Pittsburgh Pirates Player Valuation – TrackMan Data

By Josh Orenstein – March 6, 2021

Prospect Rankings

1. **Aaron Ashby**
2. **Kohl Franklin**
3. **Ethan Small**
4. **Drey Jameson**
5. **Jacob Bukauskas**

2. **Aaron Ashby, SP**

Drafted: 4th Round, 2018 from Crowder College (MIL) Data: 2018, 2019 – Rookie, Short Season, Low A							
Current Age	22.8	**Height**	6' 2"	**Weight**	181	**Bat / Thr**	R / L

Pitch Values are given by Run Value/100 which is Percentile Ranked compared to MLB averages

Four Seamer	**Changeup**	**Slider**	**Curveball**	**First Pitch Strike%**	**Avg/Top**
52/100	90/100	94/100	50/100	56.4%	92 / 95

Summary: Fastball, changeup, slider, curveball. Fastball has excellent ground ball potential. Struggles to locate his fastball, but can throw his offspeed stuff for strikes.

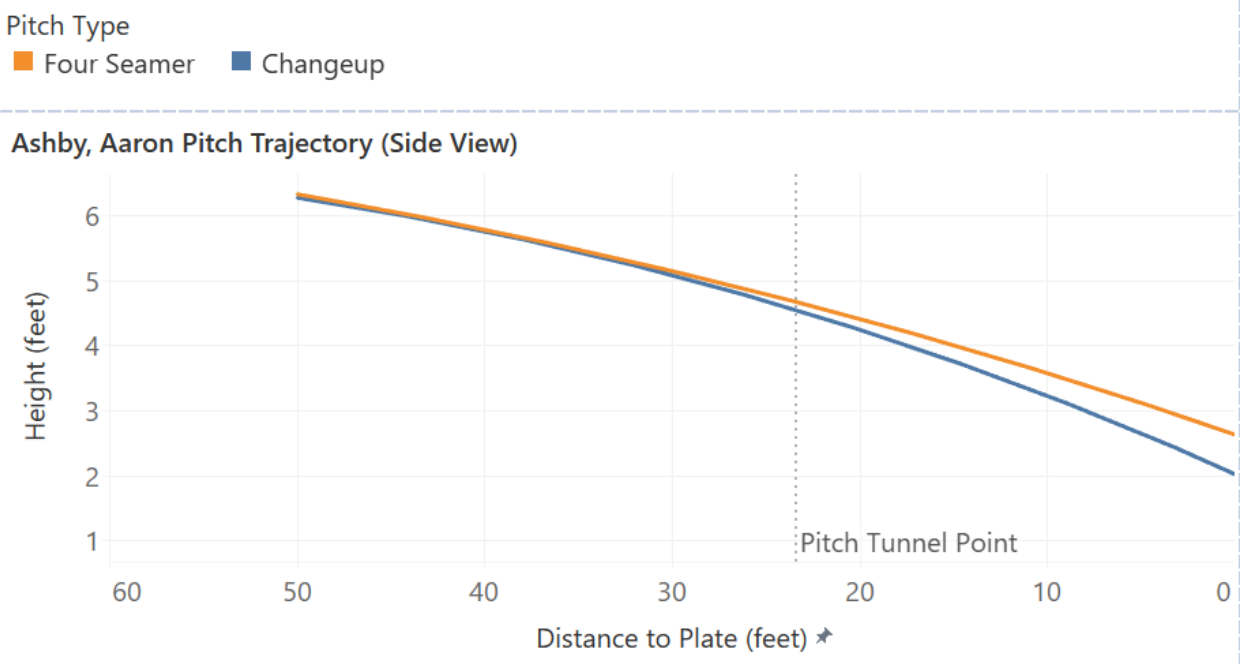
Breakdown: Ashby's fastball had average results largely due to poor command. He rated slightly below average in first-pitch strike and zone percentage. He scored in the 98th percentile on fore-arm angle; but the velocity plays down due to his short extension (5.5 ft). He did have some pitches classified as two-seamers that rated highly. He throws his fastball at a low spin rate and given the high forearm angle it may be worth featuring the two seamer more.

