

Minor Happenings: Bo Knows Baseball

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Saturday, April 24 2010 1:00 AM - Last Updated Saturday, April 24 2010 6:20 AM



"Minor Happenings" is a weekly column which 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.

I was in Lake County this week to see the Captains and had a chance to talk to several players and coaches, so I will have some articles soon on players like outfielder Bo Greenwell as well as right-handed pitchers Joe Gardner and Austin Adams. In addition to that, I still have several pieces to put out from interviews I recently conducted with Columbus Clippers players, two of which already posted this week: [Jason Donald](#) and [Wes Hodges](#) .

Paul Cousineau and I hosted our [weekly radio show Smoke Signals](#) last night. It felt a little odd to be talking Indians baseball on a night when the Browns were taking part in the NFL Draft and the Cavaliers were playing Game 3 of their opening round series with the Chicago Bulls. The show itself actually went live during the frenetic last two minutes of the Cavs-Bulls game, so it made for an interesting first 10-15 minutes of the show trying to talk baseball while having both eyes glued to the TV screen.

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For breaking news as it happens with the Indians big league and farm teams, be sure to follow me on Twitter [@tlastoria](#) . Also, be sure to check my site at the [Indians Prospect Insider](#) as three to four articles are going up there a day with game recaps, player articles, and analysis pieces on all four of the Indians full season minor league affiliates.

Onto the Happenings....

Indians Minor League Player Of The Week

(for games from April 15th to April 21st)

Bo Greenwell (Outfielder – Lake County)

.461 (12-26), 9 R, 2 2B, 1 3B, 3 HR, 13 RBI, 3 BB, 4 K, 1 SB

What a week and what a start to the season for Low-A Lake County outfielder Bo Greenwell. Overall this season in 14 games he is hitting .418 with 3 HR, 20 RBI, 6 stolen bases and has a 1.183 OPS. He currently ranks 2nd in the Midwest League in



hitting, 1st in runs (17), 3rd in hits (23), tied for 7th in home runs, 1st in RBI, 8th in stolen bases, 2nd

in on-base percentage (.500), 3rd

in slugging percentage (.691), and 2nd

in OPS. So, a great start indeed.

The early surge in Greenwell's performance and hot start is not all that surprising as a lot of people tabbed him as a guy to watch going into the season as a potential breakout player. Of course no one expected this kind of start, but it appears a lot of the raw tools are starting to come together for the football player turned baseball player. The biggest change may be he is

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starting to believe in his abilities more and is just much more confident when he goes out there to hit, all signs he is starting to mature not only physically but mentally as well.

Greenwell also exhibits a very good approach at the plate as he limits the strikeouts and will generally walk just as much as he strikes out. On top of that he has above average speed, so as he continues to get stronger and grow into his body the power numbers are going to come and he offers up a very exciting power/speed combo where maybe he could hit 10-20 home runs and steal 20-30 bases a year. On top of all that he has an impressive attitude and unbelievable makeup.

It should be noted that when the Midwest League named their Player of the Week covering the period of April 8 to April 18, Greenwell was inexplicably not named the winner even though at the time the award was voted on he was the league leader in EVERY offensive category except for doubles. Be as it may, the guy ranked second in almost every category won the award. It was a travesty and completely unfair to Greenwell, and a ridiculous decision by the league that made no sense whatsoever.

Honorable Mentions:

Cord Phelps (2B – KIN): .462 (12-26), 5 R, 1 2B, 0 3B, 1 HR, 2 RBI, 1 BB, 2K
Jose Constanza (OF – COL): .500 (9-18), 4 R, 1 2B, 3 3B, 0 HR, 1 RBI, 1 BB, 2 K
Kyle Bellows (3B – KIN): .429 (6-14), 3 R, 1 2B, 0 3B, 0 HR, 5 RBI, 3 BB, 1 K
Jeremie Tice (3B – LC): .477 (10-21), 5 R, 2 2B, 0 3B, 0 HR, 3 RBI, 1 BB, 1 K
Austin Adams (RHP – LC): 2 games, 0-0, 1.13 ERA, 8.0 IP, 7 H, 1 ER, 4 BB, 5 K

Previous Winners:

04/08 to 04/14: Carlos Santana (Catcher - Columbus)

Director's Cuts

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Indians Farm Director Ross Atkins was in Double-A Akron this week and had the following to say about some of the players he saw there:

On Cord Phelps: "He is a guy who really performed in college and has had a very good professional career thus far. He hasn't



done anything outstanding just yet and it seems like he may be starting to. He is as committed as anyone that we have as far as his work ethic is concerned. We really have to pull back on him because if not he will really work himself into the ground as he is that driven. We are so glad to see that all that hard work is paying off with a great start this year. He is driving the ball with authority, he has hit the ball over the wall a couple times, and he hit another double off the wall to the opposite field. He is a switch-hitting second baseman that last year had one error going into August, so he is a very sound defender and sound base-runner and the offense seems to be coming. A switch hitting second baseman with developing power is definitely interesting. He deserves a good start with the work he has put in."

