

= Jeffrey Hammonds =

Jeffrey Bryan Hammonds ( born March 5 , 1971 in Plainfield , New Jersey ) is an American former professional baseball player . Hammonds was an outfielder and played for the Baltimore Orioles ( 1993 ? 1998 ) , Cincinnati Reds ( 1998 ? 1999 ) , Colorado Rockies ( 2000 ) , Milwaukee Brewers ( 2001 ? 2003 ) , San Francisco Giants ( 2003 ? 2004 ) and the Washington Nationals ( 2005 ) in Major League Baseball ( MLB ) . Before playing professionally , Hammonds played for Scotch Plains @-@ Fanwood High School in Scotch Plains , New Jersey and Stanford University .

At Stanford , Hammonds was named an All @-@ American . The Orioles selected Hammonds with the fourth overall selection of the 1992 MLB Draft . Though he was seen as one of the best prospects in baseball , injuries limited his performance with Baltimore . After he was traded to Cincinnati and then to Colorado , he emerged with the Rockies in 2000 , and was selected to appear at the 2000 Major League Baseball All @-@ Star Game . He signed a three @-@ year , \$ 21 @.@ 75 million contract with the Milwaukee Brewers that off @-@ season , but continued to struggle with injuries . He had a resurgence with the Giants in 2003 , after he was released by the Brewers , but struggled with the Giants in 2004 and Nationals in 2005 before retiring .

= = Amateur career = =

Hammonds was born in Scotch Plains , New Jersey , He attended Scotch Plains @-@ Fanwood High School , where he played for the school 's baseball team . After high school , Hammonds was a ninth @-@ round draft pick of the Toronto Blue Jays in the 1989 Major League Baseball Draft , though he did not sign . He reported that he never considered going professional at that point , as his parents insisted he attend college , and that Hammonds ' brother , who had signed with the Pittsburgh Pirates out of high school , suffered a career @-@ ending injury while playing in minor league baseball .

Hammonds had scholarship offers to attend Duke University , the University of Notre Dame , and Stanford University and play college baseball . He chose to attend Stanford University , where he played for the Stanford Cardinal baseball team that competed in the Pacific @-@ 10 Conference ( Pac @-@ 10 ) in the National Collegiate Athletic Association 's ( NCAA ) Division I. At Stanford , Hammonds broke the Pac @-@ 10 single season stolen base record as a freshman , stealing 102 bases in 174 career games . Hammonds was awarded NCAA Freshman of the Year and voted All @-@ College World Series in 1990 and was also named an All @-@ American in that year .

During the 1992 season , Hammonds batted .380 with 33 stolen bases in 47 games , and was again named an All @-@ American . He again led the Cardinal to the 1992 College World Series .

= = Professional career = =

= = = Draft = = =

Before the 1992 Major League Baseball Draft , Hammonds indicated that he would sign if offered a \$ 1 @.@ 8 million signing bonus , which caused Hammonds to fall to the fourth overall selection , where the Baltimore Orioles selected Hammonds with their first @-@ round draft pick . Frank Robinson , then the Orioles ' assistant general manager ( GM ) , met Hammonds at that year 's College World Series while scouting , and advised Orioles GM Doug Melvin to pick Hammonds . The Orioles , regarded as frugal , held a hard line with Hammonds in negotiations , refusing to give a signing bonus as large as \$ 1 million .

Hammonds did not play professionally in 1992 as he competed for the United States national baseball team in the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona . He faced a two @-@ month road trip across sixteen states by bus , more travel combined with training than employed by any professional team . Hammonds struggled with the national team initially , but agreed to sign with the Orioles in July 1992 , receiving a \$ 975 @,@ 000 signing bonus , the largest of any player chosen in that draft

. Upon signing , his hitting improved .

= = = Top prospect : Baltimore Orioles ( 1992 ? 1996 ) = = =

Without having played a single professional game , Baseball America rated Hammonds as the 19th best prospect in baseball . He made his professional debut in 1993 with the Bowie Baysox of the Class @-@ AA Eastern League , where he batted .283 , at which point he was promoted to the Rochester Red Wings of the Class @-@ AAA International League , where he batted .311 . Hammonds received a promotion to the Orioles on June 25 , becoming the first player chosen in the 1992 MLB draft to reach the majors , where his debut was greeted with fanfare and high expectations . He batted .305 in 105 at @-@ bats with the Orioles that season , however he suffered a pinched nerve in May , and a neck injury in August . The Orioles ended his season prematurely to allow Hammonds to recover .

