

This Week In Baseball Debuts: The Week Of May 28, 2018

Welcome to the third issue of the *This Week In Baseball Debuts* newsletter. Inspired by an [episode of Effectively Wild](#), the purpose of this newsletter is to highlight the MLB debuts that have occurred in the past week. Our goal is to not only inform you about the top prospects you already know but give you some insight into some of the lesser know players who may only be up for a single cup of coffee.

In addition to this newsletter, a version of these profiles will also appear at [Banished To The Pen](#).

Dustin Peterson, OF

Born: September 10, 1994 (23)

Throws: Right **Hits:** Right

Team: Atlanta Braves **Debut:** May 28, 2018

Baseball America ranked Peterson as the 44th best available prospect in the 2013 Major League Baseball Draft. The San Diego Padres selected Peterson in the second round, with the 50th overall selection, of the draft. Peterson signed with the Padres, rather than attend college, even though he had already had a scholarship with Arizona State University. On December 19, 2014, the Padres traded Peterson, Max Fried, Jace Peterson, and Mallex Smith to the Atlanta Braves in exchange for Justin Upton and Aaron Northcraft. Following the trade, Peterson began to see playing time in the outfield instead of at third base where the Padres had him. In 2017, Peterson played for the Gwinnett Braves of the Class AAA International League, where he batted .248 with one home run and 30 RBIs in 87 games. On May 28, 2018, Peterson's contract was selected by the Braves to replace Ronald Acuña while on the disabled list. Peterson's older brother D.J. is in the Cincinnati Reds organization. Dustin Peterson's major league debut will officially go down as May 28, 2018, but it actually occurred May 29, just shy of 1:30 a.m. Tuesday. He has been used as a pinch hitter in both of his major

league appearances.

Debut Game

Hitting: 1 AB | 1 K

Player Pages

[Fangraphs](#)

[Baseball Reference](#)

Prospect Rankings (Team / Overall)

MLB Pipeline: 15 / NA

Fangraphs: 23 / NA

Baseball Prospectus: NA / NA

Matt Skole, 1B

Born: July 30, 1989 (Age: 28)

Hits: Left **Throws:** Right

Team: Chicago White Sox **Debut:** May 28, 2018

Skole was drafted by the Washington Nationals in the fifth round of the 2011 Major League Baseball Draft out of the Georgia Tech. In 2012, Skole was the South Atlantic League MVP and Nationals Minor League Player of the Year after hitting .291/.426/.559 with 27 home runs and 104 runs batted in. Prior to the 2013 season, he was ranked as the Nationals fourth-best prospect by Baseball America. The 2013 season was a short one for Skole, in his second game of with the Class-AA Harrisburg Senators, Skole collided with a runner on a fielding play at first base, falling to the ground and tearing his ulnar collateral ligament and flexor tendon in his left elbow. He underwent Tommy John surgery on April 17, 2013. Skole returned to action and played in the Nationals' instructional league in September and for the Mesa Solar Sox in the Arizona Fall League.

Going into the 2017 season Skole was considered one of the Nationals' top power-hitting

prospects, however he only played in 64 games that season due to quadriceps and oblique injuries. On July 29, 2017 while on the minor league disabled list, the Nationals designated Skole for assignment, thereby removing him from the 40-man roster. After the 2017 season, he signed with the White Sox as a minor league free agent. In his minor league seasons, Skole has exclusively played at first and third base in the field. Nationals General Manager Mike Rizzo described him in 2012 as someone who "probably profiles as a left-handed power bat at first base". He has also been noted as a patient hitter with a "strong propensity to take walks". This season at Charlotte (AAA) Skole slashed .259/.360/.442, with a 13% walk rate and a 29% strikeout rate with 5 home runs.

Skole did not have to wait long for his first major league home run, it was a solo shot in his second at bat. He was the sixth White Sox player to homer in his MLB debut. The best player to do it was Carlos Lee in 1999, while the last player to do it was catcher Miguel Olivo in 2002. Skole hit a single on the first pitch of his first at-bat. At the age of 28, Skole is oldest White Sox to get a hit in his MLB debut since Buddy Peterson did it at the age of 30 in 1955.

