



COLORADO ROCKIES

Farm Report

JULY 2012



2012 1st Round Selection David Dahl

Photo courtesy of Charlie Drysdale

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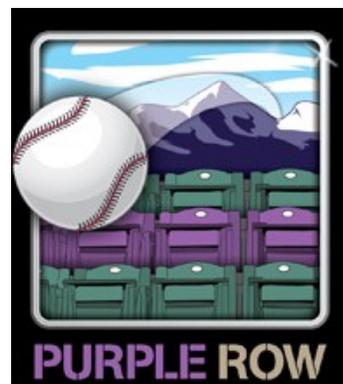
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Introduction

This is perhaps the most exciting time of the year for minor league baseball. Not only have the short season kicked into high gear, but the full season leagues have entered the second half of the season. That means clean slates and a fresh opportunity to reach the postseason. Top prospects have passed the Super Two deadline, leading to exciting major league debuts.

With the new CBA this season, the draft signing deadline now falls in mid July. Unlike previous seasons, when late signees would hold out until the middle of August to sign a contract (and occasionally missing an entire season of developmental time), most 2012 draftees have already signed and have made their professional debuts.

In this issue, we are pleased to introduce our first interview with a 2012 draftee. Third round selection and current Tri-City Dust Devils catcher Tom Murphy joins us to talk about his experiences before the draft, and fills us in on what the first few weeks of professional ball really look like.

We are also pleased to introduce our main feature in this issue, an interview with Baseball America's #86 prospect, right-handed pitcher Chad Bettis. Since injuring his shoulder in April, there has been very little news on the promising pitching prospect. With this exclusive interview, we hope to shine a little light on that mystery.

This issue would not exist without the cooperation of Bettis' representatives at Sosnick Cobbe Sports, who helped set up a face-to-face interview with the young pitcher. We are also grateful to Jeff Randazzo of The Warner Companies, who represents Tom Murphy and was more than willing to make time for this interview.

Finally, we are now using the latest PuRP voting to track the stats of the top 30 prospects within the Rockies' farm system—the PuRP voting is completely community based and is updated every Spring and Fall over at Purple Row. You can find the updated stats for June at the end of this issue.

If you have suggestions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us via email or Twitter. We look forward to constantly improving this product based on your feedback.

—Andrew T. Fisher and Matthew Muzia

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Chad Bettis' Long Journey

By Matthew Muzia

One of the biggest mysteries within the Rockies' farm system this season has been the complete absence of news regarding Chad Bettis. Fresh off a dominant 2011 season with the Modesto Nuts (garnering Cal League Pitcher of the Year and a prominent place at #86 within Baseball America's Top 100 Prospects), the hard-throwing righty received his first invitation to Big League Camp this Spring -- and was even considered a darkhorse bullpen arm in the majors this season -- before a shoulder injury derailed his entire season without an official pitch was thrown.

Since then? Complete silence regarding the status of his shoulder, and no real news as to the extent of the injury or possible recovery time.

Recently, I had the privilege to meet Bettis for lunch. I hoped to discuss his injury, and to uncover some of the mystery surrounding his ongoing recovery. We met at a local Denver restaurant, where Bettis appeared healthy and strong from the very start. "I half-expected to see your arm in a sling," I quipped.

The 2011 Breakout

"We were playing [at Inland Empire] and I gave up nine earned in four innings. It was probably the most embarrassing outing of my professional career. I was furious."

At the midway point of the season, Bettis' ERA had ballooned to 5.14 in the Cal League. He had allowed five or more earned runs in three straight starts. Desperate for answers, the young pitcher turned to Nuts pitching coach, Darryl Scott. Inspired by Josh Waitzkin's martial arts book, "The Art of Learning," Scott asked Bettis try a unique strategy. Together, they would work through his delivery piece by piece until Bettis was staying back with the ball. "I was repeating each step of my windup...from looking at the catcher and taking my [initial] step back. I'd do that a hundred times a day." Piece by piece, he worked on getting each piece of his delivery at the right place. With a renewed emphasis on getting the finer mechanics just right, Bettis was able to stay back longer in his delivery and quickly saw a turnaround in his season.

In June, Bettis was dominant. In July and August, he was easily the best pitcher in the league. His strikeout rates spiked to an impressive 11.57 K/9 for the final 35 innings of the season -- he was now striking out over a third of the batters he faced despite a strict innings limit. The refined mechanics had a side benefit: increased velocity.

"In the playoffs, I know I hit 100 a couple of times."

"The last three weeks of the season, I was sitting around 96-97 -- and that's definitely the hardest I've ever thrown...in the playoffs, I know I hit 100 a couple of times." With improved command and a triple-digit fastball, Bettis had become one of Colorado's elite pitching prospects. Drafted in 2010, some scouts viewed Bettis as a likely impact reliever based on his closer duties at Texas Tech University. The Colorado Rockies had given him a chance to stick in the rotation, however, and his extra work had paid off.

The Injury

"I hear the trainers heckling me, 'This wasn't your year to get hurt!'"

