



# COLORADO ROCKIES

## Farm Report

## JUNE 2012



ONEOK Field—Tulsa, OK

Photo courtesy of Matthew Gross

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

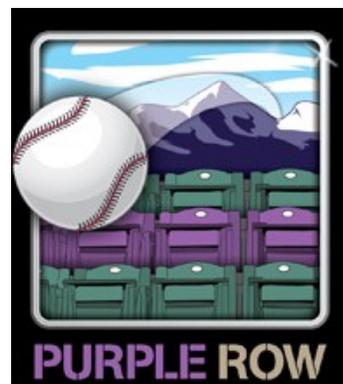
*Josh Rutledge , 2B of the Future?*

*The Rise of Will Swanner*

*Carl Thomore Looks For Fresh Start*

*Preview of Short Season Leagues*

**SB★NATION**  
**DENVER**



## *Introduction*

In our first issue, we promised a new effort during the first week of every month. Due to the MLB Draft (and life) getting in the way, it took us exactly one month to break that promise. Rather, we decided to delay this issue for a week in order to make it more relevant with the impending start of the Rockies' two short season leagues.

First of all, we want to thank Matthew Gross for his contributions to this issue. He has been following the Tulsa Drillers through West Texas for most of the month and has a unique perspective on the current state of the team. His feature article on Josh Rutledge should explain why we should be very, very excited for the potential 2013 debut of this middle infielder.

Andrew Fisher submits a feature article about Asheville Tourists promising catcher Will Swanner. One of the biggest reasons for the Tourists success this year, Swanner has been a force at the plate this season. We also want to thank Chris Swanner, Will's father, for his contributions to this article.

Matthew Muzia submits an article on one of the overlooked talents in the 2011 Draft, outfielder Carl Thomore. The second round pick often gets passed by for other talents such as SS Trevor Story and pitcher Tyler Anderson, but he has the potential to be one of the breakout stars of the season for the Grand Junction Rockies.

Speaking of the Rockies, this issue will also give a brief preview of the short season clubs, who are scheduled to start their seasons in the next week. While many of the 2012 draft picks have yet to be officially signed, we give you a few key names to keep an eye on in Tri-City and in Grand Junction. Our goal is to provide you more in-depth coverage on both of those teams in the July issue.

Again, we hope you enjoy this second edition of the Rockies Farm Report. Our goal is to give you the most in-depth coverage possible. If you have any suggestions (or if you would like to volunteer your services for future issues!), do not hesitate to contact us via Twitter or email. We welcome any suggestions.

—Andrew T. Fisher and Matthew Muzia

Introduction	Page 2
Will Swanner's Breakout	Page 3-4
Journey of Carl Thomore	Page 4-5
Is Josh Rutledge For Real?	Page 6-7
Colorado Springs Sky Sox	Page 8
Tulsa Drillers	Page 9
Modesto Nuts	Page 10
Asheville Tourists	Page 11
Tri City Dust Devils	Page 12
Grand Junction Rockies	Page 13
2012 Draft Class	Page 14
Hot/Cold Prospects	Page 15
Top 30 PuRPs May Splits	Page 16

### ***CONTACT US:***

*Email:* [PurpleRowProspects@gmail.com](mailto:PurpleRowProspects@gmail.com)

*Follow us on Twitter:* [@PR\\_Prospects](https://twitter.com/PR_Prospects)

[Visit Rockies Roster](#) for up-to-date rosters and transactions

[Visit Purple Row](#) for Colorado Rockies discussion and analysis

[Visit SB Nation Denver](#) for Rocky Mountain regional news

*Stats courtesy of:*

[Milb.com](#), [First Inning](#), [Minor League Central](#).

*Disclaimer: All logos and trademarks remain the sole property of the teams and clubs. The Farm Report is in no way affiliated with or supported by any team or club; the viewpoints and opinions expressed in the Farm Report are those of its writers and contributors and are not meant to represent an official opinion, policy, or viewpoint.*

# *Will Swanner Breaks Out In Asheville*

*By Andrew T. Fisher*

The Colorado Rockies have had a fairly consistent late round draft strategy, one that is not too uncommon: draft an exceptional high school athlete with signability concerns, then buy them out of a strong college commitment with a high bonus.

Sometimes, this works exceptionally well. In 2004, Colorado bought Baseball America's #10 position player in the draft out of a University of Miami commitment with a \$925,000 bonus...in the 14th round. That prospect is now the Rockies' leadoff hitter. Two other late bonus babies - Tyler Massey (2008, 14th round, \$525,000) and Delta Cleary Jr. (2008, 37th round, \$250,000) - have not panned out as well. Both are South Atlantic League All-Stars with Low-A Asheville this season, but each initially debuted at that level four seasons ago.

Despite struggles from that duo, the Rockies stayed the course in the 2010 draft, selecting fellow 2012 Tourist All-Star catcher Will Swanner. Considered by scouts to have 2nd-3rd round talent, he slipped all the way to the 15th round due to concerns about a perceived unbreakable commitment to Pepperdine. Will's younger brother Michael is a pitcher; while just over a year younger than Will, Michael was in the same draft class. Both were committed to Pepperdine together, but the Rockies were able to convince Will to start his MLB career with a \$490,000 bonus, which equated to a third-round slot.

As Chris Swanner, father of Will and Michael, told Purple Row after the draft, "It would have been a baseball dad's dream to have both boys go to the same great college baseball program, one pitching and one catching. As it turns out, they are both where they should be."

Will Swanner exploded on the scene with the rookie level Casper Ghosts in 2010, posting one of the most extreme and ridiculous stat lines imaginable. He hit .303 with 7 home runs in just 76 at-bats, yet struck out a nauseating 33 times without drawing a single walk. Despite that K/BB ratio, Baseball America ranked Swanner the #10 prospect in the Pioneer League for 2010, the top ranking position player on a

Ghosts team that included Rafael Ortega and Cristhian Adames.

