Here is the next group of prospects in the 2010 Indians Top 50 Prospect Countdown here on TheClevelandFan.com and SportsTimeOhio.com. As a reminder, these scouting reports will be linked and listed for easy access on my site .

Also, my new 2010 Cleveland Indians Top 100 Prospects & More book is now available . To order the book (which profiles over 165 players in the system and runs 214 pages in length) ... go here for all the details
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Last, I will be heading to Goodyear, Arizona later this week where I will be covering and reporting on the Indians minor leaguers as well as some of the major league happenings while I am out there for ten days. Be sure to check back daily for my notebook piece which posts everyday while I am out there. The notebook will recap all the news, stories and observations from the previous day.

#50-46
#45-41
#40-36
#35-31
#30-26
#25-21

20. Carlos Rivero - Shortstop
Born: 05/20/1988 - Height: 6'3" - Weight: 220 - Bats: Right - Throws: Right

Year	Age	Team	Lvl
2005	17	DSL Indians	R

2006	18	GCL indians	R
2006	18	Burlington	R
2007	19	Lake County	A

2008	20	Kinston	A+
2009	21	Akron	AA
		Totals	

History: Rivero was signed by the Indians out of Venezuela in March of 2005 at just 16 years of age. He finished the 2009 season as the Eastern League's top rated shortstop with a .972 fielding percentage, which also eclipsed the club record for fielding percentage by a shortstop previously held by Ivan Ochoa's .970 mark set in 2005. He played in the Arizona Fall League in the offseason and in 22 games hit .318 with 2 HR, 13 RBI and had an .859 OPS.

Strengths & Opportunities: Rivero has been one of the more hyped young Latin prospects in the Indians system the past three years, but has yet to deliver the goods with a consistent, strong season at the plate. He is a notorious slow starter and strong finisher, and he once again did that last season for the second year in a row. At High-A Kinston in 2008 he hit .263 with 1 HR, 25 RBI and a .653 OPS in the first half of the season, and then in the second half hit .300 with 7 HR, 39 RBI and a .845 OPS. The same thing happened last year at Double-A Akron where he hit just .220 with 1 HR, 25 RBI, and a .569 OPS in the first half, and then in the second half hit .280 with 6 HR, 33 RBI, and a .797 OPS.

Rivero is an impressive specimen physically as a shortstop, and is expected to get even bigger. To go along with his size, he has all the outstanding abilities and intangibles except speed. What he lacks in speed, though, he more than makes up with his power potential, bat-to-ball ability, his hands, and his glove-work. He has the potential to be a good hitting middle infielder with some power potential down the road, and has a very good approach for a young player with a great looking swing with good technique where the ball comes off his bat well. He is naturally strong with very good bat speed, and the feeling is that as he continues to mature and

fill his frame that his above average power potential will begin to surface. Even at a young age he already has shown a good understanding of the strike zone and a knack for putting the ball consistently in play with a career 6.2 at bat to strikeout ratio. Considering he has played all five of his minor league seasons very underage for his level, a 6:1 at bat to strikeout ratio is very good and shows the potential with his bat-to-ball ability and plate discipline. He is a good situational hitter, and also has excellent makeup.

For a player of Rivero's size, he moves around well at shortstop. He is not fast and only has average range, but he has good first step quickness, has real good hands, and a strong and accurate arm. Whether or not he sticks at shortstop or slides over to third base depends on how big he gets, but the Indians believe he will be able to stick at shortstop long term. He went out to the Arizona Fall League and played third base, not because he is being moved to third base but because that was where the at bats were. No position change is in the works and he is still considered a shortstop, but there are some who think that down the road he may fit better at third base as he continues to fill out his frame and his bat arrives.

The Indians are pleased with Rivero's development to date as while the numbers are not there they feel that he is making progress and has gotten more and more consistent with his approach and with his defense. They consider him as a player along the lines of Jhonny Peralta who is going to make the consistent routine play and have some power to his game. He is still developing, and once the confidence comes in his game and he believes that he belongs at the level he is at, that his numbers will start to take off.

Rivero's improved hitting in the last two months of the season last year was mostly the result from a lot of work in the cages with Akron Hitting Coach Lee May Jr. to get his bat path more consistent and also attacking pitches much better by not letting them get too deep in the zone. Going forward, he needs to continue developing his approach at the plate along with his plate discipline and breaking ball recognition. As he continues to grow and get stronger and bulkier, he needs to maintain his first step quickness and work on getting better jumps to the ball. He has been limited in the home run department somewhat because the Indians have worked on shortening his swing, getting him to stay in the middle of the field, and work counts better to develop his plate discipline. As a result, he often does not yet hit to his strength which is pulling the ball, and once that is unleashed a power explosion could result.