His slider was his most successful pitch. He rated highly in vertical movement gap compared to his fastball (82nd percentile) but low in velocity at 82 mph. He was able to throw it for strikes as his zone percentage is about average. It has good down-and-away chase potential for LHB.

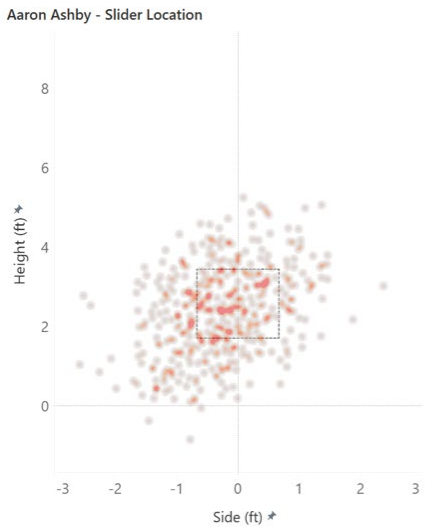
Ashby has success with a slow changeup (9 mph gap to fastball). It has a narrow gap in vertical break compared to his fastball, so this pitch looks good from a tunneling perspective. He was able to command it well scoring in the 97th percentile in zone percentage. The downside of the command is that he threw a lot of changeups down the middle.

His curveball is his 4th pitch. A 78 mph, 2300 spin pitch rating about average in vertical break and velocity. He located it in the zone slightly above MLB average.

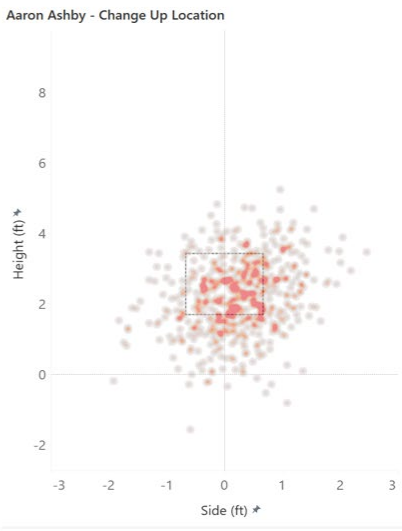
Ashby's fastball/changeup combo has excellent tunneling potential



Ashby locates his slider down and away to a LHB.



He is able to throw his changeup for strikes at a high rate



2. Kohl Franklin, SP

Drafted: 4th Round, 2018 from Broken Arrow HS (CHC) Data: 2018, 2019 – Rookie, Short Season, Low A							
Current Age	21.5	**Height**	6' 4"	**Weight**	190	**Bat / Thr**	R / R

Pitch Values are given by Run Value/100 which is Percentile Ranked compared to MLB averages				
Four Seamer	**Curveball**	**Changeup**	**First Pitch Strike%**	**Avg/Top**
44/100	98/100	99/100	51.3%	92 / 96

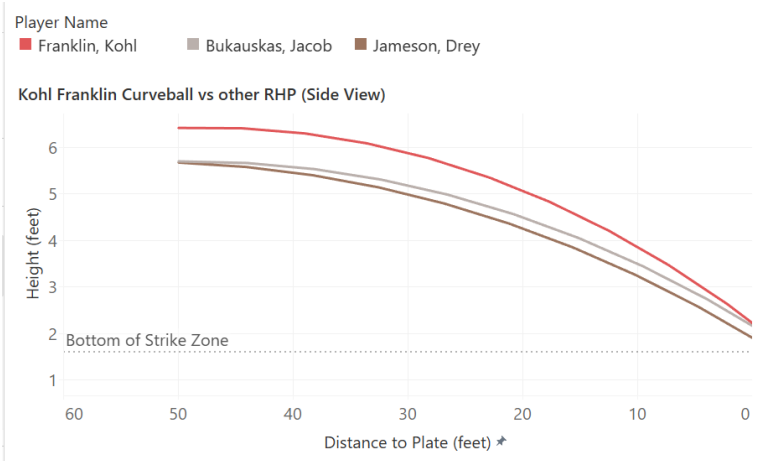
Summary: Three-pitch mix, average fastball, elite curve spin, good changeup speed. Excellent performance especially considering age for level.

