Players taken in the late rounds of the First Year Player Draft generally fall into three categories: 1.) a late round flyer on a high-priced high school talent all but certain to go to college, 2.) a player selected and signed as organizational depth, or 3.) a player who has some recent injury concerns which resulted in a freefall in the draft. The latter applies to High-A Kinston right-handed pitcher Mike McGuire, who is turning out to be one of the nice surprises in the Indians farm system this year. Tony had a chance to speak with him this week.

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The latter applies to High-A Kinston right-handed pitcher Mike McGuire.

McGuire was originally drafted in 2007 by the Cincinnati Reds in the 46th round, but he chose not to sign and went back to school at the University of Delaware for his senior season.

His final year at Delaware turned out to be a disaster as he struggled with injuries and his performance suffered as a result to where he finished the year 6-5 with an 8.22 ERA in 15 games (76.2 IP, 108 H, 46 BB, 71 K).

Even after his rough season, he ended up being taken in the 43rd round of the 2008 Draft by

the Indians, and after signing he made his professional debut with the Indians short-season Single-A affiliate in Mahoning Valley going 3-5 with a 4.05 ERA (40.0 IP, 36 H, 16 BB, 47 K).

One may wonder how on Earth he was ever drafted with the numbers he had in 2008 at Delaware, but when you consider his size at 6'7" 235 pounds, his low 90s fastball velocity, and a shoulder injury which greatly affected those numbers, you can see why there was a lot to like about McGuire coming out of the draft. Bottom line, being taken in the late rounds it allowed the Indians an opportunity to take a gamble on him with little risk.

Much to McGuire's surprise he ended up with the Indians, a team that prior to draft day he never had any contact with.

"When I was playing all through high school and college the Indians never crossed my mind," said McGuire in a recent interview. "I never met Bob Mayer - the East Coast Indians Scout - and had never seen him before and never even knew his name.

I had six or seven teams I thought I was going to be drafted by, so just to get a call from him and the Indians was a [surprise and] good feeling."

It goes without saying that when teams read a scouting report on a pitcher and see that he has had two recent shoulder surgeries, some red flags immediately go up. No matter how talented or how many raw tools the player may have the team will be hard-pressed to draft that player until those later rounds in the draft where the gamble is greatly reduced.

"My past medical history where I had two shoulder surgeries definitely hurt my draft stock," said McGuire. "In high school I was a pretty good prospect as a sophomore.

At 17 years old I was throwing 90 MPH and was 6'6", but unfortunately my junior year my second game I needed shoulder surgery and it hurt [my draft standing] a little bit.

Luckily Delaware stuck with me, so I got a chance to play there.

Unfortunately, I had another shoulder surgery while I was at Delaware.

Thank God for Bob Mayer as he stuck with me and believed I could still pitch."

McGuire grew up in the Philadelphia area, and had countless offers from other schools to play baseball for them, but when he had the first shoulder injury in high school he got a cold dose of reality as almost all of those offers disappeared.

"Before my surgery in high school I could pretty much pick wherever I wanted to go," said McGuire. "It went from abut a 160 schools down to three. West Virginia and Clemson were the other schools.

I thought Delaware was a good choice and they offered a lot, plus they were pretty close to home."

Young players always have a feeling of invincibility, but an injury or two always has a way of bringing a player back down to Earth. When you are young you feel like you can overcome anything, but the older a player gets the more they understand how a serious injury can derail a career. Making their way through the injury minefield is one of the great unknowns in baseball and is something that is almost impossible to control or avoid. Many promising careers have ended abruptly because of an injury.

"The first surgery I was young and didn't think about it much, but the second one the only thing that crossed my mind was whether I was ever going to pitch again," said McGuire. "Was I ever going to get on the mound and throw a baseball again.

I was only 19 years old at the time, 20 when I had the second surgery.

No matter if I played professionally or not, I just wanted to get out there and throw again.

I hooked up with the right doctors and physical therapists and here I am now.

For me to get back to the level I was at in college before my surgery I am very blessed."

McGuire now is 100% healthy and has really been on a pretty good roll this year now that his velocity has returned to almost pre-injury levels to where it is sitting at 90-93 MPH and sometimes touching 94 MPH. He feels as strong as he ever has, and

[redacted]