It's "Minor Happenings" time here at TCF, and Tony takes some time this week to hit on Lake County outfielder Nick Weglarz, who is having a monster season and rapidly ascending the Indians top prospect lists. Tony also reflects on his trip to Kinston, talks about his most recent conversation with Farm Director Ross Atkins, Ben Francisco, Andy Marte, and the Indians Arizona Farm League roster. Enjoy.

"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, from private sources connected to the Indians organization, as well as from club officials from the team itself.

Just a quick note to mention that my trip last weekend to Kinston, North Carolina to see the Indians advanced Single-A affiliate Kinston in action was fantastic. A special thanks to Assistant General Manager Jessie Hays and Director of Broadcasting Chris Hemeyer for a warm welcome and for an un-Godly amount of help during my stay.

With their help, I had the chance to speak to a lot of players, coaches, scouts, and others, and will have several articles up on the site recapping these interviews soon.

My article with Minor League Pitching Coordinator Dave Miller posted on Tuesday, and the first wave of player feature articles should hit the site over the weekend.

Be on the lookout for player articles on Matt Whitney, Chris Giminez, Jared Goedert, Josh Rodriguez, Wes Hodges, John Drennen, and Frank Herrmann over the course of the next ten days.

Below, I have included small writeups in this week's
Minor Happenings
on right-handers Steven Wright and Josh Tomlin, both of whom I had a chance to speak to briefly during my visit.

Also, early next week I will recap my visit to Kinston with a ton of video and pictures.

I had planned for the Kinston recap to kickoff the onslaught of articles, but there was so much video to upload that I just could not get the recap out as originally planned this week.

TheClevelandFan.com Minor League Player Of The Week

(for games from August 23 to August 29)

Brandon Pinckney (Shortstop - Akron)
.486 AVG (17-35), 6 R, 3 2B, 1 HR, 10 RBI

Pinckney had a great last week, hitting .486 (17-for-35) in eight games. After what was thought to be a breakout season in 2004 when he hit .333 with 5 HR and 55 RBI in 108 combined games at Lake County and Akron, Pinckney has bounced around between Kinston and Akron and not played well the last few years.

Right now, Pinckney is more a utility player and organizational player at this point.

With shortstop Asdrubal Cabrera getting the call to Buffalo and eventually Cleveland, the shortstop position was vacated and Pinckney has filled in well hitting .354 (35-99) with 1 HR, 17 RBI and an .826 OPS in August.

With his inspired play of late, he is definitely making the most of an opportunity, and could very well be the starting shortstop in Buffalo next year.

Honorable Mentions:

Heath Taylor (LHP - Mahoning Valley): 1-0, 0.75 ERA, 12 IP, 7 H, 1 ER, 0 BB, 13 K
Andy Marte (3B - Buffalo): .455 AVG (10-22), 6 R, 3 2B, 2 HR, 8 RBI, 2 BB
Chris Nash (1B - Mahoning Valley): .417 AVG (10-24), 2 R, 3 2B, 0 HR, 7 RBI, 4 BB
Jim Deters (RHP - Kinston): 1-0, 0.00 ERA, 7 IP, 2 H, 0 ER, 0 BB, 3 K
Cirilo Cumberbatch (OF - Lake County): .400 AVG (12-30), 3 R, 3 2B, 0 HR, 6 RBI, 1 BB

Previous Winners:

8/16 to 8/22: Ryan Goleski (OF - Akron)

8/9 to 8/15: Nick Weglarz (OF - Lake County)
8/2 to 8/8: Josh Rodriguez (SS - Kinston)
7/20 to 8/1: Jeremy Sowers (LHP - Buffalo)
7/12 to 7/19: Todd Martin (1B - Mahoning Valley)
7/5 to 7/11: Todd Martin (1B - Mahoning Valley)
6/28 to 7/4: Rodney Choy Foo (IF - Akron)
6/21 to 6/27: Reid Santos (LHP - Akron)
6/15 to 6/20: John Van Every (Outfielder - Buffalo)
6/8 to 6/14: Chris Gimenez (Utility - Kinston)
6/1 to 6/7: Aaron Laffey (LHP - Buffalo)
5/24 to 5/31: Josh Rodriguez (SS - Kinston)
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 was in Akron this week to take in action at Canal Park. I had a chance to talk with Atkins for over ten minutes on the phone on Tuesday, although I am unable to directly quote most of what he said here this week since my digital recorder was accidentally turned off for most of the interview.