Debut Game

Hitting: 4 PA | 2 H | 1 BB | 1 K | 1 HR

Player Pages

[Fangraphs](#)

[Baseball Reference](#)

Prospect Rankings (Team / Overall)

MLB Pipeline: NA / NA

Fangraphs: NA / NA

Baseball Prospectus: NA / NA

Dereck Rodriguez, RHP

Born: June 5, 1992 (25)

Throws: Right **Hits:** Right

Team: San Francisco Giants **Debut:** May 29, 2018

To start with the obvious, Dereck is the son of Hall of Fame catcher Ivan Rodriguez. In his debut at the plate, he made his familial ties very clear by banging an opposite-field RBI double to the wall against Kyle Freeland. Ivan, however, was only able to hit a single in his MLB Debut, so Dereck forever has bragging rights over his father.

After being drafted in the 6th round of the 2011 MLB Draft by the Minnesota Twins, Dereck spent his first three years in the Minors as an outfielder, amassing a batting average of just .216. Between 2014-2017, Dereck spent most of his time shuffling between A-level Cedar Rapids and A Advanced Fort Myers before making it to AA Chattanooga halfway through the 2017 campaign. After the 2017 season, Rodriguez elected free-agency and was signed by the Giants, who assigned him to AAA Sacramento, where he stayed until being called up to the Majors. Rodriguez started 9 games in the hitter-friendly Pacific Coast League and pitched to the tune of a 4-1 record with a 3.40 ERA. In his debut, Rodriguez fell victim to some subject Giants' defense, as he allowed four runs with only one being earned.

Debut Game

Hitting: 2 PA | 2 AB | 1 H | 1 2B | 1 K

Pitching: 3.1 IP | 5 H | 1 ER | 4 K | 1 BB

Player Pages

[Baseball Reference](#)

[Fangraphs](#)

Prospect Rankings (Team / Overall)

MLB Pipeline: NA / NA

Fangraphs: NA / NA

Baseball Prospectus: NA / NA

Jaime Schultz, RP

Born: June 20, 1991 (26)

Throws: Right **Hits:** Right

Team: Tampa Bay Rays **Debut:** May 29, 2018

A 14th round draft pick out of High Point University, Jaime Schultz was drafted by the Tampa Bay Rays in 2013. Schultz has electric stuff and it shows with a minor league career 11.7 K/9 but his lack of command (5.3 BB/9) caused the Rays to convert him from being a starter to a relief pitcher starting in 2017. While generally never showing up on any major prospect lists he was featured many times in Carson Cistulli's [The Fringe Five](#) in 2016 for his ability to have nearly a 40% strikeout rate that year.

Thought to be the last guy cut from the big league roster in 2017 coming out of spring training, Jaime spent most of the season battling injuries. First he pulled his groin, an injury that sidelined him for 3 months. After coming back from that injury he later in the season tore his right meniscus, playing through the pain for the rest of the season. He had surgery to fix both seasons in the offseason.

In his major league debut, Jaime Schultz entered the game in the bottom of the 7th striking out the side on 14 pitches. After the game he was optioned bat to AAA when Nathan Eovaldi was activated off of the 60-day DL.

Debut Game

Pitching: 1 IP | 0 H | 0 ER | 0 K | 0 BB

Player Pages

[Baseball Reference](#)

[Fangraphs](#)

Prospect Rankings (Team / Overall)

MLB Pipeline: 28 / NA

Fangraphs: NA / NA

Baseball Prospectus: NA / NA

Tim Peterson, RP

Born: February 22, 1991 (27)

Throws: Right **Hits:** Right

Team: New York Mets **Debut:** May 30, 2018

Tim Peterson made his MLB debut on Thursday against the Braves. In two innings of work he allowed one walk and one hit, however the one hit was a home run to Johan Camargo.

Peterson also got his first MLB at-bat in the game and grounded out to shortstop.

The Mets drafted Peterson out of the University of Kentucky in the 20th round of the 2012 draft. In February of 2015, Peterson was suspended 80 games for use of the steroid Trenbolone. In the [Fangraphs 2016 Rule 5 draft preview](#) Chris Mitchell wrote, "Tim Peterson has been frustrating low minors hitters for years. He pitched to a 2.46 FIP between High-A and Double-A last year, striking out over one-third of batters faced."

