Tony's countdown of the top 100 prospects in the Indians farm system continues today, and featured in thus quintet is Stephen Head, a recent guest on Tony and Paul's Thursday night "Smoke Signals" radio show here on the site. Head also went deep in the Indians first spring training game on Wednesday against the Giants. Also included in this installment is Chuck Lofgren, a former top ten Indians prospect, and Rob Bryson, who came over from Milwaukee in the C.C. deal.

My *2009 Cleveland Indians Top 100 Prospects & More book* *is now available. Click on the hyperlink for all the details, and to order it just go to* *my website* *and click on the form to the top right to complete the order with a check or credit card. If you wish to send a check or money order by US Mail, please contact me at tlastoria@indiansprospectinsider.com and I will verify the order and provide my full mailing address for you so send payment.*

We continue today with #35-31 in the Indians Top 100 Prospect Countdown. Here are the earlier rankings:

100. Brian Juhl (C)
99. Brad Hinkle (RHP)
98. Mark Thompson (SS)
97. Adam Davis (C/INF)

96. Adam White (OF)
95. Jerad Head (INF/OF)
94. Brock Simpson (1B/OF)
93. Ryan Blair (OF)
92. Dustin Realini (INF/OF)
91. Shawn Nottingham (LHP)
90. Cirilo Cumberbatch (OF)
89. Michael McGuire (RHP)
88. Sung-Wei Tseng (RHP)
87. David Roberts (RHP)
86. Jason Smit (INF)
85. Marty Popham (RHP)
84. Jose Constanza (OF)
83. Adam Abraham (INF)
82. Isaias Velasquez (2INF)
81. Gary Campfield (RHP)
80. Heath Taylor (LHP)
79. Rich Rundles (LHP)
78. Dallas Cawiezell (RHP)
77. Robbie Alcombrack (C)
76. Carlos Moncrief (RHP)
75. Nate Recknagel (C/1B)
74. Karexon Sanchez (INF)
73. Roman Pena (OF)
72. Kyle Landis (RHP)
71. John Drennen (OF)
70. Todd Martin (1B)
69. Santo Frias (RHP)
68. Michael Finocchi (RHP)
67. Kevin Rucker (OF)

66. Matt Meyer (LHP)
65. Bo Greenwell (OF)
64. Paolo Espino (RHP)
63. Jonathan Holt (RHP)
62. Vinnie Pestano (RHP)
61. Kevin Dixon (RHP)
60. Randy Newsom (RHP)
59. Chris Nash (1B)
58. Carlton Smith (RHP)
57. Lucas Montero (OF)
56. Steven Wright (RHP)
55. Michael Aubrey (1B)
54. Delvi Cid (OF)
53. Clayton Cook (RHP)
52. T.J. McFarland (LHP)
51. Wyatt Toregas (C)
50. Chris Jones (LHP)
49. Chen-Chang Lee (RHP)
48. Matt Brown (OF)
47. Ryan Edell (LHP)
46. Neil Wagner (RHP)
45. Danny Salazar (RHP)
44. Jared Goedert (2B/3B)
43. Josh Judy (RHP)
42. Jeremie Tice (3B)
41. Joey Mahalic (RHP)
40. Erik Stiller (RHP)
39. Ryan Morris (LHP)
38. Mike Pontius (RHP)
37. Ryan Miller (LHP)

36. Frank Herrmann (RHP)

35. Bryce Stowell - Right-handed Pitcher

Born: 09/23/1986 - Height: 6'2" - Weight: 205 - Bats: Right - Throws: Right

Year	Age	Team	Lvl	W
2008	21	UC Irvine	C	8
2008	21	Cape Cod	IND	3

History: Stowell was a 22nd round pick in the 2008 Draft out of UC-Irvine. He was draft eligible because he was a redshirt sophomore and 21 years old, so he had the option of returning to college for another year or two, but the Indians pried him out of college with a $725,000 bonus.

Strengths & Opportunities: Stowell throws a four-pitch mix of a fastball, sinker, circle changeup and slider. The fastball currently sits at 91-93 MPH and touches 95 MPH, and has the ability to add more velocity. His best secondary pitch is a slider that grades out as an out pitch at the next level. In summer ball Stowell experimented with a 12-6 curveball that he experienced mixed results with. The Indians love his

arm, and were impressed with how much more aggressive he became out in the Cape Cod League once he was facing hitters using wood bats instead of aluminum. His velocity jumped up from 92-93 to 94-95, and his breaking ball improved.