Here are two comments from him I did get, one on Scott Lewis and a glowing report on Kelvin De La Cruz, as well as a recap of his radio interview this week:

On Scott Lewis: "He is looking great. He has had probably one of the most consistent years of anybody on that staff [in Akron]. He's been steadily coming off a pitch count which we have had on him the last year and a half, which is difficult for a starter because you start to get into a rhythm and you start to feel good and we are taking you out of the game.

He's handled that well, and ever since he has come off the [strict] pitch count he has pitched a

little better."

On Kelvin De La Cruz: "He's 6'4", 19 years old, he throws 93 MPH, left-handed, weighs 220 pounds, and is a student of the game. He's got a promising future because he is young, strong and powerful, which is a good combination.

He pitches with his fastball and has a feel for three pitches, but he still has a long way to go."

On roster setup at this point in the season: "First of all there all very good scenarios right now when we are talking about our minor league teams playing meaningful games at the end of the season. Whether they are in the playoffs or not, certainly we want to be or like to be, but not at the sacrifice or development of one of our players and certainly never at the sacrifice of the success of the major league team.

So my focus right now is on how does the minor league system help the major league team.

That's what I focus on everyday, that's how we setup the rosters, that's how we setup the playoff rotations.

We are focused on whether we are making sure we are supporting the major league team, and that is the first and foremost priority.

Secondarily, we place our prospects in positions to be in meaningful games and meaningful situations where they are further developing as highly competitive professional athletes.

So really focusing on those two things is my priority."

On players participating in meaningful games: *"*In my opinion it is very much a difference-maker if you are able to play in more meaningful games in other organizations because of that intensity level being higher.

It is a great time to evaluate, and a great time to find out about a guy.

The human mind and spirit of competition is we all want to be in a winning environment.

But, really it is more focused on development and it is the best environment for development.

It's definitely a great scenario to be in.

The only compromise is that you may compromise one of the teams.

But, that being said, once again if they are all in meaningful games that's our goal.

Whether or not we put a winner on the field and they win a championship that would be secondary."

Indians Strike Gold With Weglarz

Lake County outfielder Nick Weglarz has had a breakout season, which should find him firmly planted on just about every Indians top ten prospect list this offseason. Weglarz has not necessarily come out of nowhere, as he was a third round pick in the 2005 Draft, but after a broken hamate bone in his hand prematurely ended his 2006 season before it really started,

he fell to the wayside and was sort of forgotten about coming into this season. He has responded to hit .274 with 22 HR, 80 RBI and an .885 OPS in his first full season.

Weglarz keeps a simple approach at the plate: let the ball come to him and hit it hard. While this may seem easy to do, for a lot of hitters one of the hardest things to do is have that innate ability to be patient to wait for your pitch, and hit is hard.

And he has done that, as he has walked 82 times and has 27 doubles and 22 home runs in 431 at bats.

Those may not seem like fantastic numbers, but consider he is only 19 years old and already a hulk at 6'3" 220 pounds, and you can see the potential for big power production.

The strikeouts are concerning (129) and he does not hit for a very high average (.274), but he is a slugger and while he may never be a .300 hitter he has enough plate discipline to where he could still get on base at a .360-.380 clip and become a 30-40 home run a year guy.

Weglarz is in the spotlight right now at Lake County. Gone are infielder Jared Goedert and first baseman Matt Whitney, two players who had monster seasons at Lake County this year which somewhat overshadowed Weglarz's play.

Also, first round pick Beau Mills was moved up to Kinston last week.

Weglarz was drafted as a first baseman, but was moved to the outfield right from the day he signed with the Indians. He'll never win a Gold Glove out in left field, but he has become at least an average fielder and shows an adequate arm. In a story in the News Herald last week, Player Development Advisor Johnny Goryl "nodded affirmatively" when comparisons to Jim Thome at similar stages of their development were recently made.

In that article, Goryl stated, "Nick is a little more athletic than Jimmy was at the same age.

For his age and experience, Nick is a pretty developed hitter with above-average hand-eye

coordination.

He's got the potential of hitting like Jimmy does, for power, average and RBI."

Yes, power indeed. When talking to several Kinston players over the weekend who played at Lake County at some point in time this season, they raved about Weglarz's power.

