

= Darin Ruf =

Darin Cortland Ruf (born July 28 , 1986) is an American professional baseball first baseman and outfielder for the Philadelphia Phillies of Major League Baseball . He was born in Omaha , Nebraska , and played at Westside High School . Subsequently , he attended Creighton University , and excelled playing baseball there before the Phillies drafted him in 2009 . In the minor leagues , he initially hit for a high batting average , but in 2011 combined that with power numbers to become one of the Phillies ' top prospects . He made his major league debut in September 2012 , after having hit 38 home runs to lead the Eastern League . In 2013 , he split time between Triple @-@ A and the major league Phillies , and was among the league 's top rookies during the season . He was embroiled in a roster battle for a bench spot entering 2014 , but hurt his oblique , and landed on the disabled list prior to the season .

= = Early life and career = =

Ruf was born on July 28 , 1986 to parents Bill and Mary Ruf in Omaha , Nebraska ; he has four siblings (one of which is older , the rest younger) . He attended Westside High School , where he helped the team win a Nebraska state championship his sophomore season and finish as the runner @-@ up his senior year . He also played football and basketball , and was the captain of the baseball and football teams ? during his senior season , he achieved all @-@ state honors in both football and basketball . After his senior season , he committed to play baseball at Creighton for its " combination of athletics and academics " ; there , he was a " standout " over his four seasons , serving as the squad 's first baseman .

Even in Ruf 's freshman season (2006) , he started all 52 games . His sophomore season (2007) drew him significant accolade ? he was named the Missouri Valley Conference (MVC) Player of the Year , a member of both the first @-@ team all conference squad , and a first @-@ team all @-@ conference scholar athlete . He also was named an all @-@ star for his performance in summer collegiate baseball , for which he was a member of the Wisconsin Woodchucks of the Northwoods League . His strong performance continued during his junior season (2008) , during which he compiled a 15 @-@ game hitting streak that contributed to his .347 season batting average . His collegiate career culminated in 2009 , when he was named to the second @-@ team all @-@ MVC team and a third @-@ team academic @-@ all American by ESPN . Overall , he is " all over the Bluejay record books , finishing second in RBI with 201 , third in total bases with 423 and in hits with 275 , sixth in walks with 135 , seventh in doubles with 57 and tied for 10th in home runs with 27 ... (he) started all 227 games in his career . " While at Creighton , he earned a degree in finance , compiled a 3 @-@ 51 grade point average (GPA) , and aspired to be a successful businessman .

= = Professional career = =

= = Minor leagues (2009 ? 11) = = =

Ruf was drafted by the Philadelphia Phillies in the 20th round of the 2009 Major League Baseball draft . After the Phillies drafted him , scouting director Marti Wolever asserted that Ruf " is an outstanding defensive first baseman with a chance to hit and has tremendous makeup . " After converting to play predominantly in the outfield , however , Ruf 's fielding has been characterized as either " serviceable " or " weak " , and Phillies general manager Rubén Amaro , Jr. commented that he did not have the defensive skills to play every day .

His first professional assignment was the GCL Phillies in 2009 ; after performing well there , he was promoted to the Williamsport Crosscutters of short season A. With both squads , he held a batting average of over .300 . He also participated in the Florida Instructional League . In 2010 , he began the season with the Lakewood BlueClaws , also of Class A , but spent only 32 games there . The Phillies promoted him to the Class A @-@ Advanced Clearwater Threshers , and was the Phillies '

minor league player of the week in late May . In total , he amassed nine home runs and 67 runs batted in (RBIs) while posting a .290 amalgamated batting average . His power emergence began in 2011 when he hit a Florida State League @-@ leading 43 doubles , as well as 17 home runs and 82 RBIs and a .308 batting average . Defensively , he played first base , third base , and left field , and even pitched two innings of relief during a 23 @-@ inning game . After the season , he played in the Arizona Fall League for the Scottsdale Scorpions .