Heading into the 2012 season, Bettis was expected to lead the Tulsa Drillers rotation (along with 2011 minor league strikeout king Edwar Cabrera) along with an excellent chance at a 2012 debut at Coors Field by the end of the year. With a perceived surplus of young arms (such as Drew Pomeranz, Alex White, and Tyler Chatwood) ahead of him on the depth chart, there were even rumors that Bettis may find a spot within the Rockies' bullpen during 2012. Those rumors died after a fated bullpen session in late March. After feeling some pain in his throwing shoulder, Bettis was completely shut down for the remainder of camp.

The Rockies' medical staff recommended a regimen of strict rest for Bettis, hoping that

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the extended period of inactivity would give the muscles time to heal. If the rest failed to work and there was still lingering pain in the shoulder, then the trainers could still recommend surgery. Shoulder surgery is always a risky proposition for pitchers, and the Rockies wanted to give the shoulder a chance to heal on its own.

Six months after his most successful run as a professional, Bettis was forced to the sidelines. Without him, the Tulsa Drillers cruised to the Texas League North Division title in the first half - their first playoff berth since 2006. Fellow starter Edwar Cabera became the staff ace and was selected to the Futures Game World roster. Injuries and ineffectiveness forced the Rockies to call up journeyman pitchers like Carlos Torres to make a spot start in the majors.

Meanwhile, Chad Bettis wasn't even allowed to pick up a baseball.

The Rehabilitation

"You understand how much you really care about the game. Watching other guys throw, you take the little things like that for granted."

For the first two weeks after the injury, Bettis was forced to avoid physical activity. All he could do is wait, rest, and hope that the muscle would fully recover on its own. Slowly but surely, the pain went away. An MRI at the end of May showed no lasting damage in the shoulder, and Bettis was given the go-ahead to begin physical activity once again.

Slowly, Bettis was allowed to start the long process of rebuilding strength into the shoulder. He started working in the weight room, gradually increasing the number of reps on each of his workouts. By the third week of June, he was throwing from 60 feet without any pain -- that distance had increased to 120 feet by the end of June. "I felt so good, I wanted to keep throwing." Finally, after several months of inactivity and caution, Bettis was finally on the road towards a full recovery. While he has yet to throw off a mound, there's still the possibility that he makes it back on the mound, perhaps in a bullpen role, by the end of the season.

That decision, however, is completely in the hands of the Rockies' medical staff. With an arm as prized as

Bettis', and in the midst of a lost major league season, caution remains the name of the game.

"You understand how much you really care about the game. Watching other guys throw, you take the little things like that for granted."

It will be difficult to count 2012 as anything but a lost season for Chad Bettis. Last year's shining star in the minors was derailed from an encore performance before he threw an official pitch and it likely kept him from his major league debut. But finally, there is some promising news to report. Bettis' shoulder appears to have healed without risky surgery, he is throwing again, and has the drive to get back on the mound.

The Future

In a strange twist of irony, Bettis' significance to the Rockies' organization took a huge leap despite his shoulder injury. With the announcement of GM Dan O'Dowd's "Project 5183," where the Rockies are planning on rolling with a rotation of 11 starter-type pitchers that each throw a specific number of innings, Bettis is the perfect test candidate. As a starter/closer at Texas Tech University, Bettis is a perfect fit.

"You're not going to throw four or five pitches in three outs. You're going to throw your best two pitches that you know you're going to get outs on."

From the moment he was drafted, some scouts viewed him as a likely bullpen arm because of his lack of a third strong pitch. While it appears that this projection is less of a concern currently, the idea of throwing Bettis on the mound four times a week is certainly intriguing -- especially with his power slider and fastball.

For now, though, the thought of the experiment is secondary to the anticipation of his return to the mound, perfectly healthy again. As fans, all we can do is wait until he faces live hitters again.

Draft Class Of 2012: Tom Murphy

By Matthew Muzia

In the 2011 Draft, the Colorado Rockies selected college catcher Peter O'Brien, a player known much more for his offensive prowess with a bat than his defense behind the plate. O'Brien was also the highest drafted catcher for the organization since they selected current Tulsa Drillers catcher Lars Davis in 2005. At the signing deadline, O'Brien and the Rockies were unable to come to terms on a contract and he returned for a senior year of college.

Since the first three rounds are protected, the Rockies were given a mulligan on the pick. This June, they used that extra third round selection on another catcher – Tom Murphy from the University of Buffalo. At the time of the draft, scouting reports glowed about his bat (specifically hitting a homerun off Colorado native and #4 overall selection Kevin Gausmann), but was also praised for his play behind the plate. Murphy emphasizes the personal importance of his defensive game. “Over the past year, I've changed my attitude to become more of a defensive catcher than an offensive catcher because I've realized the amount that goes into a game on the defensive side can win you so much more than hitting .300.”

The catching position is considered the most difficult on the diamond. They have to physically tough to deal with the day-to-day grind of the position, they have to be intelligent to keep one step ahead of batters, and they must be able to communicate with a wide variety of pitchers throughout the game, sometimes in different languages and with a complex system of hand signals. With all of the potential draftees available, how does a team know which catcher to select? Visible tools are a big part of the game, but there's more that happens before the draft. “I took a psych test for every single team that questioned me. Most of them are your standard multiple choice test. There's like 150 questions a test, each one of them gives you a scenario and asks how you would react to that scenario.” Teams also talk to area scouts and coaches to get the best possible picture of a specific player's makeup and background. Once selected, however, Murphy's celebration was short lived. He was on his way to Washington to play for the Tri-City Dust Devils.

