



# BETTING THE FARM

Baseball America's top pitching prospects for 2007

1  
**DAISUKE MATSUZAKA**  
Red Sox, RHP

2  
**PHILIP HUGHES**  
Yankees, RHP

3  
**HOMER BAILEY**  
Reds, RHP

4  
**ANDREW MILLER**  
Tigers, LHP

5  
**TIM LINCECUM**  
Giants, RHP

## Orioles' Top Prospects

### 1. BILLY ROWELL, 3B, 18

First-round pick in 2006 hit .328 last year after graduating from high school.

### 2. BRANDON ERBE, RHP, 19

The Orioles persuaded this 2005 third-round pick from Maryland to stay home instead of honoring his oral commitment to the University of Miami.

### 3. HAYDEN PENN, RHP, 22

Should be ready to step into the rotation anytime now.

### 4. GARRETT OLSON, LHP, 23

Finesse pitcher, below, has one of the best breaking balls in the system.



BY JONATHAN NEWTON — THE WASHINGTON POST

### 5. RADHAMES LIZ, RHP, 23

Hard thrower could be switched to reliever.

— Jorge Arangure Jr.

## Nationals' Top Prospects



BY TONI L. SANDYS — THE WASHINGTON POST

Right-hander Collin Balester is making his best pitch — the curveball — to one day join the big league rotation. He'll likely start the year in Harrisburg.

### 1. COLLIN BALESTER RHP, 20

Mechanical adjustments led him to a shaky start at Class A Potomac last year, but by the time player development guru Bob Boone saw him in August, he was overpowering. Boone sent him to Class AA Harrisburg, where he likely will start the season. Scouts love his biting curveball.

### 2. CHRIS MARRERO OF-1B, 18

One Nationals official watched him blast bomb after bomb in a batting practice session this spring and likened him to Mike Piazza. A high school third baseman, the Nationals are tinkering with his position, but are clear on one thing. "I want him to play 'bat,'" Boone said.

### 3. COLTON WILLEMS RHP, 18

He joined Marrero as a first-round pick last year. Willems dropped his slider in order to master a curveball. He can reach mid- to upper-90s with his fastball. At 6 feet 4, he has an excellent frame.

### 4. KORY CASTO LF-3B-1B, 25

When will the organization's two-time minor league player of the year be ready? "Now," Manager Manny Acta said. The Nationals have moved him from position to position, but he projects to a .280 major league hitter with some gap power.

### 5. ESMALYN GONZALEZ SS, 17

He signed for \$1.4 million from the Dominican Republic last summer. Soft hands, quick bat and unusually patient approach at the plate. His best tool? "His head," Nationals special assistant Jose Rijo said.

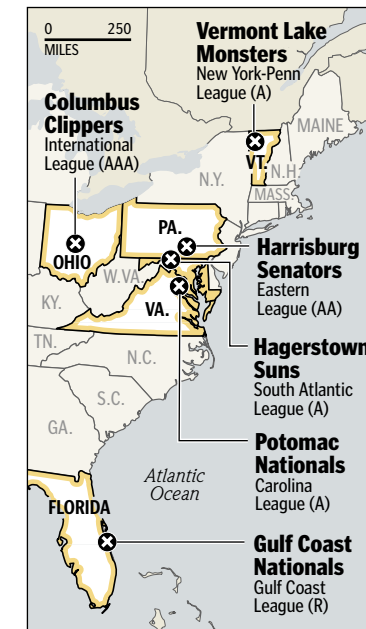
— Barry Svrluga



BY JOE HERMITT — THE PATRIOT NEWS

The time is now for Kory Casto, who will start the 2007 season in left field for the Washington Nationals. He can also back up at third and first.

## Nationals' Minor League Teams



BY GENE THORP — THE WASHINGTON POST

## Orioles' Minor League Teams

**NORFOLK TIDES**  
(AAA) International League

**BOWIE BAYSOX**  
(AA) Eastern League

**FREDERICK KEYS**  
(A) Carolina League

**DELMARVA SHOREBIRDS**  
(A) South Atlantic League

**ABERDEEN IRONBIRDS**  
(Short Season) New York-Penn League

**BLUEFIELD ORIOLES**  
(Rookie) Appalachian League