"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

What a crazy signing period it was following the Indians' 2010 Draft picks. For a recap of the madness, it is all laid out in my signing journal I kept updating the past two months. Now that the 2010 Draft coverage has come to an end, it is time to put the focus 100% squarely back on the six affiliates in the Indians' minor league system.

With that in mind, I have some catching up to do. I am posting an update today with last week's Player of the Week as well as lots of other goodies I have had but been able to post the past few weeks because of a lack of time. I plan on posting another Minor Happenings on Sunday with even more stuff, including a long interview with Double-A Akron pitching coach Greg Hibbard on several of the arms there and who have gone onto Triple-A Columbus.

Also, in case you missed them this week I posted pieces on the 2010 released players to date and an article on 2010 10th round pick outfielder Tyler Holt

. Also, Al C. and I have been posting daily “Around the Farm” updates highlighting all the notable performances in the system from Triple-A down to rookie ball.

I will be visiting Columbus this Sunday to see Carlos Carrasco pitch, and may hit Akron on the way down to see Matt Packer.

Onto the *Happenings*…

Indians Minor League Player of the Week
(for games from August 5th to August 11th)

Alex Kaminsky (Right-handed pitcher - Mahoning Valley)
1-0, 2 G, 0.90 ERA, 10.0 IP, 4 H, 1 ER, 2 BB, 9 K, .118 BAA

Talk about making an incredible first impression. That's all short-season Single-A Mahoning Valley right-hander Alex Kaminsky has done since signing with the Indians as an undrafted free agent two months ago. As we know, the odds are long for any draft

pick, but for an undrafted player they are almost impossible. However, as we have seen with the likes of right-handed pitcher Frank Herrmann this year and outfielder Brian Barton a few years prior, all you need is a chance as if you can go out and perform you will get noticed.

The 22-year old Kaminsky - who is from Fostoria, OH and went to Wright State - has really been the rock of the pitching staff all year at Mahoning Valley. He was named a NY Penn League All Star, and to date in 11 starts he is 5-3 with a 1.95 ERA. In 55.1 innings he has allowed 41 hits, 16 walks and has 45 strikeouts. He ranks tied for 5th in the league for wins, 5th in ERA, tied for 7th in games started, 12th in strikeouts, and 8th in WHIP (1.03). Needless to say, he has done

everything you could ask and then some to put his name on the map.

Kaminsky doesn't throw very hard and has a standard three-pitch mix of a fastball, curveball, and changeup. Time will tell on what kind of pitcher he truly is as strong statistical seasons in the NY-Penn League can often be misleading on prospect standing (see Heath Taylor and Vidal Nuno). But this is a good start and excellent foundation he has laid to begin his minor league career. As an undrafted player with almost nothing invested in him he is going to often get the short end of the stick with roster spots and roles down the road, but if improvement is shown and he continues to develop as well as perform, then anything can happen.

Honorable Mentions:

Jerad Head (OF - COL): .348 (8-23), 5 R, 4 2B, 0 3B, 1 HR, 4 RBI, 0 BB, 6 K, 1.012 OPS
John Drennen (OF - AKR): .360 (9-25), 3 R, 2 2B, 0 3B, 1 HR, 5 RBI, 1 BB, 3 K, .945 OPS
Juan Diaz (SS - KIN): .444 (12-27), 2 R, 2 2B, 0 3B, 0 HR, 4 RBI, 0 BB, 5 K, .963 OPS
Giovanny Urshela (3B - MV): .435 (10-23), 7 R, 3 2B, 0 3B, 1 HR, 8 RBI, 2 BB, 1 K, 1.140 OPS
Carlos Moncrief (OF - MV): .400 (10-25), 7 R, 1 2B, 1 3B, 1 HR, 1 RBI, 6 BB, 5 K, 1.171 OPS
Giovanni Soto (LHP - LC): 1-0, 2 G, 2.08 ERA, 13.0 IP, 5 H, 3 ER, 3 BB, 13 K, .119 BAA
Austin Adams (RHP - KIN): 0-0, 2 G, 1.08 ERA, 8.1 IP, 8 H, 1 ER, 2 BB, 4 K, .258 BAA
Joe Gardner (RHP - KIN): 0-0, 2 G, 2.57 ERA, 14.0 IP, 11 H, 4 ER, 3 BB, 7 K, .224 BAA

Previous Winners:

07/28 to 08/05 T.J. House (LHP – Kinston)
07/22 to 07/28: Adam Abraham (3B – Lake County)
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

Indians' Farm Director Ross Atkins chimes in on some potential September callups or roster additions in the offseason, and also explains what some of the recent draft pick signings will be doing these final few weeks of the season.

On the offseason roster decision making process: "There are conversations that are happening quicker than I anticipated about the offseason. Players are starting to make their plans for winter ball, or not going to winter ball, or just strength and conditioning. It is often critical to make sure we are helping players make the best decisions that we can in person. It is certainly more productive and effective when you are able to have a conversation face to face with an organization stance on an offseason plan and the player's stance."