The adjustment period for any new pro player is tough, but for a new catcher it is a massive undertaking. He has to communicate and learn an entirely new pitching staff, adjust to the more intense pro regimen, and get himself physically prepared to play every single night. Within the Rockies' organization, players are expected to face these challenges without much initial influence from the coaching staff. “The Rockies have a 30 day policy that they really can't coach you too much. They watch you for the first 30 days you're here. It's a little bit different, I think, but coaches are always there to answer questions. They know you play because you got drafted where you got drafted. They want to see why you got drafted where you did and really observe you for 30 days before making some drastic changes.”

Though there are still team drills and team stretching, the coaches with the short season teams take a laissez faire approach with their new draftees, at least at the beginning. The true purpose behind this organizational strategy is unknown, but it does lead to some speculation. Psychological tests and interviews can be helpful to identify potential draftees, but they fall short when it comes to really knowing a specific person. Perhaps the coaching staff takes this first month to observe and evaluate the professionalism and maturity of these new professionals, to identify specific flaws that they want to correct in the offseason or during instructionals? The answer could even be more simple than that: the Rockies know that the draft and first month of professional ball is likely the most drastic change in lifestyle that any of these players has yet faced and they give the first 30 days as an adjustment period.

For his part, at least, Tom Murphy has adjusted quite well to his first month in pro ball. “It's just a lot of dedication. Everyday you wake up and your job is baseball.. so that's what I focus on and put all my energy towards that.” Though he hasn't played since June 25 (out with a tweaked hamstring), there is still plenty of reasons to get excited about the 21 year old catcher.

At least so far in Tri-City, Murphy is displaying both sides of his game.



Colorado Springs Sky Sox (AAA)

Record: 45-44

7.0 GB Pacific Coast League Northern Division

Record in June: 15-13

You Need To Know...

The Sky Sox were on a roll in late June, winning five straight home games and six of seven. Then the smoke from the Waldo Canyon Fire in Colorado Springs forced the postponement of their homestand finale. The Sky Sox then lost four of their next five on the road to reverse their momentum, returning them to their .500 pace.

Player To Watch

Nick Schmidt, the 1st round pick of the Padres in 2007, came to the Rockies in exchange for Huston Street. He dominated AA with Tulsa, striking out 8 batters per 9 innings and walking just 15 in 14 starts. Promoted to AAA at the end of June, Schmidt has been hit around in two starts with Colorado Springs. He may be a bullpen arm in the future.

Edwar Cabrera Working For Callup

After leading AA Texas League in home runs allowed and being named to the MLB Futures game, Edwar Cabrera got a surprise callup to the big leagues. The result was a disastrous MLB debut at Coors Field on June 27, the day after pitching coach Bob Apodaca stepped down after nearly ten years at the helm.

The Rockies elected to send Cabrera to AAA following that debut, and in the two starts since, he has allowed 5 earned runs in 11.1 IP, with just one home run. He was not big league ready at the time of his call-up, but his erratic command was not representative of his skill. He led all of minor league baseball in 2011 with a devastating change-up, but needs to refine his fastball, breaking ball and command. Still not ready for the big leagues, he is fairly close and worth monitoring as he adjusts to altitude in AAA.

McBride, Brown Begging For MLB

Andrew Brown, 27, came to the Rockies in the offseason on a waiver claim. Matt McBride, also 27, was the final throw-in piece of last July's trade of Ubaldo Jimenez to the Cleveland Indians. There are a lot of important numbers being thrown around by the two offensive forces for the Sky Sox this year, but no number looms larger than "27."

McBride, who has played catcher, first base and corner outfield, currently ranks 5th in the Pacific Coast League with a .349 average, has struck out just 31 times in 69 games and sports a healthy .940 OPS. He replaces Brown at the PCL All-Star game Wednesday, who elected to stay home with family during the All-Star Break.

Brown's 18 home runs rank 3rd in the PCL, and he sits 4th in doubles with 27 and 2nd in total bases. His OPS is top 10 in the league, making him one of the more productive bats at the AAA level.

This is a yearly story, watching older minor league veterans run roughshod over pitchers in Colorado Springs without much of a chance at the majors. Cole Garner. Matt Miller. Mike Jacobs. Josh Fields. Twenty-seven is often considered a rough guess for an athlete's peak, so they rarely become part of an organization's future plans.

Brown and McBride do have some things going for them though. Both are hitting in a subdued offensive environment due to a new humidor, yet have been more successful at the plate than those names above. Brown is a right-handed hitting outfielder, a role the Rockies do not have depth at. McBride would be a nice token piece to get a September look to provide more visibility to the return of the Ubaldo Jimenez trade.



Tulsa Drillers (AA)

Record: 7-9 (Second Half)

3.0 GB Texas League North Division

Record in June: 13-13

You Need To Know...