On Wyatt Toregas: "It's tough for a player to go from competing to make a team in the major leagues to being in Double-A. With us wanting Carlos Santana to play everyday in Triple-A, we talked to Wyatt about going to Double-A and playing every day. He technically is serving as a major league backup there and we just wanted him to get regular work so he can be as crisp as possible should we have a need in the major leagues. Like I said, it's tough for anyone to handle but he has handled it well. It is just something I think he just turned his attention and focus to making those pitchers and that team as good as it can be and he will benefit from the consistent reps."

On Zach Putnam: "Everything [has us excited about him]. He has been the shining light of our pitching so far in the minor leagues. He has been consistent in his minor league career and he had a great spring training. Last year we took him out of the rotation and put him in the pen and thought he could be someone who could move quickly. We had some gaps that were filled from other places and things started to settle down in the bullpen in Cleveland, so we put him back in

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the rotation to see if we could further develop his slider. The slider has taken off, his delivery has gotten better, his fastball command is exceptional, and he really does look like a major league pitcher in Double-A right now. So we are fired up about his progress, but still see someone who could help the bullpen in a hurry."

Santana Injury Scare

Hearts skipped a beat all around Cleveland on Wednesday afternoon when word got out that prized catching prospect Carlos Santana had left his game with Triple-A Columbus with an injury.

Columbus was playing a day game (11 am start), and in the third inning Santana was making his second plate appearance of



the game when he fouled a ball right off his left knee. He immediately crumpled to the ground in pain and after several minutes including a visit from team trainer Michael Salazar and manager Mike Sarbaugh, he was removed from the game and helped off the field by Salazar and outfielder Shelley Duncan.

Typically a foul ball off the leg does not result in anything serious, but this is Cleveland so fans could only expect the worst. Thankfully it was learned after the game that he simply suffered a deep bruise and that he would be day to day and likely get a few games off before he gets back in there.

Had Santana been more seriously injured it would have been an unfortunate setback for him as he is really doing a good job so far of working on some of the things the Indians really want him to get better at, that being his English and how he communicates with his pitchers.

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"I am working on my defense and working on trying to communicate with the staff and the manager," said Santana in a recent interview at Huntington Park in Columbus. "Day to day I try to talk to my pitchers whether American or Latin, specifically more with the Americans as I practice my English with them. So I am doing [well]. I am very confident with it and getting better."

There is no question Santana can hit, but this is really a unique opportunity for them where they can keep him in Triple-A to not only control his service clock and get an extended look at another high profile catcher in Lou Marson, but let him finish his development off at the Triple-A level and hone in on his English.

"I work everyday with my hitting and defense," said Santana. "I love hitting, so I get work on it before games and early in the day. [As for] my English I pick it up talking to people. When they ask a question in English, I try and answer and I get help from my friends like [Damaso] Espino and Niuman [Romero]."

There was some concern when Santana broke the hamate bone in his right wrist back in December that it would affect him in the early going this year, but he says the injury does not bother him at all.

"It is good," said Santana. "I came into spring training in Arizona and had a good rehab and it doesn't bother me anymore. I hurt it while swinging a bat in the Dominican as when I swung the bat I broke it. But right now it feels good."

Santana is off to a good start for Columbus where in 13 games he is hitting .364 with 4 HR, 14 RBI and a 1.178 OPS. Fans are chomping at the bit for him to get to Cleveland right away, especially with Marson struggling in Cleveland. Even though he may feel he is ready, Santana takes it all in stride and doesn't let the hype of being the #1 prospect in the system and one of the top young players in the game change the way he goes about his business.

"Personally I don't worry about it," said Santana. "I just worry about this team [here in Columbus]. I have work to do and I just need to play the games. I don't care about what other people say and when I get up. I had a good season last year and two years ago, and this year it is the same thing. I'm just working hard on my defense and hitting and playing hard. We'll

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see what happens."

