Pittsburgh Pirates Player Valuation – TrackMan Data

By Josh Orenstein – March 6, 2021

<u>Prospect Rankings</u>

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

1. 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.
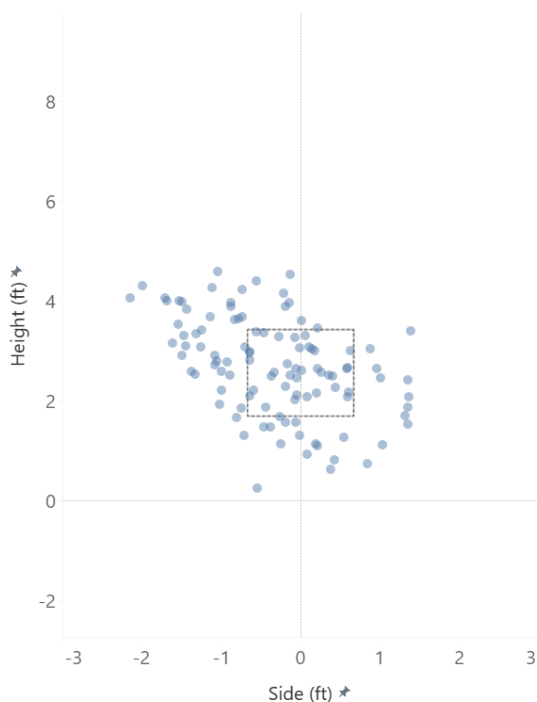
Breakdown: Franklin pitched primarily at Short Season Eugene where he was two years younger than the average competition. Fastball velocity was slightly below MLB average (92 mph) with spin rate rating slightly above average (2271 rpm). He struggled to command the zone as he had low rankings in both First Strike and Zone Percentage. On first pitch fastballs, he tended to miss arm-side (see chart below). 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 small vertical break compared to his fastball.

His curve is slow (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.

Kohl Franklin - First Pitch Fastball Plate Location

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: Ashby has a four-pitch mix; four-seamer, changeup, slider, curveball. Fastball has excellent ground ball potential and he can throw his breaking pitches for strikes.

Breakdown: His fastball had average results largely due to poor command. Ashby's fastball first-pitch strike and zone percentage rated slightly below MLB average. He scored in the 98th percentile on fore-arm angle; but had short extension (5.5 ft) and a low spin rate (2100 rpm);

He did have some pitches classified as two-seamers that rated highly 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. The plate location chart below shows its chase potential to left-handed hitters.

Ashby has success with a slow changeup (9 mph gap to fastball). It has a very narrow gap in vertical break compared to his fastball, so this pitch could score well in pitch tunneling metrics. He was able to command it well scoring in the 97th percentile in zone percentage. He did throw the pitch high in the zone and this could be a concern at higher levels.