Breakdown: Franklin data is primarily from Short Season where he was two years younger than the average competition. Fastball velocity was slightly below MLB average (92 mph) with spin rate slightly above average (2271 rpm). He struggled to command the zone as he had low rankings in both First Strike and Zone Percentage. On first pitch fastballs, he tended to miss arm-side. He throws his fastball from a high forearm angle (79th percentile).

Franklin throws his changeup at a low velocity (84 mph) and rates above average in keeping a narrow vertical break compared to his fastball so there is good tunneling potential with his change.

He throws a slow curve (76 mph) with elite spin (2848 rpm). He gets out in front on it with extension ranking in the 62nd percentile at 5.8 feet from the mound.

Franklin gets more break on his curveball than the other RHP thanks to the elite spin rate



3. **Ethan Small, SP**

Drafted: 1st Round, 2017 from Mississippi State (Milwaukee) Data From 2019, 2020 seasons – Rookie, Low A, Spring Training							
Current Age	24.0	**Height**	6’ 3”	**Weight**	214	**Bat / Thr**	L / L

Pitch Values are given by Run Value/100 which is Percentile Ranked compared to MLB averages				
Four Seamer	**Change Up**	**Curveball**	**First Pitch Strike%**	**Avg/Top**
98/100	98/100	95/100	55.0%	91 / 94

Overall: Fastball, curve, changeup. Long extension adds 1.5 mph to his perceived fastball velocity. High forearm angle; big vertical separation between fastball and changeup.

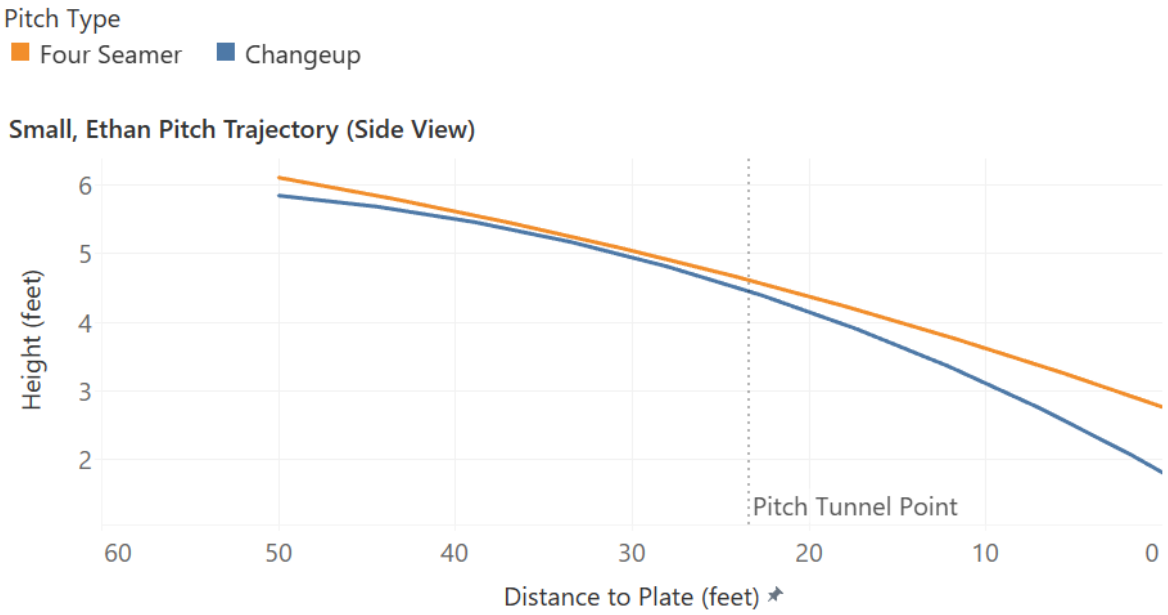
Background: Small dominated the Midwest League in the data we have. He relied heavily on his fastball (67%) which played up due to his long extension (7 feet) and high forearm angle which rates in the 95th percentile. It’s a low spin pitch which typically correlates with ground balls so there could be potential to add a two-seamer as well.

