

Grichuk was the 'other' Kernel in 2010

Written by Jim Ecker

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The Los Angeles Angels selected two outfielders in the first round of the 2009 Major League draft and assigned them to Cedar Rapids for the start of the 2010 campaign.

One of them was Mike Trout, who has quickly developed into one of the best players in the game. The other guy was Randal Grichuk, who got hurt and overlooked a bit.

Here we are in the playoffs and Trout is home, perhaps counting his \$144.5 million contract. Meanwhile Grichuk is playing for the St. Louis Cardinals in the National League championship series against Baltimore, hoping to get the Cardinals into the World Series.

The Angels traded Grichuk and Peter Bourjos to the Cardinals last November for David Freese and Fernando Salas. Bourjos was the big name in that trade for St. Louis, but Grichuk has impressed enough folks to get in the postseason lineup after hitting .245 with three homers and eight RBIs in 47 games during the regular season.

The Angels drafted Grichuk BEFORE they picked Trout in 2009. They went back-to-back, with Grichuk the 24th overall pick in the first round and Trout the 25th.

The two young players were born just six days apart in 1991, Trout on Aug. 7 and Grichuk on Aug. 13. Now they're both in the Major Leagues, Trout as an all-star and Grichuk as an important player in the national spotlight.

Trout has been on the fast track since Day 1. The Angels sent him to Cedar Rapids at the tail end of the 2009 season and less than two years later he was in the big leagues, leaping over fences to steal home runs and making a name for himself as a 19-year-old kid.

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Grichuk took a little longer to reach the Major Leagues, but he still got there fairly quickly when he made his MLB debut on April 28 this season when he was just 22 years old.

Grichuk is hitting only .188 in the playoffs, but he's belted a home run and has played well in the outfield.

Trout hit .287 with 36 homers and 111 RBIs this year, which make Grichuk's stats pale by comparison. In fact, Trout's numbers left just about everyone else in the dust this year and make an MVP candidate again.

But what are the odds?

Both players were just 17 years old when they were drafted in the first round in 2009 by the Angels. Both young men spent time with the Cedar Rapids Kernels, Trout in 2009 and 2010 and Grichuk in 2010 and 2011. Both guys reached the Major Leagues in a hurry, Trout when he was 19 and Grichuk when he was 22.

The Angels knew what they were doing in that 2009 draft. It's been fun to follow their careers and see them succeed so quickly, and both men could be around for a long time.

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