

## 2010 Indians Top 50 Prospects: #15-11

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Tuesday, March 16 2010 10:00 AM - Last Updated Saturday, March 27 2010 3:08 PM

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Here is the next group of prospects in the 2010 Indians Top 50 Prospect Countdown here on TheClevelandFan.com and SportsTimeOhio.com. As a reminder, these scouting reports will be linked and listed for easy access on my [site](#) .

Also, my new 2010 Cleveland Indians Top 100 Prospects & More [book is now available](#) . To order the book (which profiles over 165 players in the system and runs 214 pages in length) ... [go here for all the details](#)

Last, I am currently in Goodyear, Arizona this week and I will be covering and reporting on the Indians minor leaguers as well as some of the major league happenings while I am out there for through Saturday. Be sure to check back daily for my notebook piece which posts almost everyday while I am out there. The notebook will recap all the news, stories and observations from the previous day.

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### 15. Jordan Brown - Outfielder

**Born: 12/18/1983 - Height: 6'0" - Weight: 205 - Bats: Left - Throws: Left**

Year	Age	Team	Lvl
2005	21	Mahoning	A-

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2006

22

Kinston

A+

2007

23

Akron

AA

2008

24

Buffalo

AAA

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2009

25

Columbus

AAA

**Totals**

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[Junior 700p Baseball Prospect Rankings page](#)

Year	Age	Team	Lvl
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2004

20

Mahoning

A-

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2005	21	Lake Co	A
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2005	21	Kinston	A+
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2006	22	Akron	AA
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2007	23	Injured	-
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2008

24

GCL Ind

R

2008

24

Kinston

A+

2008

24

Akron

AA

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2009

25

Columbus

AAA

2009

25

Cleveland

mlb

**MiLB Tot**

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### MLB Tot



**History:** The Indians selected Sipp in the 45th round of the 2004 Draft out of Clemson University. The pick was a gamble by the Indians, as Sipp was an outfielder who had only pitched in 22 career college games and many felt he would be too costly to sign. After he impressed the Indians in the Cape Cod League they gladly paid him an unheard of \$130,000 to sign for a 45<sup>th</sup> rounder. His career was sidetracked for two years from 2007-2008 from an elbow injury that shut him down at the end of spring training in 2007 and then resulted in

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Tommy John surgery in July of 2007. He spent the rest of 2007 and 2008 rehabbing from the injury and was not 100% until the beginning of last year.

**Strengths & Opportunities:** Sipp is a converted outfielder who has made an exceptional transition into pitching. He is a power-armed pitcher who has an impressive three-pitch arsenal fronted by a plus fastball and plus-plus slider that both grade out as out pitches at the major league level. His fastball has good life and movement consistently coming in at 91-94 MPH and has flashed 95 MPH in the past and his quick arm action and excellent deception makes it look a lot faster. His slider is a major league weapon with wipeout ability showing good tilt and late action. He has a good feel for an average changeup, which is a good change of pace pitch so hitters can't sit on his slider and fastball.

Sipp gets a lot of swing and misses with his electric fastball-slider combo, consistently putting up some of the highest swing and miss percentages in the Indians' system since signing with them. Not only is he tough on left-handers, but his deception in his delivery troubles right-handers who have a hard time picking up the ball out of his hand. He does not have a traditional left-handed delivery since he is a little bit open and therefore can really attack lefties and righties the same. He is also extremely athletic which allows him to consistently repeat his delivery and field his position exceptionally well. He is also tough on base-runners as he controls a running game well. He is a very aggressive, fearless pitcher on the mound, and has amazing aptitude. Even when he is not on, he has guts and a certain toughness about him that finds a way to get outs and get out of a jam.

It all comes down to fastball command with Sipp. He was inconsistent with his command last year, so it led to a high amount of walks. Command is usually the last thing to return after a pitcher has Tommy John surgery, so this should surely improve this coming season since he has a full season played in the books since his surgery. Nonetheless, it is the most important part of his development to finish him off. If he can consistently throw it over the plate at a high percentage, then he immediately becomes even more dominating and into the special category of major league relievers. He is a little under-sized so he still needs to prove he can be durable and stay healthy. While he made it through unscathed with no injury setbacks last year, in addition to the elbow surgery he has a history of injuries in his past such as a shoulder issue last offseason as well as an oblique injury and left elbow inflammation in 2006. He also needs to continue working his changeup into his pitch mix and develop more consistent command with it.

**Outlook:** Finally a 100% from his elbow surgery last year, Sipp once again showed why he was thought of as one of the top relief prospects in all of baseball going into 2007. He no longer had any restrictions and was pain free, and went out and pitched like a man with a purpose. The Indians love his potential as a dominant late-inning reliever, a role he had several opportunities to pitch in with the big league club last year. He has established himself as a fixture in the Indians bullpen for the foreseeable future, and will open the 2010 season in a setup role in the Cleveland bullpen.

