

2010 Tony Awards: Pitcher of the Year

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Tuesday, October 05 2010 11:00 AM - Last Updated Wednesday, October 06 2010 7:34 AM



Yesterday we kicked off the Cleveland Indians year end awards with the announcement of the [Offensive Player of the Year](#)

. Today we continue the postseason awards with the announcement of the Pitcher of the Year. In the coming days the Reliever of the Year, Defensive Player of the Year, Rookie of the Year, Comeback Player of the Year, Biggest Breakthrough, Biggest Disappointment and All-Tony Team will be announced.

As a quick reminder, these awards are awarded 100% based on performance as prospect standing is not factored in. So just because a guy is or is not listed does not mean anything from a "prospect" status. These awards are simply for fun to hand out at the end of the year. Also, the Cleveland Indians in no way whatsoever had any input in these awards.

Onto the nominees...

Pitcher of the Year Nominees:

Austin Adams (RHP – Lake County/Kinston)

8-5, 2.49 ERA, 26 G, 112.0 IP, 90 H, 12 HR, 36 BB, 112 K, 1.13 WHIP, 3.6 BB/9, 7.1 K/9

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Adams did a fantastic job all year considering he is still in the process of his conversion to a full-time pitcher as well as being limited to four to five innings an outing due to a piggyback role. He opened the year at Low-A Lake County and went 2-4 with a 3.54 ERA in 13 appearances, and then at the midpoint of the season moved up to High-A Kinston where he was dominating going 6-1 with a 1.53 ERA in 13 appearances. Even though he was limited with just 112 innings pitched, he finished 3rd in the organization in ERA (2.49).

Carlos Carrasco (RHP - Columbus)

10-6, 3.65 ERA, 25 GS, 150.1 IP, 139 H, 16 HR, 46 BB, 133 K, 1.23 WHIP, 3.4 BB/9, 8.0 K/9

Carrasco had an inconsistent year in 2009 where in 26 Triple-A starts between the Cleveland and Philadelphia organizations he went 11-10 with a 4.64 ERA (157.0 IP, 149 H, 45 BB, 148 K).

He came back this season and had a near carbon copy performance with all of his peripheral stats, but his ERA dropped a full run because he may have gotten over his issues with being susceptible to the big inning. He finished 10th in the organization in ERA (3.65), tied for 4th in wins (10), and was 2nd

in strikeouts (133).

Joe Gardner (RHP – Lake County/Kinston)

13-6, 2.75 ERA, 28 GS, 147.1 IP, 102 H, 6 HR, 62 BB, 142 K, 1.11 WHIP, 3.8 BB/9, 8.7 K/9

Gardner made his professional debut this season, and made it a memorable one where he opened at Low-A Lake County and went 1-0 with a 3.24 ERA in six starts before quickly moving on to High-A Lake County in mid-May where he went 12-6 with a 2.65 ERA in 22 starts. He showed an incredible ability to get groundballs (3.21 GO/AO), limiting hits (.197 BAA), and missing bats (8.7 K/9). He finished 4th in the organization in ERA (2.75), 1st in wins (13), and 1st in strikeouts (142).

T.J. McFarland (LHP – Kinston/Akron)

11-5, 3.37 ERA, 25 G, 130.2 IP, 130 H, 10 HR, 42 BB, 97 K, 1.32 WHIP, 2.9 BB/9, 6.7 K/9

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McFarland opened the year in the High-A Kinston bullpen in a piggyback situation because of the abundance of starters at Kinston and Double-A Akron to start the season. As callups and injuries occurred, he found himself permanently in the rotation by mid-May and put together a very good season. Led by a high groundball rate (2.25 GO/AO) and a pitch to contact mentality, he has established himself as an interesting pitching prospect going forward. He ranked 7th in the organization in ERA (3.37) and 3rd in wins (11).