I had the opportunity to watch Swanner in person on several occasions that summer. He is lean but well-built and athletic, tapping his legitimate raw power not from sheer size, but from exceptional bat speed. In one game, he swung at 11 of the 12 pitches he saw, including a fastball that skipped off the plate. Indeed, his pitch recognition needed a lot of work to unlock the undeniable tools he possessed offensively. Defensively, Swanner showed off a strong throwing arm, but his actions behind the plate remained rough.

[ "I'm] not trying to kill every ball I see." ]

After the season, the Rockies sent Swanner to the Dominican Republic for more work, then held him in Extended Spring training until mid-2011. The Rockies' staff worked diligently with Swanner on both sides of his game.

"2010 was a huge learning year for me just fresh out of high school," Swanner told Purple Row this month. "I feel like the coaches have helped me out a ton, (as well as) just watching the older guys during spring training."

In Casper last year, Swanner's power and batting average numbers dropped, but he showed an important and significant improvement in his plate discipline, decreasing his strikeout rate from 42.3% to 33%, while increasing his walk rate from 0% to 11%. That strikeout rate has plummeted even further to below 24% so far in 2012 upon his promotion to Asheville, which has turned into a bit of a coming out party for Swanner. The 20-year-old catcher out of Carlsbad, California is now hitting .336/.416/.629 through June 10. The difference? Simply:

"(I'm) not trying to kill every ball I see."

Continued on Page 4

Much of Swanner's value as a prospect is tied to his position behind the plate. Unfortunately, his six passed balls, six errors and 6 of 64 runners thrown out this season don't speak well of his potential to stay behind the plate. He expressed a willingness to play the outfield, and his athleticism should play well in a corner position, making him a Wil Myers-lite type prospect.



Will Swanner with the 2011 Casper Ghosts – photo courtesy of Andrew T. Fisher

But don't give up on the idea of Swanner remaining at catcher just yet. He has worked hard at improving his game both defensively and offensively, and due to slow times to the plate by pitchers and less than tight fielding of teammates, his defensively statistical numbers are not wholly reliable.

“(Modesto Nuts hitting coach) John Stone has been with me for the last couple of years. He and I have formed a pretty good relationship by mentoring me in catching and hitting. His attitude towards everything is perfection, and that's what I strive for.”

With all the adjustments he has been able to make offensively, there is no reason to bet against the 20-year-old just yet. The Rockies have been working with him on shortening his release and improving his footwork. If he can improve his defense enough to stick behind the plate, which a scouting contact still believes is quite possible, Swanner could rise to be the next catcher-of-the-future in Colorado quite quickly. If not, he just might hit enough to be a dangerous right-fielder.

*Will Swanner has now reached base in 35 straight games (as of June 12), the best current streak in the South Atlantic League.*

## *Carl Thomore Seeking Fresh Start In Grand Junction*

*By Matthew Muzia*

With the breakout of infielder Trevor Story, the 2011 Colorado Rockies draft class has found their premier face. Yet one of the most overlooked members of this draft class also happens to be one of the players with the most potential, second round selection Carl Thomore. The New Jersey native was taken just after Story, and the outfielder had a disappointing debut to his professional career during a short stint with the Casper Ghosts. As one of the youngest players in the Pioneer League, Thomore batted just .192/.288/.301 and rarely showed off his plus power.

Yet there are plenty of reasons to keep a careful eye on Thomore during 2012. Recent draft history alone suggests a closer look at the speedy outfielder, as the Rockies have struck absolute gold with their second

round selections the past several June drafts, including Chad Bettis (2010), Nolan Arenado (2009), and Charlie Blackmon (2008). Even though Carl Thomore may be overshadowed by other 2011 selections such as Story and other Texan draft picks such as HS outfielder Dillon Thomas (4th rd) and college SS Taylor Featherston (5th rd), Thomore deserves a closer look - not only because he is a talented baseball player, but because of the long and difficult journey that has brought him to the professional ranks.

During his junior year of high school, Thomore suffered a gruesome injury during the state playoffs. While awkwardly sliding into third base, he felt a tremendous pop as his cleat grabbed the dirt, twisting and severely dislocating his ankle.

Continued on Page 5

“When I first saw it, I didn't think I would ever play again.” A medical professional in the stands that night rushed to the field and painfully reset the ankle, saving his foot – and likely his baseball career.

“I'm sure if you told any kid that they had a shot [at professional baseball], they would do anything to get there – so that's what I had to do.”

During the next year, Thomore found himself undergoing a strenuous rehabilitation routine in order to get himself back into baseball shape. “I knew maybe, just maybe, I had a shot at playing pro ball...that motivated me. Like any kid that plays baseball, I've been wanting to do this my whole life, and just to hear that I have a shot at doing that? I'm sure if you told any kid that they had a shot [at professional baseball], they would do anything to get there – so that's what I had to do.”

Last June, however was a moment that he will never forget.

“I was in my house with my whole family and we connected the computer up to the big-screen TV. The 77th pick came by, and it was just a crazy feeling. An adrenaline rush through you and you go 'I'm a professional baseball player now.' It's just crazy to think about. I jumped so high, my fists hit the ceiling.”

Carl Thomore had accomplished his dream of becoming a professional baseball player. Yet the work had just begun. He signed with Colorado and made a late season debut with the Casper Ghosts, joining fellow draftees Trevor Story and Dillon Thomas in the plains of Wyoming – a far cry from New Jersey. His initial thoughts? “Hard, man. Hard. But every day in pro ball, you get a little better. I'm not saying you're going to technically have better stats, but every day I got better at some part of my game.

Thomore played just 43 games with the Ghosts in 2011, but one particular moment stood out during the season. “I didn't do too hot last year, but [my family]

came to town and I did really well for them, even hit a homerun. It was good to have them there, watching that.”

Between the late start to the season and the poor statistical numbers, it's not really a surprise that Thomore has been so quickly forgotten by casual fans. Yet if there is a player that could break out in a big way during the short season, it's Thomore. While some players may get discouraged by a repeat season in rookie ball, the New Jersey native takes it in stride. “It doesn't really matter where I go, I just want to play and get better. Wherever I can go and get my reps in, that's where I want to be.”