Stowell signed late, so he did not pitch in the Indians system in 2008 nor did he participate in the Instructional League in the fall because he logged so many innings over the summer playing in the Cape Cod League. His performance in the Cape Cod League cemented the Indians desire to sign him and make him a Cleveland Indian. He is a fierce competitor with excellent leadership abilities, which combined with his stuff could be the right mentality for a bullpen role down the road. He needs to improve and be more consistent with his command as it is still lacking a little, but this is something the Indians believe can be worked out as he begins working with them next year.

Outlook: Stowell is part of an impressive haul of power-armed college and high school pitching prospects the Indians were able to draft and sign last year. Since Stowell did not pitch for a short-season league team last year, it is tough to gauge where the Indians may place him this upcoming season, but the best guess at this point is he opens the 2009 season at Single-A Lake County but will move quickly to advanced Single-A Kinston provided he stays healthy and performs well.

34. Stephen Head - First Baseman/Outfielder

Born: 01/13/1984 - Height: 6'3" - Weight: 220 - Bats: Left - Throws: Left

(due to a formatting issue, Head's stats are shown at the bottom of this page)

[redacted]

33. Chuck Lofgren - Left-handed Pitcher

Born: 01/29/1986 - Height: 6'3" - Weight: 205 - Bats: Left - Throws: Left

Year	Age	Team	Lvl	W
2004	18	Burlington	R	0
2005	19	Lake County	A	5
2006	20	Kinston	A+	17
2007	21	Akron	AA	12
	21	Buffalo	AAA	0
2008	22	Akron	AA	2
		Career		36

[redacted]

32. Trey Haley - Right-handed Pitcher

Born: 06/21/1990 - Height: 6'4" - Weight: 190 - Bats: Right - Throws: Right

Year	Age	Team	Lvl	W
2008	18	GCL Indians	R	0
2008	18	Mahoning Vy	A-	0
		Career		0

History: Haley was a 2nd round pick in the 2008 Draft out of Central Height High School (TX). The Indians reportedly gave serious

consideration in making him their No.1 pick in the draft. Prior to signing with the Indians, last year at Central Heights High School in Nacogdoches, Texas, Haley went 8-2 with a 1.55 ERA in 13 games (50 IP, 23 H, 34 BB, 98 K), and had signed a letter of intent to pitch for Rice University before signing with the Indians for $1.25 million just hours before the August signing deadline. After signing with the Indians, Haley reported to the Gulf Coast League (GCL) to get his arm back in shape since he had not thrown all summer. The Indians actually exposed him to some game action by letting him throw a game for the GCL Indians and sent him up to short-season Single-A Mahoning Valley to get some experience around the clubhouse and get his feet wet and exposed to the baseball environment there.

Strengths & Opportunities: It is hard not to like what you see from Haley from a tools and physical standpoint. The Indians love his projectable frame, arm strength, athleticism, good delivery and two outstanding pitches. His fastball has good movement and sits around 91-94 MPH and already tops out at 95 MPH, and due to his youth he has the arm and body (6'4" 190-pounds) to grow and add more velocity down the road. While the plus fastball is his best pitch, Haley also throws a curveball (77-81 MPH) and deceptive changeup (83-84 MPH) with the curveball rating as a plus pitch and the changeup an average pitch at the moment. He is still learning to get a feel for a changeup since he never really needed it in high school, and the curveball has good depth and could be a weapon for him as he grows into a pitcher in the coming years. He is very competitive, intelligent, and he has good poise on the mound.

Haley is young, so he needs to learn to become a pitcher rather than a thrower. He also needs to learn to develop a routine and become much more sound with his mechanics since he has a tendency to overthrow. One of his bigger issues has been maintaining his velocity and being consistent with his fastball. He is very raw on the mound, and will be a project for the Indians the next two years tinkering with his mechanics and delivery so he can become much more consistent with his fastball velocity and command. There is no telling what Haley can become once he learns how to work in and out and spot up the curveball. Right now the Indians just want him to work on the command of his fastball, curveball, and changeup, and if he is able to develop those pitches, they may work in a slider later.