Matt Packer (LHP – Lake County/Akron)

9-7, 2.04 ERA, 30 G, 132.2 IP, 112 K, 7 HR, 22 BB, 123 K, 0.99 WHIP, 1.4 BB/9, 8.5 K/9

Packer (and Gardner) had one of the most dominating years for an Indians minor league pitcher in some time, one that no one saw coming. Like McFarland at High-A Kinston, Packer opened the year at Low-A Lake County in the bullpen, but soon found himself in the starting rotation and in 24 appearances (13 starts) there he went 8-5 with a 1.60 ERA. The Indians moved him up to Double-A Akron in August and he did not slip one bit going 1-2 with a 3.16 ERA in six starts. He posted a 2.58 GO/AO on the year, and finished the season 1st in the organization in ERA (2.04) and 5th in strikeouts (123).

Josh Tomlin (RHP - Columbus)

8-4, 2.68 ERA, 20 G (17 GS), 107.1 IP, 83 H, 11 HR, 33 BB, 80 K, 1.08 WHIP, 2.8 BB/9, 6.7 K/9

Tomlin was called up to Cleveland for the final two months of the season, but prior to the promotion he left behind a pretty impressive three and a half month body of work at Triple-A Columbus. He opened the year in the bullpen before moving into the rotation after the injury bug hit the starting staff a few weeks into the season. Upon moving into the rotation he was sensational and was arguably the ace of the Columbus staff the first half of the season. His numbers are not sexy by any means, but he proved to be consistent at getting people out.

Alex White (RHP – Kinston/Akron)

10-10, 2.45 ERA, 26 GS, 150.2 IP, 123 H, 12 HR, 46 BB, 117 K, 1.12 WHIP, 2.7 BB/9, 7.0 K/9

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White had a very good professional debut across two different levels of the organization where he spent about the first six weeks at High-A Kinston going 2-3 with a 2.86 ERA in eight starts before finishing the year at Double-A Akron going 8-7 with a 2.28 ERA in 18 starts. He lived up to everything he was billed to be when he was taken in the 1st round of the 2009 Draft as a groundball machine (1.91 GO/AO) with the ability to miss bats and an exceptional work ethic. He finished 2nd in the organization in ERA (2.45) and tied for 4th in wins.

And the 2010 Tony Award goes to...Joe Gardner

Unlike with the Offensive Player of the Year award, this came down to two pitchers who set themselves apart from the pack in Matt Packer and Joe Gardner. As great a season as Alex White had, the duo of Packer and Gardner bested him in almost every category imaginable. Also, for all the positive steps Carlos Carrasco made this year, Gardner and Packer were just that much more impressive from a performance perspective.

When looking at the year both Packer and Gardner had, very little can be looked at to separate them. Packer had a groundball rate of 2.58 while Gardner had a 3.21 GO/AO. Packer had a .231 batting average against while Gardner had a .197 BAA. Packer had a 2.04 ERA while Gardner had a 2.75 ERA. Packer had an 8.3 K/9 while Gardner had an 8.7 K/9. Packer allowed 7.6 hits per nine innings while Gardner had a 6.2 H/9. Packer allowed just 7 home runs in 132.2 innings pitched (0.5 HR/9) while Gardner allowed just 6 home runs in 147.1 innings pitched (0.4 HR/9).

While Packer had an impeccable 1.5 BB/9 and Gardner a still solid 3.8 BB/9, ultimately Gardner was just better in all the main peripheral stats like home run rate, strikeout rate, and hit rate, and on top of that led the entire organization in wins. While both could have been co-Pitcher of the Year, I am not one of those who chicken out and do this, so in the end Gardner wins out because he was just a little more dominating across the board.

Gardner's season and his emergence as an innings eating, sinker-balling, middle-of-the-rotation big league pitching prospect was one of the biggest stories to come out of the 2010 season. He showed he can dominate at both levels of Single-A, and one of the more intriguing stories to follow for the 2011 season will be how he adjusts and his stuff translates at Double-A Akron

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where he is expected to open next season in the starting rotation. If things go well, he could enter into the Indians big league pitching plans sometime in 2012.

Up Next: Reliever of the Year

Photo courtesy of Lianna Holub

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