Injury related performance can be very difficult to pinpoint, especially for the vast majority of fans who have never entered the trainer's room. But for Thomore, his ankle remained a serious concern even two years later during his first pro season. After another year of workouts, however, Thomore finally feels ready for the grind of professional baseball. “Sometimes I have a little spasm every once in a while but it feels so much better than even two weeks ago. [In April], it was still very weak because I wasn't on my legs a lot, and now I'm getting my strength back in it. I'm feeling fast again.” Combine a serious injury with adjusting to professional ball and it's easy to see why Thomore may have struggled in 2011. A full season under pro trainers – along with a strenuous daily work regimen – could be the secret to a rebound year in 2012.

“...Now I'm getting my strength back in [my ankle]. I'm feeling fast again.”

While still very young for the Pioneer League, Thomore will be the veteran presence in the outfield for the inaugural Grand Junction Rockies season. Much like with Story in 2011, Thomore will be overshadowed by Rockies 2012 first round selection, David Dahl and will be joined by fellow high schooler Max White, the 2012 second round selection. As a repeat prospect, expectations are surprisingly muted for someone with a solid ceiling and potentially plus power. This time, though, Thomore will finally be healthy enough to make a name for himself.

# *Josh Rutledge: Future Second Baseman, Or Just Another False Hope?*

*By Matthew Gross*

Over the last 13 seasons, the Colorado Rockies have had a merry-go-round of mediocrity manning the second base position. The list reads off like a “who’s who” of failed franchise experiments: Mike Lansing, Todd Walker, Jose Ortiz, Ronnie Belliard, Luis Gonzalez (2004 & 2006), Aaron Miles, Kaz Matsui, Jayson Nix, Ian Stewart, Clint Barmes, Jose Lopez, and Marco Scutaro. Those twelve players have combined to give Colorado *a grand total of 4.4 rWAR (Wins Above Replacement) from its Opening Day second basemen over the last 13 years*, and 3.3 of that was solely from Matsui’s 2007 campaign. In other words, the Rockies have been averaging 0.1 WAR from their Opening Day second baseman in years they haven’t gone to the World Series since the turn of the century.

Enter Josh Rutledge, a shortstop by trade who was taken in the 3rd round of the 2010 MLB draft. This year, he’s been splitting time at both middle infield positions in Tulsa (45 games at shortstop and 18 at second base) as he aligns himself for a possible career in Denver. Is he the answer to the Rockies’ revolving door at second base?

## **Hitting**

Without a doubt, this is the tool that stands out most when you see Rutledge play. When he gets hot, the ball is sprayed all over the park; a shot down the left field line, a pitch taken the other way to right field for a double, a line drive towards into the left center field gap, a hot smash up the middle – And that’s not just hyperbole, those were actually the four hits he racked up in a single game against the Midland Rock Hounds on June 2nd.

He’s not always this hot, so putting the “pure hitter” tag on him would be unfair, but a 23 year old who has already showcased the ability to use every inch of the field to his advantage as well as Rutledge has is certainly

promising. He holds the potential to be a .300 hitter during good seasons if he continues to develop.



Rutledge and Nolan Arenado warm up before a game at ONEOK Field. Photo courtesy of Matthew Gross.

## **Hitting For Power**

Rutledge is a middle infielder listed at 6’ 1”, a generous figure according to the eye test. Simply put, he just doesn’t look like a guy with any pop in his bat. But if an opposing pitcher is not careful, those looks will prove deceiving. In just over 250 plate appearances this season, Rutledge has already launched eight home runs, which ties him for the team lead. It’s not a huge number, but when you place it next to the nine second half dingers he hit last season, it does appear as though Rutledge is developing the ability to hit for a little bit of power; and something along the lines of 15 home runs per season no longer seems out of the question.

Even a few of the outs he’s made recently have perked some interest. One such fly ball was in Frisco when he flew out to the edge of the right center field warning track. It wasn’t ever hit well enough to leave the yard, but it was surprising to see him show that much power potential to that part of the ballpark. Then just the oth-

Continued on Page 7

er night, Rutledge hit a ball that was caught on the warning track in deep center field in one of the deeper sections of ONEOK Field. (This one may have gone out on a night where the ball was flying better.)

Even though these two fly balls didn't produce home runs, the results are intriguing. When a pitcher makes a mistake, Rutledge can hit the ball with authority to both left and center field.

### **Running Game**

Rutledge has stolen 13 bases this season while only being caught three times, but he hasn't done it on quickness alone. Instead, he combines good (not great) speed with smart decision making. Rutledge isn't guaranteed to go for second every time he's on first, but if a pitcher doesn't keep a close eye on him, he'll be more than happy to swipe the bag, making him an annoying distraction for opposing pitchers.

In addition, his instincts are above average. Right out of the box Rutledge seems to know when he can turn a single into a double or a double into a triple; just as he seems to know when he can go from first to third on the base paths, and maybe more importantly, when he can't. As a base runner in general, he seems to be able to find that balance between patience and aggression better than most.

### **Defense (Range & Arm)**

Before a recent game, I asked Rutledge about splitting time at second base and shortstop this season. "It's actually been a pretty easy transition" he said. "The ground balls are pretty much the same and I worked at it in the offseason. The biggest thing is learning to make the turn on the double play - That's new".

His actions have certainly backed up his words, as he's looked solid playing both positions. While not an exceptional defender, he has made rangy plays to both his right and left at both second and short. He also displays those good instincts on this side of the ball. In a game against Frisco for example, Rutledge was the middle man in a potential 4-6-3 double play. When he realized that he wasn't going to get the man at first, he spun around and fired a strike home, nailing a runner

who rounded third and got greedy.

The other half of his defense (the arm) is a mixed bag. He doesn't have a cannon, and he has borderline arm strength wise if a team wanted him to stay at short. (At second base, however, his arm is more than sufficient.) The aspect of his arm that can't be questioned though is its accuracy. Regardless of where he's playing, Rutledge gets the ball to its destination without much incident.

