

= John Bowker ( baseball ) =

John Brite Bowker ( born July 8 , 1983 ) is an American professional baseball outfielder and first baseman who is a free agent . He stands 6 feet 1 inch ( 1 @. @ 85 m ) tall and weighs 205 pounds ( 93 kg ) . He has played for the San Francisco Giants , Pittsburgh Pirates and Philadelphia Phillies of Major League Baseball ( MLB ) and the Yomiuri Giants and Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles of Nippon Professional Baseball ( NPB ) . He bats and throws left @-@ handed .

Bowker was drafted out of Long Beach State University in the third round of the 2004 MLB draft by the San Francisco Giants . He spent the next few years in their minor league system and ranked among the Eastern League leaders in several hitting categories in 2007 . He was called up by the Giants shortly after the 2008 season began , and he became the first San Francisco @-@ era Giant to hit a home run in his first two major league games . He was the Giants ' starting first baseman for much of the season and finished the year batting .255 with 10 home runs in 111 games . In 2009 , Bowker won the Pacific Coast League batting title with a .342 average . However , he batted .194 in 31 major league games . He began 2010 as the Giants ' right fielder but lost the job soon after the season started . He was optioned to Fresno in June and was traded to the Pittsburgh Pirates at the trade deadline . Bowker was called up by the Pirates in September and finished the 2010 season batting .219 with 5 home runs in 67 games . He started the 2011 season as a reserve outfielder on the Pirates ' team but was designated for assignment and sent to the minors after April . He batted .306 with 15 home runs and 76 RBI in 106 games with their International League team before getting traded to the Philadelphia Phillies at the end of August . Used mainly as a pinch hitter , Bowker had no hits in 13 at @-@ bats with Philadelphia . Following the season , he was released so he could sign with the Yomiuri Giants in Japan .

= = Early years = =

Bowker was born to Brite and Chris Bowker on July 8 , 1983 , in Sacramento , California . Growing up , he attended Mariemont Elementary School , Arden Middle School , and Rio Americano High School . He began his baseball career playing for an Arden Park Little League team coached by his father , and he played baseball at Rio Americano , along with football and basketball . He decided to concentrate on baseball as a sophomore . He lettered three seasons in baseball , two seasons in football and one season in basketball in addition to being named all @-@ league in each of these sports . He set Rio Americano 's single @-@ season records for batting average ( .463 ) hits ( 41 ) , home runs ( 8 ) and runs batted in ( RBI ) ( 41 ) .

After graduating from Rio Americano , Bowker enrolled at Long Beach State University . In 2004 , he led the LBSU Dirtbags to the NCAA Super Regionals and was included on the 1st Team All @-@ Big West . After batting .323 in his first two years at Long Beach , he entered the 2004 Major League Baseball ( MLB ) Draft and was selected in the third round by the San Francisco Giants .

= = Professional career = =

= = = San Francisco Giants = = =

= = = = 2004 ? 2007 = = = =

To begin his minor league career , Bowker was assigned to the rookie @-@ league Arizona League Giants . After batting .512 with 22 hits , 2 home runs , and 11 RBI in 10 games for the Giants , he was promoted to the Salem @-@ Keizer Volcanoes of the single @-@ A short season Northwest League . With Salem @-@ Keizer , he batted .323 with 41 hits , 4 home runs , and 16 RBI in 31 games . Between the AZL Giants and Salem @-@ Keizer , he appeared in 41 games , batting .371 with 63 hits , 6 home runs , and 27 RBI in 41 games .

In 2005 , Bowker attended Giants ' spring training but was sent to the minors on March 2 . He spent the season with the single @-@ A advanced San Jose Giants . In 121 games , he had 124 hits , 27 doubles , 13 home runs , and 67 RBI while batting .267 . He batted .238 with a double , a home run , and 4 RBI in 5 playoff games as San Jose won the California League championship .

Bowker attended spring training with the Giants in 2006 , but he was sent to the minors on March 2 . He spent most of the season with San Jose , where he batted .284 with 131 hits , 6 triples , 7 home runs , and 66 RBI in 112 games . His 32 doubles ranked tenth overall in the league . In 5 playoff games , he batted .182 with 4 hits , 2 doubles , and 1 triple . He also appeared in two games for the triple @-@ A Fresno Grizzlies of the Pacific Coast League , where he had two hits in four at bats .