This year before getting called-up, Peterson was 0-1 with a 3.45 ERA, 7 saves, a 0.940 WHIP, and a 12.56 K/9 in 28.2 innings at Triple-A New Orleans.

Fun fact: MLB umpire Quinn Walcott went to the same high school as Peterson, and the school has only been around since 2008.

Debut Game

Pitching: 2 IP | 1 H | 1 ER | 1 HR | 0 K | 1 BB

Player Pages

[Baseball Reference](#)

[Fangraphs](#)

Prospect Rankings (Team / Overall)

MLB Pipeline: NA / NA

Fangraphs: NA / NA

Baseball Prospectus: NA / NA

Mitch Walding, 3B/LF

Born: September 10, 1992 (25)

Throws: Right **Hits:** Left

Team: Philadelphia Phillies **Debut:** May 30, 2018

He attended St. Mary's High School in Stockton, California, where he was a starting pitcher and shortstop on the baseball team as well as an all-league quarterback on the football team, graduating in 2011. Walding was drafted in the fifth round of the 2011 Major League Baseball draft by the Philadelphia Phillies. He signed for a signing bonus of \$800,000, plus having the Phillies pay for his future college expenses. Back in 2013, [Mark Newman called Walding](#), "one of the best pure hitters I've scouted this season." In his minor league career Walding had a batting line of .242/.333/.382 with 58 home runs in 2,363 at bats, and on defense had played 658 games at third base and 2 games at first base.

Mitch has a fun story about finding out he had been called up to the majors, around 3 am while he was sleeping his phone kept ringing and ringing even though he has ignored the 14 previous calls and sent them right to voicemail, he picked it up on the 15th time, and his AAA manager was on the other end letting him know to always pick up his phone and let him know he would be making his MLB debut later that day.

Unfortunately Walding earned the "Golden Sombrero" in his MLB debut. He struck out in all four of his at-bats. This was first time since 1986 and only the seventh time in baseball history that a player went 0-for-4 with four strikeouts in his major league debut. On the bright the side, Mitch has no where to go but up.

Debut Game

Hitting: 4 PA | 4 K

Player Pages

[Fangraphs](#)

[Baseball Reference](#)

Prospect Rankings (Team / Overall)

MLB Pipeline: NA / NA

Fangraphs: NA / NA

Baseball Prospectus: NA / NA

Shane Bieber, SP

Born: May 31, 1995 (23)

Throws: Right **Hits:** Right

Team: Cleveland Indians **Debut:** May 31, 2018

Shane was selected in the fourth round of the 2016 MLB Draft by Cleveland. Through 10 starts this season, Bieber has gone 5-1 with a 1.10 ERA between Double-A Akron and Triple-A Columbus. In 65 1/3 innings, the righty has piled up 61 strikeouts against and only three walks. Bieber did not issue a walk in his first four outings of the season with Akron. [John Sickels](#) writes, "His command and control have always been impeccable, but what's made the difference over the last two years is better fastball velocity." Bieber's promotion follows a rain-shortened, seven-inning no-hitter against Triple-A Gwinnett, he struck out seven and walked none in the win for the Clippers. Shane made his MLB debut on his birthday, he is the sixth starter to make his debut on his birthday. He joins Edwin Jackson, Larry Dierker, Gerry Arrigo, Tom Hughes, and Dick Robinson on that list. It was made clear that this was only a spot start and would be sent down later that week. Bieber is the third player from the 2016 MLB draft to make his debut this season, the others are Eric Lauer and Joey Lucchesi.

Debut Game

Pitching: 5.2 IP | 8 H | 4 ER | 2 HR | 6 K | 1 BB

Player Pages

[Fangraphs](#)

[Baseball Reference](#)

Prospect Rankings (Team / Overall)

MLB Pipeline: 3 / 99

Fangraphs: 5 / NA

Baseball Prospectus: 5 / NA

Ronny Rodriguez, 2B/3B

Born: April 17, 1992 (26)

Throws : Right **Hits:** Right

Team: Detroit Tigers **Debut:** May 31, 2018

Rodríguez grew up in the Dominican Republic, but moved to the United States in 2007. He attended high school in Lawrence, Massachusetts, but when his mother became pregnant, putting a strain on the family due to their small house, he dropped out and returned to the Dominican Republic. He signed as an international free agent with the Cubs in 2008, but the contract was voided when Major League Baseball determined he should have been eligible for the draft. MLB suspended Rodríguez from signing for a year.