"The ground balls are pretty much the same and I worked at [second base] in the offseason. The biggest thing is learning to make the turn on the double play - That's new".

### **The Red Flag**

One thing that Rutledge does not do very well is walk. In fact, he went an astonishing 121 consecutive plate appearances (between late April and mid May) without drawing one. With a BB rate of only 4.8%, this season, it does put a damper on his hitting skills as it's unlikely he'll ever be a well above average OBP player. Minor league BB% is one of the stats that most strongly correlates to major league success.

### **The Verdict**

None of Rutledge's tools strikes you as outstanding. Instead, he's a guy that you have to watch for several games in order to fully appreciate what he brings to the table. His biggest asset is that he has so many ways to contribute: A solid hitter with perhaps a little bit of pop, a smart base runner, and a guy who can at worst hold his own on defense. He's a "sum of all parts" type player; but if that's enough to eventually make him the Rockies Opening day second baseman for several consecutive seasons, then he'll provide this franchise with something it's desperately needed for a long time.



## Colorado Springs Sky Sox (AAA)

Record: 30-34

7.5 GB Pacific Coast League Northern Division

Record in May: 12-17

Record in June: 5-6

### You Need To Know...

Teams at the AAA level are often ruthlessly treated by their big league teams in terms of roster construction, but this is never more true than when the big league teams struggle. As a side effect of the Rockies' big league rotation woes, the Sky Sox have found their rotation constantly morphing. Their 29 games in May used a total of 11 different starting pitchers - including **Christian Friedrich**, **Alex White**, **Drew Pomeranz**, **Tyler Chatwood**, and **Jorge de la Rosa**.

### Player To Watch

22-year-old **Tyler Chatwood** was acquired for **Chris Iannetta** this off-season after starting 22 games for the 2011 Angels in 2011. His 2012 campaign has been derailed by an assignment to the MLB bullpen, and his May slowed by injury. Now healthy and in a consistent role, he can start working towards the MLB rotation.

### Tim Wheeler, Forgotten Man

**Tim Wheeler** set the Tulsa Drillers record last season for home runs - as a center fielder - yet he seems to get forgotten. The Rockies selected a center fielder, **David Dahl**, 10th overall in last week's draft. The outfield is getting crowded on the big league club, with **Dexter Fowler** breaking out, **Carlos Gonzalez** entrenched, **Michael Cuddyer** early in his contract and **Tyler Colvin** pushing for starts.

Wheeler's name got lost a bit when he broke his hamate bone in April, forcing him to miss six weeks. He returned June 1, and after going 0-for-5 in his return, he has recorded a hit in the nine games since. He is now hitting .292/.370/.385 on the season through June 11. The power has not appeared - and due to the nature of his injury, it probably won't for a while - but he is performing well. His development will undoubtedly figure into decisions with the 25-man roster in 2013.

### Sky Sox Rotation Become Necessary Saviors

The Colorado Rockies' rotation is on a near record pace for futility. They have used 10 starters already, four of whom were in the Sky Sox rotation at some point. While **Bob Apodaca** and company search for answers with the big league club, the savior might be in a Sky Sox uniform this July.

The first hope is that **Drew Pomeranz** cleans up his delivery. He absolutely has big league stuff, but he had lost velocity on his fastball, and he has walked five in consecutive starts in AAA. **Tyler Chatwood** could figure in eventually as well, but he has struggled in Colorado Springs with ineffectiveness and injury.

Two other names that could help are currently in the infirmary. **Juan Nicasio** was placed on the disabled list June 3 with a knee strain. He has since had fluid drained of the knee, and appears ready to start his return later in the month.

**Jorge de la Rosa** is the main hope. Sidelined last May with a torn UCL, the southpaw has been attempting a comeback from Tommy John surgery this season. Originally believed to be eligible to return around now, de la Rosa has had his rehab assignment indefinitely halted due to a small presence of fluid in his pitching elbow. Up to that point, he had not pitched well, throwing to a 7.79 ERA in six starts.

A month ago, **Alex White** and **Christian Friedrich** successfully parlayed strong AAA starts into a big league job. The Rockies need one of these other four to do the same in the next month.



## Tulsa Drillers (AA)

Record: 34-28

Lead Texas League North Division

Record in May: 11-17

Record in June: 5-5

### You Need To Know...

Unfortunately, the Drillers' offense has not been very good. It's not just that they've scored the fewest runs of any team in the Texas League; it's that they lack a thumping bat in the middle of the order and are forced to put in several below average ones at the bottom of it on a nightly basis. Not a single regular has an OPS over .800. **Josh Rutledge** leads the team with a .787 OPS, with **Nolan Arenado** and **Ben Paulsen** not far behind at .769 and .768. This team has been completely devoid of above average plate production. Even worse is that **Angelys Nina** and **Michael Mitchell**, both of whom have sub .600 OPS seasons going, have already combined for 425 PA.

### Player To Watch

**Joseph Gardner**, acquired as the third pitcher in the **Ubaldo Jimenez** trade, is finding his groove. In the past four starts, Gardner has pitched 25.1 IP, allowed 8 ER, and has forced 39 ground ball outs to just 16 flyball outs.

### Chad Bettis Amidst A Lost Season

If no news is bad news (and it probably is in this case) then the news on **Chad Bettis** is terrible.

The Rockies have kept information regarding Bettis' return under wraps as if they were the Secret Service protecting highly classified information, and if the Drillers know anything, they aren't talking either.

At this point, we should be prepared for a worst case scenario. This looks to be a lost year of development for one of the Rockies' top pitching prospects — one who had a great shot at an MLB debut this fall.

### Struggling Starters, Solid Bullpen

It's not that Tulsa's starting rotation has been bad, it's that it's been the proverbial box of chocolates — "You never know what you're gonna get".

Even the most consistent pitcher on the staff **Dan Houston** was not immune to these fluctuations as he went seven strong innings in Midland (only giving up two earned runs), before struggling through five innings when coming back home.