Several talked about a home run he hit in batting practice which hit the top of the scoreboard, which is roughly 420 feet from homeplate and three to four stories high in right-center field.

To hit the top of the scoreboard, and as the players said "it was still going up", is an example of the Thome-like power this kid has.

Bullpen Could Be Wright Move

Kinston right-hander Steve Wright has certainly had his ups and downs this year. Unfortunately , this season the downs have been more prevalent in his first professional baseball season.

On the year, Wright is 6-9 with a 5.84 ERA in 26 combined starts at Lake County and Kinston.

Still, even with the struggles this season Wright has kept a positive attitude and is trying to learn something new each time out.

"It's been rough," said Wright. "It's a learning experience getting your first professional season under your belt. I'm just trying to stay healthy and go out there everyday and compete.

I'm working to keep [the ball] down.

I've been pretty flat with the fastball and leaving it up too much.

Instead of executing with every pitch, I will throw two or three good strikes in a row and then the strike I need gets crushed.

I just say once midnight comes it is a new day.

You learn what you did wrong and what you did right and you try to take every positive you can out of it.

I feel fine and I have been feeling good and every outing I have gone out there, I just have to execute on the pitch."

Wright's struggles have centered mostly on a lack of good fastball command, which can spell doom for any pitcher. To make matters worse, his secondary pitches have been flat and not been effective.

"My slider has been pretty flat lately, and I have been messing with it," said Wright. "Right now I am more worried about my fastball control and keeping it down and working it on the inside and outside half [of the plate] and everything else will come with that.

You have to pitch off your fastball, especially in this league.

If you can't control your fastball hitters will recognize that and sit offspeed."

Wright throws a fastball that consistently clocks in at 89-91 MPH, although he has gotten it up to 92-93 MPH on occasion. Going into the draft, scouts loved his slider and considered it a plus pitch, even though it has not been there for him this season. There are some who believe his future could be in the bullpen where - like a Jensen Lewis - his fastball velocity could play up.

He also has 112 strikeouts in 109.1 innings pitched, which is a very nice strikeout rate of 9.2 strikeouts every nine innings.

While there are no plans at the moment for a move to the bullpen, this is something you could very well see going into next season.

Wright has experience in the role, and he would welcome the change.

"I like relieving and starting," said Wright. "The good thing about starting is you know when you are going to pitch and you can get into a set routine.

Relieving is a little more on

adrenaline because you get thrown in to the middle of the game and you stop the bleeding or continue to put zeroes on the board.

I actually pitched out of the bullpen all through college except for my junior year, and in the summer between my sophomore and junior year I was actually a closer in the Cape Cod League."

Tomlin Jumps On The Prospect Radar

Kinston right-hander Josh Tomlin has had a very good season, and has established himself as one of the Indians better pitching prospects in the system. Tomlin grew up in East Texas and went to Angelina Junior College before transferring to Texas Tech, and was drafted by the Indians in the 19th round of the 2006 Draft.

To date, he is 10-4 with a 3.57 ERA in 30 combined appearances (19 starts) at Lake County and Kinston, and has amassed 101 strikeouts in 123.2 innings pitched.

A sprained ulnar collateral ligament in his pitching elbow in 2006 sidelined him for six weeks and ultimately hurt his status for the draft. While he was disappointed going into the draft and sliding to the 19th round, he signed with the Indians quickly and pitched in Mahoning Valley last year and went 8-2 with a 2.09 ERA. Tomlin started this season in Lake County where he initially pitched out of the bullpen, but was moved into the starting rotation around mid-season.

Since the move to the starting rotation, he has been on a roll.

"It was a pretty good stretch there [starting in Lake County]," said Tomlin this past weekend. "I was fortunate to stay healthy and go out there and log innings and everything worked out. It was alright."

Tomlin has a three pitch mix where he throws a fastball that consistently clocks in at 85-89 MPH, sometimes touching 90 MPH, and he also throws a slider and changeup. Right now, Tomlin is still working on some improvements with his delivery and harnessing the control of his fastball. "Right now it is just getting out in front of the ball, finishing pitches and staying balanced," said Tomlin.

"Using my legs more so I can actually pitch my pitches working out front.

That

is what I worked on the other day and will work on this week."

With the Carolina League playoffs about ready to start next week, Tomlin knows he will likely move back into the bullpen. "With the starters we have here and the playoffs coming up, I imagine I will be in the bullpen," said Tomlin. "The starters have done a great job so far, so why not stick with those guys for the playoffs."

