An undrafted player tearing up minor league pitching and trailblazing a path to the majors? That's almost unheard of, but that's exactly what Brian Barton (pictured) is doing for the Tribe. Lastoria hits on this, John Farrell's weekly radio spot, Adam Miller being named player of the year, the minor league playoff races, and who we're likely to see called up in September in the latest version of "Minor Happenings" ... the best Indians minor league column on the web.

Minor Happenings" covers the important developments and news in the Indians farm system over the course of the past week. Information in this report is collected from the various news outlets that cover each team, some national news, and in some cases from private sources connected to the Indians organization.

Director's Cuts:

Indians Farm Director John Farrell focused mainly on Akron prospects this week in his weekly interview. Here are his comments on an assortment of players:

On Brian Barton: He is a non-drafted free agent they signed out of the University of Miami who is hitting .325 with 18 HRs, 75 RBIs and 39 steals in 100 games. With the path he has taken and the strides he has made, he has the potential to become a remarkable success story considering he was not drafted. The Indians are still scratching their heads how he went undrafted. He had originally went to Loyola and then transferred to Miami, and the thought is because he had to sit out a year after the transfer along with the concern that he was not serious about baseball (he majored in aerospace engineering) it plummeted his draft

stock and led to him not being selected in the draft. Barton hits for power, average, has very good speed, and can play all three outfield positions. He is on the radar now.

On Trevor Crowe: He recently debuted at 2B for Akron. The plan is to see more of him at 2B for at least the rest of the regular season at Akron and in the Arizona Fall League this winter. Crowe has infield experience prior to college, and with the need at 2B in the system and for the major league club, the Indians are looking at every possibility to get him up here quickly. The Indians will assess his play at 2B, and if they feel the move to 2B is slowing his progress to the majors they will put him back in CF. Crowe projects as a future leadoff hitter because he is an on-base machine, has speed, and is very patient at the plate. The Indians feel he will hit for more power in the future, and feel his best comp is Brian Roberts of the Orioles. Roberts is exactly the player they envision Crowe being.

On Ryan Mulhern: This has not been a successful season for him. While he has been productive (.268 avg, 14 HRs, 61 RBIs), his production to date pales in comparison to the numbers he put up in 2005 (.315 avg, 32 HRs, 94 RBIs). Much of his problem has been a lack of aggressiveness early in the count in not attacking fastballs, and then late in the count being over-aggressive when the pitchers are throwing more breaking balls. He is over-thinking his at bats and just not had a good plan of attack when he steps into the batters box.

On Brad Snyder: The power is there, and there is no denying his physical abilities, but he is still working on his strike zone discipline. His swing is geared for pitches in the zone as when he stays within himself he hits almost everything hard. But, his lack of discipline has led to him being very susceptible to high and outside pitches and pitches in the dirt.

On Ryan Goleski: One of the biggest turnarounds in the system this year, with his strikeout improvement a big key behind Goleski's success. He is much more disciplined and has developed a much better two strike approach at the plate (Goleski's development in these areas is exactly what they wanted to see from Snyder).

Miller Gets a Short Promotion

Top pitching prospect Adam Miller was called up to Buffalo this past Monday to make a spot start for the Bisons. Miller was dominant early on pitching 4 shutout innings, but eventually wore down (94 pitches) in the 5th inning. Overall, Miller lasted 4.2 IP and gave up 3 runs on 4 hits and 3 walks while striking out 4. His time at Buffalo was short-lived, as he was sent back to Akron shortly after the game and is expected to make his next scheduled start today (8/26) for Akron. With Buffalo pretty much out of the playoff picture in the International League, and Akron all but in the playoffs in the Eastern League, Miller's return to Akron was expected so he could help lead the Aeros and win their 3rd league championship in four years.

Lofgren Rested

The Indians decided to skip Kinston left-hander Chuck Lofgren's scheduled start this past week in order to rest him. Lofgren is fine physically, and he is 100% healthy; however, the Indians are aware that Lofgren currently has pitched 128 innings at Kinston this year after pitching only 93 innings last season for Lake County in his first full professional season. The Indians did the same thing with Adam Miller at Akron back in early July, and since then Miller has been unbelievable. Kinston manager Mike Sarbaugh has already tabbed Lofgren as the Game 1 starter when the postseason kicks off for Kinston in early September. Scott Lewis and Joe Ness are expected to round out the rotation in Game 2 and 3.

