One of the most popular columns we run, Minor Happenings is the frighteningly in depth creation of website contributor Tony Lastoria ... who appeared on "All Bets Are Off" with Bruce Drennan last week. In this week's version, Tony brings us up to speed on the injury to prized Indians prospect Adam Miller. Tony also hits on the promotion and position change for the red hot Jared Goedert as well as a multitude of other stories from the Indians farm system.

Minor Happenings" covers the important developments and news in the Indians farm system. Information in this report is collected from the various news outlets that cover each team, some national news, and in some cases from private sources connected to the Indians organization.

TheClevelandFan.com Minor League Player of the Week

(for games from May 24 through May 30)

Josh Rodriguez (Shortstop - Kinston)
.409 AVG (9-22), 4 R, 2 HR, 9 RBI, 5 BB, 3 SB

Kinston shortstop Josh Rodriguez takes home the hardware this week after an offensive outburst that saw him hit .409 and rack up 9 RBI, and reach base in 14 out of 27 plate appearances. The good week hopefully is a good stepping stone for Rodriguez as he has struggled for the most part in the early going, as he is only hitting .224 on the year with 5 HR, 22 RBI, 9 stolen bases and a .713 OPS.

The Indians took Rodriguez with their second of four picks in the second round of last year's

draft. Rodriguez is a patient hitter with gap power, and while he lacks great speed he does have an excellent throwing arm and is versatile enough to play third base, shortstop or second base. With the need in the system for quality, impact middle infielders, Rodriguez is one to keep an eye on going forward.

Honorable Mention:

Shin-Soo Choo (OF - Buffalo): .478 AVG (11-23), 5 R, 1 2B, 2 3B, 6 RBI, 2 BB, 3 SB
Ben Francisco (OF- Buffalo): .355 AVG (11-31), 3 R, 4 2B, 1 HR, 5 RBI
Hector Rondon (RHP - Lake County): 10 IP, 6 H, 0 ER, 0 BB, 8 K
David Huff (LHP - Kinston): 6.2 IP, 5 H, 1 ER, 1 BB, 7 K

Previous Winners:

5/17 to 5/23: Shawn Nottingham (LHP - Akron)
5/10 to 5/16: Matt Whitney (1B - Lake County)
5/3 to 5/9: Chuck Lofgren (LHP - Akron)
4/26 to 5/2: Adam Miller (RHP - Buffalo)
4/19 to 4/25: Shawn Nottingham (LHP - Akron)
4/12 to 4/18: Jason Stanford (LHP - Buffalo)
4/5 to 4/11: Matt McBride (C - Lake County)

Director's Cuts

Indians Farm Director Ross Atkins chimed in this week on two of the Indians noteworthy prospects:

On Adam Miller: He has a slight strain on the last digit of the middle finger on his pitching hand. While he has been put on the disabled list, the move is more precautionary and the injury is not considered to be serious. If Miller had to pitch a meaningful game for Buffalo or Cl
eveland
, he could pitch it.
Being in the minor leagues, it gives the Indians an opportunity to be overly cautious with Miller

and shut him down a few days so the injury can heal. Miller should be back on the mound soon, as in a few days he will go on a return to throw program of 10-14 days.

On Asdrubal Cabrera: The Indians weighed playing him in Buffalo or Akron before the season started, and sided with
Akron
mostly because it offered him the best chance to have success and develop. At
Akron
, Cabrera can make adjustments like lowering his back elbow and concentrating on driving the ball more and showing more power from the left-hand side of the plate.
Also, being at Double-A he will see more fastballs.

Goedert Changes Position, League

With Kinston third baseman Wes Hodges out, it provided the Indians with a chance to promote Lake

County third baseman Jared Goedert. On Monday, Goedert was called up to Kinston and debuted at third base on Tuesday going 0-for-4 at the plate (he is 0-8 in his first two games at Kinston
).
Goedert leaves behind Single-A Lake County hopefully for good, where he hit .364 with 16 HR, 51 RBI and had a 1.191 OPS in 46 games.

Hodges had been roadblocking Goedert from a callup since he was the incumbent third baseman at Kinston and he was not ready to move up to Akron. Even when Hodges returns next week, it should not present a problem with getting Goedert in the lineup as it once did a few weeks ago. The reason for that is because Goedert has been moved to second base and had been playing there for well over a week before the callup to
Kinston
. The plan while Hodges is out is to alternate Goedert between third base and second base, and when Hodges returns Goedert will be the full-time second baseman.

Cabrera Ready For Buffalo?

Akron shortstop Asdrubal Cabrera has done everything he has been asked to do in improving his game offensively, and on the year he is hitting .309 with 6 HR, 20 RBI, 13 stole bases

and an .899 OPS. Surprisingly, he leads the team in home runs

which is amazing considering players like John Van Every, Brian Barton, Ryan Goleski, and Jordan
Brown are much bigger deep threats.
Defensively, Cabrera has been as advertised and has only made 5 errors in 43 games, and in addition to the routine plays has made several tough plays in the field.

