We are in the thick of the year end Cleveland Indians minor league player awards as the Offensive Player of the Year was announced on Monday, the Pitcher of the Year was announced on Tuesday, and the Reliever of the Year was announced yesterday.

Today we continue the postseason awards with the announcement of the Defensive Player of the Year. This is a new award this year, and one I think is very deserving to acknowledge some of the great defensive displays by players who may not have had good seasons at the plate.

One thing to note, is the defensive metric known as Total Zone is currently not calculated for the 2010 minor league season and is something that will come out in the coming weeks, so unfortunately I could not use this when determining this award. You'll have to cut some major slack here as the candidates for the award were determined by a combination of their basic defensive stats (fielding percentage) and perception (how they actually looked).

Again, just a quick reminder that these awards are awarded 100% based on performance as prospect standing is not factored in. So just because a guy is or is not listed does not mean anything from a “prospect” status. These awards are simply for fun to hand out at the end of the year. Also, the Cleveland Indians in no way whatsoever had any input in these awards. In the coming days the Comeback Player of the Year, Rookie of the Year, Biggest Breakthrough, Biggest Disappointment and the All-Tony Team will be announced.

Defensive Player of the Year Nominees:

Kyle Bellows (3B – Kinston)
.978 PCT, 199 G, 77 PO, 286 A, 8 E, 371 TC, 30 DP

Bellows led all Carolina League third basemen in fielding percentage. He was a rock at third base all season for High-A Kinston and showed very good range and an incredibly accurate and strong arm. He has really established himself as one of the best defensive third basemen in the minors.

Greg Folgia (Outfielder – Lake County)
.994 PCT, 101 G, 169 PO, 7 A, 1 E, 177 TC, 1 DP

Folgia led all Midwest League outfielders in fielding percentage, which comes as no surprise to anyone who watched him patrol right field for Low-A Lake County all season. He made several amazing catches be it coming in and making sliding catches, going back on balls and chasing them down at the right-center field wall, or attacking balls with reckless abandon and leaping over walls to catch them.

Roberto Perez (C – Lake County)
Fielding: .997 PCT, 104 G, 850 PO, 109 A, 3 E, 962 TC, 5 DP, 15 PB
Throwing: 50 CS, 75 SB, 125 ATT, .400 PCT

Perez led the 16-team Midwest League in fielding percentage among catchers, and finished 2nd in caught stealing percentage. He showed a strong, accurate arm when attempting to throw out

runners at second and third, and exhibited all of the intangibles required to be an above average major league defender at catcher.

Giovanny Urshela (3B – Mahoning Valley)
.957 PCT, 55 G, 52 PO, 124 A, 8 E, 184 TC, 11 DP

The 18-year old Urshela did not lead the NY-Penn League in fielding percentage, though was only 14 points off the leader (.970) even though he was three to four years younger than most of the third basemen in the league. Even so, he was a defensive highlight reel every night and played above his years. He has gold glove ability, and flashed that potential many times over the course of 2010 and more than held his own with his fielding and throwing.

And the 2010 Tony Award goes to…Roberto Perez

Unlike all of the hitting and pitching awards provided so far, there is not a lot of context which can be provided defensively because of the absence of much statistical data. More advanced stats should become available this offseason.

All that said, when reviewing the limited statistical data and considering the actual on field performance of all the Indians minor leaguers this year, the four-some of Kyle Bellows, Greg Folgia, Roberto Perez, and Giovanny Urshela really stood out. In a system devoid of many above average defenders at any position, these four were far and away the best four defensive performers this season.

But when it comes down to it, Perez had the best year defensively in the organization because of how many different ways he affected a game with his throwing, blocking, receiving, game calling, leadership, etc. There is no question he was the glue to that team this year at Low-A Lake County as he worked extremely well with the pitching staff all season, shut down the opposing team's running game, and was very good defensively behind the plate with blocking and receiving.

Obviously Perez has a long way to go with his bat, but the Indians have themselves a very good

defensive catching prospect and one that many feel could hold his own in the major leagues right now as a defender. He is going out to the Arizona Fall League to catch, and while it is uncertain how much he will actually play, this is a pretty big honor in sending a player who played all year in Low-A to a prestigious prospect league such as the AFL where rosters are mostly made up of Triple-A and Double-A players. He should open the 2011 season at High-A Kinston as the starting catcher.

As a quick note, Ezequiel Carrera and Juan Diaz - the two players obtained in the Russell Branyan trade in June - definitely would have been included here but they played less than half a season in the organization.

Up Next: Comeback Player of the Year

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 .