

= Jon Lieber =

Jonathan Ray Lieber (born April 2 , 1970) is a former Major League Baseball (MLB) pitcher . He stands 6 feet 2 inches (1 @. @ 88 m) tall and weighs 240 pounds (110 kg) . He played for the Pittsburgh Pirates (1994 ? 1998) , Chicago Cubs (1999 ? 2002 and 2008) , New York Yankees (2004) , and Philadelphia Phillies (2005 ? 2007) . He batted left @- @ handed and threw right @- @ handed , and utilized a fastball , a slider , and a changeup for his pitches . In a 14 @- @ season career , Lieber compiled a 131 ? 124 record with 1 @, @ 553 strikeouts and a 4 @. @ 27 ERA in 2 @, @ 198 innings pitched .

Lieber attended the University of South Alabama , helping them win the Sun Belt Conference Championship . He was drafted by the Kansas City Royals in the second round of the 1992 Major League Baseball Draft , but he was traded to the Pittsburgh Pirates the following season before even throwing a pitch in the major leagues . He made his debut in 1994 and was named the Pirates ' Opening Day starter in 1995 , but it was not until 1997 that he became a full @- @ time major league starter . He was traded to the Chicago Cubs following the 1998 season . In 2000 , he led the National League (NL) with 251 innings pitched . He had his best season in 2001 , winning 20 games while losing just six . Lieber underwent Tommy John surgery in 2002 and missed the entire 2003 season . In 2004 , he pitched for the New York Yankees , reaching the playoffs for the only time in his career . He signed with the Philadelphia Phillies in 2005 and tied for fifth in the NL with 17 wins . Injuries cut into his playing time over the next three years ; he finished his career as a reliever with the Cubs in 2008 .

= = Biography = =

= = = Early life = = =

Lieber was born in Council Bluffs , Iowa . He graduated from Abraham Lincoln High School in Council Bluffs in 1988 . Lieber initially attended Iowa Western Community College in 1989 and 1990 before transferring to the University of South Alabama . Over the next two years , Lieber experienced great success for South Alabama . He posted 12 ? 5 records for them both of his years there , and he led the team in earned run average (ERA) and strikeouts both years . He was selected by the Chicago Cubs in the ninth round of the 1991 Major League Baseball (MLB) draft , but he did not sign . In 1992 , he helped South Alabama win the Sun Belt Conference Championship .

Lieber received several honors following his senior season . These included the Sun Belt Conference Player of the Year award , a third @- @ team All @- @ America selection by the American Baseball Coaches Association , an all @- @ region award , and an all @- @ league award (his second) . In 2013 , he was inducted into the Mobile Sports Hall of Fame . He was drafted by the Kansas City Royals in the second round of the 1992 draft , and this time , he signed .

= = = Minor Leagues (1992 ? 94) = = =

Lieber began his professional career with the A short season Eugene Emeralds of the Northwest League . In five starts with the Emeralds , he had a 3 ? 0 record , a 1 @. @ 16 ERA , 23 strikeouts , 22 walks , and 26 hits allowed in 31 innings pitched . He also appeared in seven games (six starts) for the Baseball City Royals of the A @- @ Advanced Florida State League , posting a 3 ? 3 record , a 4 @. @ 65 ERA , 19 strikeouts , eight walks , and 45 hits allowed in 31 innings pitched .

In 1993 , the Royals switched their A @- @ Advanced affiliate to the Wilmington Blue Rocks of the Carolina League . Lieber began the season with Wilmington , posting a 9 ? 3 record , a 2 @. @ 67 ERA , 89 strikeouts , nine walks , 125 hits allowed , and 114 2 ? 3 innings pitched in 17 games (16 starts) . He was promoted to the AA Memphis Chicks of the Southern League on July 11 , where he posted a 2 ? 1 record and a 6 @. @ 86 ERA in four starts . On July 31 , seeking pitching help as

they contended for the playoffs , the Royals traded Lieber and Dan Miceli to the Pittsburgh Pirates for their closer , Stan Belinda . The Pirates assigned Lieber to the Southern League 's Carolina Mudcats ; in six starts , he had a 4 ? 2 record , a 3 @. @ 97 ERA , 28 strikeouts , 10 walks , and 39 hits allowed in 34 innings pitched .

Lieber made three starts with the Mudcats in 1994 , posting a 2 ? 0 record , a 1 @. @ 29 ERA , 21 strikeouts , two walks , and 13 hits allowed in 21 innings . He also made three starts for the Buffalo Bisons of the Triple @-@ A American Association , posting a 1 ? 1 record , a 1 @. @ 69 ERA , 21 strikeouts , one walk , and 16 hits allowed in 21 1 ? 3 innings pitched .