*Photo courtesy of Tony Lastoria*

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[Tony Sipp MinorLeagueBaseball.com page](#)

[Tony Sipp Baseball-Reference page](#)

[Tony Sipp MinorLeagueSplits.com page](#)

### 13. Jason Kipnis - Second Baseman

**Born: 04/03/1987 - Height: 5'10" - Weight: 175 - Bats: Left - Throws: Right**

Year	Age	Team	Lvl
2009	22	Mahoning	A-

**Totals**

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**History:** Kipnis was selected by the Indians in the 2nd round of the 2009 Draft out of Arizona State University. He originally enrolled and played for the University of Kentucky, but he was dismissed from the team after his red-shirt freshman season because of a rules violation, so transferred to Arizona State. The Indians followed him extensively his three years in college and had him targeted in the 2008 Draft when he was a draft eligible sophomore but just missed out on him when the San Diego Padres selected him in the 4th round. He did not sign with the Padres and came back for his junior season at Arizona State in 2009 and went on to win PAC-10 Player of the Year honors and was named a first team All-American. He led Arizona State in almost every offensive category hitting .387 with 68 runs, 20 2B, 15 HR, 68 RBI, 47 walks, and 24 stolen bases. He also had a .500 on-base average and .731 slugging percentage. He only played 29 games for short-season Single-A Mahoning Valley in 2009 because he did not sign until early July, but also because he had a minor elbow sprain that he suffered in the College World Series when he hyper-extended his elbow laying out for a ball in the outfield in a game against North Carolina. He spent roughly three weeks rehabbing the injury in Mahoning Valley before he made his professional debut on August 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Strengths & Opportunities:** Kipnis is an advanced, athletic hitter who has a nice compact,

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clean swing. He has a polished approach at the plate with a discerning eye that packs a powerful punch in his small 5'10" 175-pound frame. He has some incredible bat-to-ball ability, works counts, can hit with two strikes, gets on base, and doesn't strikeout a lot. While he has more hit ability than power at this time, the Indians feel like he has a chance to hit with more power down the road. In fact, his developing power may be his best tool because he has a knack for squaring up the ball and the ball just jumps off his bat to all fields. While he is not very big he has excellent bat speed and strength to hit for power mostly because of some very strong wrists and forearms which help generate a lot of his power and whip the bat through the hitting zone. One comparison made by an Indians official was that he reminds them some of former Texas Rangers big leaguer Rusty Greer.

Kipnis is a baseball player who is an intense competitor. He plays the game with passion and very hard, goes all out, and is fun to watch. While his speed is only just a tick above average, he can steal a base and shows a good success rate because of his good instincts on the bases and intelligence as a player. Unlike most hitters, Kipnis had a lot of experience with wood bats in high school and college having used them in high school tournaments and in college summer leagues in the Virginia Valley League in 2007 and Cape Cod League in 2008. His barrel late in the season at Mahoning Valley was getting a little slower and loopy, so an adjustment was made to shorten up his swing by keeping his hands in front of his head to provide a shorter path. The Indians are also working on leveling out his swing as he has a minor uppercut.

The biggest question mark for Kipnis is where he fits on the field as going into the draft the past two years this was the primary concern among teams. The Indians left him in the outfield for his professional debut in Mahoning Valley, but after the season decided to try him out at second base during the Fall Instructional League. His performance at second base during the instructional period earned him rave reviews not only by the Indians, but from several scouts from other teams as well. One rival scout out in Instructional League said "if he can stick there he has the bat that could make him explode as a prospect."

While Kipnis is only considered an average defender in the outfield, he is very athletic and has the versatility to play any outfield position. He also displays good instincts and gets good jumps on balls. His throwing arm is a tick below average, easily the weakest tool in his arsenal. The problem is he really does not fit anywhere in the outfield as an everyday major league player as he lacks the plus range of a center fielder and lacks the big bat teams covet from a corner outfielder. As a result, he kind of gets lots in the shuffle as an outfielder and is just another solid prospect. As a second baseman his offensive tools play up and increase his value tremendously. The move to second base makes him move valuable, and worst case is if he can't play there everyday it should provide some versatility for him down the road.

Kipnis has experience at second base as he played there in high school and originally enrolled at the University of Kentucky as a shortstop. He also prefers to play the position, which is a big plus when making a position switch as it always helps when the player is 100% on board with the change. The Indians are confident he has the footwork, hands, and comfort level with turning double plays. He doesn't have the natural actions of an infielder and he certainly needs lots of work with coaching and reps at second base, but the feeling is he can be at least an average defender there. Such a change would boost his value as with his bat he would just be at best a fringe corner outfield prospect or an average center field prospect, but as a second baseman his bat plays up big at the position to where he becomes a potential impact player there offensively.

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**Outlook:** Kipnis' path to the big leagues as an everyday player looks to be second base or bust. He was nothing special as an outfielder and just a regular guy, but as a second baseman his bat and ability there puts him in the upper-echelon of second base prospects in minor league baseball. If he stays healthy and handles the position change well, he has the potential to be a player who can put up a high on-base percentage and plus slugging from the position. The Indians were very encouraged with what he showed at second base in Instructional League for five weeks, and are full steam ahead at least for 2010 in keeping him there to see how he develops and adapts to the position. He could move quickly through the system given his advanced hitting ability, though the change to second base will likely slow him down some for at least 2010. He should open the 2010 season as the starting second baseman at advanced Single-A Kinston.

*Photo courtesy of Ken Carr*

[Jason Kipnis MinorLeagueBaseball.com page](#)

[Jason Kipnis Baseball-Reference page](#)

[Jason Kipnis MinorLeagueSplits.com page](#)

### 12. T.J. House - Left-handed Pitcher

**Born: 09/29/1989 - Height: 6'2" - Weight: 215 - Bats: Right - Throws: Left**

Year	Age	Team	Lvl
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2009	19	Lake Co	A
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~~Full Name: [REDACTED] Position: [REDACTED] Bats: [REDACTED] Throws: [REDACTED] Lvl: [REDACTED]~~

2005

17

DSL Ind

R

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2006	18	GCL Ind	R
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2007	19	GCL Ind	R
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2007	19	Mahoning	A-
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2008	20	Akron	AA
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2008

20

Lake Co

A

2008

20

Kinston

A+

2009

21

Kinston

A+

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2009

21

AZL Ind

R

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[Kelvin De La Cruz - Minor League Baseball image page](#)