"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.

Okay, slowly but surely I am clearing out the cache of news and notes in regard to the Indians' minor league system after being away for a little bit. The trade activity of late and keeping up with what is going on as we near the 4:00pm deadline today has slowed things down as far as getting this information out. In any case, I am posting the Player of the Week for this week as well as a treasure chest full of comments by Ross Atkins I have compiled over the past several days.

I plan to have another installment of *Minor Happenings* tomorrow, but a trade of Jake Westbrook would likely nix those plans as I research the deal and any players involved and post an article on everything. So stay tuned!

Also, as an FYI, I will be on SportsTime Ohio's TV show "Indians Minor League Magazine" this Tuesday August 3rd. The show airs at 6:00pm every Tuesday and is re-aired several times throughout the week.

Onto the *Happenings*...

Indians Minor league Player of the Week
(for games from July 22nd to July 28th)

Adam Abraham (First Baseman – Lake County)
.455 AVG (10-for-22), 6 R, 2 2B, 0 3B, 3 HR, 10 RBI, 2 BB, 4 K, 1.455 OPS

In the "where did that come from" category, Low-A Lake County first baseman Adam Abraham had arguably the best week long performance to date in his three year professional career. Going into the week he was hitting just .216/.277/.349, but after a hot

week with the bat is now up to .240/.303/.405. While the overall numbers are less than appealing, it is still a significant jump in batting average, on-base percentage, and slugging percentage this late in the season. Anytime you see a regular in the lineup bump their OPS by 82 points over the course of a week in July - no matter how bad the numbers were at the start of the week - you know that player had it going.

This is Abraham's second tour of duty with Lake County, which may be a sign that the outlook does not look good in regard to his future as a professional since college players who repeat the Low-A level all year will generally have a hard time moving much further up the minor league ladder. But this doesn't seem to have phased Abraham as he has really turned it on of late. In fact, his performance before and after the All Star break in mid-June have been like night and day. Prior to the All Star break, in 143 at bats he hit .182 with 2 HR, 11 RBI and a .518 OPS; however, after the All Star break in 119 at bats he is hitting .311 with 7 HR, 24 RBI, and a .933 OPS. Overall this season he is hitting .240 with 9 HR, 35 RBI and a .708 OPS. Last year in 104 games at Lake County he hit .257 with 6 HR, 31 RBI, and a .723 OPS.

Abraham is built solidly at 6'0 and 200 pounds, and has a line drive swing with some good pop in his bat. He plays the game the right way and his all out play-style often leaves him where he rarely has a clean uniform after a game. While he has struggled with his offense, the Indians like his versatility where he can play catcher, first base or third base. While he has not logged time at catcher this year, he has split his time at third and first base. On top of that he is an excellent leader on the field and in the clubhouse.

Honorable Mentions:

Jeanmar Gomez (RHP – COL): 2-0, 2 G, 1.80 ERA, 15.0 IP, 13 H, 1 BB, 11 K, .236 BAA
Clayton Cook (RHP – LC): 1-0, 2 G, 1.69 ERA, 10.2 IP, 8 H, 2 ER, 2 BB, 5 K, .190 BAA
Jordan Brown (OF – COL): .429 (12-28) , 4 R, 2 2B, 0 3B, 2 HR, 9 RBI, 3 BB, 4 K, 1.183 OPS
Jose Constanza (OF – COL): .417 (10-24), 4 R, 1 2B, 0 HR, 2 RBI, 2 BB, 1 K, 2 SB, .920 OPS
Luis Valbuena (2B – COL): .348 (8-23), 8 R, 3 2B, 0 3B, 3 HR, 8 RBI, 6 BB, 5 K, 1.352 OPS
Jordan Henry (OF – AKR): .412 (7-17), 3 R, 2 2B, 0 3B, 0 HR, 0 RBI, 3 BB, 2 K, 1 SB, 1.029 OPS
Matt McBride (OF – AKR): .368 (7-19), 6 R, 4 2B, 0 3B, 2 HR, 8 RBI, 0 BB, 3 K, 1.245 OPS
Chun Chen (C – KIN): .313 (5-16), 4 R, 2 2B, 0 3B, 1 HR, 6 RBI, 6 BB, 3 K, 1.125 OPS
Jesus Aguilar (1B – AZ): .417 (10-24), 5 R, 1 2B, 0 3B, 3 HR, 6 RBI, 0 BB, 5 K, 1.218 OPS
Anthony Gallas (OF – AZ): .417 (10-24), 3 R, 1 2B, 1 3B, 0 HR, 3 RBI, 2 BB, 5 K, 1.003 OPS

Previous Winners:

07/15 to 07/21: Jason Kipnis (2B – Akron)
07/08 to 07/14: Jesus Aguilar (1B – Arizona)
07/01 to 07/07: Matt McBride (OF – Akron)
06/24 to 06/30: Michael Brantley (OF - Columbus)
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

Lots to get caught up on, and one of those are some recent comments from Indians' Farm Director on a host of Tribe prospect up and down the system:

On Josh Tomlin: "To say that I wasn't somewhat pleasantly surprised [with his Major League debut] would be a stretch because

we did expect the nerves to be at a whole another level with that setting and who he was pitching against, but he was really unbelievable. Having said that, if there was anyone that was not going to be unnerved it was Josh Tomlin just because of the competitor he has been. He is the player that has had to overcome not having the best opportunities and the clearest path to the Major Leagues and continue to outperform because he doesn't have the ceiling or projection that some younger players have. He is proving with his ability to compete that ceiling maybe is one of the things we shouldn't focus on all the time. I think the most telling thing for me watching Josh pitch [in that game] was he seemed to take everyone else's game up a notch. It almost appeared to me that Matt LaPorta and Chris Gimenez had a little bit more to their game after watching the courage that he took out to the field. He is a guy that hasn't been given the clearest path. In player development we are shooting for the stars, and we are going to give the younger guy that throws 95 MPH and has that above average breaking ball a little bit more of an opportunity. At the same time, we knew Josh can pitch. We have been telling him he is a Major League pitcher for three years now. We have been telling him he would get his opportunity, it just may not be the clearest path. Because of his competitiveness we knew he would be here. We were not certain of his role, and had used him in a bullpen role as his fastball plays up in the bullpen. So we were not certain how he would transition, but knew he would be here."

On Jeanmar Gomez and Josh Tomlin's debuts: "It is really good to see that the guys who come up here are really in the right frame of mind. They are prepared for the outing and are not intimidated. It is clear both of them had a game plan that they executed. It is clear both of them are able to repeat their deliveries, control the running game, and neither one of them was unnerved by the setting. I think a lot of that has to do with throwing to Carlos Santana and Chris

Gimenez and the familiarity that Manny Acta has worked very hard to give them by spending time with our minor league players and spending time with them in the offseason. All of those little things have added up, but mostly my hat is off to Jeanmar Gomez and Josh Tomlin."

On Jason Kipnis: "He is one of the better stories of the year for us in player development. An outfielder in 2008 and 2009 in college coming to us in 2010 as a second baseman sounded really good to us. As you know the ability to make that transition in professional baseball is not easy. We are unsuccessful quite often, but he has been more than a success. He has very quickly become someone we think that can become an above average defender at a middle infield position. That doesn't happen to

often. The biggest hurdle [at second base] has just been the pivot and the arm action with the slot of his throw. In Jason's case he took to the groundball pretty well, and certainly took to the lateral movements very well. He is still learning the pivots and still has some development left in there [such as] knowing that there are three ways to turn the double play and learning those three ways to do it, when to use them and why to use them, and then getting comfortable so he can use them when the game is on the line. What has stood out about him the most is he makes ranging plays look easy, and then the throws from different angles that you have to make when you are ranging that typically turn into errors and he hasn't had many of them. Obviously he has the elite athleticism and elite confidence to make a transition like that with his caliber of play, and while he has done that he has continued to be one of the most offensive players in our system. A .900 OPS, hitting home runs, hitting doubles, running the bases hard, and a spark for that team. He has some of the intangibles that many managers are looking for in that he will call a player out and has some natural strength about him. Whether or not that turns into a major league leadership characteristic we will see, but really one of the best stories of the year for us."

On T.J. McFarland: "For us in Player Development getting a high school player in the draft is always exciting because of the opportunities on the maturity, physical and mental front, and obviously on the fundamental side of things. He has answered the bell with every challenge we have put in front of him he has been able to improve and make strides. He is putting the ball on the ground at the highest clip only behind Joe Gardner who is on the team with him. He reminds us a lot of Aaron Laffey at this stage of his development. He has a lot of confidence and a lot of athleticism and the ability to get a ground ball. [Promotions] are always a balance. He is certainly by most measures ready for that challenge [in Double-A], and then what you are

also balancing is whose spot is he taking. TJ will most likely see another level of play at some point this season, just when will depend on his continued strides and secondarily the right opening for him. He is talented enough that if the right opening does not present itself that if he continues to make strides and maybe just another level of dominance comes in the form of more strikeouts or fewer home runs to just show us that he doesn't belong there, then we will get him out of there."