= = = Pittsburgh Pirates (1994 ? 98) = = =

Lieber was called up by the Pirates in May 1994 to join their starting rotation . In his first major league start on May 15 , he gave up one run in six innings but took the loss as the Philadelphia Phillies defeated the Pirates 1 ? 0 . He earned his first career win five days later , pitching eight shutout innings in a 6 ? 0 victory over the Montreal Expos . In 17 starts with the Pirates , Lieber had a 6 ? 7 record , a 3 @. @ 73 ERA , 71 strikeouts , 25 walks , and 116 hits allowed in 108 2 ? 3 innings .

Following Lieber 's rookie season , Pirates ' manager Jim Leyland named Lieber the team 's Opening Day starter for 1995 . Like many of the young Pirates ' pitchers that year , Lieber struggled ; he was optioned to the Calgary Cannons of the Triple @-@ A Pacific Coast League on June 18 after going 2 ? 7 with a 7 @. @ 48 ERA . In 14 starts with Calgary , Lieber had a 1 ? 5 record , a 7 @. @ 01 ERA , 34 strikeouts , 19 walks , and 122 hits allowed in 77 innings pitched . He was recalled by the Pirates on September 5 when rosters expanded but was used mostly as a relief pitcher for the rest of the year . In 21 games (12 starts) , Lieber compiled a 4 ? 7 record , a 6 @. @ 32 ERA , 45 strikeouts , 14 walks , and 103 hits allowed in 72 2 ? 3 innings pitched .

Lieber remained in the bullpen to begin the 1996 season . In his first 34 games , he posted a 4 @. @ 21 ERA . In July , he returned to the starting rotation following the release of Zane Smith . As a starter , Lieber posted a 7 ? 2 record with a 3 @. @ 91 ERA , emerging as the Pirates ' ace by the end of the year . In 51 games (15 starts) in 1996 , Lieber posted a 9 ? 5 record , a 3 @. @ 99 ERA , 94 strikeouts , 28 walks , and 156 hits allowed in 142 innings pitched .

Lieber became the Pirates ' Opening Day starter again in 1997 . On June 30 , he threw his only complete game of the year , striking out 10 while allowing one run on five hits in a 3 ? 1 victory over the Chicago White Sox . Lieber was inconsistent in 1997 , amassing several winning streaks and several losing streaks during the season . In 33 games (32 starts) , he had an 11 ? 14 record , a 4 @. @ 49 ERA , 160 strikeouts , 51 walks , and 193 hits allowed in 188 1 ? 3 innings pitched . He was third in the NL in losses (behind Mark Leiter 's 17 and teammate Steve Cooke 's 15) ; however , he tied Mike Hampton for the most runs batted in by a major league pitcher with eight .

In 1998 , Lieber was the Pirates ' fourth starter . He had a 5 ? 10 record over his first 17 starts , partly because he received 15 total runs of support in the losses over that time . Lieber had an 8 ? 13 record with a 3 @. @ 90 ERA before getting placed on the disabled list (DL) for the first time in his career on August 21 due to a left oblique muscle strain . He returned from the DL on September 15 but posted a 10 @. @ 80 ERA over his last two starts . In 29 games (28 starts) , Lieber posted an 8 ? 14 record , a 4 @. @ 11 ERA , 138 strikeouts , 40 walks , and 182 hits allowed in 171 innings pitched . He was tied with seven other pitchers for fifth in the league in losses . Following the season , Lieber was traded to the Chicago Cubs for Brant Brown .

= = = Chicago Cubs (1999 ? 2002) = = =

Lieber began 1999 as the Cubs ' third starter . Prior to the All @-@ Star break , he had an 8 ? 3 record with a 3 @. @ 26 ERA (seventh @-@ best in the NL) . From April 29 to May 8 , he was on the DL with a right eye contusion . He threw his first major league shutout on May 14 , striking out seven in a 9 ? 0 victory over the Atlanta Braves . Lieber went 0 ? 8 with a 5 @. @ 71 ERA in his first 13 starts following the All @-@ Star Break before earning wins in his final two starts of the year . In

31 starts , Lieber compiled a 10 ? 11 record , a 4 @.@ 07 ERA , and 46 walks in 203 1 ? 3 innings pitched . He was tied for tenth in the league with 226 hits allowed (along with teammate Steve Trachsel) , but he finished eighth in the league with 186 strikeouts and tied with six other players for ninth in the league with three complete games .