With Tulsa's rotation, any pitcher on any day could throw a gem. Gardner with his heavy sinker, **Edwar Cabrera** with his high strikeout potential, **Nick Schmidt** with his impeccable command, and **Parker Frazier** and Houston with their ability to keep hitters off balance. When on, all have shown they can be dominant at times. None of them, however, have shown the ability to pitch consistently. It makes for an interesting team to follow, but it's not good news for you're looking for pitching help in the Colorado rotation.

With a mediocre offense and inconsistent starting pitching, this team's biggest weapon has been the bullpen. It's easy to notice Tulsa's closer **Coty Woods** and his eye popping 0.34 ERA, but there are no fewer than five members of this pen with an ERA of 3.00 or lower. Unfortunately, only Woods is younger than 26, so the odds of the other members of this group helping the Rockies pen in the future are slim.

A bit more about Woods: he works quickly, he gets ahead in the count, and he gets batters out. His fastball generally hits 92mph and he collects a good mixture of weak ground balls and strikeouts with the late movement on his pitches. When he enters a game with the lead, there's a sense in the ballpark that it's already over — and so far this season, it has been.



## Modesto Nuts (A - Advanced)

Record: 32-33

6.5 GB California League North Division

Record in May: 15-15

Record in June: 6-5

### You Need To Know...

Modesto has found themselves hovering around .500 all season - this despite ranking 3rd in the California League in runs and batting average, with one of the more pitching-oriented parks in the league. The reason is the rotation. While **Tyler Matzek** and **Christian Bergman** have been All-Stars, the only other two pitchers with an ERA under 5.00 to start a game are Jorge de la Rosa (4.76, 2 GS) and 27-year-old **Brandon Hynick** (3.74, 5 GS).

### Player To Watch

After starting off extremely slowly in Modesto (hitting .191 in April), the 20-year-old Dominican shortstop **Cristhian Adames** really turned it on in May. He hit **.352/.392/.484** in the season's second month. That earned him some time at the top of the lineup, and if this young defensively solid shortstop continues to hit, he will vault up prospect lists in a hurry.

### Kyle Parker At A Crossroads

This is an important season for **Kyle Parker**. As a football convert who had suffered a broken rib, his unspectacular 2011 season in Asheville was largely excused as a mulligan. Parker missed most of April with a wrist contusion from getting hit by a pitch, delaying his sophomore campaign.

In May, Parker hit **.236/.295/.403** over 75 plate appearances with 7 extra base hits (3 on May 19th alone). — not the type of line the Rockies are looking for from a 22-year-old first round pick in A-ball with massive raw power.

Parker might be still shaking off early season rust or bothered by the lingering injury, Soon though, Parker needs to start producing in a big way, or his prospect stock will take a hit. As 2011 California League MVP **Kent Matthes** can attest, the jump from Modesto to Tulsa is a big one.

### Modesto Loses Their Best Player

The Modesto Nuts were the proud owners of the California League MVP in 2011, as right fielder **Kent Matthes** took home the honors with a **.334/.378/.642** line, complete with 23 home runs. The 2012 squad had another corner outfielder threatening to repeat that hardware.

Left-fielder **Corey Dickerson** was the Rockies' 8th round selection in the 2010 draft. Two years ago today, Dickerson had zero professional at-bats, but in those two years, he has not stopped hitting. The 23-year-old product of Mississippi posted a 1.046 OPS in Casper in 2010. He then assaulted the South Atlantic League to the tune of a .986 OPS in 2011, and he nearly matched that with a .980 mark in 2012 against stiffer competition with a much less offense-friendly home park.

Dickerson's eye-popping numbers in Asheville last season came with some red flags. He hit **.354/.417/.844** with 26 HR at home, but just **.193/.280/.363** on the road. The left-handed hitter also struggled vs. southpaws, hitting **.235** with a **.314 OBP vs LHP** in 2011.

In two months' time, Dickerson erased those concerns. This season, he has actually hit lefties much better (**.389/.450/.648 vs LHP**, **.323/.381/.565 vs RHP**), and he has hit better on the road. Overall, Dickerson was ranked 6th in the CAL in OPS, 1st in doubles, 3rd in total bases, 4th in hits, 7th in OBP, and 4th in batting average.

So the Rockies completed a rare maneuver - they promoted a non-elite prospect after just two months at a new level. Clearly, the Rockies are eager to find out what they truly have in Dickerson, and that cannot be accomplished at A-ball. In his AA debut on June 11, he hit a home run in his second at-bat. Let the ride begin.



## Asheville Tourists (A)

Record: 44-20

Lead South Atlantic League Northern Division

Record in May: 21-10

Record in June: 7-3

### You Need To Know...

The Tourists continue their torrid pace, lapping the rest of the SAL with a combination of experienced pitching and impact youth. With plenty of firepower, the Tourists are very strong (especially up the middle) and are sending five players to the SAL All-Star Game. CF **Delta Cleary, Jr.**, 1B **Harold Riggins**, 2B **Sam Mende**, OF **Tyler Massey**, and C **Will Swanner**.

### Player To Watch

**Taylor Featherston** was a 5th round selection in 2011, and struggled in limited at bats in Tri-City. This year, he's dominating the SAL. The TCU product has a .937 OPS for the season, and heating up.

Over his last 10 games, Featherston is boasting the following line: .472/.558/.750, good for a 1.308 OPS.

### Anderson Arrives In Asheville

After signing late in 2011 and a groin injury that sent him to Extended Spring Training, the Rockies 2011 first round pick **Tyler Anderson** finally made his debut with the Asheville Tourists.

The polished college lefty has now made six starts with Asheville, with very mixed results. While he's kept runs off the board, Anderson has allowed 8.29 H/9 in his first 33.2 IP with a middling 5.8 K/9 rate.

While these results can be explained away with the potential lingering injury, it's looking less likely that Anderson advances quickly through the Minors this season as previously hoped.