The question now is, when does he move back up to Buffalo? The Indians player personnel people are weighing what is best for Cabrera, which is can he accomplish more staying in Akron or moving back up to Buffalo? The Indians want to do whatever it takes to make Cabrera an everyday big league shortstop, and are erring on the side of caution because they feel Cabrera's former organization (Seattle) forced him through their system too fast at the expense of proper development. With Jhonny Peralta at shortstop in Cleveland and playing well, the Indians are not hard-pressed to have Cabrera ready this year and are being patient with him.

For now, it appears Cabrera will stick in Akron at least until the Double-A All-Star break (July 10-11), and then maybe move up to Buffalo.
Also, with Cabrera impressing you very well may see Peralta move to third base and Cabrera be installed as the everyday shortstop as soon as next season.
By the way, for those wondering why Cabrera was absent from the lineup the past few days, he is in Venezuela for the birth of his child.

The Carpet Crawler

I'm a huge Genesis fan. Grew up on them since I was a 5-year old kid listening to them on my dad's stereo in the car, and when I hit my teens in the mid-80s and was more exposed to their progressive rock side in their back catalogue, I fell in love with them. One of my all-time favorite albums is the 1974 epic double-album "The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway", a

Miller Injury Not Serious

Buffalo right-hander Adam Miller was scratched six minutes from his scheduled start last Thursday because he said he still

had pain in his finger. The Indians are taking no chances with the injury, and sent him to Baltimore on Tuesday to see hand specialist Dr. Tom Graham.

Graham examined the finger and gave Miller a cortisone injection in the finger and will be shutdown for five days before going on a two week throwing program to get back into game shape.

He was put on the Buffalo disabled list and will be out for about another three weeks.

Officially, the injury has been diagnosed as a strained flexor tendon to the top of the middle finger on his pitching hand.

Hodges Sidelined, Again

Kinston third baseman Wes Hodges is sidelined with a broken toe in his left foot, and is expected to be out for roughly two

weeks. Hodges injured himself when he fouled a pitch off the foot on Monday (May 21st). Since the fracture is at the top of his toe and not near the joint, no surgery is needed; however, the toe will be bothersome and sore the rest of the season while it heals, so Hodges will need to play

through some pain.

Hodges rested for about a week, and is now easing his way back onto the field. On Tuesday, he hit off a tee and ran in the outfield for the first time since the injury, and today (Thursday) is scheduled to take batting practice.
Hodges is expected to be back in the lineup sometime early next week, with Tuesday the target date.
The real question is, when do injuries start to become a concern with Hodges?
Last year at Georgia Tech he suffered a stress fracture to his leg, and earlier this year was sidelined with a hamstring injury.
Hopefully this is not Michael Aubrey redux.

Speaking Of Aubrey...

Kinston first baseman Michael Aubrey is happy to be back in action and playing, even if it means he is at advanced Single-A Kinston. Although, the stay in Kinston should be a short one if he can stay healthy. In the last two seasons, Aubrey has

only played in 42 games and just has been a trainwreck physically. A lower back injury limited Aubrey to 28 games in 2005, and in 2006 he only played in 14 games before a strained right knee sidelined him again. A
lso, in the last week of spring training this year, he blew out his hamstring and had to stick around in
Winter Haven
(his second home the last three years) for six weeks and rehab it in extended spring training.

Aubrey is the consummate professional, with a quiet demeanor and has what Kinston Free Press writer David Hall says is a "swing like a glass of iced tea on a hot afternoon."
According to Aubrey, the back and leg issues are behind him, and he wants to stay healthy and produce so he can move up to
Akron
and back into the Indians plans.
We'll see.
To date, in seven games at
Kinston
Aubrey is hitting .333 (9-27) with 2 HR and 7 RBI.

Francisco Deserving Of Callup

Buffalo outfielder Ben Francisco continues to hit, and has very little left to prove at Triple-A. Fra ncisco was the Buffalo MVP last year and led the team in several offensive categories, and once again is leading the team in several important

offensive categories. Francisco leads the team in hitting with a .349 average, which ranks 2nd in the International League behind the lague leader who is hitting .350. Francisco also has 4 HR, 27 RBI, 10 stolen bases, and a .907 OPS, and is in the midst of a 12-game hitting streak.
It is time to give him his shot with the big league club.

One has to wonder if Francisco is going to be used as trade bait as a part of a deal for the Indians to get a need at the major league level. Personally, I'd keep Francisco and make him the Indians 4th outfielder and instead trade away Jason Michaels for a mid-level prospect to a team looking for a veteran 4th outfielder. Sure, Francisco could possibly be more valuable in a trade and help the Indians fill an immediate need, but I like Francisco as the 4th outfielder right now and in the future, and he would be a good compliment to the left-handed hitting David Dellucci and Trot Nixon in the outfield.
One thing is certain, and that is if there are some moving parts in a trade before the deadline that one or more of Francisco, Michaels, and Franklin Gutierrez will likely be a part of a deal.