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.
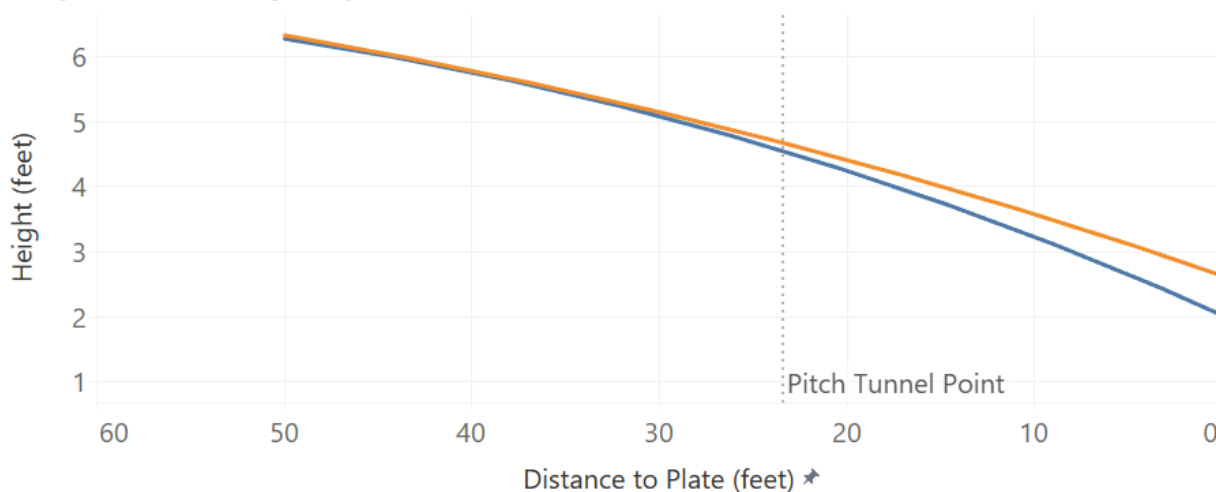
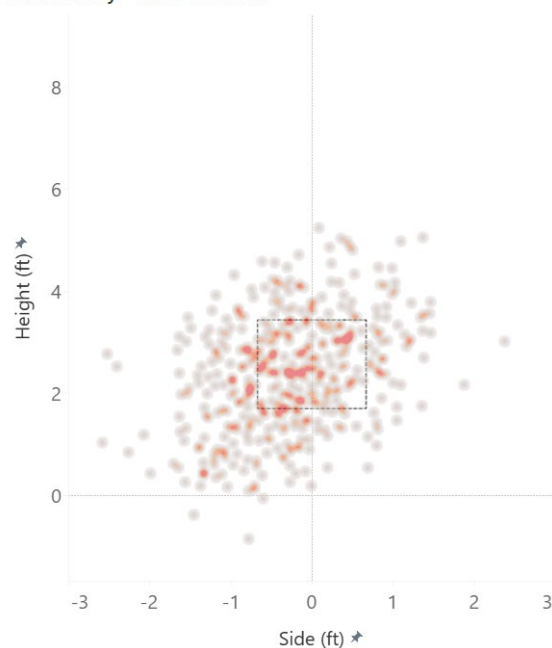*Ashby's fastball/changeup combo has excellent tunneling potential*

Pitch Type
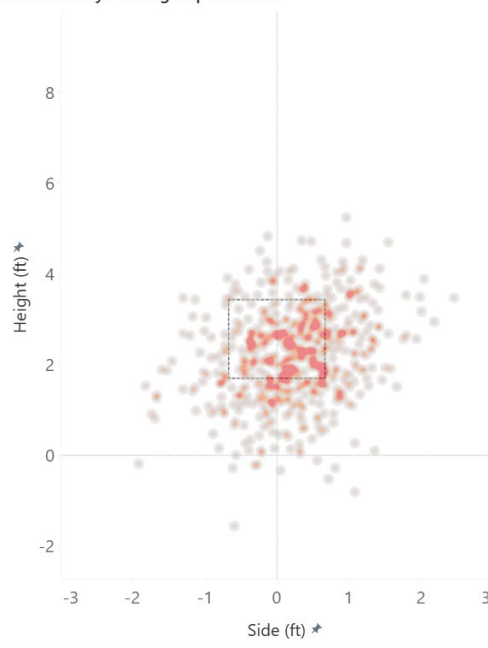■ Four Seamer   ■ Changeup

Ashby, Aaron Pitch Trajectory (Side View)

Aaron Ashby - Slider Location

Aaron Ashby - Change Up Location

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: Most of Small's data is from Low A Wisconsin where he dominated competition over 18 innings. Small relied heavily on his fastball (67%) which played up due to his long extension (7 feet) and forearm angle which rates in the 95th percentile. It's a low spin pitch which typically correlates with ground balls.

Small throws a slow changeup (14 mph slower than his FB) and combined with his forearm angle this gives the pitch heavy sink compared to his fastball (9 inches).