### The Rosell Herrera Dilemma

Middle infielders **Trevor Story**, **Taylor Featherston**, and **Sam Mende** all currently sport an OPS over .920, leaving little space for one of the most talented prospects in Asheville this season, **Rosell Herrera**.

After a spectacular debut in Casper last season, leading to Baseball America proclaiming him the fifth best prospect in the Pioneer League, Herrera has struggled to stay above the Mendoza Line in his promotion to Asheville. With so many players demanding playing time ahead of him, Herrera has seen his playing time diminish -- he has only started one game since May 27 (and that was part of a June 10 doubleheader).

The obvious solution would be to promote one of the college draftees (Featherston or Mende) to Modesto and free up consistent playing time for Herrera. Instead, the Rockies filled the empty roster spot with recently released Cleveland Indians shortstop **Casey Frawley**.

Frawley, a 17th round selection in 2009 by Cleveland, has never really hit in the minors (though his contact rates have always been solid) and represents a curious decision by the Rockies front office, especially at a position of organizational depth.

Overall, the situation is reaching critical mass and Herrera represents too large of an investment to simply let sit on the bench. He's the rawest infielder in Asheville, and needs to see regular playing time to refine his approach. If not with the Tourists, perhaps Herrera should follow 2011 Tourist **Peter Tago** to Tri-City.





## Tri-City Dust Devils (A-)

Record: 0-0

2011 Record: 44-32

Season Opener: Friday, June 15 vs. Everett AquaSox

### You Need To Know...

Last season, the Dust Devils advanced all the way to the Northwest League championship on the backs of their advanced pitching staff. With **Ben Alsup**, **Christian Bergman**, and **Dan Winkler** now pitching in full season leagues, Tri-City will have to adjust to a new set of names.

#### Player To Watch

Catcher **Aaron Jones** just finished his college career at Oregon, and will sign with Colorado. The 18th round pick has good power and very good arm strength. Along with third round pick **Tom Murphy**, the Dust Devils should have their best catching tandem in years.

#### Plenty Of Old Faces

This Dust Devils team will look familiar to Tri-City fans. Along with the returns of **Josh Slaats**, the Dust Devils will see plenty of returning names from previous seasons:

OF **Charlie Blackmon** has been assigned to Tri-City as part of a rehab assignment for turf toe. Blackmon set the Dust Devils' single season hits record back in 2008. IF **Joey Wong** played for A+ Modesto last year, and has also been sent to Tri-City for a rehab assignment.

Pitchers **Tyler Gagnon**, **Eric Federico**, and **Roberto Padilla** are among the many pitchers that are currently assigned to Tri-City. Some of these players may be reassigned once the season gets under, pushed out by 2012 draft picks such as likely Dust Devil **Seth Willoughby**, the Rockies 5th round selection in 2012 out of Xavier. Willoughby is expected to move quickly through the minors.

### Rotation Looks To Be A Strength

While last year's Dust Devils rode a solid, veteran rotation to the championship game, this year's likely rotation will have more intrigue. Regression in the California League means a return to Tri-City for 2010 fifth round pick **Joshua Slaats**, who was unable to build off his dominant finish in Asheville last season. He will be joined by 2010 first round pick **Peter Tago**, who has a live fastball but was unable to find much success as one of the youngest players in the South Atlantic League last year. Tago has spent the first part of this season working on refining his delivery during Extended Spring Training at Salt River and is set for a rebound campaign.

These two veterans will likely be joined by 2012 first round pick **Eddie Butler**. The Radford College product isn't physically large, but he comes armed with a mid-90s fastball and two secondary pitches that need some work. Much like **Chad Bettis** in 2010, **Butler** is currently viewed as a likely back end reliever, but will be given a chance to prove he can stick in the rotation long term.

Also joining them in the rotation is 11th round selection **T.J. Oakes**. The University of Minnesota product sits in the low 90s with his fastball and is a known strike thrower. With a rotation filled with unrefined potential, expect **Oakes** to stand out statistically from the rest of this group as his pitching approach should prove advanced for most of the Northwest League.

For the second season in a row, the Dust Devils will have a rotation that gives them a solid chance at another division title.



## Grand Junction Rockies (R)

Record: 0-0

2011 Record: 27-49

Season Opener: Monday, June 18 at Ogden Raptors

### You Need To Know...

The Grand Junction Rockies are set to make their franchise debut at Suplizio Field later this week, after completing their move from Casper. While the 4+ hour bus rides to away games haven't gone away, at least the former Ghosts will be able to enjoy the finest facilities in the Pioneer League. While the novelty of a new team should drive attendance, the Grand Junction Rockies should be able to field a competitive team as well.

#### Player To Watch

Starter **Zack Jemiola** has an intriguing arm. The 2012 ninth round pick has a fastball that hit the mid-90s before getting hit by a pitch derailed his senior year at Great Oak HS. The arm has plenty of upside (especially if he can regain his velocity), but he's definitely a serious project at this point.

#### DSL Pitcher Headlines Rotation

Almost every season, a top young pitching prospect comes over from the Dominican Summer League to make his stateside debut. This year, it appears that **Johendi Jiminian**, 19, will get the call. Signed as a free agent in 2010, Jiminian is considered an advanced pitching prospect for his age.

The young Dominican still has room to fill out his 6'3" frame, and could still see some added velocity to his 90 mph fastball, as well as an advanced curveball. His polish should transition well to the Pioneer League, and was a major reason he made the trip ahead of other DSL arms such as **Jayson Aquino** and **Joel Payamps**. Jiminian hopes to follow the path of other latin signings including **Juan Nicasio**, **Edwar Cabrera**, and **Jhoulys Chacin**.

### Colorado Kids Stay Home

With one of their two third round picks, Colorado selected starting pitcher **Ryan Warner** out of Colorado Springs' Pine Creek High School. The 6'7" right hander displays projectable frame to go along with his standout athleticism, as he quarterbacked the Pine Creek football team to the state championship.