The Drillers are an incredibly streaky team. During the month of June, they underwent the following streaks: Won 8 straight, Lost 3 straight, Lost 5 straight. An inconsistent offense (SS Josh Rutledge has been the only real consistent bat in the lineup) and an incredibly volatile starting rotation have made the Drillers an incredibly fascinating – and infuriating – team to follow in 2012. Still, they clinched a playoff berth and will play for their first Texas League championship since 1998.

Player To Watch

Dan Houston is quietly having a very good season for Tulsa. The noted groundballer was promoted to Tulsa at the end of 2011, and has put up a 3.57 ERA through 17 starts in 2012. The righty absolutely eats innings and rarely gets hit hard. In a season of inconsistency for Tulsa, Houston has been an absolute pillar in the rotation.

Drillers' Offense Still MIA

The Drillers were supposed to be completely loaded this season, and were expected to run roughshod through the Texas League. Why hasn't that happened? Blame the offense.

Nolan Arenado has been solid, but not spectacular this season. Ben Paulsen appears to be minor league filler. Kiel Roling was always a boom or bust candidate as evidenced by his mediocre .320 OBP this season. Even 2011 Cal League MVP Kent Matthes has struggled to adjust, batting just .193 on the season. The bats simply have not given the Drillers pitching staff much run support this season.

Rotation Shuffle

Tulsa Drillers fans have been forced to look up their starting pitcher on a nightly basis, as a combination of major league shuffling and minor league promotions have left the Drillers rotation in complete shambles.

First half ace Edwar Cabrera was called up for a spot start in the majors, then was sent to Colorado Springs for his AAA debut. Offseason acquisition Nick Schmidt is now 27 and earned his way to Colorado Springs based on a solid first half in Tulsa.

In their stead, the Drillers have seen journeyman pitcher Brandon Hynick take a spot in the lead of the rotation. Hynick, a longtime Rockies' farmhand who was traded to the Chicago White Sox in 2010, has taken over one of the rotation spots in Tulsa. He has now pitched at three separate levels within the Rockies' farm system this year alone.

He is joined by Josh Outman, recently demoted from the Rockies' rotation to work on his command. Outman is likely just passing through Tulsa for the moment.

Other rotation pieces include the mercurial Parker Frazier, who is enjoying a rebound season after struggling in Modesto, and trade acquisition Joseph Gardner. Acquired from Cleveland last summer, Gardner is repeating AA for the third season, and has yet to truly rediscover the strong strikeout numbers he posted in 2010.

The strong rotation at the start of the season has been completely decimated by system-wide injuries, and now the Drillers are faced with a pot-pourri of pitchers from various systems and levels. It could be a rough second half of the season for Drillers fans.



Modesto Nuts (A - Advanced)

Record: 12-6 (Second Half)

Lead California League North Division

Record in June: 16-10

You Need To Know...

June 23, 2012

Modesto lost their All-Star outfielder Corey Dickerson to a promotion to AA Tulsa June 8 following consecutive losses, but the Nuts rebounded well, following every June loss with a victory in Dickerson's absence. One big reason was the resurgence of Kyle Parker, who hit .298/.445/.500 with 5 home runs in the month of June.

Player To Watch

Modesto had quite the strong outfield to start the year, with Parker, Rafael Ortega and Dickerson. **Juan Crousset** has gotten lost in the shuffle, but as a fourth outfielder, Crousset has been very valuable. The 22-year-old quietly holds a similar batting average and slugging percentage to both 22-year-old Parker and 21-year-old Ortega.

Delta Cleary Back In Modesto

Cleary was given a \$250,000 signing bonus as a 37th round pick in 2008. His athleticism and tools are something to dream on, but until 2012, very little seemed to transfer into the batter's box for the outfielder. He struggled through two seasons in Asheville, then was given the challenge of being promoted to Modesto in 2011, where he continued to struggle.

In light of his difficulties and the strong trio of outfielders assigned to Modesto to start the season, Cleary found himself repeating Asheville again in 2012. He responded by hitting .304/.389/.426 becoming a South Atlantic League All-Star. With Dickerson getting promoted to AA Tulsa a week earlier, Cleary was given the opportunity to slide back into the Modesto lineup, hopefully to continue his surge. It will be interesting to see if something has finally clicked in Cleary, who at 22, still has plenty of time to reach the majors at a young age.

One of the most memorable stories in the minor leagues occurred in Modesto June 23 against the Stockton Ports. Chad Rose allowed two runs in the top of the ninth to blow the save and send the game into extra innings. Both Modesto and Stockton were then held scoreless for the next seven innings, exhausting both teams' bullpens. As typically happens in the majors, a position player took the mound for both teams. Both were just a couple years removed from pitching in college, yet they were out of practice and physically exerting in a way they were no longer trained.

Oddly, Stockton's manager was on vacation for the weekend, and Oakland's roving hitting instructor Todd Steverson was acting as the manager. After the game, he admitted he feared his outfielder Josh Whitaker was at risk for injury on the mound and ordered three intentional balks to assist in ending the game. Earlier in his career, Modesto Nuts manager Lenn Sakata had seen one of his position player's career ruined by an injury on the mound, yet he sent first baseman Jared Clark to pitch. Clark recorded three shutout innings and Modesto won after the intentional balks gave way to a walk-off win.

