

It's WashTime Somewhere

Written by {ga=edtherevelator}

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It's not often an Indians prospect makes a buzz for things he didn't do on the field, and it's even rarer to see one causing a stir without getting into any kind of trouble (that we know of, at least).

Welcome to the wonderful world of Twitter, folks, the social networking tool that is quickly making outfield prospect LeVon Washington an Indians household name 140 characters at a time. Washington, who can be found using the Twitter handle @L_wash, was taken by the Indians in the second round of the 2010 amateur draft. He was originally a first-round pick by the Rays the year before, but they failed to sign him.

The Tribe drafted Washington with the hopes that he'd be an offensive-minded outfielder they could slot into the top of the order. While many fans are already rushing to a Kenny Lofton comparison, Washington is nowhere near that yet, and if you take his 2011 season at Class A, he's nowhere near the big leagues yet either. He strikes out way too much (25.4% K rate as a 21 year old), hasn't shown any of the power he was thought to develop (.315 SLUG%) and his BB/K rate wasn't pretty either (0.55).

So why is a low-minors Indians prospect who hadn't played a full season of professional ball becoming a sensation with almost a thous

and followers? Two words:

Wash Time.

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Sure, the numbers from Washington's first pro season were uninspiring, but the prospect's talk is quite impressive. Talk is cheap, but Washington's tweets, outlandish but not offensive, add up. Washington has created a Twitter hashtag (or keyword, for the unhip) of #WashTime, which is basically every time for Washington but he has retroactively added that "WASH" stands for "Winning Against Straight Haters." It's not just drivel, though. A couple of weeks before Christmas, Washington started using the hashtag #WashMas and followers who retweeted or used the hashtag would receive a "WASHTIME" t-shirt. For free.

Although I wasn't one of the lucky few (not sure how many Washington ACTUALLY sent out), fans did receive the shirts. Although Washington received an over-slot signing bonus to sign with the Tribe, the guy still just makes a Minor League base salary, and he is printing up t-shirts for fans? I am so down with this.

Other than #WashMas, other examples of #WashTime have included some surprisingly blunt comments regarding Ryan Braun's positive PED test, lots of pump up talk for Indians fans to get excited about him and the team's future and why he dismisses prospect rankings ("being the number 1 prospect won't help me hit no better").

Washington is a frequent retweeter of his fans who use the WashTime hashtag. His followers, in return, have come up with some amusing examples of WashTime, making Washington one of the most interesting interactive athletes Cleveland has seen. All thanks to Twitter.

(Side – Don't interpret any of this to say Cleveland sports has some boring tweeters, on the contrary, the Indians organization alone has a number of must-follows: Minor-leaguers Cole Cook (@C_M_Cook) and William Krasne (@PinkPoloShorts) are excellent tweeters, as well as the famed #BullpenMafia, especially Vinny Pestano (@VinnieP52) and Chris Perez (@ChrisPerez54). And they are simply the tip of the iceberg for the Indians, who must be praised for their social media-friendly organization. /rant)

Make no doubt, Washington needs to improve in order to not only back up his tweeting, but also be considered for a legitimate job in the big leagues. Assuming he progresses as the Indians hoped, he's probably about 3 years away from fully contributing to the big-league club.

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But I'm definitely pulling for him. On a Cleveland Indians team filled with silent leaders (outside of the aforementioned Bullpen Mafia), the Indians could definitely use a player with Washington's ability and swagger.

So, LeVon, you have a follower and a fan in me. Hopefully it is WashTime in Cleveland soon.