The Cleveland Indians signed Rodríguez as an international free agent in 2010. Baseball America ranked Rodriguez as the Indians' eighth best prospect entering the 2013 season. After the 2015 season, Rodríguez was selected to the roster for the Dominican Republic national team at the 2015 WBSC Premier12. He batted 6-for-15 (.400) during the tournament.

On December 16, 2017, Rodríguez signed a minor league contract with the Detroit Tigers. On May 30th, Ronny hit for the cycle for the AAA Toledo Mud Hens, the Tigers called him up the next day where he slapped an infield single in his first at bat. This season in 48 games with the Mud Hens, Rodríguez was hitting .318/.341/.540 with eight homers, 14 doubles and three triples. After receiving the phone call about his call up his first call was to his mother, "When I called my mom, she was working in the factory. I said, 'Hey, you're done with the job.'" Ronnie joined Dereck as the second Rodríguez to make his debut this week. Rodríguez's uncle, Wilton Chavez was a pitcher made it as high as Triple-A before having a five-year career in the Mexican league.

Fun Fact: Rodríguez raps under the stage name "[El Felino](#)". He has 60 grade lyrics and 70

grade flow.

Debut Game

Hitting: 4 PA | 2 H | 1 K

Player Pages

[Fangraphs](#)

[Baseball Reference](#)

Prospect Rankings (Team / Overall)

MLB Pipeline: NA / NA

Fangraphs: NA / NA

Baseball Prospectus: NA / NA

Dylan Cozens, OF

Born: May 31, 1994 (24)

Team: Philadelphia Phillies **Debut:** June 1, 2018

Throws: Left **Hits:** Left

Dylan was a second round pick in the 2012 MLB draft. His father Randy played football for four years as a defensive lineman at the University of Pittsburgh, and was drafted in the 17th round of the 1976 NFL Draft by the Denver Broncos, but never played for them. Cozens initially attended Desert Mountain High School in Arizona, but was suspended midway through his junior year for an altercation with his baseball coach. Baseball writer Keith Law reported that Cozens "shoved his coach and told him to 'f off' in the dugout during a game, so he was kicked off the team - the culmination of a series of incidents that turned many scouts off him, one even calling him a 'bully'". He was ineligible after transferring so he played football.

As a senior in Cozens's first and only season with the Chaparral baseball club he posted a .520 batting average and hit 19 home runs in 33 games, breaking the school's single-season

record held by former White Sox first baseman Paul Konerko. His 19 home runs led the state by six home runs, and were second nationally only to the 21 hit by future major leaguer Joey Gallo. He ended the season by hitting a walk-off home run in the bottom of the seventh inning to win the Division I state championship.

The Phillies drafted Cozens even though there were red flags about his temperament and the fact that he had signed a letter of intent to play football at the University of Arizona. Cozens signed with the Phillies for a contract worth \$659,800. "That was probably the guy I was most excited about", said Phillies general manager Rubén Amaro Jr., "Extraordinary power for a kid -- great body, runs well, seems to move pretty well".

Early returns seemed to prove Amaro Jr. correct, in 2013, 2014, and 2016 he was named an MiLB.com Phillies Organization All Star. Even though his strikeout numbers were high his power numbers seemed to outweigh those. In 2016 his platoon numbers were exposed, Cozens batted just .197 off left-handed pitching and struggled to make contact, striking out an egregious 186 times in 521 at bats. Despite his platoon struggles, Cozen was selected to the 2016 MLB Futures Game and won the Eastern League MP Award. That wasn't the only issue that cropped up in the 2016 season, after being placed on the 40 man roster while playing in the Dominican Winter League, the 6-foot-6, 235 pound Cozens got into a fight with and punched 5-foot-10, 185 pound teammate Boog Powell (now with the A's), who needed five stitches near his left eye to close a cut.

In 2017 while playing for the Triple-A Lehigh Valley IronPigs, Cozens finished 4th in the International League with 27 home runs, but lead the league in strikeouts with 194 in 476 at-bats.