Weeks later, Steverson was banned from the California League for one year for "damaging the integrity" of the game. After all, he essentially tried to lose a game in front of 800 paying fans.

This story offers little insight into prospect lovers of the Rockies, but it does illuminate the interesting question of what the primary function of the minor leagues is - to win games or to develop MLB players. Or is there a point where the primary goal shifts based on the circumstance? Steverson asked for a guaranteed loss in exchange for the promise that Oakland's 2010 25th round pick could continue his career and maybe reach the majors.



Asheville Tourists (A)

Record: 10-8 (Second Half)

2.0 GB South Atlantic League Northern Division

Record in June: 14-12

You Need To Know...

The Tourists stumbled down the stretch of the first half, including a five game losing streak towards the end of June that put their first half division title in jeopardy. They recovered by the end of the month, clinching their first playoff berth since 2009.

Player To Watch

Vianney Mayo was the Opening Day starter for the Tourists (and had one of the most dominant pitching performances in the SAL earlier this season), before he fell off the radar due to injury. The righty is back on the mound after a month long absence, and appears to be regaining command of his occasionally electric stuff. His return could be a huge factor in the second half.

Middle Infielders Cool Down

After a completely blistering first half of the season, two of the Tourists' star infielders experienced a sudden (though not unexpected cooldown).

Top prospect Trevor Story had a very rough June, hitting .195/.263/.276 during the month after carrying an OPS of .962 in May. The talented shortstop has done nothing but hit since entering pro ball, so this slump was expected. How will he rebound? Well, he currently has an 1.150 OPS for the month of July.

Sam Mende also hit a rough patch in June, batting .239 for the month. These slumps are expected for the first full season of professional ball; it's the rebounds that are important. So far, Mende and Story are recovering.

Tyler Anderson's Disappointing Start

When he was drafted in the first round of 2011, Tyler Anderson was praised as a polished college lefty with at least four solid pitches and a strong grasp of the strike zone. He had just set the University of Oregon single season record and was expected to move quickly through the organization. A deadline signing kept him out of pro ball in 2011, and a groin injury in extended spring training delayed his prop debut until May 2012, nearly a full year after being drafted.

Anderson has now started 11 games for Asheville. His surface numbers look great: 7-2, 3.08 ERA. He has allowed three or fewer runs in 10 of those 11 starts.

Now the bad news: Anderson has struck out 35 batters in 59.1 innings, far below expected values. His velocity and command have also been below expectations. These peripherals are troubling for a pitcher who should be far beyond low A ball hitters. Anderson should be dominating the South Atlantic League with his combination of stuff and polish, and that simply isn't happening.

Could it be a simple adjustment to pro ball? Perhaps an organizational adjustment towards a groundball approach instead of simply blowing past hitters? Potentially. But within a vacuum, these peripherals (along with a higher than expected walk rate) cast shadows across Anderson's future already, in his first professional season.

Strikeouts aren't everything, but Anderson still needs to show more of the tools that made him a first round draft pick. The current pitcher has a very slim shot at the major leagues.



Tri-City Dust Devils (A-)

Record: 12-12

2.0 GB Northwest League East Division

June Record: 5-11

You Need To Know...

The Dust Devils have played in quite a few close games this season. Even despite their seven game losing streak in mid June, eight of their 12 losses on the season have been by a margin of two or fewer runs, despite having one of the worst offenses in the Northwest League this season.

Player To Watch

As suggested in our June issue, infielder **Rosell Herrera** was demoted to Tri-City for more regular at-bats than were available in Asheville. The promising infielder is extremely raw, but hit the Pioneer League well last season and could enjoy a return to short season ball.

Tri-City No Longer Rehab Central

At the beginning of the Northwest League season, the Dust Devils' roster was crowded with players on rehab assignments. Players such as OF Charlie Blackmon, and IF Joey Wong received regular playing time as part of a rehab assignment—but were taking away playing time from 2012 draftees such as local product OF Derek Jones.

Even though the Dust Devils' position players don't have the same star attraction as their Pioneer League counterparts in Grand Junction, there are still some intriguing pieces. Catcher Tom Murphy will return from a hamstring injury soon, toolsy OF Dillon Thomas deserves some recognition, and 1B Jordan Ribera has mashed this season while splitting time between Tri-City and Asheville. Now that some of the older players have moved on, these new prospects can get their opportunity in the spotlight.

Dust Devils' Arms Are A Strength

The big draw of Tri-City this season, as per usual, is with the arms.

Ryan Arrowood has been the early star of the Dust Devils' rotation. The 28th round selection has started three games for Tri-City and has a stellar 1.06 ERA through 17.0 innings. He has walked four batters in that span, only surrendering 10 total hits.

Joshua Slaats continues his rebound in Tri-City after struggling in his Modesto assignment earlier this season. The righty out of the University of Hawaii has a 3.21 ERA through five starts in the Northwest League, and has struck out 25 batters in just 28 innings. Even more promising, he appears to be rediscovering the control that made him Asheville's best pitcher during the second half of 2011.