= = = Philadelphia Phillies (2012 ? present) = = =

Ruf enjoyed great success playing for the Reading Phillies (since renamed the Reading Fightin Phils) in 2012 , earning Eastern League most valuable player (MVP) honors , as well as the Paul Owens Award , which is given to the best player in the Phillies ' minor league system . During the season , the Fightin Phils sold T @-@ shirts that said " Babe Ruf " , a reference to Babe Ruth . He led the Eastern League with 38 home runs and 104 RBIs , and tied for the league lead by playing in 139 games and 11 sacrifice flies , all en route to earning a September callup and making his major league debut on September 14 (skipping the Triple @-@ A level entirely) . He recorded his first major league hit on September 25 , a home run off the Washington Nationals ' Ross Detwiler . Ruf totaled three home runs and 10 RBIs in his 12 @-@ game " cup of coffee " at the end of the season . An article on Phillies Nation summarized his season and journey through the minor league system :

Darin Ruf slugged his way onto the scene about midway through the 2012 season with the Reading Phillies ; it wasn't as though Ruf was some highly @-@ touted prospect everyone knew about . Really , he was an afterthought at 26 years old ; a guy who was just kind of there . That all changed

Ruf started the 2013 season in Triple @-@ A with the Lehigh Valley IronPigs , but was recalled by the Phillies on July 6 when Ryan Howard was placed on the disabled list . At the major league level , he finished fifth among rookies with 14 home runs , nine of which were in August , the most among any major league player during that stretch . Of his 70 starts at the major league level , 28 were at first base , 27 in right field , and 16 in left field , while of his 78 starts in Triple @-@ A , 59 came in left field and 19 came at first base . Ruf struggled to find a spot on the Phillies roster at which he could contribute , despite strong performance : " Even after proving he can be a productive offensive contributor and showing his defensive versatility , Ruf 's spot in the Phils ' lineup may not be locked in for next season . " one columnist wrote .

Entering the 2014 season , he was set to compete for a spot on the bench , as Amaro declared that he was not good enough , particularly defensively , to play everyday . However , the Phillies placed him on the disabled list (DL) due to a strained oblique ; his estimated recovery time was around the end of April or the beginning of May . When Ruf returned , he played for the IronPigs , but suffered another injury on June 3 , fracturing his left wrist when sliding into the wall while playing left field . He returned to the major league Phillies on July 22 when John Mayberry , Jr. landed on the disabled list , but struggled in his first several games ; in his first 17 at @-@ bats , he had just two hits . Nevertheless , the Phillies toyed with platooning him with Ryan Howard , who was also struggling , at first base , and Ruf also played two innings at third base . Overall , Ruf amassed only 117 major league plate appearances , and was significantly hindered by injuries .

As 2015 began , Ruf once again had to fight for playing time ; there was no clear opening for him on the Phillies ' roster , notwithstanding the fact that he was one of the few players on the roster with the ability to hit for power .

On May 13 , 2016 , Ruf was optioned to Triple @-@ A in exchange for Tommy Joseph .

= = Player profile = =

Eric Longenhagen , a baseball analyst for Crashburn Alley , asserts that Ruf 's ceiling is a platoon player at first base , but that his superior intangibles have allowed him to overachieve in terms of his potential . He wrote ,

For him to be anything more than that would be positively historic . We ? ve never seen a player of this age with a similar skill set (a fringe average hitter with a huge hole in his swing and plus raw power who is a 20 runner with pretty much unknown arm strength) do anything sustainable of note at the major league level . Ruf turns 28 halfway through next year and possesses both a skillset and body that typically don ? t age well . It 's a very weird situation but it 's a triumph of the Phillies player development system and of Ruf 's effort that he ever put on a Major League uniform at all .

= = = Offense = = =

Ruf is a strong power hitter who , according to one talent evaluator quoted in Lindy 's Sports 2014 baseball preview magazine , possesses " raw country strength " at the plate . He has an uppercut swing , and struggles to hit outside pitches because of poor balance at the plate , but consequently , is able to hit fly balls and drive mistake pitches out of the park . He is a patient hitter , but is the opposite of many hitters , in that as a right @-@ handed hitter , he hits left @-@ handed pitchers better than right @-@ handed pitchers .

= = = Defense = = =

Ruf has played first base as well as both of the corner outfield spots during his career , and focused on the outfield during the latter stages of his development because of Ryan Howard 's perceived preeminence at first base . In the outfield , Ruf is a " liability " , and he is " pretty shaky " at first base , further underscoring his " man without a position " persona within the Phillies ' organization . This has led some to suggest he would be better suited as a designated hitter in the American League .

= = Personal life = =

Ruf 's wife is Libby Schuring , whom Ruf married in December 2011 . His hobbies include golfing and traveling . During the offseason , he resides in his hometown of Omaha , Nebraska . Christa Ruf , Ruf 's sister , also attended Creighton ; she played softball there for four seasons .