 50 R, 24 2B, 2 3B, 7 HR, 58 RBI, 1 SB, 50 BB, 73 K, .652 OPS

### **The Skinny:**

A quick note to mention that disappointment is not necessarily the player himself not doing well as injuries can have a huge impact on the success of their season. For the most part, injury had a huge part in many of these players having a disappointing season.

Brown got off to a hot start in Kinston, but was slowed by an injury which sidelined him for most of the last three months of the season. Head missed a lot of time the first half of the season because of a lingering knee issue from spring training, and while he showed flashes of the ability that made him a 2<sup>nd</sup> round pick in 2005, he just never could get his season going offensively because of it.

Miller did not really have a physical injury, his was more psychological as he struggled with his command and things just unraveled on him this year with 42 walks in 34.1 innings and an unheard of 2.24 WHIP.

Hodges and De La Cruz, two of the higher rated prospects coming into the season, were affected by injury as well. De La Cruz got off to a rocking start as he dominated in his first two outings in Kinston, but an injury while working out between his second and third start resulted in a serious elbow injury that sidelined him for most of the rest of the season and in the process he lost an entire year of development. Hodges struggled with a hand and shoulder injury in May and he was just never able to get completely healthy all season.

He missed a considerable amount of time sidelined with the injuries and even when he came back he played a lot of games as the designated hitter, so he was unable to make much progress if any this year on his defense at third base.

## Minor Happenings: 2009 Tony Awards

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, October 07 2009 7:00 PM -

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*And the Tony Award goes to: **Carlos Rivera***

If you look back on the Indians top prospect lists going into this season, the only player who did not suffer a significant injury who was unanimously in just about every Top 15 listing for the Indians and struggled with his performance was Carlos Rivera. A lot of people expected him to build on his strong finish in Kinston last year, but he fizzled for the most part at the plate this year. He is still very young, but this is the third year in a row he has had a lot of hype but failed to deliver the goods.

He likely will return to Akron next year in the hopes that a return visit there will result in him finally getting things going offensively.

It also may help to repeat a level and let his age catch up to the league as he has often been two or three years younger than the league average.

Because of that it is way too early to give up on him as a prospect, but the kid gloves are off and a lot more is expected of him going forward.

He did show some improvement over the course of the season and played much better in the second half, but when the season ended he played nowhere near the level he was anticipated to play at when the season began.

## All-Indians Minor League Team

*Note: This is not a top prospect listing by position, but a listing based on performance in 2009. Players acquired in the July trades were not eligible to be listed, and for full season teams a player had to have spent at least a half season in the minors.*

## Minor Happenings: 2009 Tony Awards

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Wednesday, October 07 2009 7:00 PM -

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*Also, anyone who opened the season no longer a rookie was not considered (Andy Marte).*

### 1st Team:

C: Carlos Santana (.290 AVG, 23 HR, 97 RBI, 90 BB, .943 OPS)

1B: Jordan Brown (.336 AVG, 15 HR, 67 RBI, 30 BB, .913 OPS)



2B: Cord Phelps (.261 AVG, 4 HR, 53 RBI, 17 SB, 93 BB, .749 OPS)

SS: Mark Thompson (.260 AVG, 11 HR, 54 RBI, 13 SB, 39 BB, .769 OPS)

3B: Lonnie Chisenhall (.258 AVG, 22 HR, 92 RBI, 44 BB, .797 OPS)

LF: Matt LaPorta (.299 AVG, 17 HR, 60 RBI, 42 BB, .917 OPS)

CF: Jordan Henry (.286 AVG, 0 HR, 23 RBI, 22 SB, 49 BB, .743 OPS)

RF: Abner Abreu (.305 AVG, 7 HR, 30 RBI, 11 BB, .839 OPS)

DH: Matt McBride (.287 AVG, 18 HR, 99 RBI, 29 BB, .829 OPS)

LHS: Eric Berger (10-9, 2.50 ERA, 27 GS, 133 K, 1.29 WHIP, .233 BAA)

RHS: Hector Rondon (11-10, 3.38 ERA, 27 GS, 137 K, 1.18 WHIP, .256 BAA)

MRL: Francisco Jimenez (8-0, 1 S, 2.28 ERA, 19 G, 59 K, 0.99 WHIP, .230 BAA)