The rotation will hopefully get a boost from TJ Oakes. The righty out of the University of Minnesota has not had the most ideal start to his professional career. With just three strikeouts in his first three starts, there appears to be an adjustment period for the polished college arm, who has been praised for his polish.

The Dust Devils' pen is loaded with promise as well. Fourth round selection Seth Willoughby has been the standout candidate, with eight strikeouts in just nine innings. Shane Broyles has also been lights-out. The 14th round selection has eight strikeouts and a 2.25 ERA through his first 12 professional innings.

Eric Federico is old for the level, but he is making a strong push for a midseason promotion with 13 scoreless innings this season.



Grand Junction Rockies (R)

Record: 10-11

3.0 GB Pioneer League South Division

You Need To Know...

Grand Junction started their season in Ogden against the Dodgers' affiliate, one that is commonly filled with older, more developed prospects than most in the Pioneer League. They were swept in three games, then lost a two game set the following week in Ogden. The Ogden Raptors outscored the Rockies 48-26 in those five games. Against the other two teams in their division - Idaho Falls and Orem - Grand Junction went 6-2 in June, outscoring the Chukars and Owlz 69-45.

Player To Watch

Cesar Galvez, 20, the diminutive Dominican shortstop has been overshadowed. Through July 9, Galvez was second on the team in hitting (.395) and third in on-base percentage (.435). While his age is hardly a point in his favor, few Rockies prospects have had as much success debuting stateside.

Suplizio Field Still a Mystery

One of the difficult nuances of following the minor leagues is factoring in the vastly different offensive environments that can dramatically skew statistics. With the Casper Ghosts moving to Grand Junction, we do not yet know how Suplizio Field will play at the pro level.

Casper was at the highest elevation in the Pioneer League. The move to Grand Junction places the rookie level team below both Orem and Idaho Falls, which should make the park play more fairly. Still, the Rockies' pitching staff finished their first month ranked dead last in the Pioneer League in strikeouts and home runs allowed, second worst in walks and WHIP. Some of that is likely due to Grand Junction's location - how much will be interesting to monitor in coming months and years.

Your New Love, Grand Junction OF

Teams do not draft for positional need for minor league teams, and selecting the best player available can result in a logjam at certain positions.

The saturation of talent from the 2012 draft is without a doubt in the Grand Junction outfield, one of the more talented outfields at any minor league level the Rockies have had. Carl Thomore (2011, 2nd round) returns to the Pioneer League roster and Max White (2012, 2nd round) got a predictable assignment to Grand Junction. David Dahl (2012, 1st round) became the Rockies' first top ten draft pick since Greg Reynolds in 2006. That trio is joined by Ryan Garvey (2012, 33rd round), son of Dodger great Steve, who did not sign with the Phillies as a 15th round pick in 2011. All four outfielders are still in their teens, with 23-year-old Jeff Popick (2012, 16th round) and 20-year-old Julian Yan also filling out the depth chart.

So far, Dahl has shown why he was a top ten pick. He is hitting .348 with a .425 OBP and team-leading 14 RBIs, impressing scouts with his bat and glove. The left-handed hitter is a likely top 3 PuRP when he debuts on the list this fall.

Ryan Garvey has exploded onto the scene, hitting .304 while leading the team in SLG (.587) and getting on base every bit as often as Dahl (.421 OBP). Carl Thomore managed two hits in five games before suffering an injury, and Max White has struggled a bit to begin his career.

With the Rockies' minor league team in Grand Junction, the talented outfield would be worth the trip alone.



DSL Rockies (DSL)

Record: 18-13

Tied 1st Place Dominican Summer League Boca Chica
Baseball City

You Need To Know...

The Rockies are well known for developing Latin arms, so it shouldn't be surprising that the Rockies team ranks 5th in the 35-team Dominican Summer League in earned run average. What may be more surprising is their offense, which ranks 4th in the league in batting average at .282. Three regulars in the lineup - outfielder Wilson Soriano, second baseman Miguel Dilone, and outfielder Raimel Tapia are hitting over .300. That combo has the Rockies atop their division.

Player To Watch

Wilson Soriano, 20, is 5'9" and 140 pounds in his fourth season with the DSL Rockies team. His performance this season, however, most certainly has. As of July 9, Soriano led the entire DSL in batting average (.438) and on base percentage (.528). Perhaps Soriano gets that well-deserved stateside promotion.

Miguel Dilone Blossoming With Bat

Second baseman Miguel Dilone, who turned 19 yesterday, is the son of the former 12-year MLB veteran outfielder of the same name. Dilone Sr. played from 1974-1985, notably for the Pirates and Indians. Dilone Jr. took a mature approach in 2011, walking more than he struck out. He has taken that approach so far this season even more, while mixing in an improved ability to make contact.

The resultant development has Dilone among the league leaders in several offensive categories: 5th in doubles, 18th in triples, 11th in RBI, 6th in average, 14th in OBP and 9th in total bases. Equipped with a 6'2" frame, the right-handed hitter has a frame that could fill out to add more power, and could be one of the better position prospects to graduate from the DSL Rockies in recent years.

Payamps, Aquino Lead Next Wave Of Latin Arms

While Dilone, Soriano, Tapia and the rest of the lineup has made the Rockies squad a force offensively, easily the two most notable prospects on the team are in the rotation.