In 2000 , Lieber was the Cubs ' Opening Day starter . From June 28 to August 14 , he won a career @-@ high six consecutive decisions . On July 3 , he threw a shutout , allowing two hits in a 3 ? 0 victory over the Pirates . In his next start , on July 8 , he had 12 strikeouts and threw a complete game in a 9 ? 2 win over the White Sox . Lieber was 12 ? 7 with a 4 @.@ 12 ERA through his first 29 starts ; however , he went 0 ? 4 in September with a 5 @.@ 88 ERA . In 35 starts (tied for the NL lead with Randy Johnson , Kevin Millwood , Tom Glavine , and Greg Maddux) , Lieber had a 12 ? 11 record , a 4 @.@ 41 ERA , and 54 walks . He tied Darryl Kile for ninth in the league with 192 strikeouts , he led the league with 251 innings pitched , he ranked third in the league with 248 hits allowed (behind Liván Hernández 's 254 and José Lima 's 251) , and he tied Maddux for third with six complete games (behind Johnson 's and Curt Schilling 's eight) .

Lieber 's most productive season came in 2001 . On May 24 , he one @-@ hit the Cincinnati Reds , 3 ? 0 , ending the team 's NL @-@ record streak of 208 games in a row without being shut out , throwing just 78 pitches . From June 16 to July 15 , he won six straight games . He was named an All @-@ Star for the first and only time in his career . In his final start of the season on October 3 , he allowed five runs in six innings but still earned his 20th win of the season as the Cubs beat the Reds 13 ? 7 . In 34 starts , Lieber recorded a career @-@ high 20 victories to go with just six losses , posted a 3 @.@ 80 ERA , and struck out 148 as opposed to 41 walks . His 20 wins ranked fourth in the league (behind Matt Morris 's and Schilling 's 22 and Johnson 's 21) , his 232 1 ? 3 innings pitched ranked fifth in the league , and his five complete games tied for second in the league with Javier Vázquez (behind Johnson 's six) . He finished fourth in the NL Cy Young Award vote , behind Johnson , Schilling , and Morris .

Lieber 's 2002 season was curtailed by right elbow problems , which plagued him all year . On August 1 , facing the San Diego Padres , Lieber allowed two runs in seven innings but received a no @-@ decision in an 8 ? 7 Cubs ' victory . He was placed on the DL with right elbow tendinitis the next day , and he underwent Tommy John surgery on August 8 , ending his season . In 21 starts , Lieber compiled a 6 ? 8 record , a 3 @.@ 70 ERA , 87 strikeouts , 12 walks , and 153 hits allowed in 141 innings pitched . He still managed to tie Randy Wolf , Brett Tomko , Pedro Astacio , and teammate Matt Clement for tenth in the league with three complete games . After the season , he became a free agent .

While on the Cubs , Lieber became the only Major League pitcher to give up a hit to a one handed player when he gave up not just one hit , but two to Jim Abbott , also allowing Abbott to drive in three RBIs .

= = = Other teams (2004 ? 08) = = =

Lieber signed a two @-@ year contract with the New York Yankees following the 2002 season . He missed the 2003 season recovering from his injury , although he did make two minor league rehab appearances . Lieber began the 2004 season on the DL with a strained abductor muscle in his right thigh . He returned to the major leagues on May 1 , allowing three runs in seven innings in a 12 ? 4 victory over the Kansas City Royals . Through August 1 , he had a 7 ? 7 record with a 5 @.@ 06 ERA . From then on , Lieber went 7 ? 1 with a 3 @.@ 21 ERA . On September 14 , he took a no @-@ hitter into the seventh inning against the Boston Red Sox and allowed three runs in 8 1 ? 3 innings in a 14 ? 4 victory . In 27 starts , Lieber posted a 14 ? 8 record , a 4 @.@ 33 ERA , 102 strikeouts , 18 walks , and 216 hits allowed in 176 2 ? 3 innings pitched . His 14 wins tied with eight other pitchers for eighth in the American League (AL) and tied with Javier Vázquez for the most by a Yankee as well as being the largest win total by an ex @-@ 20 game winner returning from a full @-@ season layoff since 1946 .

Dave Caldwell of the New York Times wrote on September 3 that Lieber would " probably end up in the bullpen " in the playoffs , but less than a month later , Mark Feinsand of MLB.com wrote that

Lieber " has suddenly become one of the most important cogs in the Yankees ' postseason machine " due an injury to Kevin Brown and late @-@ season struggles by Vázquez . Lieber started Game 2 of the AL Division Series against the Minnesota Twins . He allowed three runs over 6 2 ? 3 innings and was in line for the win , but he received a no @-@ decision in a 12 @-@ inning , 7 ? 6 Yankee victory . The Yankees won the series in four games . In Game 2 of the AL Championship Series against the Red Sox , Lieber allowed one run and three hits in seven innings , earning the win in a 3 ? 1 victory . In Game 6 , he allowed four runs in 7 1 ? 3 innings and took the loss in a 4 ? 2 defeat . The Red Sox become the first MLB team in history to overcome a 3 ? 0 series deficit , winning in seven games . 2004 would be Lieber 's only playoff experience , as well as his only stint in the AL .