MRR: Brian Grening (4-0, 3 S, 1.68 ERA, 28 G, 58 K, 1.14 WHIP, .206 BAA)

CL: Josh Judy (4-3, 14 S, 2.83 ERA, 41 G, 70K, 1.06 WHIP, .201 BAA)

### 2nd Team:

C: Roberto Perez (.313 AVG, 3 HR, 37 RBI, 25 BB, .842 OPS)

1B: Beau Mills (.267 AVG, 14 HR, 83 RBI, 31 BB, .724 OPS)

## Minor Happenings: 2009 Tony Awards

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Wednesday, October 07 2009 7:00 PM -

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2B: Casey Frawley (.301 AVG, 2 HR, 25 RBI, 16 BB, .761 OPS)  
SS: Argenis Martinez (.293 AVG, 0 HR, 20 RBI, 15 SB, 17 BB, .710 OPS)  
3B: Jesus Brito (.353 AVG, 3 HR, 43 RBI, 32 BB, .998 OPS)  
LF: Nick Weglarz (.227 AVG, 16 HR, 65 RBI, 75 BB, .808 OPS)  
CF: Jose Constanza (.282 AVG, 0 HR, 46 RBI, 49 SB, 75 BB, .719 OPS)  
RF: Donnie Webb (.293 AVG, 7 HR, 63 RBI, 36 SB, 42 BB, .778 OPS)  
DH: Nate Recknagel (.270 AVG, 14 HR, 75 RBI, 55 BB, .809 OPS)  
LHS: Chuck Lofgren (9-11, 4.15 ERA, 25 GS, 93 K, 1.18 WHIP, .223 BAA)  
RHS: Jeanmar Gomez (12-6, 3.30 ERA, 26 GS, 124 K, 1.21 WHIP, .242 BAA)  
MRL: Vidal Nuno (5-0, 2.39 ERA, 17 G, 59 K, 1.06 WHIP, .223 BAA)  
MRR: Matt Langwell (1-4, 4 S, 1.97 ERA, 45 G, 68 K, 1.11 WHIP, .217 BAA)  
CL: Steve Smith (2-3, 26 S, 2.33 ERA, 49 G, 63 K, 1.07 WHIP, .216 BAA)

### Honorable Mention:

C: Wyatt Toregas (.284 AVG, 7 HR, 29 RBI, 16 BB, .769 OPS)  
1B: Ole Sheldon (.267 AVG, 13 HR, 54 RBI, 32 BB, .833 OPS)



2B: Karexson Sanchez (.234 AVG, 11 HR, 57 RBI, 25 SB, 70 BB, .725 OPS)  
SS: Carlos Rivero (.242 AVG, 7 HR, 58 RBI, 50 BB, .652 OPS)  
3B: Kyle Bellows (.240 AVG, 7 HR, 32 RBI, 8 SB, 20 BB, .716 OPS)  
LF: Bo Greenwell (.296 AVG, 2 HR, 30 RBI, 9 SB, 23 BB, .766 OPS)  
CF: Michael Brantley (.267 AVG, 6 HR, 37 RBI, 46 SB, 59 BB, .711 OPS)  
RF: John Drennen (.273 AVG, 8 HR, 45 RBI, 33 BB, .774 OPS)  
DH: John Allman (.294 AVG, 7 HR, 53 RBI, 7 SB, 34 BB, .816 OPS)

## Minor Happenings: 2009 Tony Awards

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Wednesday, October 07 2009 7:00 PM -

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LHS: T.J. House (6-11, 3.15 ERA, 26 GS, 109 K, 1.31 WHIP, .250 BAA)

RHS: Paolo Espino (11-8, 3.01 ERA, 28 G, 117 K, 1.08 WHIP, .220 BAA)

MRL: Ryan Edell (4-7, 3.71 ERA, 32 G, 128 K, 1.35 WHIP, .281 BAA)

MRR: Steven Wright (10-0, 2 S, 2.48 ERA, 38 G, 68 K, 1.11 WHIP, .234 BAA)

CL: Vinnie Pestano (2-3, 24 S, 2.86 ERA, 34 G, 31 K, 1.24 WHIP, .234 BAA)