Warner will be joined by 16th round selection **Jeffrey Popick**, an outfielder out of Colorado Mesa College. While most college players find their way to Tri-City straight out of the draft, the Colorado Rockies have assigned Popick to Grand Junction. The college senior went undrafted last year after, but his athletic frame (and 1.100+ OPS this past spring) placed him firmly on the Rockies' radar.

#### Star Studded Outfield

Last season, the Casper Ghosts outfield was led by **Carl Thomore**, intriguing Australian free agent **David Kandilas**, and fourth round selection **Dillon Thomas**. For their first season in Grand Junction, the Rockies have upped the ante. Thomore will return for his second season in the Pioneer League, and will be joined by 2012 first round selection **David Dahl**. The high schooler received rave reviews for his speed and cannon arm, and has the ability to play in center field. They will be joined by second round selection **Max White**, another toolsy high school outfielder "[with plus speed, sneaky power](#)". As a former pitcher, White also has a very strong arm. All three outfielders should be plus defenders, and all should constitute the upper part of the GJ Rockies lineup.

# Colorado Rockies 2012 Draft Class

Round	Pick #	Name	Pos	B/T	Ht	Wt	DOB	Twitter	Signed
	10	David Dahl	OF	L / R	6' 2"	185	4/1/1994	@ddahl21	6/12/2012
CA	46	Eddie Butler	RHP	S / R	6' 2"	180	3/13/1991	@Butler4Life	Unsigned
	73	Max White	CF	L / L	6' 2"	175	10/10/1993		Unsigned
	105	Tom Murphy	C	L / R	6' 1"	200	4/3/1991		Unsigned
CB	128	Ryan Warner	RHP	L / R	6' 7"	195	1/21/1994		Unsigned
	138	Seth Willoughby	RHP	R / R	6' 2"	195	6/28/1990	@Swag_003	Unsigned
	168	Matt Wessinger	SS	R / R	6' 0"	180	9/20/1990		Unsigned
	198	Matthew Carasiti	RHP	R / R	6' 3"	205	7/23/1991	@Siti_11	Unsigned
	228	Wilfredo Rodriguez	C	R / R	5' 10"	202	1/25/1994		Unsigned
	258	Derek Jones	RF	L / L	6' 0"	210	6/3/1990		Unsigned
	288	Zachary Jemiola	RHP	L / R	6' 3"	200	4/6/1994		Unsigned
	318	Ben Waldrip	1B	L / L	6' 6"	245	6/27/1990		Unsigned
	348	T.J. Oakes	RHP	R / R	6' 5"	210	7/15/1990	@Oakes39	6/10/2012
	378	Correlle Prime	1B	R / R	6' 5"	200	2/18/1994		Unsigned
	408	Kyle Von Tungeln	CF	L / L	5' 9"	175	9/18/1990		Unsigned
	438	Shane Broyles	RHP	R / R	6' 1"	180	8/19/1991	@ShaneBro93	6/10/2012
	468	Scott Oberg	RHP	R / R	6' 2"	205	3/13/1990		Unsigned
	498	Jeffrey Popick	LF	R / R	6' 3"	220	6/17/1989		Unsigned
	528	Jason Stolz	SS	R / R	6' 2"	200	3/21/1990	@Jstolz_2	Unsigned
	558	Aaron Jones	C	R / R	6' 1"	205	4/14/1991		Unsigned
	588	Kyle Newton	3B	R / R	5' 10"	185	7/3/1990		6/8/2012
	618	Anthony Seise	LHP	R / L	6' 1"	188	2/23/1993	@seise23	Unsigned
	648	Rayan Gonzalez	RHP	R / R	6' 3"	175	10/18/1990		Unsigned
	678	Jordan Mejia	RHP	R / R	6' 2"	190	4/6/1991		Unsigned
	708	Andrew Brown	RHP	R / R	6' 2"	195	11/11/1989		6/10/2012
	738	Michael Mason	LHP	R / L	6' 3"	190	4/3/1990		Unsigned
	768	Alec Mehrten	SS	R / R	6' 3"	190	7/24/1990		6/10/2012
	798	Adam Paulencu	RHP	R / R	6' 4"	205	11/17/1990		Unsigned
	828	Matthew Flemer	RHP	R / R	6' 2"	210	11/22/1990		Unsigned
	858	Ryan Arrowood	RHP	R / R	6' 3"	190	8/24/1990	@Arrowood21	6/10/2012
	888	Patrick Hutcheson	2B	L / R	5' 10"	185	10/9/1989		6/10/2012
	918	Trent Blank	RHP	R / R	6' 2"	175	8/31/1989		Unsigned
	948	Shawn Stuart	RHP	R / R	6' 3"	210	12/26/1988		Unsigned
	978	Austin Simcox	SS	R / R	6' 3"	180	6/22/1994		Unsigned
	1008	Ryan Garvey	RF	R / R	6' 1"	190	3/30/1993	@SteveGarvey6	Unsigned
	1038	Chris Cowell	C	R / R	6' 4"	215	12/23/1989		Unsigned
	1068	Justin Solomon	2B	R / R	5' 9"	165	8/19/1994		Unsigned
	1098	Kevin Bradley	SS	S / R	6' 0"	195	1/9/1994		Unsigned
	1128	Casey Burns	3B	R / R	6' 3"	185	9/30/1993	@Casey_C_Burns	Unsigned
	1158	James Swanson	SS	R / R	6' 0"	175	2/11/1994		Unsigned
	1188	Justin Dillon	RHP	R / R	6' 3"	220	9/5/1993		Unsigned
	1218	Brandon Montalvo	C	R / R	6' 1"	185	3/25/1994		Unsigned

