



The Kinston Indians made the Carolina League playoffs last year, but bowed out in the first round, getting swept by Winston-Salem. This will be an interesting year for Kinston, as it is going to be their final year as a Cleveland affiliate. As a matter of fact, as of right now, this is going to be Kinston's last year with a minor league baseball team. In 2012, the K-Tribe will move to Zebulon, NC and take over the (much nicer) AA stadium there, replacing the Cincy franchise that is moving from Zebulon.

The franchise will of course remain in the high-A Carolina League, but for the first time in a long time, there will be no minore league baseball in Kinston, NC.

Kinston opens their season today against the very same Winston-Salem Dash that ended their 2010 season. Last year's 1st round pick Drew Pomeranz will toe the rubber for manager Aaron Holbert's squad as they start another run towards the Carolina League championship. Let's take a look at the players Holbert will have at his disposal for the beginning of the 2011 campaign:

Catcher:



Defensive specialist Roberto Perez (50) should get the majority of the time behind the plate for the K-Tribe. Perez is as sound of a defensive catcher as you will find in the minor leagues. He has advanced receiving skills, a strong arm with a quick release, and calls and excellent game behind the plate. Pitchers love throwing to him, and he handles them very well. Unfortunately, his OPS last year in low A Lake County was just .699. In the pitcher-friendly Carolina League, Perez's offensive numbers could be ugly. Regardless, he'll be worth watching simply for his defensive prowess. His pop times in AZ were consistently under 1.9, and I had him as quick as 1.78. Folks, that is just plain fast. He has a solid approach at the plate, with a .360 OBP last season, but needs to improve his hit tool if he wants to be more than a backup in the show.

Infield:

Chase Burnette and Jeremie Tice (44) will split time between 1B and DH, with Burnette seeing most of the time at 1B. Both are big guys with some pop, although Burnette is the more athletic of the two. Tice hit 14 HR last year between Lake County and Kinston last year and posted an .810 OPS. Burnette was selected in the 18th round last year out of Georgia Tech as an OF, and has worked very hard on his defense in converting to first base. He signed quickly, and hit 9 HR in 275 AB between Mahoning Valley and Lake County. Adam Abraham moves up to Kinston from Lake County to man the hot corner. He put up a solid .267/.330/.430 line for the Captains in 2010.

Ronald Rivas and Casey Frawley will form the K-Tribe's double-play tandem up the middle. Frawley was a 17th round pick in 2009 out of Stetson University, and has decent pop for a SS (13 HR, .430 SLG for Lake County in 2010).

Outfield:

Tyler Holt (25), Bo Greenwell (41), Abner Abreu (33) will be patrolling the green pastures of Historic Grainger Stadium to start out 2011. Holt is a high-energy, intense guy drafted last year in the 10th round