Outlook: Rivero is the classic example of looking beyond the stats and instead looking at age, level, ability and flat out grading out a prospect with what you see and feel he will become. Even though he once again had a season of two distinct halves offensively, he still continued to play consistent, above average defense at shortstop last year. He is still only 21 years old, so there is a lot of projection still left in his bat. Even though he has yet to put up a good statistical season in the minors, the Indians value him a lot and proved so when they rostered him this offseason by putting him on the 40-man roster. He likely will repeat as the starting shortstop at Double-A Akron to start the season next year, though could see time at Triple-A Columbus later in the season. By repeating at Akron and letting his age catch up to his level, he could be poised for a breakout year.

Photo courtesy of Tony Lastoria

Carlos Rivero MinorLeagueBaseball.com page

Carlos Rivero Baseball-Reference page

Carlos Rivero MinorLeagueSplits.com page

19. Jeanmar Gomez - Right-handed Pitcher
Born: 02/10/1988 - Height: 6'4" - Weight: 190 - Bats: Right - Throws: Right

Year	Age	Team	Lvl
2005	17	DSL Indians	R
2006	18	GCL Indians	R

2007	19	Lake County	A
2008	20	Kinston	A+
2009	21	Kinston	A+

2009	21	Akron	AA

Totals

[redacted]

Year	Age	Team	Lvl
2004	18	GCL Phillies	R

2005	19	Batavia	A-
2006	20	Lakewood	A
2007	21	Clearwater	A+
2008	22	Reading	AA

2008	22	Philadelphia	MLB
2009	23	Philadelphia	MLB
2009	23	Lehigh Valley	AAA

2009	23	Columbus	AAA
2009	23	Cleveland	MLB
		MiLB Totals	

MLB Totals

History: Marson was selected by the Philadelphia Phillies in the 4th round of the 2004 Draft out of Coronado High School (AZ). The Indians acquired him from the Phillies as part of a package of four players they received for Cliff Lee in July of 2009. He played in the Futures Game at Yankee Stadium in 2008, and also played for Team USA in the Summer Olympics in Beijing in August of 2008.

Strengths & Opportunities: Marson won't hit a lot of home runs, but he is a good hitting catcher with a very polished approach who has the ability to hit for average and put the bat on the ball consistently. He does not have a lot of power, and while some more power may still come he is not going to develop much more as it is just not in his swing since his offensive game is centered around an approach to get on-base with singles and walks. He has plenty of bat-to-ball ability, controls the strike zone well, and uses the entire field and sprays a lot of line drives. When he came to the Indians he went right into the Triple-A Columbus and big league clubhouse in Cleveland and established his presence immediately and showed his exceptional leadership skills. During his one month with the big league club last September he quietly put together a solid showing by hitting hit .250 with a .733 OPS in 14 games, his first extended playing stint in the big leagues.

While Marson's bat may just be ordinary or nothing special, his true value as a prospect lies in his defensive abilities and all the intangibles he possesses that come with maintaining and leading a pitching staff. He is a solid-average defender, and while he does not have a laser of an arm, his very quick exchange and transfer of the ball and accurate throws allow him to get the ball down to second base in about 1.9 seconds which is major league average. After being acquired from the Phillies in late July, he threw out 10 of 24 (41.7%) runners attempting to steal at Triple-A Columbus and then with the big league team in Cleveland threw out 8 of 17 (47.1%) of attempted base-stealers. His ability to catch and throw may just be a little above average because of his consistency, but it project to get even better because of his age, work ethic, and makeup.

Marson's value is in the way he handles a pitching staff, provides more than solid defense behind the plate, shows outstanding leadership skills, and displays a good throwing arm. He is very poised, handles a pitching staff well, and knows how to execute a game plan effectively. He is extremely athletic for a catcher, which helps with his agility behind the plate and also how he does a good job of blocking balls. He also takes a lot of time to get to know all of the pitchers on his staff not only with what their strengths and weaknesses are on the field, but who they are as individuals. He is widely viewed by many in the game as a solid major league starting catcher in the making.

Marson looks to be on the verge of a solid major league career. He has the mentality for the game, now it is a matter of his skills showing themselves. His biggest drawback is clearly his lack for much punch with his bat, and really there is not much room for improvement in this area. His swing path is not conducive to much power because he swings down on the ball which results in a lot of groundballs. Also, while he is only 23 years old, the general feeling is that he has pretty much reached his ceiling as a player, and while that is not bad, he simply is what he is as a player.

Outlook: For many teams, having a good hitting catcher is a luxury, something Indians fans were spoiled to have with Victor Martinez in Cleveland the past six years. Finding an elite hitting catcher is a rarity, which is why the Indians and so many fans are so excited to eventually see uber-catching prospect Carlos Santana. In the meantime, however, Marson should prove to be more than capable as the team's field general for most of this year doing all the dirty work behind the plate, handling the pitching staff, and being a leader. The Indians are already on record as saying that they will not rush Santana and instead let him open the season as the starting catcher in Triple-A Columbus. With that in mind, Marson is set to be the everyday starting catcher to open the 2010 season in Cleveland. When Santana finally does arrive,

Marson should move to a backup role. He would make for one of the best backup catchers in the league, so may become a trade chip to use at some point down the road.