He throws a slow changeup (14 mph slower than his FB) that gets a lot of depth relative to his fastball (9 inch difference in vertical break).

His curve has average spin but gets good horizontal movement (85th percentile). He tended to locate it glove-side.

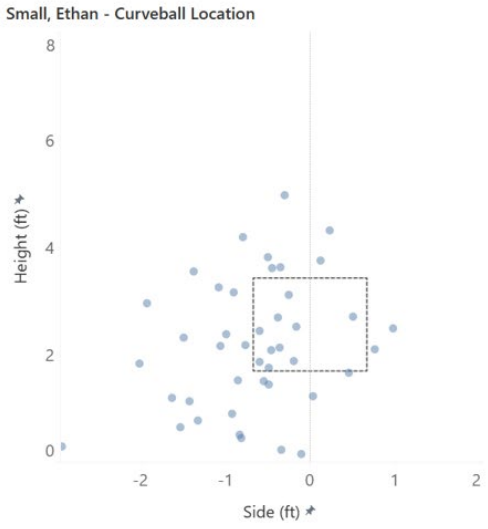
He may tip his breaking pitches as well as there is clear separation in his release point.

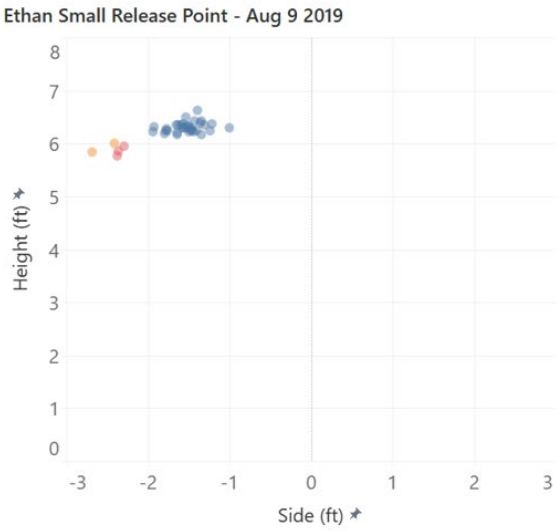
Small’s changeup gets a lot of sink (9 inch drop vs fastball)



Small located his curveball gloveside

He may be tipping his offspeed stuff.





4. Drey Jameson, SP

Drafted: 1st Round, 2019 from Ball State (ARI)							
Current Age	23.5	**Height**	6’ 0”	**Weight**	165	**Bat / Thr**	R / R
Run Value/100 is Percentile Ranked							

Data From 2019 season – Short Season A			
Four Seamer	**Slider**	**First Pitch Strike%**	**Avg/Top**
70/100	61/100	47.0%	94 / 97

Overall: Jameson showed a two-pitch mix at Hillsboro; fastball, slider. Short extension ticks down his perceived fastball velocity by 1 mph. Slider is slurvy but has good shape and spin.