Thru 6/10

## Colorado Rockies Farm - Top Hitters



Hitters



Will Swanner (C) 7 HR, 25 XBH, .336 AVG, 1.038 OPS



Corey Dickerson (OF) 9 HR, 37 XBH, .338 AVG, 0.980 OPS



Harold Riggins (1B) 11 HR, 28 XBH, .314 AVG, 0.957 OPS



Sam Mende (IF) 8 HR, 32 XBH, .319 AVG, 0.937 OPS



Trevor Story (SS) 10 HR, 30 XBH, .285 AVG, 0.935 OPS

## Colorado Rockies Farm - Top Pitchers



Pitchers



Drew Pomeranz 8.7 K/9, 1.53 WHIP, 1.59 ERA



Christian Bergman 6.90 K/9, 1.09 WHIP, 2.80 ERA



Tyler Matzek 9.8 K/9, 1.38 WHIP, 2.87 ERA



Dan Houston 4.60 K/9, 1.26 WHIP, 3.25 ERA



Tyler Anderson 5.90 K/9, 1.15 WHIP, 3.48 ERA



## Rockies Hottest Prospects This Week

Taylor Featherston (IF) 2 HR, 5 XBH, .400 AVG, 1.303 OPS



Josh Rutledge (IF) 2 HR, 7 XBH, .333 AVG, 1.021 OPS



William Swanner (C) 1 HR, 2 XBH, .364 AVG, 1.007 OPS



Christian Bergman (P) 13 strikeouts, 11 hits allowed, 1.35 ERA



Jayson Aquino (P) 3 strikeouts, 5 hits allowed, 1.29 ERA



Graphics courtesy of Charlie Drysdale

## Purple Row Top 30 Prospects May Splits

PuRP #	Hitter	Level	Position	PA	BA	OBP	SLG	OPS	HR	SB	CS	K%	BB%	BABIP
2	Nolan Arenado	AA	3B	28	.289	.288	.421	.709	3	0	0	12.7%	0.8%	.303
3	Willin Rosario	MLB	C	66	.246	.288	.590	.878	6	1	1	25.8%	4.5%	.231
7	Kyle Parker	A+	RF	78	.236	.295	.403	.698	2	0	0	21.8%	6.4%	.283
8	Tim Wheeler	AAA	CF	0	N/A - was on DL	entirety of May								
9	Josh Rutledge	AA	SS/2B	121	.292	.339	.442	.781	3	5	0	14.9%	5.0%	.326
10	Charlie Blackmon	AAA (DL)	OF	0	N/A - was on DL	entirety of May								
11	Rosell Herrera	A	3B/SS	81	.189	.238	.270	.508	0	3	1	14.8%	6.2%	.222
12	Trevor Story	A	SS	118	.305	.381	.581	.962	5	2	0	17.8%	9.3%	.342
15	Rafael Ortega	A+	CF	134	.320	.366	.434	.800	1	7	7	11.9%	6.7%	.355
19	Corey Dickerson	A+	LF	133	.345	.421	.664	1.085	7	4	2	17.3%	11.3%	.379
20	Thomas Field	AAA	SS/2B	103	.289	.356	.422	.778	2	0	0	11.7%	7.8%	.312
21	Will Swanner	A	C	70	.311	.386	.656	1.042	4	0	0	24.3%	10.0%	.366
22	Kent Matthes	AA	RF	108	.188	.231	.337	.568	3	3	2	25.9%	5.6%	.225
24	Jordan Pacheco	MLB	3B	84	.317	.321	.451	.773	1	2	0	10.7%	1.2%	.342
25	Cristian Adames	A+	SS	99	.352	.392	.484	.876	0	1	0	15.2%	6.1%	.393
26	Ben Paulsen	AA	1B	83	.284	.361	.351	.712	1	0	0	27.7%	10.8%	.400
28	David Kandelias	A	CF	37	.286	.459	.464	.923	0	2	0	13.5%	24.3%	.348
30	Hector Gomez	AAA (DL)	SS	0	N/A - was on DL	entirety of May								
HM	Dillon Thomas	unassigned	OF	0	N/A - will be assigned to Tri-Cities									
HM	Sam Mende	A	IF	95	.407	.463	.674	1.137	3	7	0	14.7%	6.3%	.464
HM	Mike Zuanich	AA	OF	35	.226	.314	.355	.669	1	0	0	31.4%	11.4%	.316

PuRP #	Pitcher	Level	Position	G	IP	Record	ERA	WHIP	K%	BB%	G8%	HR/9	FIP	BABIP
1	Drew Pomeranz	AAA	LH SP	4	19.2	2-2	2.29	1.32	23.3%	2.3%	40.6%	0.79	2.79	.355
4	Chad Bettis	AA (DL)	RH SP	0	N/A - was on DL	entirety of May								
5	Tyler Matzek	A+	LH SP	6	33.1	3-0	2.16	1.11	24.6%	17.4%	45.0%	0.00	3.32	.163
6	Alex White	MLB	RH SP	5	28.2	1-3	6.28	1.57	14.0%	5.4%	52.0%	1.26	4.70	.337
13	Edwar Cabrera	AA	LH SP	5	30.1	2-3	4.75	1.35	10.1%	14.0%	39.8%	1.48	5.01	.261
14	Tyler Anderson	A	LH SP	4	24	3-0	3.75	1.04	19.1%	3.2%	47.9%	0.75	3.16	.286
16	Peter Tago	unassigned	RH SP	0	N/A - will be assigned to Tri-Cities									
17	Christian Friedrich	MLB	LH SP	5	29	3-1	5.52	1.59	24.4%	6.1%	31.9%	0.62	2.72	.409
18	Joe Gardner	AA	RH SP	5	25	1-2	6.48	1.44	19.6%	5.4%	57.8%	1.08	3.84	.333
23	Albert Campos	released	RH SP	0	N/A - released on April 19									
27	Josh Slaats	A+	RH SP	3	10	1-2	7.04	2.04	17.1%	11.7%	38.2%	1.17	5.33	.389
29	Jayson Aquino	unassigned	LH SP	0	N/A - assigned to DSL Rockies									
HM	Edgmer Escalona	AAA	RH RP	7	6.2	1-1	2.7	1.35	24.1%	6.9%	65.0%	0.00	2.00	.350
HM	Dan Houston	AA	RH SP	5	32.2	2-2	2.48	1.41	12.1%	7.9%	56.0%	0.28	3.84	.290