Photo courtesy of Ken Carr

Lou Marson MinorLeagueSplits.com page

Lou Marson Baseball-Reference page

Lou Marson MinorLeagueSplits.com page

Zach Putnam - Right-handed Pitcher
Born: 07/03/1987 - Height: 6'2" - Weight: 225 - Bats: Right - Throws: Right

Year	Age	Team	Lvl
2008	20	Mahoning Valley	A-

2009	21	Kinston	A+
2009	21	Akron	AA
		Totals	

[redacted]

Year	Age	Team	Lvl
2007	17	DSL Indians	R

2008	18	GCL Indians	R
2009	19	Lake County	A
2009	19	Kinston	A+
		Totals	

History: Perez was signed by the Indians as an undrafted free agent in May 2007 out of the Dominican Republic. He allowed two earned runs or less in 20 of his 23 outings last year, and in one of those three outings he allowed only three earned runs. His most forgettable performance of the year last season was on May 21st when he went just three innings and allowed eight earned runs and four home runs. He was shutdown for three weeks in August because of a sore shoulder.

Strengths & Opportunities: Perez throws a standard three pitch mix of a fastball, curveball and changeup. His fastball sits at 89-91 MPH and has touched 93 MPH, and his arm is so strong and works so easy that with maturity the Indians expect he is going to add more velocity. He locates his fastball well to both sides of the plate with some sink to it. His curveball and changeup are much more advanced than most players his age as the way he consistently throws them for strikes and his unbelievable command in the zone is something you don't see

from pitchers his age. Both are already above average pitches and both have the potential to be plus pitches and out pitches at the major league level, especially the curveball which is already a swing-and-miss pitch for him. The curveball is the slightly better of the two pitches and shows some good, hard break to it, and he has the confidence and ability to throw it in any count he wants on any given day. His changeup has okay action in the zone and is still improving, but his arm action is so good that it fools the hitter right out of the hand that it gets them out on their front foot.

Perez has proven to be one of the best pitchers in the organization at controlling what he can control by limiting their walks, getting strikeouts, and putting the ball on the ground. He shows a good feel for pitching, and with his exceptional secondary stuff, if his fastball comes and he is consistently sitting in the low 90s with it he has the potential to be a consistent major league pitcher. He has a little bit of deception in the way he throws as he is kind of very soft when he breaks his hands and leaves the rubber and then all of a sudden has a very fast arm. He is a very loose bodied pitcher, and has a good frame that should fill out and blow up the next two seasons. He is still tall and lanky, but has added about 25 pounds of weight to his frame since signing with the Indians in May of 2007 and will continue to do so. When he is between the white lines he is focused on getting the job done, and whether he has a good or bad outing he remains positive and is the same kid coming into the locker room with the same smile. He is a very mature player, and carries himself well.

While Perez has shown the ability to throw strikes and get hitters out with plus secondary stuff, going forward it is all about developing his confidence in his fastball. He knows his secondary stuff is so good so it is easy for him to get caught up in using it, but the Indians want him to develop the fastball and increase his usage of it since it will be a key pitch in his arsenal as he moves up to the higher levels in the system. After a very impressive performance the first half of the season at Low-A Lake County, the Indians sent him to High-A Kinston to challenge him and get him to understand that he needs to pitch and get outs with his fastball. Near the end of the season he started to get better and better with his fastball usage which will allow him to pitch deeper into games in the future. With his stuff he doesn't need a lot of velocity with his fastball to be successful, he just needs to command it well and understand how to attack the swing because he can command three pitches.

In addition to paying more attention to his fastball usage, Perez is also learning to refine himself as a pitcher. The Indians have worked with him on keeping his head straight with his follow through as sometimes his head will pull off to the side which in turn affects his command. They also have worked with him on tightening up his mannerisms on the mound as while he is just a very confident player he sometimes comes off as being cocky. He is still tall and lanky, so adding more strength and bulk is a must if he is to be able to handle the workload of a starting pitcher. He is still learning to more consistently pound the zone with his fastball and refine his secondary stuff, and once he does a better job of repeating his mechanics he'll have even better command of all his pitches.

Outlook: Perez has the stuff to potentially be a front end of the rotation starter, but is more ideal projection is as a middle of the rotation big league starter. The Indians have been high on him from the day they signed him, and he continues to elevate his prospect status every year and is now one of the top pitching prospects in the organization. He is the next big pitching prospect coming up from the lower levels of the Indians system who should become much more of a household name over the coming years, and he is a player to definitely watch grow and

develop the next few seasons. He should open the 2010 season in the High-A Kinston starting rotation and potentially finish the season at Double-A Akron.

Photo courtesy of Tony Lastoria

Alexander Perez MinorLeagueBaseball.com page

Alexander Perez Baseball-Reference page

Alexander Perez MinorLeagueSplits.com page