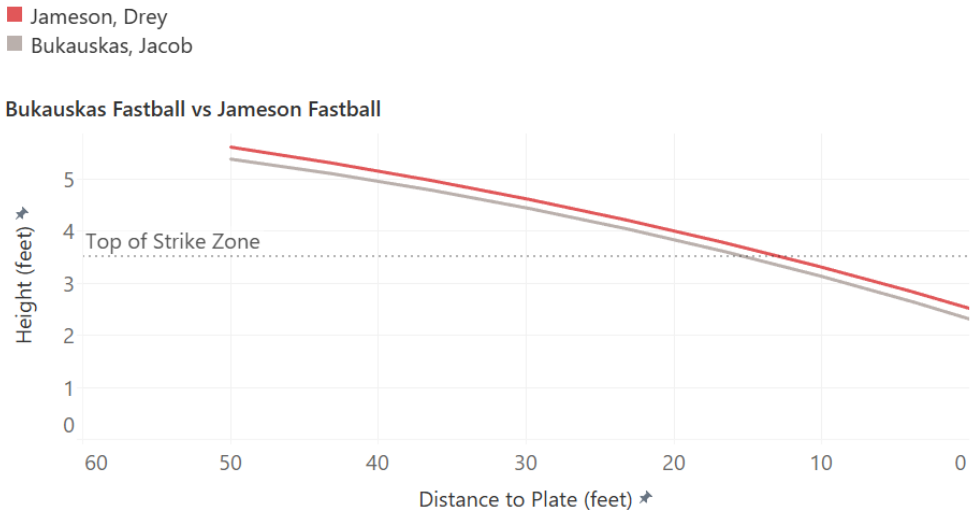
Background: Jameson's fastball showed above average velocity and spin but he struggled to find the strike zone registering a first pitch strike at a below average rate. His forearm angle ranks about average, high considering his height and gives his fastball good ride.

His slider has good shape to as it registers a lot of horizontal break. It's a little slurvy as it has a similar trajectory and speed compared to his curveball.

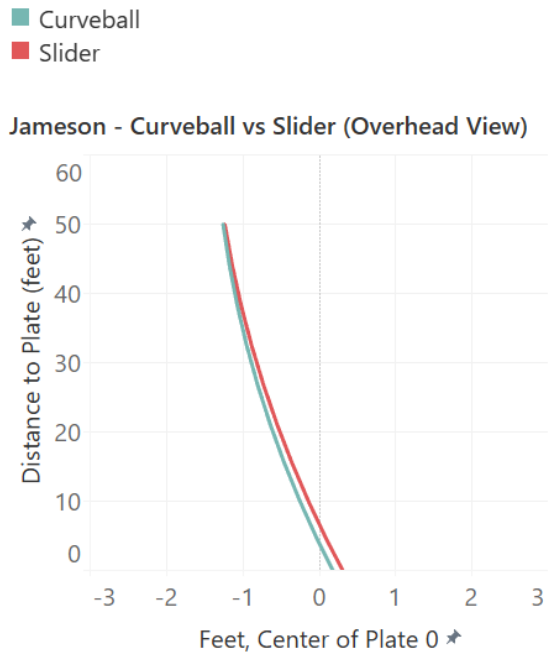
His curve had average spin at about 2400 rpm and short extension (5.0 feet).

We captured just 9 changeups. It has a high velocity; 87 mph and high spin rate so could have some good tunneling potential with his fastball.

Jameson has a higher release point than Bukauskas which makes it more likely for him to work at the top of the strike zone.



Jameson's curveball and slider look very similar



5. Jacob Bukauskas, RP

Drafted: 1st Round, 2017 from North Carolina (HOU) Data From 2018, 2019 seasons – Short Season, Low A, High A, AA, AFL, Spring Training							
Current Age	24.4	**Height**	6' 0"	**Weight**	196	**Bat / Thr**	R / R

Pitch Values are given by Run Value/100 which is Percentile Ranked compared to MLB averages					
Four Seamer	**Slider**	**Two Seamer**	**Change Up**	**First Pitch Strike%**	**Avg/Top**
72/100	86/100	37/100	28/100	58.0%	95 / 99

Overall: Elite spin on fastball, throws everything hard, struggles with command. Low angle, inconsistent release point.

Background: Bukauskas throws a hard fastball topping out at 99 mph with elite spin (2543 rpm, 97th percentile). Due to his short arm stroke, he registers a low forearm angle (30th percentile). He struggled to command his fastball as it ranked very poorly in zone percentage (16th percentile) and first pitch strike percentage (35th percentile).

