"Minor Happenings" is a weekly column which covers the important developments and news in the Indians farm system. While most of the information in this report is from my own research and through interviews I have conducted with organizational personnel, some information in this report is collected and summarized from the various news outlets that cover each team.

A little bit different format this week with the Happenings. With the holiday weekend and also yours truly about to pull my hair out with the car shopping process which has engulfed my life over the past few days, I decided to go with a more notes style approach this week.

As a reminder, a pre-recorded interview with Triple-A Columbus third baseman Jared Goedert was aired on my Smoke Signals show I do with co-host Paul Cousineau every Thursday 9:30-10:30 PM. To listen to the show and the interview, click here . Also, the International Signing Period just kicked off, so for some background on how that works, click here as well.

Last, an article on Double-A Akron second baseman Jason Kipnis , a conversation with Low-A Lake County pitching coach

Mickey Callaway
, and the
411 on the Russell Branyan trade
posted this week.

Everyone have a safe and Happy Fourth of July!

Onto the *Happenings*…

(By the way, if you see any typos this week, cut me some slack this week as I didn't have a chance to do my usual second and third looks through this piece...thanks!)

Indians Minor League Player of the Week
(for games from June 24 to June 30)

Michael Brantley (Outfielder – Columbus)
.462 AVG (14-31), 9 R, 3 2B, 0 3B, 0 HR, 6 RBI, 2 BB, 1 K, 4 SB, 1.034 OPS

Triple-A Columbus outfielder Michael Brantley is not long for the minor leagues. The speedy table-setter at the top of the

Columbus lineup looks to be back in top form in all phases of his game be it offensively, defensively, or running the bases. With that, his days in Columbus appear to be numbered, and he will likely be back in Cleveland sometime this month, possibly for good.

Brantley just finished off a very good month of June where in 21 games he hit .352 (31-for-88) with 2 HR, 13 RBI and a .903 OPS, and on top of that retained his excellent walk to strikeout ratio with 10 walks and 8 strikeouts. Currently, he is squaring the ball up well and using the entire field and just looks so much more comfortable at the plate than he did in spring training and the first two weeks of the season where in nine games with the Indians he hit .156 (5-for-32) with 0 HR, 3 RBI and a .416 OPS.

In addition to the offense, Brantley's defense has been better than ever. He remains under control and glides to balls in the gaps like a gazelle and makes it look easier than it really is out there. He goes back or in on balls with such ease, which may be why so many casual observers tend to think less of his defense as compared to a maximum effort guy like Trevor Crowe who really works hard going back and in on balls in the outfield. The Indians could certainly use an upgrade defensively in center field because Crowe is not cutting it as an everyday guy there, so Brantley could be the answer in the short term, and perhaps the long term if the injured Grady Sizemore is moved to left field next year.

Brantley has handled his assignment to Columbus like a trooper even though he knows he probably should have been in Cleveland all year. His focus to handle the task at hand and not get caught up in the day-to-day roster decisions has been incredible. He never sulked or lost his confidence when he was sent down to Columbus in April, he instead used it as an opportunity to get better and attack some of the things the Indians challenged him with to get even better. The result today is he feels like a better player overall where his swing at the plate has improved, he is getting better reads on the balls in the outfield, and physically he feels as good as he has ever felt.

Honorable Mentions:

Jordan Brown (OF – COL): .375 (9-24), 1 R, 3 2B, 0 3B, 0 HR, 10 RBI, 2 BB, 4 K, .907 OPS
Jared Goedert (3B – COL): .241 (7-29), 8 R, 0 2B, 0 3B, 4 HR, 8 RBI, 3 BB, 12 K, .979 OPS
Jerad Head (OF – AKR): .588 (10-17), 3 R, 4 2B, 0 3B, 1 HR, 4 RBI, 2 BB, 4 K, 1 SB, 1.650 OPS
John Drennen (OF – AKR): .393 (11-28), 6 R, 1 2B, 1 3B, 0 HR, 6 RBI, 2 BB, 5 K, .933 OPS
Roberto Perez (C – LC): .412 (7-17), 3 R, 1 2B, 0 3B, 0 HR, 1 RBI, 2 BB, 4 K, .971 OPS
Adam Abraham (1B – LC): .364 (8-22), 4 R, 2 2B, 0 3B, 2 HR, 6 RBI, 0 BB, 1 K, 1.091 OPS
Alex Monsalve (C – AZL): .438 (7-16), 2 R, 2 2B, 0 3B, 0 HR, 5 RBI, 1 BB, 4 K, 1.033 OPS
Alex Kaminsky (RHP – MV): 1-1, 2 G, 2.70 ERA, 10.0 IP, 11 H, 4 BB, 9 K, .297 BAA
Matt Packer (LHP – LC): 1-0, 1G, 0.00 ERA, 8.0 IP, 5 H, 1 BB, 9 K, .185 BAA
Clayton Cook (RHP – LC): 1-0, 2 G, 1.64 ERA, 11.0 IP, 9 H, 1 BB, 13 K, .220 BAA

Alex White (RHP – AKR): 1-1, 2 G, 0.73 ERA, 12.1 IP, 12 H, 1 BB, 7 K, .255 BAA

Previous Winners:

06/17 to 06/23: Jason Kipnis (2B – Akron)
06/10 to 06/16: Jared Goedert (3B – Columbus)
06/03 to 06/09: Josh Rodriguez (INF – Columbus)
05/27 to 06/02: Paolo Espino (RHP – Akron)
05/20 to 05/26: Kyle Bellows (3B – Kinston)
05/13 to 05/19: Carlos Santana (C – Columbus)
05/06 to 05/12: T.J. McFarland (LHP – Kinston)
04/29 to 05/05: Trey Haley (RHP – Lake County)
04/22 to 04/28: Jason Donald (INF – Columbus)
04/15 to 04/21: Bo Greenwell (OF – Lake County)
04/08 to 04/14: Carlos Santana (C – Columbus)

Director's Cuts

Indians Farm Director Ross Atkins was in Columbus to see his Triple-A affiliate in action, and one player of interest who appears to be on the verge of a callup is right-handed starting pitcher Carlos Carrasco. Here is what he had to say about him:

On Carlos Carrasco: "He has been consistent all year. He is easily the most talented pitcher in the rotation [in Columbus], and arguably the most talented pitcher in any of our minor league

rotations. I think as we have talked about on many players, the time is valuable being in the minor leagues and making sure [he does] everything [he] can to make sure it is the last time in the minor leagues and there is not the up and down transition."

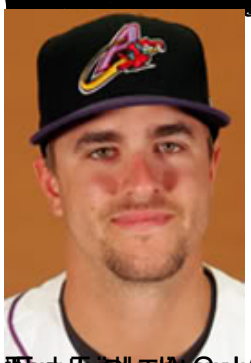
On what Carrasco is working on: "The things that we are challenging Carlos to do are controlling the running game, to be more consistent with his fastball, and pitch in more to right-handers better. We think he has been more consistent with his fastball, particularly down in the zone. It is really easy to miss up with the fastball and you have to work really hard to keep it down at 100% intensity. That's something that at his young age he is pretty good at, he could just be better at it. It is easier to challenge these guys with these adjustments when 1.) you have the carrot of the major leagues ahead of them and 2.) you have the lower caliber of play."

On Carrasco's room for growth: "Yeah, he can because of the body and what he has already accomplished in Triple-A and he has already been in the big leagues. Most people his age are just coming out of college. He has been extremely durable, and there has been a lot of physical and fundamental progress. As you know the mental part of the game is a huge part of it. He is by no means limited there, but the natural maturation that occurs in professional baseball and the ups and downs dealing with soreness, failure, and success, those are all things that affect each pitch and each outing and things he is going through the growing pains with. There is no question he is a major league pitcher. Really we are just walking the balance of making sure we maximize his time in player development."

Manager's Minute: Mike Sarbaugh

As many know, I was in Triple-A Columbus last weekend, and during my time there I had the chance to sit down with manager Mike Sarbaugh to get caught up on how several of his players have looked.

On Michael Brantley: "He has been very consistent all year long. When he first got here there were some things that he and



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