Francisco Honored

Buffalo outfielder Ben Francisco was selected by the International League as a post season All-Star. Francisco has had a breakthrough season this year, where he went to Cleveland and caught the attention of many fans when he hit a walkoff homer in his first major league start, and also in 19 games hit .273 with 3 HR, 7 RBI and had an .858 OPS.

At Buffalo, Francisco is hitting .320 with 12 HR, 49 RBI, 22 stolen bases and an .884 OPS, and he leads the International League in hitting by nine points. If Francisco finishes the season with the International League batting title, he would be the first Buffalo player to do so since Mark Ryal hit .334 in 1990. Francisco also leads the team in stolen bases (22), on-base percentage (.388) and slugging percentage (.508). In addition, he is second on the team in hits (118), doubles (27), extra base hits (40) and runs scored (59), and fifth in RBI (49).

Francisco has been consistent all season, putting up a 19-game hit streak from May 9th to June 7th (.423, 33-78) and a 15-game hit streak from August 2nd to the 16th (.381, 24-63). This is Francisco's third season at Buffalo, although his first season in 2005 was minimal as he only played in four games late in the year and then in the playoffs.

Last year, he was the Buffalo Co-MVP with Jason Dubois and hit .278 with 17 HR, 59 RBI and 25 stolen bases in 134 games.

Espino Rolls Along

Lake County 20-year old right-hander Paolo Espino continues to roll, as in his last start he went

six innings and allowed only two runs on three hits and no walks while strikeouting out nine. Th e 5'10" 190-pounder was a 10th round pick in the 2006 Draft.

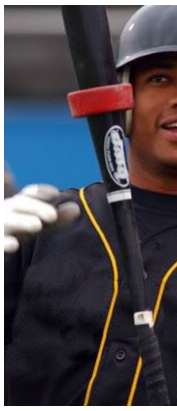
Espino is pitching better than his win-loss record and ERA indicate, as he has pitched every fifth day and pitched strong just about every time out going six or seven innings. Espino throws a fastball that touches 90 MPH and he compliments it with a good breaking ball.

He started the year in the backend of the Lake County bullpen, but has progressed all season and was eventually moved into the starting rotation.

As a starter, Espino is 2-3 with a 3.88 ERA in 12 starts, and on the year overall he is 4-4 with a 3.78 ERA and in 102.1 innings pitched has allowed 90 hits, 28 walks and has 112 strikeouts.

Hey, Remember Me?

Buffalo third baseman Andy Marte won the International League Player of the Week award this week for the period from August 20-26. This is the second time Mart has won the award this season, as he also took home the hardware for his



outstanding play from June 4-10. Last week, Marte hit .409 (9-22) with two doubles, three home runs, 10 RBI and a .909 slugging percentage in seven games.

Two other Buffalo players have won Player of the Week honors this year, with right-hander Sean Smith taking home Pitcher of the Week honors for his play from May 14-20, and outfielder Jason Cooper for his play from July 30th to August 5th.

On the season, Marte is hitting .266 with 16 HR, 59 RBI and a .769 OPS in 91 games, and his 16 home runs are tied for the team lead with first baseman Ryan Mulhern. After seemingly sleepwalking through most of the season at Buffalo, Marte has turned it on in August as he is hitting .308 with 5 HR, 17 RBI and an .868 OPS for the month.

The Indians face a roster dilemma with Marte this offseason, as he will be out of options next year and has to make the team out of spring training.

If he fails to make the Indians roster out of spring training, he would have to clear waivers to be sent to the minors (which will not happen).

Arizona Fall League Rosters Announced

With the minor league season winding down, the Indians are getting players prepared to play in several fall and winter leagues. This week, the players in the Indians farm system who will play in the Arizona Fall League (AFL) were announced.

The Arizona Fall League is the most widely known fall/winter league, where typically the prospects sent to the AFL are on the cusp of playing in the major leagues and teams look to get them extra playing time to fine tune their games, audition them for trades, and also make roster decisions on them since many are Rule 5 Draft eligible. Here are the Indians minor leaguers who will participate in the AFL, which runs from October 9th thru November 17th:

Team: Surprise Rafters
Coach: Jon Nunnally (Kinston Indians Hitting Coach)

T.J. Burton (RHP, Kinston)
Michael Finocchi (RHP, Akron)
David Huff (LHP, Kinston)
Randy Newsom (RHP, Akron)
Rich Rundles (LHP, Akron)
Jeff Stevens (RHP, Akron)
Chris Gimenez (C, Kinston)
Michael Aubrey (1B, Akron)
Trevor Crowe (OF, Akron)

In the coming weeks, announcements will be made on what players will play in other fall/winter leagues. For example, an official announcement should come forth that right-hander Erik Stiller and another player or two will be in the Hawaiin Winter League.