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

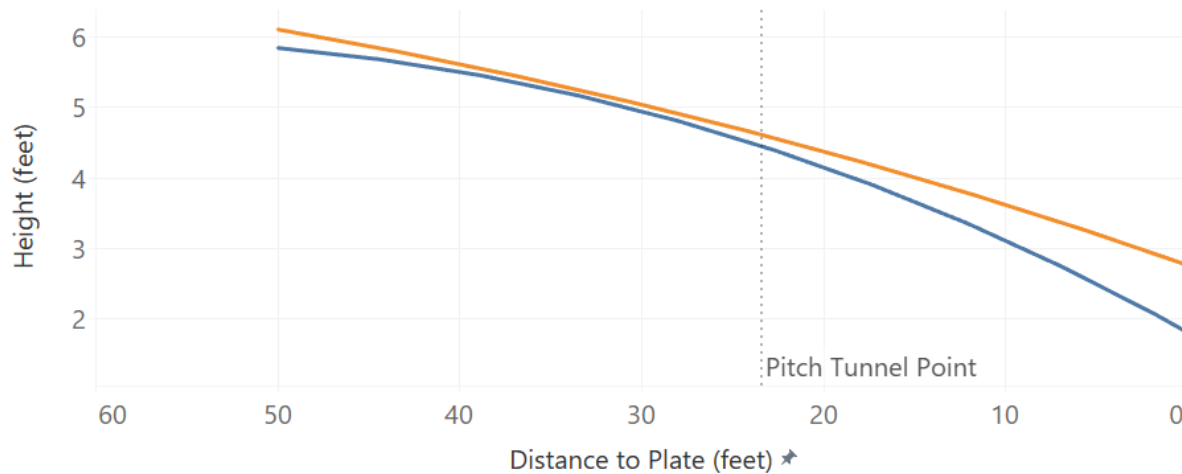Small may tip his breaking pitches as well as there is clear separation in his release point.

Small's changeup gets a lot of sink (9 inch drop vs fastball)
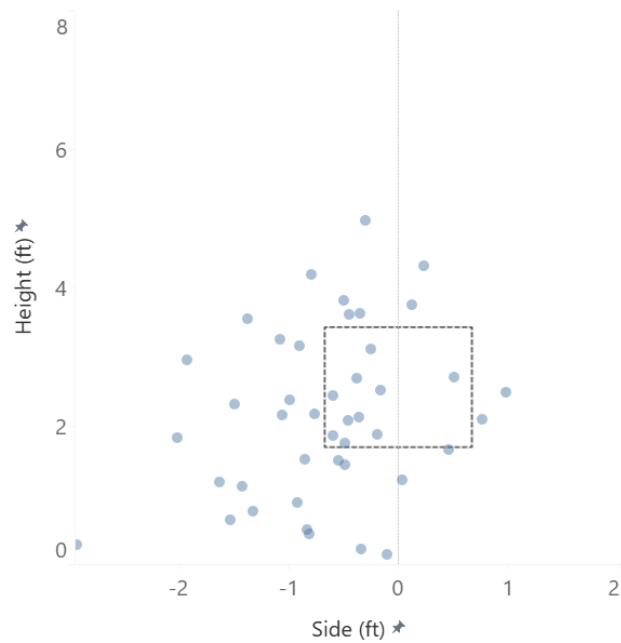
Pitch Type
■ Four Seamer   ■ Changeup

Small, Ethan Pitch Trajectory (Side View)
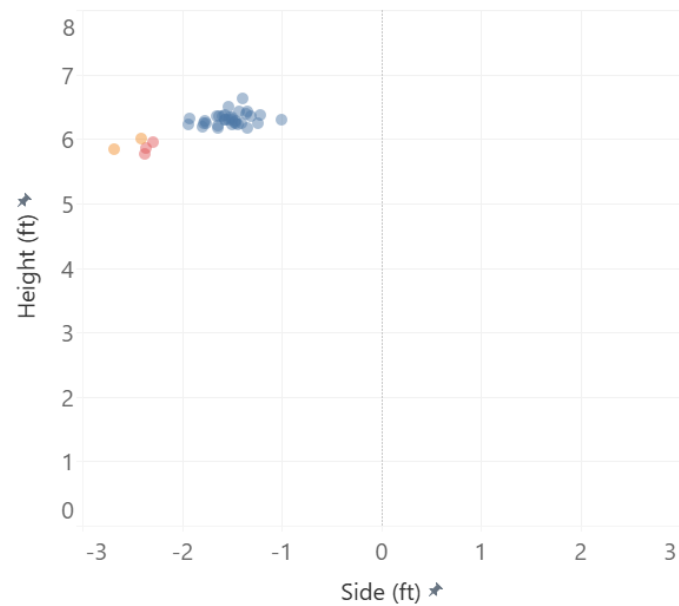
Small located his curveball gloveside

Small, Ethan - Curveball Location

Small may be tipping his offspeed stuff.