His slider was his best pitch according to run value and he threw it 30 percent of the time. Bukauskas increased his slider usage in his last 5 outings in AA and it resulted in an increased strike out rate (12.3 K/9). It's a hard, high spin pitch (87 mph/2477 rpm) that has a lot of movement, it ranked in the 64th percentile in ride (vertical break) and has average horizontal movement. He tries to get hitters to chase locating it down and away.

His changeup didn't fare well which is surprising given its hard velocity (88 mph) combined with good sink (9 inch drop relative to fastball).

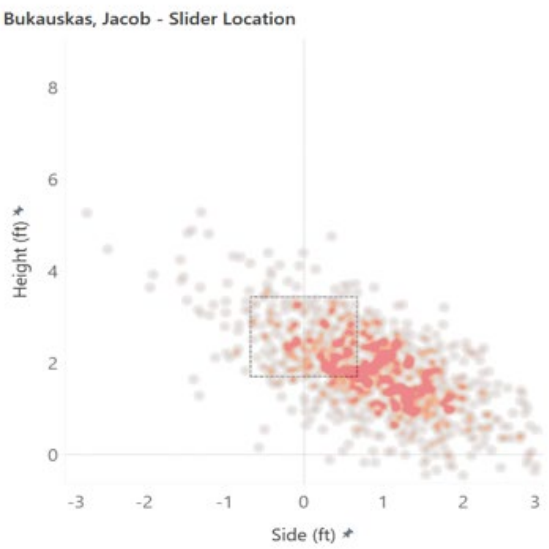
Bukauskas throws a two seamer on occasion. It didn't fare well likely due to command issues and it may not be the ideal pitch for him as he releases his pitches at such a low forearm angle (28th percentile).

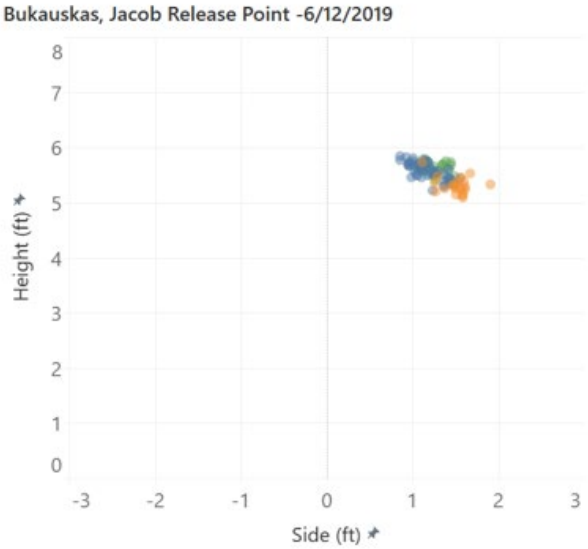
We did capture 35 cutters from Bukauskas, which was not enough to qualify for run value ranking; however, it did rate high in velocity (90mph) and vertical break/ride (82nd percentile).

He really struggles with his release point as it often ranged about a foot side-to-side

Bukauskas tries to get RHB to chase down and away

His release point lacks consistency





Appendix –

Indicators of Run Value Based on 2018 MLB TrackMan data provided

	Primary Indicators		**Secondary Indicators**	
	LHP	RHP	LHP	RHP
Four Seam	Strikes, Spin Rate, Extension	Strikes, Spin Rate, Velo	High forearm angle	
Two Seam	Strikes, Sink	Movement, Velo, high forearm angle	Velo, high forearm angle	Movement, Velo, high forearm Angle
Cutter	Extension	Velo, Strikes, Horz Break	Strikes, Ride	Ride, High forearm angle
Slider	Low arm slot, Rides like FB	Ride, Spin, Horz Break	Velo	
Curveball	Lower vert break separation from FB, Velo, Strikes		Horz Break	Extension

Changeup	Velo gap to FB, Horz movement	Velo, break relative to FB	Keep ball down