

Top-10 NWL Players of the Decade (2000-09)

In a balloting among radio broadcasters, media relations directors, and front office staff from the eight Northwest League franchises, the Top-10 Northwest League alumni from the past decade that have excelled in the Major Leagues. From a ballot of 24 players, the voting group pared the list to a Top-10 – all familiar names to baseball fans nationally.

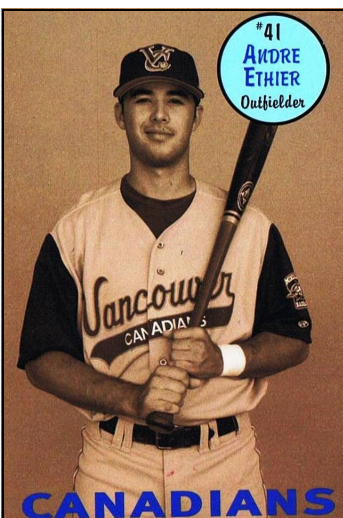
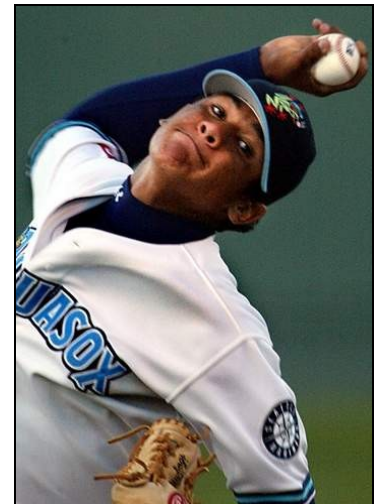


1. Tim Lincecum (Salem-Keizer, 2006)

After beginning his professional career with the Salem-Keizer Volcanoes in 2006, he ascended to the San Francisco Giants a year later and now is one of the more dominant pitchers in the game. A two-time National League All-Star and two-time NL Cy Young Award winner, Lincecum has compiled a 45-19 record with a 2.93 ERA – winning the NL strikeout crown in both 2008 and 2009, ranking second in the NL in ERA both seasons.

2. Felix Hernandez (Everett, 2003)

As a 17-year-old rookie with the Everett Aquasox in 2003, he had a dominant stay in the Northwest League, going 7-2 with a 2.29 ERA – climbing the ladder quickly through the Seattle organization. Now a six-year MLB veteran, Hernandez has developed into one of the feared pitchers in the American League, registering a 6-1-45 overall record and a 3.44 ERA. He was a 2009 AL All-Star, leading the loop with 19 wins, finishing second in the Cy Young Award balloting.



3. Andre Ethier (Vancouver, 2003)

A second-round pick of the Oakland Athletics in 2003, he began his professional career with the Vancouver Canadians, hitting .390 with a homer and seven RBI for the C's before a quick call-up to Class A ball. After being traded to the Los Angeles Dodgers during the 2005-06 off-season, he made his MLB debut in 2006 and helped L.A. to three postseason runs. Ethier is a .295 career hitter with 145 doubles, 85 homers, and 342 RBI, earning 2009 National League Silver Slugger honors.

4. Shane Victorino (Yakima, 2000)

Spent the entire 2000 season with the Yakima Bears, hitting .246 with two homers and 20 RBI, but has gone on to a prosperous Big League career. In seven MLB seasons (between San Diego and Philadelphia), he has a combined .282 batting average, with 53 home runs, 121 doubles, 38 triples, and 259 RBI. Helped the Phillies to two World Series appearances (including the 2008 World Championship), earning 2009 National League All-Star honors and leading the league in triples.

5. Dan Uggla (Yakima, 2001)

Spent the 2001 season with the Yakima Bears, hitting .277 with five homers and 40 RBI. Was selected by Florida in the 2005 Rule 5 Draft and has spent the past five seasons with the Marlins, earning National League All-Star honors in 2006 and 2008. Has a career .258 average with 133 homers, 152 doubles, and 393 RBI, including three-straight 30-home run seasons.

6. Ian Kinsler (Spokane, 2003)

Began his career with the Spokane Indians in 2003, hitting .277 with a homer and 15 RBI, but had monster 2004 and 2005 seasons in the minors and now is in his fifth year with the Texas Rangers. A 2008 American League All-Star, Kinsler is a career .278 hitter with 84 homers, 130 doubles, 95 stolen bases, and 286 RBI – logging a 30-30 season (31 HR, 31 SB) in 2009.

7. Zach Greinke (Spokane, 2002)

One of three stops in 2002 was a two-game stint with the Spokane Indians, but has developed into one of the more durable arms in the American League. Despite a career mark of 51-60 and a 3.72 ERA, Greinke had a magical 2009 season – leading the AL in ERA (2.16), earning AL All-Star and AL Cy Young Award honors.

8. Pablo Sandoval (Salem-Keizer, 2005)

The “Panda” spent his second professional season with the Salem-Keizer Volcanoes, hitting .330 with three homers and 50 RBI, but has developed into one of the young stars in the Big Leagues. In three seasons, Sandoval is a career .321 hitter with 32 homers and 136 RBI, ranking second in the National League in batting average last season (.330).

9. Dontrelle Willis (Boise, 2001)

The D-Train had a big year with the Boise Hawks in 2001, going 8-2 with a 2.98 ERA, but after being traded to the Florida, made a big splash in 2003 – earning NL Rookie of the Year honors, leading the Marlins to a World Championship. Willis earned NL All-Star honors in 2003 and 2005, leading the NL with 22 wins in 2005. He has a 71-62 overall record with a 4.04 ERA.

10. Rich Harden (Vancouver, 2001)

Began his career with the Vancouver Canadians in 2001, going 2-4 with a 3.39 ERA, but after back-to-back big years in the Oakland organization, made his Big League debut in 2003 – helping the A’s to the postseason (one of three playoff appearances). Currently with the Texas Rangers, Harden has a 53-30 career record with a 3.52 ERA.