Outfielder Bo Greenwell is a minor league player in the lower levels of the Indians system who was taken in the 6th round of the 2007 Draft out of high school in Fort Myers, Florida. The 19-year old Greenwell just finished up his second year and first full season in the Indians organization, and is the the son of former Red Sox outfielder Mike Greenwell. Tony recently had the chance to talk with Greenwell about his transition to professional baseball as well as what it is like to have a former successful major league player as his father.

Bo may know baseball, but his dad knew a little himself.

Outfielder Bo Greenwell is a minor league player in the lower levels of the Indians system with the rookie level Gulf Coast League (GCL) Indians. Taken in the 6th round of the 2007 Draft out of Riverdale High School in Fort Myers, Florida, the 19-year old Greenwell just finished up his second year and first full season in the Indians organization.

Greenwell is the son of former Red Sox outfielder Mike Greenwell, the owner of a steady 12-year career where he owns a lifetime .303 batting average, appeared in two All-Star games, and was the runner-up for the American League MVP in 1988 when he hit .325 with 19 homers and had 122 RBI. Naturally, as the son of a former successful major league baseball player, the younger Greenwell had the advantage of an in-home hitting instructor from the day he was born.

"Absolutely," said the younger Greenwell in a recent interview in Winter Haven, Florida. "I mean, during his time he was one of the best so obviously he has a lot of knowledge about the game. He instilled a lot of his philosophies in me when I was young. Now he is able to step back and let me kind of mold that into the player I am. I am a little bit

faster than he was, and at my age right now I am a little bit stronger and more developed than he was."

Coming out of high school and only 18-years old, the Greenwell's often made the short trip from their home in Fort Myers to Winter Haven last year to see their son play and check up on him. It was their way of helping their son ease his way into the life as a professional baseball player, and also allowed the elder Greenwell a chance to help and encourage his son as he made his way through his first professional season.

"In my first season, yeah [my dad visited often]," said the younger Greenwell. "He came up once a week to kind of check up on me and see how things were going.

He knows how it is, and knew it would be a struggle for me going through a lot coming out of high school.

I didn't see anything over 88 MPH and coming out here you see 90 MPH everyday.

You play everyday too, and I was not used to that.

I was definitely getting my feet wet last year.

As for this year, he has kind of taken a step back and only come a couple days out of the season and just has kind of let me blossom on my own."

Retired from baseball, his father is now a volunteer baseball coach at Riverdale High School and since coming aboard has given their baseball program a shot in the arm. While the elder Greenwell coached Bo through his high school years, he is now coaching his 16-year old son Garrett who looks like he may be a future football or baseball star.

At 6'0 and 235 pounds, Garrett plays fullback and middle linebacker in football and is the cleanup hitter and first baseman for the baseball team.

"My dad has a lot to offer for both football and baseball," said Greenwell. "Mentally he is a good motivator and the kids respect him.

He has definitely turned that high school around as it was a losing program when we first got there.

Now that I have come through the system and my brother has come through - we also have a couple cousins there now - it has definitely turned the program around.

And my dad has been a big factor in it."

While his father was playing, Greenwell obviously grew up a Boston Red Sox fan. His father retired suddenly after the 1996 season citing burn out from the game as his reason for leaving, and ended up totally cutting himself off from the game when he left.

As a result, the younger Greenwell did not follow baseball much when his dad retired and instead began to focus more on football and turned out to be a pretty good player.

"Going into my senior year, I tore my ACL in my knee that summer," said Greenwell.

"So that kind of hindered me a little bit my senior year.

I made second team all state my junior year and if I would have been healthy my senior year I probably would have been first team all state.

I had a couple of Division-1 scholarships but obviously I was not tall enough to be a quarterback and they wanted to move me to a slot receiver or safety."

But, no matter how much he focused on football, his first love was always baseball. He had a talent to play baseball where things came naturally to him whereas in football it took a lot of hard work to become the successful player he was.