Year-End Team Awards

Over this past weekend, advanced Single-A Kinston wrapped up their home schedule by handing out several year-end awards to several players on the roster. The Steve Olin Pitcher of the Year Award went to right-hander Jim Deters.

Deters

K-Tribe Playoff Schedule

The Kinston Indians are already in the Carolina League playoffs and pretty much know their first round opponent will be Salem. Right now, it is just a matter of deciding whether they will host all three first round playoff games, or have to go to Salem for the first game.

Kinston won the first half title, and if they win the second half division title they would be entitled to an all-home three-game playoff series.

Kinston is currently in first, and up on Salem by two games with five games to go.

Southern Division Series

Game 1 - Wednesday, September 5th - at Salem or at Kinston
Game 2 - Thursday, September 6th - Salem at Kinston - 7pm
Game 3 (If Necessary) - Friday, September 7th - Salem at Kinston - 7pm

Mills Cup Championship Series

Game 1 - Saturday, September 8th - Southern Division Champion at Northern Division Champion
Game 2 - Sunday, September 9th - Southern Division Champion at Northern Division Champion
Game 3 - Monday, September 10th - Northern Division Champion at Southern Division Champion
Game 4 (If Necessary) - Tuesday, September 11th - Northern Division Champion at Southern Division Champion
Game 5 (If Necessary - Wednesday, September 12th Northern Division Champion at Southern

Division Champion

Playoff Outlook For The Rest

With the DSL and GCL Indians finished, and Kinston already in the playoffs, only four minor league affiliates still have their postseason situation in doubt. Here is a quick rundown of the playoff chances for each of the other affiliates battling for a playoff spot:

Buffalo (AAA): Six games out of first in the International League North Division, and 1.5 games out of the wildcard race. It is a three team race for the wildcard between Buffalo, Rochester and Richmond where only 1.5 separate the three teams. Buffalo only has five games remaining, including their final four against Rochester, so it should make for a crazy finish in the wildcard race this weekend.

Akron (AA): Four games out of first in the Eastern League Southern Division, but up four games for the wildcard. Akron has six games remaining, and their playoff chances look very good.

Lake County (A-): 5.5 games out of first in the South Atlantic League Northern Division. With only five games left, they have been eliminated from playoff contention.

Mahoning Valley (SA): Six game out of first in the Ny-Penn League Pinckney Division, and six games out of the wildcard lead. With only nine games left and six games out of any playoff spot, their chances are extremely slim of making the playoffs.

GCL And DSL Wrapup

The Dominican Summer League (DSL) team and the rookie-level Gulf Coast League (GCL) Indians wrapped up their play this past week. Neither qualified for the playoffs, and except for a select few, the players are done for the year until Instructional League starts in the fall.

Here are some notable final stats for some players in each league:

GCL Indians (28-31):
Chris Nash (1B): .313 AVG, 16 2B, 3 HR, 21 RBI, .836 OPS, 47 games
Angel Rodriguez (OF): .288 AVG, 5 2B, 2 3B, 0 HR, .684 OPS, 41 games
Karexon Sanchez (3B): .273 AVG, 7 2B, 3 HR, 21 RBI, .702 OPS, 48 games
Robbie Alcombrack (C): .244 AVG, 10 2B, 7 HR, 23 RBI, .833 OPS, 38 games
Chris Archer (RHP): 1-7, 5.64 ERA, 52.2 IP, 56 H, 33 ER, 21 BB, 48 K, 12 games

Santo Frias (RHP): 2-3, 1.88 ERA, 48.0 IP, 36 H, 10 ER, 8 BB, 47 K, 9 games
Ryan Miller (LHP): 4-2, 2.40 ERA, 45 IP, 26 H, 12 ER, 12 BB, 44 K, 9 games
Travis Turek (RHP): 2-1, 1.59 ERA, 28.1 IP, 19 H, 5 ER, 6 BB, 18 K, 14 games