Hard Luck Tseng

Kinston right-hander Sung-Wei Tseng continues to pitch well, and he put together two quality outings this past week. Last Thursday, the 22-year-old from Taiwan got yet another no decision when he went six innings and allowed only one run on

three hits. Then, on Tuesday he went six innings again and allowed three runs on six hits and was tagged with the loss. On the year, in ten starts he is 0-5 with a 3.27 ERA and has allowed 49 hits, 18 walks and struckout 44 in 55 innings pitched.

While he is 0-5 on the year, Tseng has kept Kinston in every ballgame and has been hit with a bout of hard luck as he gets very little run support when he pitches.
In his ten starts, the
Kinston
offense has only scored 14 runs, which is a pathetic 1.4 runs a game he gets when he starts.
Tseng has been learning English for about a year, was signed as a non-drafted free agent last July after pitching for Chinese Taipei in the World Baseball Classic. Tseng throws five pitches, with his best pitch being a nasty split-fingered fastball that he has used sparingly so far this year.

Goleski Struggling

Akron outfielder Ryan Goleski has had a rough start to the season, and probably second to only fellow Akron outfield

teammate Trevor Crowe, Goleski has been one of the most disappointing players in the Indians system to date. While Goleski will say otherwise, scouts have said he appears to have a lack of passion and that it has carried over into his performance on the field and at the plate. The lack of passion could be a byproduct of the disappointment from not making the Oakland A's opening day roster as a Rule 5 Draft pick, and returning to the Indians and essentially being buried in a system deep with outfielders.

The Indians are not buying it, however, as they feel the reason for his poor performance to date is largely a result of the wrist injury he is still recovering from which he injured last offseason. W hile he is now reportedly 100% healthy, he fell into some bad habits with his swing mechanics when trying to compensate for the injury, and now the Indians are trying to work with him to get rid of those bad habits. Goleski is hitting .254 with 1 HR, 21 RBI and a .645 OPS.

Santos A Jack-Of-All-Trades

Akron left-hander Reid Santos has been extremely versatile for the Aeros pitching staff as to date the 6'1" 170 pounder has

been a part of just about every role on the pitching staff, from setup man, to closer, to long man, and now starter. With J.D. Martin sidelined due to injury, Santos made his first start of the season on Wednesday night and went 4.2 innings and allowed two runs on five hits.
Santos
' ability to handle multiple roles in the bullpen and adapt to constant change could put him on the fast track to
Cleveland
, and is yet more bullpen depth the Indians appear to be grooming in the minors.
Santos
is from
Wahiana
,
Hawaii
, and in 17 appearances he is 2-1 with 2 saves and a 1.84 ERA, and has allowed 19 hits and 7 walks while striking out 22 in 29.1 innings pitched.

Dominican Dandies

Lake County went into the season with one of the youngest groups of starting pitchers in the South Atlantic League. Two of those starters are out of Venezuela, 19-year old right-handers Jeanmar Gomez and Hector Rondon.
Gomez has had a

rough go of it for most of the season, but of late seems to be settling in. On Monday, Gomez was brilliant in leading the Captains to a 2-0 victory by throwing six innings of shutout ball and allowing three hits and two walks while striking out three.
On the year, in 10 starts he is 4-5 with a 6.24 ERA, and has allowed 59 hits and 18 walks while striking out 30 in 49 innings pitched.
Meanwhile, Rondon has arguably been
Lake
County
's best starting pitcher this season.
In his last two starts, he has thrown a combined ten shutout innings, and on the year is now 4-1 with a 4.03 ERA, and has allowed 48 hits and 11 walks while striking out 42 in 51.1 innings pitched.

Creating Some Buzz

Right-hander Bubbie Buzachero was acquired from Toronto for Brian Tallet in the offseason between the 2005 and 2006 seasons, and since coming on board with the Indians he has opened some eyes. Last year in the Akron bullpen,
Buzachero

Martin Out

Akron right-hander J.D. Martin has been sidelined with right elbow inflammation, and as of this writing there has been no decision made whether or not he will go on the disabled list. Martin is 2-3 on the year with a 4.25 ERA, and had to leave his last start on Friday early because of the injury. His fastball usually hovers around 90 MPH, but Indians officials had noticed it was down to the low 80s in his last few starts. Martin's elbow is reportedly structurally fine, and may just need to be shutdown for a short time to get back to 100%.

First Half Winds Down

Single-A first half action is winding down, as the first half will come to a close in less than three weeks (June 17th). The season is split into two halves, with the winners of each half getting an automatic berth into the league playoffs in September. After the Single-A All-Star games from June 18-20, second half action starts back up on June 21st with everyone at 0-0.
Here is a snapshot of the Indians two Single-A teams in Kinston and Lake County:

Kinston: Currently, the K-Tribe are 30-21 in 1st place in the Southern Division of the Carolina League. They hold a half game lead with 18 games to play.

Lake County: Currently, the Captains are 25-27 in 4th place in the Northern Division of the South Atlantic League. They are 11 games out of first with 18 games to play before the break.

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