On Carlos Carrasco: "I think we feel confident he is past the issue with his elbow. However, we will be cautiously optimistic and if there are any flare ups or hiccups we will be conservative on his usage. We have had no reason to pull back the reigns so far and he has been effective in [his outings] since he came back."

On Vinnie Pestano: "He is about as close as you can be really [to getting a chance at the big

league level]. At this point there are some complicating factors with the roster, but Vinnie has done everything he can possibly do to earn a look from a major league staff. There is no question he will pitch in the major leagues, it is now just a question of when."

On Bryce Stowell: "It is a little bit different [with a major league opportunity this year] because he is a non-Rule 5 eligible player, so we do not have to protect him this year. Because we do not have to protect Bryce, a little bit more will go into that decision making process on whether or not he comes up this year."

Coach's Corner: Bruce Fields

I had a chance a few weeks ago to sit down with Indians' minor league hitting coordinator Bruce Fields while I was in Kinston and discuss several of the players there and in Columbus at the time:

On Chun Chen: "Last year and the year before he kind of didn't really have a feel for his swing early on, but I give [hitting coach]

Phil [Clark] a lot of credit working with him the last couple of years and he kept him ready at the beginning of this season even when he wasn't playing because Roberto Perez was playing most of the time. He kept Chen ready, and then he just picked up on it and made some adjustments as he was going through the early part of the season and just took off. He and Phil had a great working relationship and to Chen's credit he has made the adjustments, and as he is finding out he has to continue to make adjustments when jumping leagues as guys are more experienced, older, and a little more polished. He is holding his own and I think he has come a long way. I think he definitely was working on his defense [the last few years] as he had some shortcomings he had to improve upon, so there was a lot of concentration on that. Everyone wants to hit and be better hitters. One of his problems was the offspeed stuff as he didn't

recognize curveballs, so he had to come along and understand how to approach and attack a curveball and other offspeed pitches. It is out of the hand and I think he has gotten better with pitch recognition and understanding himself and what pitches he wants to attack. It is a process of maturing too. You get a little older and the longer you play, the better you get. He is the classic example of that. He is focusing in on his swing, and he is watching some of the better hitters in the league that he has picked some stuff up and applied to himself."

On Bo Greenwell: "He does a little bit of everything. To me the longer you play and if you have some skills and got signed for a reason - plus with his pedigree with his dad playing - I think that all comes into play. If you saw Bo when he first signed, and you see him now, he has made a ton of adjustments with his setup and his approach. He is still working on some areas of his offensive game, but he is definitely better. The thing about playing this game is I always tell the guys when we meet at the beginning of the season to 'know thyself, know what you do, and don't get out of that realm'. That's how you stay consistent. But when guys have a tendency to try and do more than what they should and what they are capable, that's when they get themselves in trouble. Bo is a classic example of knowing what he is, in trying to repeat that swing, that approach, and staying consistent, and he has done a great job with that this year."

On Kyle Bellows: "Personally, I think [he is showing improvement] and I have told him so. I said this is your first full season and you are right in one of the toughest A-ball leagues around, and this is his first year playing like this. I think he has done a great job and is holding his own. If you look at his numbers and the numbers in-between the numbers that we look at, he is definitely holding his own. I asked him personally ‘what do you need to do and focus on’ and he told me exactly what he needed to do so he is aware of where he needs to go and what he needs to be, and I am happy with that as he is learning from this season. He knows that his strike zone discipline needs to be better, and that is something he is going to continue to work on as everyone needs to work on that, especially in A-ball. I am pleased with Kyle Bellows and with his performance and how he has played because I think with his exceptional defense and power potential playing at a corner position that once he just learns and plays I think his game is going to get better and better."

On Abner Abreu: "I think the power hasn't translated because of some of the injuries. He is coming back from a serious lead arm shoulder injury for his swing and that takes awhile to get over, case in point Goedert who took a two years to get over his and now look at where he is. So there is a little bit of uncertainty and apprehensiveness from a player standpoint of ‘am I okay?’ before I start really start trusting it that it will be healthy. He is only 20, he is a baby, and I think in time the power will play up as to me that's the last thing that comes. But the power is there and you see it in batting practice as he has wall power so it is going to come into play as he gets older. I am not concerned about Abner. He is a smart kid and he works his behind off, and I think in due time he is going to be right where he needs to be."

On Karexon Sanchez: “If you look at his career he has always had a half where he has done well and then just kind of tailed off. He is doing it all now and playing both middle infield positions and a corner. He can play outfield, switch hits, and has power. That's very valuable, and that guy does not grow on trees. He is very valuable and I think he has stepped up his game, and I think a lot of it has to do with the mental part which he has gotten better with and he is comfortable with himself now which is a part of growing up and maturing."

On Jared Goedert: "I'll put it to you like this. Are his numbers real? Well, has he done it before? Then the numbers are real. If this was like a blip on the radar and never been done by him then I would say maybe it is not for real, but he has done this before then he was injured. It was a lead arm injury and he was afraid to kind of get extension when you have that type of injury. It showed in spring in training this year as he was driving the ball similar to what he was that year in Lake County. I think it is real as he is playing about as well as he can play from an offensive standpoint. I was in Columbus [in early July] and I was there four nights and he hit four homers in four nights. I think in terms of his swing he is where he needs to be, from there it is not on me thank goodness that I have to make that decision [on a Major League callup]. But I like where Jared Goedert is, I like his hitting approach and I think it plays."