Bowker attended spring training with the Giants in 2007 but only appeared in two spring training games . He spent the entire season with the Connecticut Defenders , the Giants ' double @-@ A affiliate in the Eastern League . He set career highs with 139 games played , a .307 batting average , 160 hits , 22 home runs , 90 RBI , 35 doubles , and 6 triples . He ranked seventh in the league in batting average ( among qualifiers ) , first in games , second in hits ( to Jordan Brown ) , fifth in doubles ( tied with David Smith ) , fifth in triples ( tied with Clete Thomas and Michael Spidale ) , and third in RBI ( behind Jeff Larish and Oscar Salazar ) . His 22 home runs were tied for fifth in the league ( with Salazar and Luis Jiménez ) and set a Connecticut franchise record .

===== 2008 =====

Entering the 2008 season , Bowker was named the ninth best prospect in the Giants ' organization by Baseball America . He attended spring training again but was sent to Fresno on March 11 . On April 11 , Bowker was called up by the Giants , and he joined the team the next day after having only 3 hours of sleep the night before . In a 7 ? 5 loss to the St. Louis Cardinals that day , he got his first hit ( a single ) and drove in three runs with his first home run , both against Todd Wellemeyer , as he became the eighth player in San Francisco Giants history to hit a home run in his debut . The next day , in the Giants ' 7 ? 4 victory over the Cardinals , Bowker had four RBI and hit his second home run , against Joel Piñeiro , becoming the first player in San Francisco Giants history to hit a home run in each of his first two Major League games . He had seven RBI in his first two games , the most by any major leaguer in his first two games since Joe Cunningham had seven in 1954 . Bowker replaced Rich Aurilia as the Giants ' starting first baseman on April 21 . On June 7 , he hit the first grand slam of his career , against Luis Ayala , in a 6 ? 0 victory over the Washington Nationals . On July 2 , Bowker hit a two @-@ run " Splash Hit " home run into McCovey Cove against Ryan Dempster in a 6 ? 5 loss to the Chicago Cubs . He was batting .274 before the All @-@ Star break , but after batting .152 with two RBI in 21 games after the break , he was optioned to Fresno on August 13 to make room on the roster for Travis Ishikawa , who replaced him as the Giants ' first baseman . He was recalled by the Giants on September 2 after rosters expanded . Used mainly as a pinch @-@ hitter in September , he batted .346 with 1 home run in 15 games to finish the season with a .255 batting average ( 10th among NL rookies ) , 83 hits ( 9th among NL rookies ) , 14 doubles , 3 triples ( tied for 4th among NL rookies ) , 10 home runs ( tied for 4th among NL rookies ) , and 43 RBI ( 6th among NL rookies ) in 111 games . At Fresno , he batted .237 with 22 hits , 3 doubles , 1 triple , 2 home runs , and 9 RBI in 23 games .

===== 2009 =====

On March 29 , 2009 , Bowker was optioned to Fresno . In June , Bowker was named the Pacific Coast League player of the week for two straight weeks ( May 24 ? 31 and June 1 ? 7 ) after batting .519 with five doubles , six home runs , 16 runs scored , and 18 RBI over that span . He was called up to the Giants on July 9 when Ryan Sadowski was optioned to Fresno . On July 19 , he had a game @-@ winning sacrifice fly against Zach Duke in the Giants ' 4 ? 3 victory over the Pittsburgh Pirates . Bowker split time in left field with Randy Winn and at first base with Ishikawa , but he was returned to Fresno on July 26 so the Giants could call up Eugenio Vélez after Bowker batted .156 with 4 RBI in 11 games . He was recalled at the beginning of August but was sent back to Fresno

after appearing in two games . On August 16 , Bowker tied a Grizzlies ' record ( shared by Dante Powell ) by driving in seven runs in an 8 ? 5 victory over the Nashville Sounds . He hit three @-@ run home runs against Tim Dillard and John Axford , and he was walked with the bases loaded by David Johnson . On September 1 , he was recalled when rosters expanded . He was used mainly as a pinch @-@ hitter until September 23 , when he took over left field after Vélez was moved from left field to second base to replace the injured Freddy Sanchez . In 31 games with the Giants that year , Bowker batted .194 with 13 hits , 2 doubles , 2 triples , 2 home runs , and 7 RBI in 67 at bats . In 104 games at Fresno , he batted .342 with 125 hits , 22 doubles , 4 triples , 21 home runs , and 83 RBI . He tied for ninth in the league in home runs ( with Prentice Redman ) and tied for eight in RBI ( with Allen Craig ) . He led the league in batting , becoming the first Fresno player to win the batting title since Brian Dallimore in 2003 . Bowker was named to the PCL 's regular @-@ season All @-@ Star team , post @-@ season All @-@ Star team , and All @-@ PCL team .