Coach's Corner: Mickey Callaway

Mickey Callaway is the new pitching coach at Low-A Lake County and just joined the Indians organization this past offseason. Coming into this season he had no prior coaching experience as he just retired as a player last offseason after 14 seasons as a professional, five in the major leagues. He spent the last five seasons pitching in Korea and Taiwan, and that experience pitching in a foreign country is something that he will use to help him relate to some of the struggles the Latin pitchers go through playing professional in the United States.

I sat down with him for about ten minutes on Wednesday evening before the game and talked about his transition to coaching and the starting pitchers in the Captains rotation:

On Trey Haley: "I think Haley is becoming a guy who is not raw anymore. He is around the zone and at times has shown



command going in and out of the strike zone. He is still young so he needs to mature a little more still, but fielding his position and doing the little things he is wonderful at which is nice to see from a kid his age. He is around the zone now as he is not just launching it anymore. He is right where he needs to be and I think he is making good progress. It's not a numbers game here and he is smart enough to know that. He is a smart kid. We just need him to do the things to make him successful. Does he do everything that he needs to do to be successful right now? No, but that is what we are working on and I think he recognizes that. He gets a lot of satisfaction being around the zone and not walking a lot of guys. Two games ago he didn't walk a batter, which was probably one of the first times he has done that as a professional, so that kind of stuff gives him a high and something to work toward."

On Austin Adams: "He has looked really solid. He has four pretty good pitches and he has

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been throwing them all for strikes. He has shown a very firm fastball with some pretty good movement. He has been pitching and been one of our more solid guys this year getting ahead in the count and really attacking the hitters. He knows his stuff is good and he pitches like that. We have him on a strict pitch count of 60-65 pitches, but he is getting deep in a game even though he wants to keep on pitching."

On Clayton Cook: "He was great in spring training but then had ten days off coming into the season. He hasn't been where he was in spring training as far as his command goes, but we are working on some stuff and he will get that command back. He has three really good pitches he can throw for strikes and he knows how to pitch, so hopefully in his next outing he will be pitching a little better. Right now we are just trying to preach to him to get ahead and trust his stuff. That's the key, to get ahead and then use your stuff to pitch to his strengths and the hitter's weaknesses. If you don't get ahead it is tough to locate some pitches after that."

On Danny Salazar: "He has looked okay. Again, he is one of those guys who had a lot of days off coming into the season. He has only made two starts and is trying to get that feel back. He has a great fastball, but we need to get him to trust it more and let him know how really good it is and utilize it better. It is going to play up well as far as a strikeout pitch goes, it's just we need to work on his secondary pitches to really setup his fastball and to become a swing and miss pitch. Right now I think the hitters are comfortable in there just looking fastball and looking to make contact."



On Joe Gardner: "There is no doubt that he has a big league sinker. We are just trying to work with him on his secondary pitches and just do the little things holding runners on and stuff like that to just tighten up his game that way. He is 100% healthy no doubt and has been very aggressive."

On Marty Popham: "I think it is a little tough for him when he comes in out of the pen as it is a different routine for him. But he is a guy who can make pitches and has a great changeup and

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good fastball that he can locate down in the zone. We are just working on a breaking ball for him to mix in with his changeup. I think he is going to have success."

On coaching: "I love it. I feel like I am out there throwing every pitch now instead of worrying about my day and my routine and when I am pitching again. I am really getting a lot of satisfaction out of it. I get upset when they walk a guy like I did when I pitched. Not that pitching was boring when I was doing it, but this is a lot more exciting every night for me."

On how he came to sign with the Indians: "No, [the Indians did not really know me]. I always knew when I was playing that I would make a better coach someday than as a player. I wanted to play long enough to where I got enough experience to where I could be a good coach, and I felt like I had that accomplished after last year. My body was starting to wear down a little bit so I talked to my agent and we made up a resume and sent it out. My agent has a good relationship with the Indians, and I came out to instruct for a week long interview and ended up getting the job. I was very excited about that."

On playing in Korea and Taiwan the last few years: "I thought it was good, and I had a great time doing it learning about all of the different cultures. I think what I really took from it was getting to really feel what a guy from Venezuela or Taiwan does and how tough it really is with the communication barrier to play in the United States. Hopefully that will help me be a better coach because of that."

On the pitching coach who had the greatest influence on him: "I had a lot of good pitching coaches [over the years], but one who always stuck out in my mind was Chuck Hernandez who was the Indians bullpen coach last year. I had him for a few years with Tampa Bay. I felt like I took a lot from Chuck, and have continued to use that even after A-ball when he was no longer my pitching coach."

Ups And Downs

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