



The Clippers had a scheduled off-day yesterday, but there were still four games in the minor league system as the Aeros had a doubleheader after a rainout on Tuesday. Akron split their two games, Carolina came through with a victory and Lake County went down in a tough one. Wins and losses don't mean much in minor league baseball though, so let's take a look at some of yesterday's individual highlights from around the farm.

Luigi Rodriguez, CF-LCC: 2-5, HR (3), 2 RBI, R, 2 K.

Rodriguez is one of the most exciting players in the Indians organization. He's probably the fastest player in the minor league system, and the converted 2B has surprising pop for someone his size. Rodriguez is listed at just 5'11" and 160lbs, but the switch-hitting CF has a .406 SLG this season and has recorded 18 XBH. Many of those XBH are because of his speed, but he does a nice job barreling the baseball and hitting balls hard into the gaps. He's an improving baserunner, with 12 SB in 17 attempts. Defensively, he's still a work in progress as this is his first full season in the OF, but all the tools are there for him to become an above-average CF. He has the speed and a decent arm, he just needs more experience reading flyballs in the OF. He reminds some of a young Kenny Lofton, and while Lofton was a better athlete, the comparison isn't totally insane. I'm not saying that I expect him to turn into Lofton, but the potential is there. In a system with few high-ceiling guys, Rodriguez stands out as a guy who could have a big impact on the game at the next level.

Steven Wright, SP-AKR: L (5-3), 5 IP, 2 R (0 ER), 6 H, K, 3 BB. Despite the loss, Wright actually lowered his season ERA to just 1.54. In 64 1/3 IP, the knuckleballer has 55 K and 31 BB, and has at the very least made himself into an intriguing option going forward.

Brett Brach, SP-AKR: W (2-2), 6 IP, ER, 5 H, 0 K, 2 BB. Despite not missing many bats yesterday, Brach was effective for 6 innings in game 2 of the Aeros double dip for his 2nd Eastern League win this year.

Bryan Price, RP-AKR: IP, R (0 ER), BB. In 32 2/3 IP for the Aeros, Price has a 2.20 ERA, 31 K and 11 BB. His K rate has dropped considerably of late, as he's recorded just 8 K in his last 15 2/3 IP.

Preston Guilmet, RP-AKR: S (8), IP. Guilmet worked a clean inning for his 8th save of the season. He now has an even 3.00 ERA, 20 K and 7 BB in 21 IP for the Aeros.

Chun Chen, 1B-AKR: 2-3, 2B, 4 BB, R. Chen has hit in eight straight games for the Aeros, and in reaching base 6 times in 7 trips to the plate yesterday pushed his season OBP over .400. Still stuck on just 1 HR though, as his SLG (.433) is barely higher than his OBP (.406).

Thomas Neal, RF-AKR: 2-5, HR (1), RBI, 2 BB, 2 R, 2 K. Neal popped his 1st HR of the season yesterday, clearly fueled by his peanut butter M&M's. His season line stands at .288/.364/.373 with the one HR and 14 RBI in 44 games for Akron.

Kyle Blair, RP-CAR: W (5-3), 5 IP, ER, 2 H, 3 BB, K. Blair has an interesting streak going; in his last 4 straight relief appearances, he's earned the victory each time out. That's unusual out of the bullpen, but Blair has been piggybacking on starts so that helps explain it. In those 4 outings, Blair has pitched a combined 19 2/3 innings, allowed just 4 ER while striking out 9 and walking 9.

Shawn Armstrong, RP-CAR: IP, H, K. Armstrong was named to the Carolina League All-Star Team, and it's easy to see why. In 32 IP for the Mudcats, he's struck out an impressive 40, walked 15, and posted a tiny 1.13 ERA.

Jeremie Tice, DH-CAR: 1-3, HR (12), RBI, BB, R, K. Tice was also named to the Carolina League All-Star Team on the strength of his 1.000 OPS this season. He missed a few games after exiting the June 3 contest with an injury, and yesterday's HR was his first hit in 4 games

since returning on June 10.

Tony Wolters, 2B-CAR: 2-5, 2B, RBI, R, 2 K. Wolters has hit in 8 of his last 10 games, going for a .342/.359/.533 line in that timeframe. I really like this kid, and it's a lot of fun to watch him play baseball. His OPS on May 1 was .390; today it is .646. Remember, Wolters skipped low-A entirely, having played last season with the short-season Mahoning Valley Scrappers after suffering a wrist injury in spring training.

Anthony Gallas, LF-CAR: 3-4, HR (5), 4 RBI, R. Clearly inspired by his alma mater's run to the CWS, the Kent State product has been on fire of late, going 7 for his last 13 with 2 HR and 5 RBI.

Cole Cook, RP-LCC: L (2-2), 2 IP, R (0 ER), 2 H, 2 K. Cook was the hard-luck loser last night, as his defense let him down for an unearned run that ended up leaving him with the loss. He picked up his defense in the 5th, escaping a 2-on, 1-out jam by inducing a groundout to 1B and striking out the next batter with runners on 2nd and 3rd. Cook's season ERA is down to 3.55, and he has 31 K and 11 BB in 38 IP for the Captains.

Francisco Valera, RP-LCC: IP, 3 K, 2 BB. Valera with a Vinnie Pestano inning yesterday, walking two but striking out three.

Leo Castillo, 3B-LCC: 2-5, 3B, RBI, R. Castillo has been showing signs of life of late. His overall line is still just .190/.235/.270, but in June he's at .244/.295/.317. He's still just 18 years old and in his first full-season league stateside, so there's plenty of time for improvement here.