Ethan Small Release Point - Aug 9 2019

4. 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 two-pitch mix, struggles with command. Low forearm angle.

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 and he started to move away from it towards the end of the 2019 season. He throws it hard (88 mph) but it does have good sinking potential as it drops 9 inches relative to his 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).
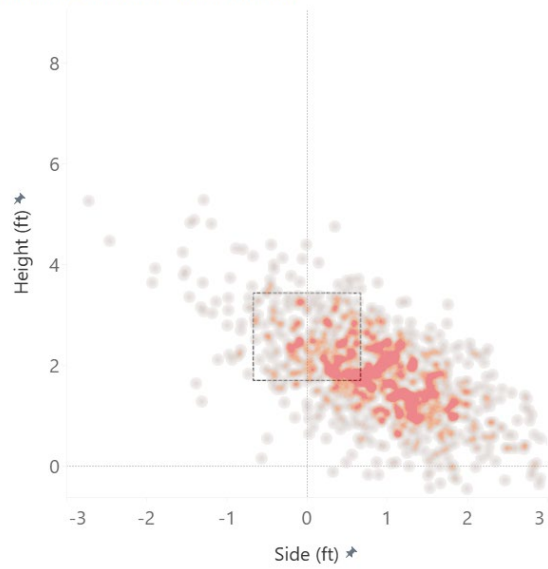
We did capture 35 cutters from Bukauskas, which was not enough to qualify for run value ranking; however, it did rate high in velocity (90mph) and vertical break/ride (82nd percentile).

He really struggles with his release point as it often ranged about a foot side-to-side.
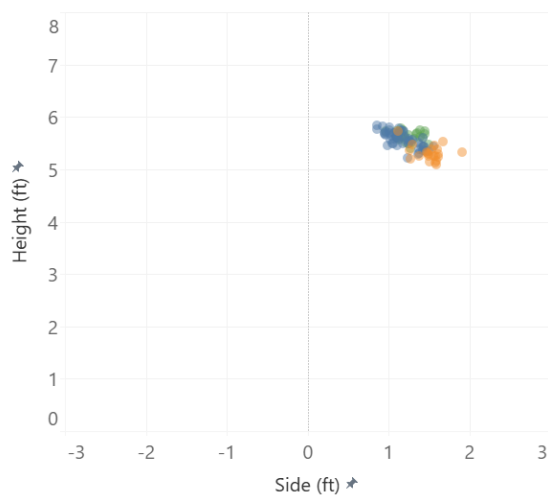
Bukauskas tries to get RHB to chase down and away

Bukauskas, Jacob - Slider Location

Bukauskas release point ranging about 1ft side-to-side

Bukauskas, Jacob Release Point -6/12/2019

5. 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 showing a fastball 70% and slider 22% of the time. Short extension ticks down his perceived fastball velocity by 1 mph. Slow, slurvy slider.

Background: Jameson's fastball showed above average velocity and spin but he really struggled to find the strike zone with it registering a first pitch strike just 47 percent of the time and locating it in the zone just 10 percent of the time.

His slider is slow compared to MLB pitchers at 82 MLB. It's got good spin but was a little flat as it rates low in vertical break/ride and horizontal break. It seems a little slurvy given its velocity relative to his fastball (12 mph diff).

We captured just 9 changeups and 6 curveballs and he throws both at a high velocity; 87 mph from the changeup and 80 mph from the curveball. His curve had average spin at about 2400 rpm and short extension (5.0 feet).

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	