Non-Special K

To date, Akron outfielder Brad Snyder has 147 strikeouts and is on pace to shatter the single-season strikeout record. The record for most strikeouts in a season is 155, which was set by John Van Every last year. It should be noted that while Van Every set the single season strikeout record at Akron in 2005, he also tied the single season HR record (27). For Snyder, this is not exactly the type of company you want to be in if you envision playing in the big leagues anytime soon, especially when coming into this season you were tabbed the team's #1 position player prospect (before the Marte deal).

Snyder has been somewhat of a disappointment this year. He currently is hitting .260 with 15 HRs, 65 RBIs and 18 stolen bases, which are decent numbers. But, after striking out 158 times in 2005, the idea was to return to Akron and work on his plate discipline and two-strike approach. Snyder is just not consistently making contact and can't lay off pitches high and outside. This has been nothing but a lost season of development for Snyder, and one can only hope he learns from this season and bounces back in 2007 when he likely is at Buffalo.

Francisco Callup Looming?

Buffalo outfielder Ben Francisco is currently not on the 40-man roster, but when the Buffalo season ends Labor Day weekend, he could be added to the 40-man roster and called up to Cleveland. Reason being, Francisco is Rule 5 Draft eligible this winter and if he is not 40-man roster protected he almost certainly will be selected in the draft by another team. Francisco is a 4th outfield candidate next year and he does it all. He can play any outfield position, he hits for average, power, and steals bases. On the year, he is hitting .277 with 17 HRs, 58 RBIs and 24 stolen bases at Buffalo. The Indians should call him up now to get at least a quick look at him before deciding whether to roster him or not.

Also, Francisco's hit steak that ended July 9th will officially go down in the books as a 25-game hit streak. A game that had been suspended during the streak was recently completed this week. Had he not gotten a hit in the makeup of the suspended game, the streak would have reverted to a 13-game hit streak. Francisco doubled in the game to keep the streak at 25 games.

Torres Ailing

Akron placed 2B Eider Torres on the disabled list with a strained left intercostal muscle this week. Torres had been bothered by the injury for about a week, and the Aeros finally decided to shut him down and put him on the disabled list. The injury comes at an unfortunate

time for Torres, as he currently has 40 stolen bases which is tied for the all-time franchise record with Damian Jackson. Torres needs one more stolen base to eclipse the mark that Jackson set in 1995. On the season, the switch-hitting Torres has had somewhat of a breakthrough season as in addition to the 40 stolen bases, the 5'9" 175 pound middle infielder is hitting .273 with 2 HRs and 41 RBIs at Akron.

Rehab Update

Right-hander JD Martin continues his comeback from Tommy John surgery, and was called up to Kinston this week. In his first two appearances, he has totaled 7.1 IP without allowing a run and has given up 5 hits while striking out 8. Prior to his callup to Kinston, in 5 appearances at Lake County (15.0 IP) was 0-1 with a 4.20 ERA with 16 strikeouts, and at Mahoning Valley in 6 appearances (18.0 IP) he was 0-1 with a 1.50 ERA with 13 strikeouts. To date, there have been no reported setbacks with Martin's rehab.

Mr. 100

Congrats to Akron outfielder Ryan Goleski. Friday night, he knocked in his 100th RBI of the season. Putting up 100 RBI seasons in the minors is a rare thing, and Goleski has given no signs of letting up. On the year, he is hitting a combined .305./.392/.553 with 24 HRs and 100 RBIs at Kinston and Akron. He is Rule 5 Draft eligible in the offseason, and most certainly will be added to the Indians 40-man roster to protect him from the draft. He will likely start in Buffalo in 2007, and being on the 40-man roster could see some action with the big league club if the need for an outfielder presents itself.

Akron Honors

The Eastern League announced their post-season All-Star team this past week. Three Akron

players made the team: 2B Eider Torres, 3B Kevin Kouzmanoff, and SP Adam Miller. Also, Adam Miller was named Eastern League Pitcher of the Year, and Akron manager Tim Bogar was named Manager of the Year. On the season, Miller is 13-6 with a 2.88 ERA at Akron. In 140.2 IP he has held opponents to a .229 batting average against and has struckout 142 batters. He is tied for the league lead in wins, 3rd in ERA and 3rd in strikeouts.

On the season, Akron (79-51) is cruising to an Eastern League Southern Division title. With 10 games remaining, they own a 7.5 game lead and their magic number to clinch is 4.