Outlook: Haley is an intriguing young talent, and because of his age and being so raw on the mound, the opportunity to miss on him is far greater than a player with the same stuff in their early 20s who is a little more established. His intelligence and poise will be put to the test his first two full seasons in the organization with all the ups and downs he is going to encounter on the mound in addition to all the instruction he will get. He is really a wildcard for the Indians from the 2008 Draft as while he has a lot of talent, he is so raw on the mound there is no telling where his career will go. Knowing this, the Indians really took a gamble with him as a second round pick and was one of the more questionable

picks the Indians made on draft day but could ultimately pay big dividends for them. Haley will open the 2009 season in extended spring training out in Arizona, and will likely pitch for one of the short-season teams when they start up play in June.

31. Rob Bryson - Right-handed Pitcher

Born: 12/11/1987 - Height: 6'1" - Weight: 200 - Bats: Right - Throws: Right

Year	Age	Team	Lvl	W
2007	19	Helena	R	3
2008	20	West Virginia	A	3
		Lake County	A	0
		Career		6

History: Bryson was a 31st round pick in the 2006 Draft out of William Penn High School (DE) by the Milwaukee Brewers. In the last year of its existence due to changes in the CBA, Bryson was one of the biggest draft-and-follow signings in May 2007 when he signed for $300,000. He was acquired by the Indians in July 2008 as part of the C.C. Sabathia trade.

Strengths & Opportunities: Bryson throws two plus-pitches, a fastball that sits around 92-94 MPH and tops out as high as 96 MPH, and a wicked slider. He is young and is still working on refining his fastball command, but he strikes people out at a very high rate (career 11.9 K/9). His fastball is a very effective pitch because of his very strong mechanics and his ability to get good drive toward the plate with his big, thick build and use his lower half well. While his slider is already rated a plus pitch with the potential to be a plus-plus offering, he needs some work with it and to become more consistent with it. His changeup is a

below average to average pitch and is a work in progress.

Some of his problems in 2008 stemmed from some changes to his mechanics that were handed down by the Brewers which he had a hard time adjusting to and getting comfortable with. As a result, his command suffered. Upon joining the Indians they did not make any immediate changes to his mechanics so they could evaluate him first. They put him in a priority bullpen role, which essentially meant he would throw every three days anywhere up to two to three innings an outing so he would see an entire lineup. The idea of such a role was to stretch him out, get him to use his other pitches, help develop his changeup, and to ensure he faced both left-handed and right-handed hitters.

Bryson was sidelined in late July with a shoulder injury that pretty much ended his season. Tests revealed he only had a partial tear of his labrum and rotator cuff. He did come back to pitch in the final week of the season, but in the offseason had surgery on the labrum to correct the issue. The surgery went well, and he should start pitching in sim games by April and could return to game action maybe sometime in June. At this point the prognosis is that he should make a full recovery and the shoulder should be as strong as ever once he is finished with his rehab.

Outlook: The Indians are very excited to have Bryson's youth, power, and athleticism in the system. He is a high ceiling pitcher who shows excellent composure pitching under pressure, and with his outstanding fastball-slider mix it projects him as a serious prospect in the backend of the bullpen, possibly a closer. Pitching out of the bullpen and in a late inning role is something that Bryson welcomes and actually prefers. His bulldog mentality and good makeup on the mound to go along with his repertoire certainly point to a future in the big leagues in such a role. That said, they will be very cautious with him this year and take it very slow in ramping him back up into game action. Bryson is all but certain to open the year in extended spring training out in Arizona, and likely will be held out of game action until short-season leagues start in June where he should begin a rehab assignment in the Arizona League.

All photos courtesy of Ken Carr except for Stowell picture courtesy of UC-Irvine Athletic Department

Up Next: #30-26

Stephen Head's stats:

Year	Age	Team	Lvl	G

2005	21	Mahoning Vy	A-	10
	21	Kinston	A+	47
2006	22	Kinston	A+	130
2007	23	Kinston	A+	102
	23	Akron	AA	26
2008	24	Akron	AA	106
		Career		421