With the 8th overall pick in the 1st round of the 2011 MLB Draft, the Indians selected high school shortstop Francisco Lindor out of Monteverde Academy in Monteverde, FL. Lindor is just 17 years old, and won't turn 18 until November 14 of this year. He's 5'11", 170lbs but is far from done growing. He's wiry strong, and will likely add some more muscle to his frame but is not expected to bulk up so much that he outgrows the SS position.

Lindor is a switch hitter, which is somewhat rare for a high school SS. I actually predicted the Lindor pick last week in my draft preview, before changing my mind and having the Diamondbacks select him one pick earlier in my mock yesterday. So the only reason I didn't have us taking Lindor yesterday is because I thought he'd be off the board.

Lindor's calling card is his defense. He's a smooth, athletic fielder with soft hands and a strong arm. He makes difficult plays look easy, and throws well on the move. He's a plus defender who will have no problem sticking at SS for the long haul. He's very good moving to his right and making the jump-throw to 1B on balls in the hole behind him. In addition to making the spectacular plays, Lindor is a steady fielder on the routine groundballs as well, posting a fielding % over .900 his senior year. ESPN's Jason Churchill called Lindor the best HS defensive infielder in the entire draft, saying that "Lindor makes 'crazy play after crazy play' at shortstop, according to scouts who have seen him this spring, and the arm is at least a 60 on the scouting scale. He also possesses plus lateral range and moves as well to his left as any prep shortstop in recent memory."

In addition to his plus defense, Lindor is no slouch at the plate. A switch hitter, he projects to have an above-average hit tool and at least average power for the position. Not seen as a big power guy, he opened some eyes by winning the the AFLAC HR Derby last year. The derby was held in Petco Park, a notorious pitchers park where even major league hitters struggle to hit home runs. Lindor surprised everyone by muscling out 4 HR to beat out some guys who are much bigger than he is and seen as more "power" guys. This isn't to guarantee that he'll have plus power down the road, but it's a good sign that he will hit at least 15-20 HR a season once he develops. Here's some footage of Lindor at the prelims for the AFLAC HR Derby , which were held at the University of San Diego.

Lindor had an outstanding senior season at Monteverde, hitting a stellar .528 with 6 HR. He had 28 hits on the season, 15 of which went for extra bases. Lindor also stole 20 bases in 21 attempts, showcasing above average speed and his outstanding baseball instincts. He has played the game of baseball virtually since he could walk, growing up in Puerto Rico before moving to Florida when he was 12.

Lindor was a member of the U16 National Team that won a gold medal in Taiwan in 2009. He hit an even .500 in Taiwan, with 3 triples and 6 SB. Lindor was seen as a leader on that team, and his coaches have always loved his makeup. He's been described as a baseball rat who is always on a field somewhere, which is great to hear about your top pick. There are no off the field issues or on the field attitude problems with Lindor. He's a leader on the field and his high school coach absolutely raves about not only his talent, but his leadership and the great example he sets every time he steps foot on the diamond.

A lot of experts were expecting the Indians to stay "safe" and select a college arm with their 1st round pick. That's the formula they followed the past two years, taking Alex White and Drew Pomeranz with their 1

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pick. But scouting director Brad Grant maintained all along that he wanted the best player available when the Indians went on the clock, and he didn't waver from that strategy one bit. "There's certainly more of a risk with a young high school player," said Grant. "He's still 17 years old. When you look at that, the development path is going to be a little bit longer. But at the same time, to get a young shortstop in our system is something that was too good to pass by. He's a special player."

Lindor had a late push to go as high as #2 overall to Seattle, as reports had him wowing the Mariners brass in his private workouts. He doesn't have one single plus-plus tool, but projects to be above-average across the board. He actually profiles very similarly to our current shortstop, Asdrubal Cabrera although he isn't built as thick and doesn't project to have quite as much pop as Droobs is showing this season. There's little doubt that he was the best player on the board at #8 overall, and I'm thrilled that the Indians selected him.

Now it comes time to get a contract done, and that is something that will probably go right down to the August 15 deadline. Lindor is committed to Florida State, and will almost certainly want over slot dollars. The Indians knew this going in though, and won't be surprised by his bonus demands. The MLB commissioner's office doesn't like over slot deals to get done too early because it sets a bad precedent, so look for him to sign for around $4.5 million sometime on August 15. With the uncertainty of the new collective bargaining looming and the possibility of hard slotting on the horizon, Lindor would be wise to sign a deal for whatever he can get this year. It won't be an easy process, but I think there's a 90% chance that a deal gets done eventually.

Rounds 2-30 of the MLB draft kick off today at noon. Expect the Indians to stay aggressive and follow their 2010 model where they take quality talent later in the draft and offer them big $ to sign. I've said it before and I'll say it again; the most cost-effective way to build a quality organization is through the draft, even when paying over slot. I fully expect that the club will continue their recent trend of taking the BPA throughout most of the draft, then doing what it taked to get those players signed and in the organization when it's all said and done.

-Got a draft or prospect question? Ask Al on Twitter, @gotribe31