On Josh Rodriguez: "He’s been unbelievable with his approach and he is another guy I have been impressed with. Looking at his swing there were some things last year Josh was asked to do, and he was having a hard time making adjustments. I think he made a conscious effort to make those adjustments and they are paying off for him now. I don't know had he been healthy last year what kind of year he would have had, but it’s happening for him now and it’s never too late as long as you are playing. He is putting himself into a position that we have to look at what his value may be for us."

On Nick Weglarz: ""He is starting to step up at the Triple-A level. The first month he struggled when he went up, but he was adjusting to the league and the league was adjusting to him. They know about his power potential and they were pitching him carefully. He was off and on when I saw him, but from that point he has taken off."

On Jordan Brown: "Brown is finally healthy from surgery and he is starting to drive the ball. The two times I have been to Columbus he has had a game where he had six RBI and a game where he had five RBI. He just finds a way to get it done.”

Playoff Races

The minor league regular season is quickly coming to a close in a little over two weeks on Labor Day. With that in mind, let's take a quick look at where the Indians affiliates stand with regard to a possible playoff berth:

Columbus (72-54) holds a 0.5 game lead over Louisville for the International League's West Division, and they also hold a 3.0

game lead over Buffalo for the wildcard with 18 games to go.

Akron (64-59) is 7.0 games out of the Eastern League Western Division lead, but only 1.0 game behind wildcard leading Bowie with 19 games to go.

Kinston (24-28) is 2.0 games out of first place in the Carolina League Southern Division, though only 1.5 games out of the playoffs since the current leader Winston-Salem already clinched a spot after winning the first half title. Kinston has 18 games remaining.

Lake County (25-27) has already clinched a playoff spot since they won the first half title in the Midwest League's Eastern Division. They open up postseason play in a best-of-three series on Wednesday September 8th before returning home on Thursday September 9th and Friday September 10th (if necessary).

While not mathematically eliminated, Mahoning Valley (25-34) and the AZL Indians (19-28) have no chance at making the playoffs, and the DSL Indians (37-33) are already eliminated (their season wraps up tomorrow).

Infirmary Report

The injuries are starting to really mount up as the season comes to an end. Here are some updates on a few players who have been injured recently as well as some others who have been out awhile:

Right-handed pitcher **Adam Miller** is still out in Goodyear, Arizona and making progress in his very tedious return to throw program from his right middle finger injury. The Indians and Miller are taking it extremely conservative with getting him back in game action. He is currently throwing off a mound and showing progress, and is scheduled to throw in a simulation game this coming week. Still a long way to go, but if things continue to go well he looks close to maybe being able to pitch in a few games in Instructional League this offseason to test out his finger.

Triple-A right-handed pitcher **Hector Rondon** is still rehabbing from his right elbow injury. He threw a bullpen on August 14th (not a game as I misreported) and is doing well. He is on a return to throw program to be able to pitch this offseason in a fall or winter league. He will not pitch in a game for the remainder of the regular season.

Triple-A Columbus outfielder **Nick Weglarz** is out for the rest of the season. He sprained a ligament in his right thumb while making a diving catch on July 26th and has been out since then. He is expected to be back playing this fall or winter in a yet to be determined league.

Triple-A Columbus catcher **Wyatt Toregas** is currently rehabbing the severe groin injury he

suffered earlier this month. He is with the team in Columbus, but is not expected to play again this season.

Triple-A Columbus right-handed reliever **Jess Todd** was recently put on the seven-day disabled list with a sore right shoulder. Since being optioned to Columbus on August 14th he has not pitched.

Triple-A Columbus left-handed pitcher **Jeremy Sowers** is on the disabled list with a sore left shoulder. He has supposedly not been able to throw since his last appearance on August 10th when he had to leave his start after three innings.

High-A Kinston first baseman **Nate Recknagel** suffered a nasty quad injury on Saturday while running to first base. He was sent to Cleveland for an MRI to determine if there was a tear and if surgery will be needed. He is very likely done for the season.

High-A Kinston left-handed pitcher **T.J. McFarland** left his start on Wednesday after only 0.2 innings of work, but it was not due to injury. Organizational policy calls for any pitcher who has has a high stress inning throwing 40 pitches to be removed from the game. We saw this same thing happen with lefty T.J. House earlier in the year.

Low-A Lake County right-handed pitcher **Clayton Cook** had to be removed from his start on Wednesday after two innings because of tightness with his shoulder. No word on if he is expected to miss his next start (he is still listed by the Indians to start on Monday), but given where we are in the season combined with his workload to date, the Indians likely will be very conservative with him. I wouldn't be surprised even if he is okay if he is shut down for the remainder of the season.

Low-A middle infielder **Casey Frawley** has been having some vision issues recently. He wears contact lenses and recent trips to the eye doctor have not resolved the issue. Even with the problems he is having with the eyes he continues to play.

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