Cozen was in the showers after a game when he found out he had been called up to the Show, the team manager came in and told Dylan that the general manager wanted to see him. He assumed that he was in trouble again, which would not have been a stretch of the imagination, once he got into the office he learned of Rhys Hoskins broken jaw and that it was his turn to finally join the major league club. At the time of his promotion he was batting .226/.326/.440 for Lehigh Valley, with 10 home runs and 75 strikeouts in 168 at bats.

Debut Game

Hitting: 3 PA | 1 H | 2 K

Player Pages

[Fangraphs](#)

[Baseball Reference](#)

Prospect Rankings (Team / Overall)

MLB Pipeline: 16 / NA

Fangraphs: 23 / NA

Baseball Prospectus: NA / NA

Walker Lockett, SP

Born: May 3, 1994 (24)

Hits: Right **Throws:** Right

Team: San Diego Padres **Debut:** June 1, 2018

Whether one calls him Andrew or Walker, I'm sure Lockett doesn't care as long as that call is a call to the majors. The Padres selected Lockett out high school in the fourth round of the 2012 draft. Early in his career Lockett was limited to 12.7 IP over two years because of a shoulder injury and blister issues. In 2016 Lockett had an ERA of 2.96 in 25 starts at four different minor league levels from Single-A Fort Wayne to Triple-A El Paso.

[Minor League Baseball](#) writes, "Lockett is a classic sinker-slider pitcher who works from a high angle of attack out of a mid-to-high $\frac{3}{4}$ arm slot. He comes right after hitters and induces as many grounders as possible, as do many other sinkerball pitchers. This particular sinker comes in around 91-93, with considerable drop and some arm-side run. He'll work up in the zone with the four-seamer, at times, mixing in a potentially-plus slider and solid change-up.

[H]is slider looks to be his best secondary pitch, and could boost his strikeout totals enough to make him a 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 8 K/9IP starter in the big leagues."

Lockett was not having a strong season at Triple-A El Paso, before getting called-up, he had a 5.31 ERA and 4.96 FIP in 59.3 innings. On June 2nd, the day after his MLB debut, Lockett was optioned back to El Paso.

Fun Fact: Locket's high school, Providence High of Jacksonville has only been around since 1997 and can count among its alumni: a major league baseball player, a Miss Alabama (Caitlin Brunell) and one of the most-hated college basketball players of all-time (Grayson Allen).

Debut Game

Pitching: 3.2 IP | 4 H | 4 ER | 2 K | 5 BB

Player Pages

[Baseball Reference](#)

[Fangraphs](#)

Prospect Rankings (Team / Overall)

MLB Pipeline: NA / NA

Fangraphs: NA / NA

Baseball Prospectus: NA / NA

Dennis Santana, SP/RP

Born: April 12, 1996 (Age: 22)

Hits: Right **Throws:** Right

Team: Los Angeles Dodgers **Debut:** June 1, 2018

Dennis Santana made his major league debut Friday night at Coors Field. Not only did Santana get the win in relief, but he also got his first major league hit in his first at-bat, a 2-RBI double off of Tyler Anderson that gave the Dodgers the lead. The fact that Santana got a hit in his first game shouldn't come as a surprise since he was initially a shortstop.

The Dodgers signed Santana for \$170,000 in 2013 as an international amateur free-agent from the Dominican Republic. He was converted from shortstop to a pitcher in 2014.

Santana's breakout season was 2016 with the Great Lakes Loons (Low-A), he named a Midwest League All-Star and finished the season with a 3.07 ERA and 124 strikeouts in 111.1

innings. He was a Midwest League All-Star with the Loons in 2016.

On May 19 of this year, Santana tied a career high by striking out eleven hitters in his Triple-A debut. In addition to the strikeouts, he had six scoreless innings allowing three hits and no walks. In ten starts between Double A and Triple A this season, Santana has 65 strikeouts and only 16 walks in just 49.2 innings, while allowing a mere .196 batting average against.

Shortly before his call-up, Santana was listed as one of Carson Cistulli's [Fringe Five](#). Cistulli was impressed by Santana's strikeout and walk rates at Triple-A and his ability to get hitters to chase pitches in the dirt. [Eric Longenhagen wrote](#), "Santana has a low-ish arm slot but does everything necessary to succeed as a starter. His changeup is good enough to mitigate the early look left-handed hitters get at his fastball (which has nasty tail), and the command of his entire arsenal has drastically improved in the last year. He projects as a No. 4 starter but is trending up."

