As we move ever-closer in our march to the #1 overall player in the system (hint: he's an infielder), we get into a pitching-heavy segment of the list. Eight of these next ten players are pitchers, and the two position players are remarkably similar to each other and will be compared to one another throughout their respective carrers as they fight to make it to the big leagues. Two of the system's closers fall in this range, as well as a couple other power relievers and an overslot 2010 draftee.

Here's a link to the intro and prospects #41-50 , and #31-40 in case you missed them.

30. Matt Packer, LHP

DOB: 8/28/1987

Height/Weight: 6-0/200

Bats/Throws: L/L

Acquired: 32nd round pick in 2009

2010 Stats: 9-7, 2.04 ERA, 123 K and 22 BB in 132 2/3 IP for low A and AA

Scouting report: Packer's fastball generally sits between 90-92 MPH. It has some natural sink to it, and he locates it well and uses it to induce a good amount of groundballs. In addition to the fastball, he throws a curve, slider and change. The best of the three secondary offerings is his changeup, and it helps generate most of his strikeouts. For a guy who has a reputation as more of a command and control lefty, Packer posted an outstanding K/9 rate in Lake County last year of 8.7 in his 95 2/3 innings pitched for the Captains. Packer started out in the bullpen in Lake County, but was moved to the rotation and made 13 starts. He was called up to AA Akron at the end of the season and went a respectable 1-2 with a 3.66 ERA in his 5 starts and one relief appearance for the Aeros down the stretch. For a 32nd round draft pick, pitching in AA in your 1st full professional season is a pretty impressive accomplishment.

Packer is 23 years old, so his success in low A last year was primarily against players his age or younger. That is not a knock on him as he of course had no say in his assignment and did anything the Indians asked him to, but it is something to consider when looking at his prospect standing. AA Akron will be a much bigger challenge, especially when it comes to missing bats.

Lefties with 4 pitches don't exactly grow on trees, and despite being such a late draft choice Packer will have every chance to stick as a starting pitcher. He will likely begin 2011 in the AA rotation, and he's definitely a guy to keep an eye on as he has already had a good deal of success as a professional. The Indians initially envisioned him as a LOOGY-type guy, but with his four pitches and advance feel for his craft, they are going to give him another shot at proving himself as a starter.

Glass half-full: Packer adds a couple MPH to his fastball and continues his breakout as one of the surprise arms in the system in 2011.

Glass half-empty: He gets moved back to the bullpen and focuses on becoming a lefty specialist.

29. Cory Burns, RHP

DOB: 10/9/1987

Height/Weight: 6-1/180

Bats/Throws: R/R

Acquired: 8th round pick in 2009

2010 Stats: 1-2, 1.96 ERA, 42 SV, 81 K and 14 BB in 55 IP between low A and high A.

Scouting report: Burns has a funky, three-part delivery that is reminiscent of some of the Asian pitchers who come over to MLB. He takes a small, slow step with his left foot, pauses for over a second, then comes to his “balance point” with his back to the hitter, pausing again before coming to the plate. To top it all off, when he finally does deliver the ball it comes from a three-quarters angle rather than over the top to generate more movement on the baseball. It’s a deceptive delivery, and one that he has put a lot of effort into mastering and ensuring that he can repeat it the same way, every time. It really helps him hide the ball from the hitter and helps play up his stuff, which is good but not what anyone would call electric.

Burns tops out in the low-90s with his fastball, and throws a slider and a very good changeup as well. He has an attacking mentality on the mound, and goes right after hitters. He's a very confident pitcher, and relishes the closer role. I saw Burns pitch the 10th inning of a combined no-hitter for Kinston last year, and it was clear that he wanted to go out there and shut down the opposing hitters to preserve the hard work of his teammates in the prior 9 innings. Burns is the type of guy managers love to have at their disposal, and would run through a brick wall if his coaches or teammates asked him to.

Burns will likely start out 2011 as the closer for AA Akron. He definitely has a closer's mentality, and is a fun guy to watch pitch. If you see him warming up in the Aeros bullpen, you won't need to look at the number on his back to figure out who he is. His delivery will be a dead giveaway. When Cleveland starts pilfering the Columbus bullpen, Burns will likely get a chance to pitch at the AAA level at some point in 2011.

Glass half-full: Burns eventually becomes a reliever at the back end of a MLB bullpen

Glass half-empty: Burns' delivery quits fooling people, and his stuff doesn't improve enough for him to pitch at the MLB level.

28. Bryan Price, RHP

DOB: 11/13/1986

Height/Weight: 6-4/210

Bats/Throws: R/R

Acquired: In the Victor Martinez deal with the Red Sox. Originally a 1st round sandwich pick of the Red Sox in 2008 (#45 overall)

2010 Stats: 6-3, 1 SV, 3.25 ERA, 69 K and 22 BB in 69 1/3 IP for AA Akron

Scouting report: Price was drafted by the Red Sox out of Rice University, where he had served as their closer. The Sox thought he could start, and moved him into the rotation right away in low A. He continued to start through 2009 when the Indians acquired him, but going into 2010 the decision was made to shift him back to a bullpen role in the Indians organization. He didn't start a game in 2010, making all 40 of his appearances out of the Akron bullpen. It was a solid move, as Price feels more comfortable pitching in a relief role, and his stuff plays up in the shorter outings.

From the pen, Price throws some serious heat from the right side, sitting at 92-95 and getting it up as high as 97. He has a plus slider that is his strikeout pitch, and scouts consider it a major league quality pitch at this point. In addition to the fastball and slider, Price is working on a splitter that he started throwing in 2010. When it is on, the pitch has good downward bite and hitters tend to beat it into the ground. Price was sent to the Arizona Fall League after the 2010 season primarily to work on the pitch, and had mixed results. His AFL ERA was 5.40 in 11 2/3 innings over 9 appearances. Most of the damage was done early though, and in his last 5 outings spanning 7 IP, Price gave up just one earned run. The splitter will help in his effectiveness against lefties in particular, and will be a slower pitch to complement his fastball and hard slider.

Price tweaked his shoulder last year and spent a few weeks on the DL early in the season. It was his only DL stint in his career, and is hopefully his last. Price can sometimes get a little loose with his mechanics, and needs to concentrate on keeping his delivery clean and repeatable. When he does, he has the stuff to pitch out of the back end of the bullpen. He just needs to keep his delivery clean, trust his stuff, and attack hitters.

Price will begin 2011 at either Akron or Columbus. He's one of many power arms in the system that will get a shot at earning a bullpen job with the big club either this year or next.

Glass half-full: Price develops his splitter and joins a formidable MLB bullpen.

Glass half-empty: He struggles with command and is effective only against righties.

27. Jordan Henry, OF

DOB: 6/13/1988

Height/Weight: 6-3/175

Bats/Throws: L/R

Acquired: 7th round pick in 2009

2010 Stats: .312/.411/.356 with 0/29 and 29 steals in 449 at bats between high A and AA.

[redacted] Indians

[redacted] with 6/8 in 70 AB for low A Lake County

[illegible]

[illegible]

2010 Stats: 10-5, 3.9 ERA, 100 K and 61 BB in 135 2/3 IP for high A Kinston

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