The Indians completed a trade with the Oakland A's yesterday, sending right-handed pitcher Kaz Tadano to the A's for highly regarded hitting prospect Ramon Alvarado. Tadano was recently designated for assignment (DFA) along with Brandon Phillips to create room on the 40-man roster to add non-roster players Todd Hollandsworth and Danny Graves.

Tadano was in his last option year, and with the depth of relief pitching in the organization, it was likely the Indians probably would have lost him in the offseason as they cleared roster space on the 40-man to protect players for the Rule 5 draft. If he would have been kept on the roster, he would have needed to make the team out of Spring Training next year or be placed on waivers since he would be out of options.

After signing with the Indians as a free agent out of Japan in March 2003, Tadano blazed through the minors in 2003 by going 6-2 with a 1.55 ERA in combined stops at Kinston, Akron, and Buffalo. Since 2003, however, Tadano has struggled bouncing around between Buffalo and Cleveland. His last two seasons at Buffalo, he was a combined 7-9 with a 4.72 ERA.

In acquiring Alvarado from the A's, the Indians surprisingly picked up a very good prospect. Last year in the Arizona Rookie League, he hit .296/.412/.497 with 6 HRs and racked up 32 RBIs and 9 steals in only 48 games. Alvarado is only 20 years old, and is long and lean (6'1" 160 lbs). He may start the season in extended Spring Training, but should spend a majority of the year with Lake County.

Alvarado recently was ranked as the A's 29th best prospect by Baseball America, and according to Baseball America the A's were excited and very high on

Alvarado and considered him one of the top outfielders and hitters in their system. While he still needs to grow into his body, Alvarado is considered a big power hitter, with juice in his bat and good pitch recognition at such an early stage in his development. He projects as a 20 home run, 20 stolen base player, and according to one report “could be an above-average left or right-fielder in the Jermaine Dye-mold.”

On the Brandon Phillips front, no word on any deal at this time. But, published reports have mentioned the Indians are close to announcing a deal in the next few days. The Indians DFAed Phillips on Saturday, and have 10 days to trade or release him.