Right-hander Joel Payamps signed for \$465,000 in 2010, the fourth largest bonus the Rockies have ever given to an international free agent, behind Chin-Hui Tsao (1999, \$2.2mil), Ching-Lung Lo (2002, \$1.4mil) and Rosell Herrera (2009, \$550,000).

Payamps delivered an exceptional debut season in 2011, striking out nearly a batter an inning and pitching to a 3.29 ERA as a 17-year-old. He did have issues with control, walking 18 batters in 38.1 IP, and in some respects, that has improved dramatically in 2012. Payamps has walked just 7 in 33.0 IP so far this season, which has helped lower his ERA to 2.45. However, his strikeout rate has halved to with just 16 total, and the 18-year-old leads the DSL in hit batters with eight. His strange season will be worth watching.

Southpaw Jayson Aquino came to the organization with significantly less fanfare, but his success has been irrefutable and consistent. After going 4-3 with a 1.02 ERA in 2010 and 8-2 with a 1.30 ERA in 2011, his assignment back in the DSL was a bit surprising. Now 19, Aquino is performing better than any pitcher in the entire DSL, leading the league in strikeouts while boasting a 5-0 record and 0.98 ERA. He is the only DSL pitcher with two complete games on the season.



PuRPs Top 30 Rockies Prospects



PURPLE ROW

| HITTERS | | Level | Pos | Age | PA | BA | OBP | SLG | OPS | HR | SB | CS | K% | BB% | BABIP |
|----------|---------------------|-------|------|------|-----|-------|-------|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. | Nolan Arenado | AA | 3B | 21.2 | 107 | 0.283 | 0.368 | 0.402 | 0.770 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 10.3% | 12.1% | 0.291 |
| 3. | Trevor Story | A | SS | 19.6 | 95 | 0.195 | 0.263 | 0.276 | 0.539 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 29.5% | 6.3% | 0.288 |
| 8. | Josh Rutledge | AA | SS | 23.2 | 109 | 0.333 | 0.358 | 0.598 | 0.956 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 19.3% | 1.8% | 0.380 |
| 9. | Tim Wheeler | AAA | OF | 24.4 | 116 | 0.336 | 0.377 | 0.383 | 0.760 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12.1% | 6.0% | 0.387 |
| 10. | Kyle Parker | A+ | OF | 22.8 | 119 | 0.298 | 0.445 | 0.500 | 0.945 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 19.3% | 19.3% | 0.348 |
| 12. | Rafael Ortega | A+ | OF | 21.1 | 119 | 0.235 | 0.325 | 0.402 | 0.727 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 14.3% | 11.8% | 0.253 |
| 13. | William Swanner | A | C | 20.8 | 71 | 0.322 | 0.437 | 0.458 | 0.895 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 25.4% | 16.9% | 0.436 |
| 14. | Corey Dickerson | AA | OF | 23.1 | 99 | 0.236 | 0.293 | 0.449 | 0.742 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 12.1% | 8.1% | 0.237 |
| 15. | Charlie Blackmon | SSE | OF | 25.9 | 55 | 0.260 | 0.327 | 0.400 | 0.727 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 16.4% | 5.5% | 0.300 |
| 16. | Rosell Herrera | A | IF | 19.7 | 63 | 0.175 | 0.254 | 0.298 | 0.552 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 23.8% | 9.5% | 0.220 |
| 18. | DJ LeMahieu | MLB | IF | 23.9 | 32 | 0.207 | 0.281 | 0.207 | 0.488 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 18.8% | 9.4% | 0.261 |
| 20. | Cristhian Adames | A+ | SS | 20.9 | 104 | 0.273 | 0.343 | 0.330 | 0.673 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19.2% | 10.6% | 0.338 |
| 21. | Harold Riggins | A | 1B | 22.3 | 55 | 0.271 | 0.364 | 0.438 | 0.802 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 18.2% | 10.9% | 0.306 |
| 23. | Samuel Mende | A | IF | 22.4 | 80 | 0.239 | 0.342 | 0.373 | 0.715 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 15.0% | 8.8% | 0.259 |
| 24. | David Kandilas | A | OF | 21.8 | 28 | 0.217 | 0.333 | 0.304 | 0.637 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 21.4% | 14.3% | 0.294 |
| 25. | Kent Matthes | AA | OF | 25.4 | 78 | 0.205 | 0.256 | 0.342 | 0.598 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 26.9% | 5.1% | 0.275 |
| 26. | Ben Paulsen | AA | 1B | 24.7 | 96 | 0.216 | 0.281 | 0.386 | 0.667 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 21.9% | 8.3% | 0.250 |
| 28. | Dillon Thomas | SSE | OF | 19.5 | 46 | 0.175 | 0.283 | 0.250 | 0.533 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 30.4% | 8.7% | 0.269 |
| PITCHERS | | Level | Pos | Age | G | IP | Rec | ERA | WHIP | K% | BB% | GB% | HR/9 | FIP | BABIP |
| 2. | Drew Pomeranz | AAA | LHSP | 23.6 | 5 | 27.0 | 2-2 | 2.33 | 1.70 | 20.6% | 14.3% | 53.7% | 0.00 | 3.27 | 0.346 |
| 4. | Tyler Matzek | A+ | LHSP | 21.7 | 5 | 29.7 | 1-1 | 5.16 | 1.62 | 23.5% | 14.4% | 48.1% | 0.61 | 4.01 | 0.329 |
| 5. | Chad Bettis | AA | RHSP | 23.2 | - | - | - | Injured or in Switzerland | | | - | - | - | - | - |
| 6. | Christian Friedrich | MLB | LHSP | 24.9 | 6 | 31.3 | 1-4 | 4.88 | 1.63 | 18.0% | 7.9% | 38.6% | 2.30 | 6.17 | 0.326 |
| 7. | Tyler Anderson | A | LHSP | 22.5 | 6 | 34.7 | 3-2 | 3.12 | 1.30 | 10.4% | 7.6% | 52.6% | 0.26 | 3.83 | 0.274 |
| 11. | Edwar Cabrera | AA | LHSP | 24.7 | 5 | 34.7 | 3-0 | 2.34 | 0.87 | 22.9% | 5.3% | 53.3% | 1.04 | 3.75 | 0.195 |
| 17. | Peter Tago | SSE | RHSP | 19.9 | 3 | 13.0 | 0-3 | 9.69 | 2.31 | 12.3% | 15.4% | 48.8% | 1.38 | 7.20 | 0.341 |
| 19. | Zach Putnam | AAA | RHRR | 24.9 | 8 | 8.3 | 0-0 | 7.56 | 1.92 | 25.6% | 11.6% | 33.3% | 0.00 | 2.36 | 0.407 |
| 22. | Joe Gardner | AA | RHSP | 24.3 | 6 | 35.7 | 1-3 | 3.28 | 1.40 | 12.2% | 6.4% | 52.0% | 1.26 | 5.13 | 0.267 |
| 27. | Jayson Aquino | ROK | LHSP | 19.6 | 5 | 39.0 | 4-0 | 0.92 | 0.87 | 27.7% | 4.7% | 53.5% | 0.00 | 1.71 | 0.265 |
| 29. | Parker Frazier | AA | RHSP | 23.6 | 6 | 34.0 | 1-3 | 4.76 | 1.41 | 12.8% | 5.4% | 49.6% | 0.79 | 4.20 | 0.293 |
| 30. | Rob Scahill | AAA | RHSP | 25.3 | 5 | 22.3 | 2-3 | 8.46 | 2.19 | 20.4% | 15.9% | 50.7% | 1.21 | 5.44 | 0.403 |