Fun Fact: According to the [Orange County Register](#), "Santana is named after two professional athletes. Interestingly, neither plays baseball. His father, Jose, likes basketball and was a fan of Dennis Rodman and Anfernee Hardaway."

Debut Game

Hitting: 1 PA | 1 AB | 1 H | 1 2B

Pitching: 3.2 IP | 6 H | 5 ER | 4 K | 1 BB

Player Pages

[Baseball Reference](#)

[Fangraphs](#)

Prospect Rankings (Team / Overall)

MLB Pipeline: 9 / NA

Fangraphs: 8 / NA

Baseball Prospectus: NA / NA

Jose Castillo, RP

Born: January 10, 1996 (Age: 22)

Hits: Left **Throws:** Left

Team: San Diego Padres **Debut:** June 2, 2018

In the bottom of the 8th, his first and only inning of his debut, Jose Castillo struck out Joey Votto, Eugenio Suarez and Adam Duvall, all swinging on a total of 16 pitches. He is the second player this week to make his MLB debut by striking out the side in an inning of relief, the other is Jamie Schultz of the Rays.

Castillo was signed by the Rays in 2012 as an amateur free-agent out of Venezuela. In December 2014, he was traded with Wil Myers, Ryan Hanigan and Geraldo Reyes to the San Diego Padres in exchange for René Rivera, Burch Smith and Jake Bauers.

In 2017 Castillo played for Venezuela in the World Baseball Classic. He recorded 1 save and 5 strikeout in 3 IP. Before his call up he split time between AA and AAA, in 19 appearances he recorded 8 saves with 35 strikeouts and 9 walks.

Debut Game

Pitching: 1 IP | 0 H | 0 ER | 3 K | 0 BB

Player Pages

[Baseball Reference](#)

[Fangraphs](#)

Prospect Rankings (Team / Overall)

MLB Pipeline: NA / NA

Fangraphs: NA / NA

Baseball Prospectus: NA / NA

Austin Gomber, SP

Born: November 23, 1993 (24)

Throws: Left **Hits:** Left

Team: St. Louis Cardinals **Debut:** June 2, 2018

The Cardinals' fourth round selection of the 2014 MLB draft, Gomber attended Florida Atlantic University. The Cardinals named him one of their two 2015 Co-Minor League Pitchers of the Year. In 2015, Gomber pitched for the Peoria Chiefs, where he was named a Midwest League All-Star. The Cardinals named Gomber their Minor League Pitcher of the Month for August 2015 and their co-Minor League Pitcher of the Year, sharing the award with Alex Reyes. Gomber began 2018 with the Memphis Redbirds. On April 23, 2018, in a game against the Iowa Cubs, Gomber tied the Redbirds' franchise record for strikeouts in a game with 16, joining Lance Lynn who also struck out 16 in 2010. Gomber throws three pitches: a fastball, changeup, and slider. His fastball can reach 90 miles per hour. In his pre-draft report, Jim Callis commented that his changeup was his best pitch. In AAA in 2018 he started 9 games and compiled a 4 -3 record with 63 strikeouts and 17 walks and gave up 55 hits in 55 total innings.

Debut Game

Pitching: 3 IP | 0 H | 2 K | 1 BB

Player Pages

[Fangraphs](#)

[Baseball Reference](#)

Prospect Rankings (Team / Overall)

MLB Pipeline: 10 / NA

Fangraphs: 16 / NA

Baseball Prospectus: NA / NA

Thank you for reading. If you know anyone that would enjoy this newsletter please tell them [to](#)

[subscribe](#). All past issues can be found [here](#). If you have any feedback please reply to this email.

Contributors to this newsletter are Brenden Becherer, Nicholas Carr, Simon Gutierrez, Jon Jacoby, Seth Moland-Kovash, Mike Moriarty, Tyler Nelson, and Connor Watrous.

[This Week In Baseball Debuts](#) by This Week In Baseball Debuts

25 Main St Cooperstown, NY 13326 USA