On Scott Barnes: "He has been someone that we feel like has a chance to be a major league starter. He certainly has a chance to help a major league team and if he ends up being in the pen time will tell and performance will tell, and certainly team needs will factor into that. He got off to a slow start this year, but there were not a lot of things that we could see different. I think his fortitude and sticking with things that have helped him have previous success and being open to subtle suggestions working with Joel Skinner and Greg Hibbard in Double-A [have helped]. It has really turned into a good June and July for him. Over the past couple of months he has really performed as someone who really could be a major league starter. Mostly in July, as they are hitting .187

off of him and he has had several starts this month. So it is very encouraging on that front."

On Bryan Price: "Brian has been unbelievable, he really has. And that bullpen [in Akron] has been exceptional. The Triple-A and Double-A bullpens with Stowell and Putnam just leaving [Akron], Judy's performance, what Vinnie Pestano has done, and then Omar Aguilar, Connor Graham and C.C. Lee. All of those guys have performed so well that it has been hard to standout, but Bryan has really stood out. His strikeouts to walks are among the best in our organization. His slider has developed, and he has shown tangible improvements that you don't always see at this stage. Double-A is my no means not the most advanced level, but typically the development in Double-A and Triple-A is between the ears, so when you see fundamental and physical progress with a 24-25 year old it is really encouraging. Hats off to him. Along the same lines as Scott Barnes, Bryan Price has made incredible strides. His slider is now a true weapon and he is in the mid 90s with his fastball."

On C.C. Lee: "Similar to Bryan Price, he was not off to the best start in Double-A. A lot of players deal with that, whether it is mental or the lineup is a little bit deeper or because there is

obviously a better caliber of play. But now his stuff is playing. He is in the mid-90s with an average to above average breaking ball in his second full season since coming over from Taiwan. He really seems to have adjusted well. His ability to get strikeouts is impressive and [we] love his athleticism and the power to his stuff."

On Josh Judy: "His [extra inning] outing [a week ago] was one of the best of the year. He really stepped up big for the team and pitched two innings and got the win in a situation where they really needed him in an extra inning outing. What he has done differently over the last couple of months is he is pitching with his fastball. He is able to get a strikeout with his slider, his strikeouts are up there, and his walks are down. All the things we are looking for. Now he is getting a lot of outs with his fastball and on the plate. He and Charlie Nagy have established a good rapport together and have made some good strides."

On Luis Valbuena: "It [was] a productive time for him [in Columbus]. I think right when he got there he made a subtle adjustment that Jon Nunnally and Lee May worked on together with him. In the Major Leagues he had a little bit more of an open stance, so they closed him up a little bit and he has less crash to his stride and he has really had a lot of success as his OPS is up over 1.000. I think [he will move around] quite a bit at many positions. Obviously some third base at bats have opened up, and that might be initially where he gets the bulk of them. He has been playing a lot of shortstop and he has been really solid defensively, so he comes up here with a little bit more comfort going to different positions than he had maybe to start the season and is

certainly coming with a hot bat."

On Joe Gardner: "He is a higher profile player out of UC Santa Barbara, and he came into Instructional League last year and really was impressive. Every one of our staff members took a step back and thought we had something special. He is the best in the league at putting the ball on the ground, and he is also getting strikeouts and giving up very few home runs, which as you know those are the indicators. The wins and losses and ERA are something else that we will look at, but they are [secondary]. Joe has made incredible strides this year with his body as well. He came into spring training at a point where we felt he could make some strides to improve his performance and he made them in a hurry. I think he has benefitted from it and will

have a long career in front of him."

On Bryce Stowell: "He was a higher profile pitcher out of college, and in the 2008 season he had a tremendous workload as he threw near 50 innings in summer ball after 100 inning season at UC Irvine. I think what we are seeing is him coming off of a significant workload, coming right into pro ball after that, and now just getting his legs under him. The velocity has jumped up and the dominance has come back. His strikeout rate is unheard of and he is touching [upper 90s]. He is blowing guys away. The subjective remark from our pitching coach in Double-A was that he had to get out of there because no one could hit his fastball."

On Jared Goedert: "I think if you look at Jared's numbers and what he did in 2007 he was doing what he is now. Then he was injured with a shoulder injury, lost his swing, and has found his swing again where he is a little bit shorter to the ball. I think it was a balance of trying to create a swing that was painless and trying to create a swing that was efficient and generated power, which was not happening in 2008 and 2009. Now he is pain free and able to be shorter and quicker to the ball, and the power has come back. Very similar numbers [between 2007 and 2010]."

On Carlos Carrasco: "We are relatively confident that this [forearm issue] is not going to be long term. But anytime there is soreness or stiffness around the elbow we are conservative. We are getting more information everyday, but there is no reason to believe that this is heading toward surgery or even really a significant shutdown. We should have much more clarity on that in the next few days."

Follow Tony and the Indians Prospect Insider on Twitter @tlastoria . His new book the 2010 Cleveland Indians Top 100 Prospects & More is also available for purchase on Amazon.com or his site .