Draft Top Rockies Signees of 2012



| HITTERS | Rd | Pos | B/T | School | Age | G | PA | BA | OBP | SLG | OPS | HR | K% | SB | BABIP |
|-----------------|-----------|--------------|------------|-------------------|------------|----------|-----------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|--------------|-------|
| Jeffrey Popick | 16th | LF | R/R | Mesa State | 23.0 | 8 | 30 | 0.400 | 0.500 | 0.720 | 1.220 | 2 | 16.7% | 0 | 0.444 |
| Ryan Garvey | 33rd | RF | R/R | Riverside CC | 19.3 | 10 | 41 | 0.375 | 0.488 | 0.719 | 1.207 | 2 | 34.1% | 1 | 0.588 |
| Tom Murphy | 3rd | C | R/R | U of Buffalo | 21.2 | 7 | 26 | 0.400 | 0.538 | 0.600 | 1.138 | 1 | 11.5% | 1 | 0.438 |
| David Dahl | 1st | OF | L/R | OakMtnHS[AL] | 18.2 | 11 | 52 | 0.348 | 0.423 | 0.630 | 1.053 | 1 | 9.6% | 3 | 0.375 |
| Max White | 2nd | CF | L/L | Williston HS [FL] | 18.7 | 7 | 34 | 0.250 | 0.382 | 0.464 | 0.846 | 1 | 32.4% | 4 | 0.375 |
| PITCHERS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | RD | Throw | B/T | School | Age | G | IP | ERA | WHIP | GB% | HR/9 | BB/9 | K/9 | BABIP | |
| Shawn Stuart | 31st | RHP | R/R | Cal State-LB | 23.5 | 5 | 8.0 | 0.00 | 0.75 | 26.3% | 0.0 | 0.0 | 9.0 | 0.211 | |
| Ryan Arrowood | 28th | RHP | R/R | Appalachian State | 21.8 | 3 | 11.7 | 0.77 | 0.94 | 38.2% | 0.0 | 2.3 | 5.4 | 0.212 | |
| T.J. Oakes | 11th | RHP | R/R | Minnesota | 21.9 | 2 | 7.7 | 2.35 | 0.65 | 63% | 0.0 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 0.148 | |
| Shane Broyles | 14th | RHP | R/R | Texas Tech | 20.8 | 2 | 7.0 | 1.29 | 0.86 | 40% | 0.0 | 3.9 | 2.6 | 0.100 | |
| Jordan Mejia | 22nd | RHP | R/R | Riverside CC | 21.17 | 3 | 3.7 | 4.91 | 1.36 | 41.7% | 2.5 | 0.0 | 9.8 | 0.364 | |