We are down to the final year end Cleveland Indians minor league player award. To quickly recap, here are the award winners so far:

Offensive Player of the Year: Jason Kipnis
Pitcher of the Year: Joe Gardner
Reliever of the Year: Cory Burns
Defensive Player of the Year: Roberto Perez
Comeback Player of the Year: Jared Goedert
Rookie of the Year: Felix Sterling
Biggest Breakthrough: Matt Packer

Today we continue the postseason awards with the announcement of the Biggest Disappointment, the one year end award no one wants to win. This award goes to the player who was a highly rated prospect coming into the season who performed poorly and saw a significant drop in their prospect standing as a result.

Again, these awards are simply for fun to hand out at the end of the year, though this is one award that is not really “fun” to hand out. Also, the Cleveland Indians in no way whatsoever had

any input in these awards. Tomorrow we put a bow on the year end awards with the All-Tony Team being announced.

Biggest Disappointment Nominees:

Abner Abreu (OF - Kinston)
.252, 44 R, 21 2B, 6 3B, 4 HR, 58 RBI, 20 BB, 130 K, 11 SB, .651 OPS

Rated as a Top 10 prospect by yours truly coming into the season, and as a Top 15-20 guy by many national publications, Abreu did not live up to all that promise this season. The hopes for some improvement with his high strikeout rate and low walk rate did not happen as his strikeout rate got worse (3.6 AB/K in 2009, 3.1 AB/K in 2010). He also saw significant dips in on-base percentage (.351 in 2009, .298 in 2010) and slugging percentage (.488 in 2009, .362 in 2010). The one hope here is since he was coming off a significant shoulder injury in 2009, maybe with another offseason of rehab and some improved confidence he can get back to expected performance levels.

Ben Carlson (1B – Lake County)
.171, 19 R, 8 2B, 2 3B, 2 HR, 20 RBI, 10 BB, 65 K, 3 SB, .468 OPS

Carlson was a 6th round pick out of college in the 2009 Draft, and one of the things he was supposed to bring with him to the pros was a powerful bat. In one and a half minor league seasons to date he's shown no power and may be on the verge of joining the unemployment line this spring. His numbers have not been very good since turning pro as in addition to the poor numbers this past season, he also hit poorly at short-season Single-A Mahoning Valley last year (.228/.300/.317). Carlson's days appear numbered in the organization.

Kelvin De La Cruz (LHP – Kinston/Akron
7-8, 5.01 ERA, 26 GS, 127.2 IP, 120 H, 15 HR, 72 BB, 105 K, 1.50 WHIP, 5.1 BB/9, 7.4 K/9

On the positive side, De La Cruz made it through the season healthy and did not have any injury setbacks. He was able to make 26 starts and pitch in 127.2 innings this year after

missing almost all of the 2009 season with a serious left elbow injury. That said, while he was able to go out there and pitch, he was not very effective this year, particularly at Double-A Akron (5.77 ERA, .274 BAA, 6.1 BB/9, 1.20 K/BB). A case can be made that his stuff and command will return next year once he is a full year removed from injury, so that's the idea we'll hold onto here.

Trey Haley (RHP – Lake County)
5-11, 5.97 ERA, 27 GS, 116.0 IP, 122 H, 13 HR, 86 BB, 97 K, 1.79 WHIP, 6.7 BB/9, 7.5 K/9

In a return trip to Lake County, things started off well for Haley as he was 1-0 with a 4.68 ERA in five April starts and 3-1 with a 2.84 ERA in six May starts. Once June rolled around things fell apart for him (0-2, 15.58 ERA, 3 GS) and continued in July (1-3, 5.79 ERA, 5 GS), August (0-4, 7.52 ERA, 6 GS), and September (0-1, 7.94 ERA, 2 GS). Also, in his first 11 starts over April and May he had an okay walk rate (4.4 BB/9), but in his final 16 starts his walk rate ballooned (8.8 BB/9). As a 2nd round pick out of high school in the 2008 Draft the hope was he would be further along right now. It's too bad he has struggled so much because he has the best arm in the system. Thankfully he has age on his side, though next year will be critical for him to show improvements so he can stay relevant as a prospect.

Beau Mills (1B - Akron)
.241, 55 R, 26 2B, 1 3B, 10 HR, 72 RBI, 42 BB, 71 K, 2 SB, .689 OPS

Mills had a sub par season at Double-A Akron in 2009 hitting .267/.308/.417, and the hope was that a return trip to Akron this season would see him right the ship offensively. That did not happen, and his numbers actually slid more in the negative direction. One area of improvement was his walk rate (16.6 AB/BB in 2009, 10.1 AB/BB in 2010) and strikeout rate (5.4 AB/K in 2009, 6.0 AB/K in 2010), but his power continues to deteriorate every year since his first full season in 2008 (.506 SLG in 2008, .417 SLG in 2009, .377 SLG in 2010). As a 1st round pick in the 2007 Draft, much more was expected of him by now, and he has gone from one of the top guys in the system just two years ago to now nothing more than a depth option.

Carlos Rivero (SS - Akron)
.232, 39 R, 16 2B, 2 3B, 6 HR, 43 RBI, 28 BB, 81 K, 0 SB, .603 OPS

The Indians added Rivero to the 40-man roster last offseason, but it will be interesting this offseason if he sticks on the 40-man roster considering how much he struggled this season in a return trip to Double-A Akron. The thought was that Rivero had often been two to three years younger than the league he has always played in which in turn resulted in lower output levels, but when he returned to Akron this season his numbers actually got significantly worse. That's not good, and even though he is still just 22-years old, he still has not put up a noteworthy season in the minors to validate why he continually ranks so high as a prospect.

And the 2010 Tony Award goes to…Beau Mills

I'll give Abreu a pass for this season as I think a lot of his struggles were the result of a lack of confidence in his shoulder. The same goes for De La Cruz as it is very hard to come back and pitch a full season after missing the previous season because of a significant injury. I also passed on Carlson here because while he was a high round pick he wasn't a highly rated prospect coming into the season. Finally, Rivero was the most disappointing player last year and really always has been disappointing offensively, so it would be hard to hand the award to him again for a second straight season.

To me, it came down to Mills and Haley. Both were top two round selections who have not lived up to their draft standing to date and have struggled with their performance the past two years. The difference to me is that Mills is 24-years old and may have plateaued as a player at the Double-A level. As a former first round pick, he really needed to come back this season and perform at a high level to remain relevant as a prospect, and it simply did not happen.

Haley on the other hand is still just 20-years old, and we knew coming in that he was extremely raw as a player and that there was a high risk high reward factor in play. He has time to get things turned around, and the Indians supposedly are taking a deep approach this fall in Instructional League with tearing down his mechanics and rebuilding him from the ground up. We'll see if that holds true when the season starts next year and if he can harness the unbelievable talent in his right arm.

Mills is on his way to prospect purgatory. No longer a high level prospect, he is likely to spend a lot of time at the Triple-A level the next several years. He stands a great chance to get some big league action with the Indians or some team in the future, but his career path looks to be that of the dreaded "Four-A" player bouncing around between Triple-A and the big leagues Even with his struggles at Akron the last two years, he is expected to open the 2010 season as

the first baseman at Triple-A Columbus.

Up Next: All-Tony Team

Follow Tony and the Indians Prospect Insider on Twitter @TonyIPI . His latest book the 2010 Cleveland Indians Top 100 Prospects & More is also available for purchase on his site for a special year end closeout sale of $10.00 (including shipping and handling).