Buffalo Stumble

After battling so hard to get back into the International League playoff race by going 18-7 in a 25 game stretch from July 20 through August 15th, the Bisons have gone 3-7 in their last 10 games and pretty much are out of the playoffs. With 10 games to play, Buffalo is 6 games behind wild-card leading Rochester and at this point an extreme longshot to make the playoffs. What makes this worse, is in 5 of the 7 losses the Bisons have blown leads of at least two runs, and squandered many late leads.

Down In the Valley

Mahoning Valley (33-30) is battling for a spot in the NY-Penn League playoffs. Currently, the Scrappers are tied for 1st with the Auburn Doubledays in the NY-Penn League's Pinckney Division. The regular season ends on Sept 7th, and the Scrappers have 13 games remaining. Four of those games are head-to-head 2-game series matchups against Auburn, of which the final two games of the season are at Auburn. This race should come down to the wire, as another team (State College) is only ½ game out of 1st and another two (Batavia and Jamestown) are both within 3.5 games of first.

Also, right-handed pitcher Erik Stiller won Pitcher of the Week honors in the NY-Penn League. The 6'5" 200 pound pitcher went 0-0 with a 0.00 ERA after pitching 6 innings and allowing only one baserunner (a hit) while striking out 4. On the season, Stiller is a combined 4-5 with a 4.71 ERA in 11 total appearances at Burlington and Mahoning Valley.

Last, the Scrappers almost threw a no-hitter Thursday Night. William Delage and Neil Wagner threw 8.2 innings of no hit baseball only to lose the no-hit bid in the 9 th inning with two outs on an infield single. Delage went 7 innings with 11 strikeouts.

Below Average Debut in the GCL

The debut season in the Gulf Coast League (GCL) for the rookie level GCL Indians came to a close this past week. The GCL Indians finished 21-29 on the season, and in 4th place of the GCL North Division 11 games out of 1st place. The Indians finished 6th in the league out of 13 teams in hitting (.254), but the reason for the poor record and inconsistent play is a direct result of a bad pitching staff that was 12th in the league in ERA (4.58).

Here are some of the final noteworthy statistics (league ranking in parentheses):

Roman Pena (OF): .311 avg (5th), 5 HRs (7th), 23 RBIs, 6 SBs, .911 OPS (2nd)

Lucas Montero (OF): .263 avg, 6 HRs (6th), 26 RBIs, 23 SBs (1st), .781 OPS

Carlos Rivero (SS): .284 avg, 2 HRs, 22 RBIs, 0 SBs, .711 OPS

Jeanmar Gomez (SP): 4-3 (6th in wins), 2.48 ERA (9th), 54.1 IP (3rd), 34 Ks, 1.14 WHIP

Kelvin Diaz (SP): 3-2, 3.65 ERA, 44.1 IP, 43 Ks (7th), 1.29 WHIP

AFL Roster Set

The rosters for the Arizona Fall League (AFL) have been set, and eight Indians minor leaguers will take part in the winter league. The players chosen were pitchers Kyle Collins, Jake Dittler, Scott Roehl, and Tony Sipp along with C Javier Herrera, 1B Michael Aubrey, 2B Trevor Crowe, and OF Brian Barton.

Recent Roster Moves

Pitcher Dan Cevette activated from Lake County disabled list…Pitcher Dan Frega and OF Lucas Montero transferred from the GCL to Mahoning Valley….Pitcher Ryan Morris, pitcher Chris Archer, and C Rob Alcombrack transferred from the GCL to Burlington…..Pitcher TJ Burton was placed on the Kinston inactive list…. Pitcher Mark Jecmen was placed on the Lake County inactive list….OF Roman Pena was transferred from the GCL to Lake County…..Pitcher Ryan Edell was activated from the Lake County disabled list….C Josh Noviskey was released from the Lake County roster.

Parting Shots

With Torres on the disabled list in Akron, outfielder Juan Valdez was called up from Lake County to replace him on the roster….Kinston 1B Stephen Head's 37-game on-base streak with a hit or walk came to an end last Saturday August 19th…. Burlington 1B Felipe Garcia is

the lone Burlington All-Star representative selected for the Appalachian League All-Star Game. On the season, Garcia is hitting .303 with 7 HRs and 39 RBIs in 55 games….Buffalo added infielder Ramon Vazquez to the roster after he cleared waivers, and also called up catcher/infielder Chris Gimenez from Lake County….Jason Stanford and Eddie Mujica combined to pitch a 4-hit shutout last Sunday August 20th. Stanford pitched 6 innings and struckout 7 batters.