The weekly minor league report has been broken up into two pieces. On Thursdays,

(for games from Thursday May 4 through Wednesday May 10)

Farrell Talks:

Indians Farm Director John Farrell provided some insight on several Tribe pitching prospects this week, namely Fausto Carmona, Jeremy Sowers, Hyang-Nam Choi, Eddie Mujica, and Rafael Perez.

On Carmona: According to Farrell, Carmona is not slated for a bullpen role…..yet. The idea right now is to keep him in the Buffalo starting rotation in order to let him continue to develop his secondary pitches; however, the Indians have taken note of some of the success other teams have had with putting some of their big starting pitching prospects in a bullpen role (i.e. McCarthy in Chicago and Liriano in Minnesota). Farrell actually stated that, going forward, moving Carmona to the pen in Cleveland is an option they may look at because of an obvious need in Cleveland for relief pitching, and also that he may be better off breaking into the big leagues in a bullpen role because as a reliever he would only go through a lineup one maybe two times, whereas if he is a starter he would rollover through the lineup at least three times.

On Sowers: Farrell says he is major league ready, but there currently are no plans

to get him up to the majors anytime soon. If the opportunity presents itself (injury), he could be added to the roster and called up, but in the meantime he will remain in Buffalo. According to Farrell, in Sowers seven starts this season, the one thing that has really stood out is how he keeps the ball out of the middle of the plate. He has a feel for pitching, meaning that 1.) his athleticism allows him to repeat his delivery well, 2.) he can slow the game down and read swings, and 3.) his intelligence on the mound is extraordinary.

On Choi: Farrell mentioned that Choi has been a pleasant find for the Indians, and that he has performed well in Buffalo (1-1, 3.54 ERA). Scout Jason Lee has done a tremendous job in Far East scouting, and the acquisition of Choi could provide more opportunities down the road. Choi is from Korea and 34 years old, and this is his first exposure to American baseball. Choi has a three pitch mix with a non-overpowering fastball that sits in the 87-89 MPH range, but has good control and locates his fastball well.

On Mujica: During Spring Training this year, the Indians added a split fingered fastball to his arsenal to help get left-handers out. To date, the results have been impressive (1-0, 8 saves, 0.00 ERA in 19 IP). He is fearless, and his attitude and competitiveness thrives late in games. He locates his fastball well, and Farrell said he is being considered for a promotion to Buffalo, and even hinted he could get a major league opportunity very soon.

On Perez: Even though he likely ends up as a reliever, the Indians will continue to start him in order to stretch him out and keep starting pitching options open for the organization. The organization loved what he showed in his brief showing in Baltimore earlier this year, and he could be in line for another callup if the need arises for a left-handed reliever.

Prospect Profile:

Ronald “Bear” Bay - Right-handed Starting Pitcher

In the higher levels of the farm system at Akron and Buffalo, Bay may be the least known starting pitcher. While mega-prospects Fausto Carmona, Adam Miller and Jeremy Sowers dominate the headlines at Akron and Buffalo, Bay quietly has put together one very good season in the Indians organization, and currently is off to another solid start this year.

Bay was drafted in the 25th round of the 2002 Amateur Draft by the Cubs out of Angelina College (TX). After three seasons in the Cubs minor league system where he totaled a 19-12 record and 3.02 ERA with 232 strikeouts in 234 IP, he was obtained just before the end of Spring Training in 2005 from the Chicago Cubs for Cliff Bartosh. In 2005, Bay went on to post a 9-8 record with a 3.86 ERA with 125 strikeouts in 130.2 IP in a combined 23 starts at Kinston and Akron. And, after his win last night (5/10), this season to date he is 3-3 with a 3.82 ERA with 35 strikeouts in 37.2 IP.

Bay is a solid prospect with a low 90s fastball that tops out around 94 MPH, and his ability to fill the strike zone is shown in that he has walked only 37 batters in 168.1 IP in 2005 and 2006. He turns 23 this August, and even though his consistent production at the minor league level should attract much more attention, he is under-sized (6’2”, 160 lbs) and since his debut as a professional in 2003 has not gained any weight or added any strength. Even so, with his ability to consistently throw strikes, throw a low to mid 90s fastball, and repeat his delivery well, he could be destined for a bullpen role in the majors in the coming years.

News and Notes:

Buffalo (AAA): Right-hander Rob Bell was moved to the rotation as Dan Denham has been shifted to the bullpen. A former top prospect,

Bell started the season in the Buffalo bullpen, but has experience starting as he has made 108 major-league starts for Tampa Bay, Texas and Cincinnati…..In the last 10 games, Buffalo is hitting .204 as a team, and last night broke a 19 innings scoreless streak with a run in the 7th.

Akron (AA): Aeros 2B Eider Torres had to be carried off the field last Thursday after injuring his left leg in a hard slide to help break up a double play. He was held out a few games because of soreness, but was back in the lineup on Saturday….Because Eastern League rules require rosters to be cut from 24 to 23 after the 30th day of the season, left-handed reliever Victor Kleine was released….OF Todd Donovan was placed on the disabled list last Friday with hamstring tightness, and infielder Brandon Pinckney was called up from Kinston to take his roster spot…..Unconfirmed reports say hot left-handed pitching prospect Tony Sipp could be out another 4-6 weeks.

Kinston (A+): Kinston left-hander Chuck Lofgren was recently named Carolina League Pitcher of the Week, and the hot hitting Ryan Goleski received Carolina League Hitter of the Week honors as well. Lofgren was 2-0 with a 2.25 ERA for the week, which included a sensational start last Sunday (more on that in a minute), and Goleski was 7 for 16 on the week (more on him

Sunday in the “Recap”)…..Lofgren received more accolades, as he was named MinorLeagueBaseball.com’s “Star of the Day” with his 7 IP, 1 hit, 0 run, 9 strikeout performance in the pouring rain this past Sunday.

Lake County (A-): Catcher/infielder Chris Gimenez was injured sliding into 2B last Thursday, and was placed on the disabled list with ligament damage to his right thumb. 19-year old catcher Josh Roberts was added to the roster to replace Gimenez…..Like Buffalo, the Captains are also struggling in that they have only scored 28 runs in their last 10 games.