===== 2010 =====

Although Nate Schierholtz was expected to be the Giants ' Opening Day right fielder in 2010 , Bowker won the position after hitting six home runs in spring training . On April 7 , Bowker hit a two @-@ run home run against Brett Myers in a 10 ? 4 victory over the Houston Astros . After batting .214 with four RBI in his first 10 games , Bowker was replaced by Schierholtz as the starting right fielder on April 17 . On May 7 , Bowker hit a ninth @-@ inning game @-@ tying home run against Francisco Rodríguez in an eventual 6 ? 4 loss to the New York Mets . After batting .207 with 17 hits , 3 doubles , 3 home runs , and 8 RBI in 41 games , Bowker was optioned to Fresno on June 2 to make room for Pat Burrell on the roster . He was named the PCL Player of the Week from June 14 to June 21 after he had a 13 @-@ game hitting streak and a 6 @-@ game RBI streak end that week . After batting .310 with 61 hits , 12 doubles , 14 home runs , and 36 RBI in 51 games with Fresno , Bowker and Joe Martinez were traded to the Pittsburgh Pirates on July 31 for Javier López .

===== Pittsburgh Pirates =====

Upon being acquired , Bowker was assigned by the Pirates to the Indianapolis Indians of the triple @-@ A International League , where he batted .319 in 25 games with 29 hits , 7 doubles , 2 triples , 4 home runs , and 10 RBI . He was called up to the Pittsburgh club on September 1 as rosters expanded . By September 13 , he had taken over from Lastings Milledge as the Pirates ' everyday right fielder . He hit a two @-@ run home run against Barry Enright and had three hits on September 18 in a 9 ? 6 victory over the Arizona Diamondbacks . Four days later , Bowker again had three hits and two RBI , including a solo home run against Kyle Lohse , in an 11 ? 6 victory over the Cardinals . He had a pinch @-@ hit three @-@ run double against Mike MacDougal on September 28 in a 7 ? 2 victory over the Cardinals . With the Pirates in 2010 , Bowker batted .232 with 16 hits , 5 doubles , 2 home runs , and 13 RBI in 26 games . His major league totals from 2010 were 33 hits , 5 doubles , 8 home runs , and 21 RBI in 67 games .

Bowker made the Pirates ' Opening Day roster in 2011 as a reserve outfielder . After he had 4 hits ( 1 double ) and 2 RBI in 17 at @-@ bats over 19 games , he was designated for assignment to make room on the roster for Xavier Paul on April 27 . On May 4 , he was assigned to Indianapolis after clearing waivers . In 106 games with Indianapolis , Bowker batted .306 with 129 hits , 27 doubles , 1 triple , 15 home runs , and 76 RBI ( ninth in the league ) . On August 30 , 2011 , Bowker was traded to the Philadelphia Phillies for a player to be named later or cash .

===== Philadelphia Phillies =====

Bowker was used almost exclusively as a pinch @-@ hitter with the Phillies . He had no hits in 13 at @-@ bats with the Phillies and was left off their postseason roster . With the Phillies and Pirates in 2011 , Bowker batted .133 with two RBI in 31 games .

== Yomiuri Giants ==

On January 10 , 2012 , Bowker was released by the Phillies in order to pursue a career in Nippon Professional Baseball . Three days later , he signed a one @-@ year deal with the Yomiuri Giants . He struggled in the regular season , having only .196 batting average , 3 home runs and 10 RBIs . But his performance in the Climax Series and Japan Series would be outstanding and were crucial to Giants ' both series ' Champion . Particularly in Japan Series , which included a near @-@ miss of a tie of Japan series record of 6 RBIs in a game ( which he had 5 ) and leading his Team with 7 RBI and 2 Home Runs . Despite losing to starting pitcher teammate Tetsuya Utsumi in Japan Series Most Valuable Player award , he was still awarded in Outstanding Player award .

== Second stint with the San Francisco Giants ==

==== 2015 ====

In January 2015 , Bowker signed a minor league contract with the Giants to return to playing baseball in America . Along with Ryan Vogelsong , who had played for the Orix Buffaloes , he is the second Giants draftee to return to the Giants after playing in NPB .

On June 11 , 2015 Bowker was traded to the Pittsburgh Pirates organization for a PTBNL . He elected free agency on November 6 .

== Personal life ==

Growing up , Bowker rooted for the San Francisco Giants , the team that drafted him . His uncle , Jeff Carmichael ( who coached him growing up ) , helps him train during the offseason .