DSL Indians (27-42):
Abner Abreu (SS): .303 AVG, 13 2B, 7 3B, 4 HR, 41 RBI, .827 OPS, 56 games
Juan Aponte (C): .291 AVG, 18 2B, 6 HR, 39 RBI, .830 OPS, 65 games
Kelvin Diaz (3B): .315 AVG, 19 2B, 2 3B, 8 HR, 41 RBI, 8 stolen bases, .938 OPS, 68 games
Lurvin Basabe (2B): .284 AVG, 4 2B, 3 3B, 1 HR, 24 RBI, 19 stolen bases, .758 OPS, 60 games
Sandy Mendez (RHP): 5-1, 2.96 ERA, 51.2 IP, 43 H, 17 ER, 3 BB, 39 K, 16 games
Juan Moreno Diaz (RHP): 7-4, 1.48 ERA, 48.2 IP, 46 H, 8 ER, 16 BB, 37 K, 16 games
Alexander Perez (RHP): 1-2, 2.90 ERA, 49.2 IP, 41 H, 16 ER, 13 BB, 64 K, 13 games
Danny Salazar (RHP): 5-3, 1.96 ERA, 64.1 IP, 52 H, 14 ER, 12 BB, 49 K, 14 games
Luis Solano (RHP): 3-1, 2.28 ERA, 51.1 IP, 40 H, 13 ER, 16 BB, 52K, 26 games

Affiliate Notebook

Buffalo Notes (73-64, 3rd place, 6 GB, 1.5 GB Wildcard): Prior to Wednesday night, in his last 20 games of work, right-handed reliever Mike Koplove had posted a 0.86 ERA with 19 strikeouts in 21 innings of work, and had thrown 11 consecutive scoreless outings.

Unfortunately, that string came to an end on Wednesday night when he blew a three-run lead in the ninth and blew a crucial game for Buffalo. ... Left-hander Jason Stanford picked up a couple more strikeouts this week, and now has 286 in his Buffalo career.

He is now in second place all by himself in strikeouts, and is four shy of the franchise's modern-era record held by Rick Reed. ... Utility player Joe Inglett is finishing the season strong after injuries hampered him the first half of the season.

In August, Inglett is hitting XX and has xx RBI.

On the year, he is hitting XX. ... Inglett had been out of the lineup a few days this week because of a jammed hand which he injured while sliding into third base on Sunday.

He was back in the lineup on Wednesday night. ... Right-hander Sean Smith was placed on the disabled list with shoulder inflammation (shoulder fatigue).

Smith is done for the regular season, but if Buffalo makes the playoffs he could be activated. ... Left-hander Cliff Lee keeps progressing slowly in Buffalo, and this past week threw six innings giving up only one run on five hits and xx walks while striking out eight.

Lee is expected to be called up soon and pitch out of the bullpen the rest of the year for the Indians.

Akron Notes (75-60, 2nd place, 4 GB, Lead Wildcard by 4 games): Akron first baseman Jordan Brown was named Eastern League Rookie of the Year on Wednesday.

Winning the award puts Brown in some very good company, as since the award came into existence in 1996, Eastern League Rookie of the Year honorees have included Vladimir Guerrero (1996), Mark Kotsay (1997), Pat Burrell (1999), Alex Escobar (2001), Marlon Byrd (2002), Grady Sizemore (2003), and Ryan Howard (2004). ... First baseman Jordan Brown and former shortstop Asdrubal Cabrera were named to the post-season Eastern League All-Star team this past week.

Brown is having an MVP season hitting .330 with 10 HR, 73 RBI, and an .892 OPS, and his .330 batting average leads the league.

In 96 games with Akron, Cabrera hit .310 with 8 HR, 54 RBI, 23 stolen bases and had an .837 OPS. ... On Monday, Akron was down 14-7 late in the game and in an attempt to save the bullpen manager Tim Bogar called upon outfielder Nathan Panther to pitch the last two innings in relief.

This was the first time a position player had pitched in a game at Akron this year, and in his two innings of relief Panther held the opposition scoreless on a hit and a walk while striking out one.

This is Panther's second relief stint this year, as he pitched in the same type of situation in a game for Kinston earlier in the year. ... First baseman Jordan Brown's 11-game hitting streak (.405, 15-37) and 32-game on-base (.347, 6 2B, 3HR, 15RBI, 19BB, .438 OBP) streak both ended Monday. ... Outfielder Trevor Crowe has 26 stolen bases, which is third in the Eastern League.