Before the 2005 season , Lieber signed as a free agent with the Philadelphia Phillies for three years and \$ 24 million with a team option for the fourth year . He was named the Phillies ' Opening Day starter in 2005 . He won his first four starts with the team . From May 12 through June 30 , Lieber had a 3 ? 7 record and a 7 @.@ 48 ERA . 8 ? 8 by the end of that stretch , he managed to post a 9 ? 5 record and a 3 @.@ 32 ERA to finish the season . Lieber gave up one run in eight innings on July 21 but took the loss as the Los Angeles Dodgers defeated the Phillies 1 ? 0 . On September 22 , he threw eight shutout innings in a 4 ? 0 victory over the Braves . Lieber finished the season with a 17 ? 13 record , a 4 @.@ 20 ERA , 149 strikeouts , 41 walks , and 223 hits allowed in 218 1 ? 3 innings pitched . Lieber led the team with 17 wins , which tied with Andy Pettitte for fifth in the league . He tied with six other pitchers for the league lead with 35 starts .

Lieber lost his first four starts of the season in 2006 for the first time in his career . On May 13 , he took a perfect game into the seventh inning against Cincinnati before allowing a two @-@ out single to Adam Dunn ; he threw 8 2 ? 3 scoreless innings in a 2 ? 0 victory . He was on the DL from May 30 to July 6 with a groin injury . Before going on the DL , he had a 3 ? 5 record and a 5 @.@ 79 ERA . He posted a 6 @.@ 75 ERA in his first five starts after returning from the DL , but he posted a 3 @.@ 38 in his final 11 starts . On August 16 , he threw his first shutout since 2001 against the New York Mets , allowing five hits in a 3 ? 0 victory . In 27 starts , Lieber compiled a 9 ? 11 record , a 4 @.@ 93 ERA , 100 strikeouts , 24 walks , and 196 hits allowed in 168 innings pitched .

Lieber began 2007 on the DL with a strained right oblique , and when he was activated on April 9 , he was placed in the bullpen . After two relief outings , he returned to the rotation on April 20 when Brett Myers was moved to the bullpen . On June 9 , he struck out 11 and allowed three hits in a 4 ? 0 shutout of the Royals . At the time , he was 3 ? 4 with a 3 @.@ 72 ERA , but he allowed 14 runs (13 earned) over his next two starts , both losses . On June 23 , Lieber was placed on the DL with a ruptured tendon in his right foot , which ended his tenure with the Phillies . In 14 games (12 starts) , he had a 3 ? 6 record , a 4 @.@ 73 ERA , 54 strikeouts , 22 walks , and 91 hits allowed in 78 innings . The Phillies reached the playoffs , but Lieber was left off their postseason roster because of his injury .

On January 16 , 2008 , Lieber signed a one @-@ year contract with the Chicago Cubs . He competed for the starting rotation but failed to earn a spot and was placed in the bullpen as the Cubs ' long reliever . From July 18 to September 1 , he was on the DL with a right foot injury . He appeared in his final major league game on September 5 , giving up four runs in two innings in a 10 ? 2 loss to Cincinnati . In 26 games (one start) , Lieber posted a 2 ? 3 record , a 4 @.@ 05 ERA , 27 strikeouts , six walks , and 59 hits allowed in 46 2 ? 3 innings pitched . The Cubs reached the playoffs , but Lieber was left off the playoff roster for the second year in a row .

Lieber retired after the 2008 season wanting to spend more time with his family . In his 14 @-@ year career , Lieber had a 131 ? 124 record , a 4 @.@ 27 ERA , 1 @,@ 553 strikeouts , 422 walks , 2 @,@ 388 hits allowed , and 2 @,@ 198 innings pitched in 401 games (327 starts) . His strikeout @-@ to @-@ walk ratio of 3 @.@ 680 ranks 11th all @-@ time among major league pitchers as of 2013 .

== = Pitching style == =

Lieber threw three pitches : a fastball , a slider , and a changeup . The slider was the pitch Lieber often used to get outs and was most successful against right @-@ handed batters . The changeup

darted away from batters . Lieber was not a hard thrower (his fastball was in the low 90 mph range) ; he relied on controlling his pitches to have success .

= = = Personal = = =

Lieber married Jessica Conway on September 18 , 1992 . The couple has one daughter : Jillian (born October 22 , 1997) , and three sons : Jared (born July 27 , 2000) , Justin (born May 8 , 2003) , and Jonah (born June 1 , 2007) . They live in Mobile , Alabama . Lieber enjoys hunting as a hobby .