"I don't know what it is about it, but I was always good at baseball," said Greenwell. "Obviously I got a lot of my abilities from my dad.

I honestly did not work on baseball as much as I did on football.

During the summer I did not do the AAU stuff or the wooden bat leagues, I went to football camps.

I loved the whole leadership thing and team work factors in football.

But when I stepped on a baseball field it was baseball and I was always good at it so I did not have to work on it as hard."

Even with his natural talent as a baseball player, one has to wonder had Greenwell not suffered the serious knee injury going into his senior season if he would be playing football in college somewhere at a major Division-1 program instead of toiling around in the minor leagues.

"Maybe I might have pursued it," replied Greenwell. "But I loved baseball and that is what I was good at. At best I wanted to be a dual sport athlete to play both football and baseball.

I was a pretty good punter, so I was thinking along the lines of being the punter or the backup for the football team and being an outfielder for the college baseball team as well.

It didn't work out, and I instead signed with [the University of] Miami to play outfield for them and it just kind of fell through when I got drafted."

Now finished with his second year in the Indians organization, Greenwell has already shown

much improvement from last season. After hitting just .215 with 0 HR, 8 RBI and a .548 OPS in 37 games with the GCL Indians last year, Greenwell showned marked

improvement at the plate this year hitting .263 with 2 HR, 14 RBI, and a .746 OPS. One of his biggest strengths is his ability to put the bat on the ball, where in 160 at bats he only had 17 strikeouts and 23 walks this year.

"I had a really good spring training to start off my season," said Greenwell. "T here are a couple older outfielders who went up to Mahoning Valley and Lake County, so I stayed down here.

I started off the season slow, but I picked it up [as the season went on].

Last year was the first time I was actually able to develop my baseball skills.

I was very raw coming out of high school, and I have learned a lot and took a lot out of the last offseason.

I put on 20 pounds and the coordinators here helped me out with my mechanics and it is falling into place.

Things are looking good right now."

Greenwell did not play much last season because he was adjusting to the everyday grind of a professional baseball player and developing a routine. He was also sidelined at times with a lingering shoulder issue that was the result of so much work in the outfield, a position he was foreign to since he played first base in high school and had never played outfield before.

So he spent a lot of the season stretching out the arm and loosening up his hip flexors which were a little tight.

After getting his feet wet last year, Greenwell came into camp stronger this year and better prepared to handle the daily rigors of professional baseball. He put on 20 pounds of muscle

which has helped his bat add a little thunder to it.

"Offensively, I went from a slap leadoff hitter to a number three to number five drive them in RBI gap to gap hitter," said Greenwell. "I am hitting the ball with power now, so putting on that extra bit of muscle has definitely helped me out.

I have learned how to use my body for leverage to put a little more juice on the ball.

Obviously on defense I am way better than last year.

I was having trouble catching fly balls, and now I am getting some good jumps and making good plays out there."

With his newfound power stroke, Greenwell is trying to learn how to pull balls from time to time, a skill that he often did not use in the past since he mostly used his speed and bat-to-ball ability to hit the ball the other way.

"I was taught young to hit the ball the other and to focus and keep your nose on it and drive the ball the other way," said Greenwell. "My dad believed if you could hit the ball the other way you could always learn how to turn on the ball.

Last year a majority of my hits were the other way.

That was something I worked on this offseason learning how to turn on the ball and get that bat head out there to get extended on the ball.

You can definitely see it this year."

Greenwell has certainly entered into the picture as an outfield prospect on the rise. While he is still several years away from reaching the big leagues and requires a lot of projection at this point, down the road he has the skill set to be a good hitter in the top third of the order.

He has his father beat in the speed, size and tools department. Now he just has to learn how to become the excellent hitter that his father was, which for all the tools a player may have is a skill that ultimately makes or breaks a player.

"Hopefully [I can hit like him], that would be nice!" exclaimed Greenwell. "If I am half the player my dad was that would be a tremendous accomplishment."

Photos courtesy of Ken Carr