Also, Crowe was hitting .195 on June 26th with a .293 OBP, but since June 27th he is batting .327 (67-207) with a .396 OBP. ... Over his last six starts, left-handed starter Scott Lewis is 4-1 with a 2.80 ERA (35.1IP, 31H, 11ER, 6BB, 33K).

Kinston Notes (36-28, 1st place, 82-52 overall): If Kinston wins the second half division title, it would be the first time they have won both the first and second half titles in the Carolina League since 2001. ... Right-hander Jim Deters finally has amassed enough innings pitched to qualify as a league leader in several categories. On the year, Deters is 11-4 with a 2.11 ERA, and his 2.11 ERA ranks first in the Carolina League.

To qualify for the pitching leaderboard, you need to pitch 0.8 innings for every team game. ... In Lake County, right-hander's Josh Tomlin lived in a five person suite in an apartment complex at the end of Vine Street in Eastlake, Ohio.

They lived with David Uribes, Nick Weglarz and one other player (the name escapes me).

Now in Kinston, Wright is rooming with Josh Rodriguez and Tomlin is living with Jared Goedert, Jim Deters and Mike Butia. ... Right-hander Kevin Dixon was reinstated from the disabled list (strained oblique) on Sunday, and pitched in the game throwing a scoreless inning of relief.

On the year, Dixon is 10-4 with a 3.68 ERA.

To make room for Dixon, right-hander Kyle Collins was placed on the disabled list with a right forearm strain. ... First baseman Matt Whitney is hitting .301 with 31 HR, 109 RBI and a .920 OPS in 124 combined games at Lake County and Kinston.

Lake County Notes (32-31, 3rd place, 5.5 GB, 63-70 overall): It has been a long season for 19-year old Latin American right-hander Jeanmar Gomez, but he has grown by leaps and bounds this year. In his last two starts, he has thrown 11 innings and only given up three runs, and on the season he is now 11-7 with a 5.07 ERA.

His post All-Star record is 6-1 with a 3.69 ERA. ... The Latin American triumvirate of Gomez, Hector Rondon, and Paolo Espino are three of the most promising young arms in the system, a system that appears loaded with good, young Latin American pitchers (Santo Frias, Kelvin De La Cruz, etc). ... Catcher Robbie Alcombrack was promoted to Lake County on Monday.

To make room for him, catcher Argenis Tavarez was moved up to Kinston. ... Right-hander Santo Frias was placed on the disabled list with a right elbow strain, and right-hander Scott Sumner was activated. ... Right-hander Carlton Smith is 11-6 with a 4.25 ERA on the season. ... Catcher Matt McBride is hitting .283 with 8 HR, 66 RBI and a .780 OPS on the season. ... Outfielder Nick Weglarz is hitting .274 with 22 HR, 80 RBI and an .885 OPS on the season.

Mahoning Valley Notes (34-31, 2nd place, 6 GB, 6 GB Wildcard): Since moving to the bullpen, left-hander William Delage has thrown 9.1 shutout innings and struckout 11 batters in four appearances. As a starter, he was 0-4 with a 6.65 ERA. ... Recently called up from the GCL, first baseman Chris Nash and third baseman Karexon Sanchez are tearing it up in Mahoning Valley.

Nash is hitting .379 (11-29) with seven RBI, and Sanchez is hitting .556 (5-9) with three RBI. ... First baseman Todd Martin is expected to miss the rest of the season with a sprained knee.

The injury puts the capper on a somewhat disappointing August for Martin where he hit .306 but only had two extra base hits, compared to July when he hit .385 with 11 extra base hits.

He finishes the year hitting .360 with 8 HR, 40 RBI and a .956 OPS in 54 games. ... Outfielder Juan Valdes' career is in jeopardy after he violated Minor League Baseball's drug policy.

He was suspended for 50 games after testing positive for a performance-enhancing substance, and his season is over. ... Mahoning Valley had gone 26 straight games without hitting a home rune before outfielder Justin Jerkins hit a home run last Thursday night. ... Infielder Karexon Sanchez was called up from the Gulf Coast League to Mahoning Valley. ... As a team, Mahoning Valley is hitting .282 with runners in scoring position, which is best in the NY-Penn League.