Thought of as a potential candidate for the American League Rookie of the Year Award , at this point Baseball America rated Hammonds the third best prospect in all of baseball . Hammonds suffered a knee injury during the 1994 season but opted to continue playing despite being told he needed reconstructive knee surgery , with his subsequent performances limited as a result . When the Orioles needed to reduce their roster from 28 players to 25 in May 1995 , Hammonds , who started the season batting 4 @-@ for @-@ 19 , was optioned back to Bowie .

After struggling with the Orioles early in the 1996 season , batting .237 in 56 games , he was demoted back to Rochester in June . The Orioles included Hammonds in numerous trade proposals that summer , but eventually held on to him . During his spell with Rochester Hammonds became more selective in his approach at the plate , and was recalled to the Orioles . Hammonds injured his knee in August and though he returned to the Orioles in September , they left him off their postseason roster , as they asserted that they felt Hammonds was rusty . Hammonds believed that the snub meant he should be traded , but stopped short of demanding a trade .

= = = Searching for success : Baltimore Orioles and Cincinnati Reds ( 1997 ? 1999 ) = = =

Formerly considered a top prospect in the Orioles organization , Hammonds returned to them in 1997 with his role in the organization unclear . In past spring trainings Hammonds had always practiced with the starters ; in 1997 , the Orioles alternated him between the starters , who practiced in the stadium , and the minor leaguers and non @-@ roster players , who practiced in fields behind the stadium near an airport runway . New GM Pat Gillick didn 't deny that the Orioles could trade him if Hammonds didn 't maximize his talent , though he called a potential trade a " last resort " . Despite this Hammonds had a successful season , playing in 118 games that season , receiving 397 at @-@ bats . He scored 71 runs , had 105 hits , including 19 doubles , three triples , and 21 home runs , and recorded 55 RBI .

By 1998 , Hammonds and the Orioles were hoping he would achieve more consistency . With the threat of facing a salary arbitration hearing , the Orioles approached him with the idea of working out an agreement on a multi @-@ year contract extension . Hammonds agreed , and signed a three @-@ year , \$ 7 million contract before the 1998 season . Hammonds felt that this was a strong commitment from the Orioles hierarchy , including Gillick , after which manager Ray Miller believed that this would allow Hammonds to focus on improving his skills . However , Hammonds suffered a back injury that returned him to the disabled list that year .

When Hammonds recovered , the Orioles traded him to the Cincinnati Reds for Willie Greene in August 1998 . Hammonds served as a backup outfielder for the Reds , though he batted .279 with 17 home runs and 41 RBIs in 123 games during the 1999 season . He had a three home run game on May 20 . After the season , the Reds traded Hammonds with Stan Belinda to the Colorado Rockies for Dante Bichette and \$ 1 @. @ 9 million to make up for the differences in salaries , as the Reds believed the slugging Bichette could aid them in replacing Greg Vaughn .

= = = All @-@ Star season and multiyear contract : Colorado Rockies , Milwaukee Brewers ( 2000

? 2003 ) = = =

In 2000 with the Colorado Rockies , Hammonds batted .335 with 20 home runs , 106 RBI , 14 stolen bases , in only 454 at bats . For his performance , he earned a spot on the 2000 National League All @-@ Star team roster . He trailed only teammate Todd Helton in batting average for the majority of the season , eventually finishing with the fourth @-@ highest batting average in the league , behind Helton , Moisés Alou , and Vladimir Guerrero .

After the season , the Rockies declined to offer Hammonds salary arbitration , making him a free agent . Due to concerns about Hammonds ' injury history , including 40 games missed due to injury in the 2000 season , the Rockies chose not to meet Hammonds ' financial demands . Before the 2001 season , the Milwaukee Brewers signed Hammonds to a three @-@ year , \$ 21 @.@ 75 million contract , the largest contract the organization had approved to that date . However , injuries prevented Hammonds from approaching the All @-@ Star form he had shown with the Rockies . He suffered a shoulder injury in 2001 which required surgery and this limited him to 49 games played for the season . He returned with a hot start in the 2002 season , batting .324 as of June 5 , but he had a recurrence of the shoulder injury later in the season that returned him to the disabled list yet again . Hammonds then began the 2003 season on the disabled list , this time with a high ankle sprain .

= = = Struggles , resurgence , and injuries : San Francisco Giants and Washington Nationals ( 2003 ? 2005 ) = = =

The Brewers released Hammonds on June 4 , 2003 after he struggled in ten games , batting .158 . He signed with the San Francisco Giants at the end of June . They initially assigned him to the Class @-@ AAA Fresno Grizzlies of the Pacific Coast League , before promoting him on July 30 . He batted .277 with three home runs and 10 RBIs in 36 games during the second half of the 2003 season , and was selected for the Giants ' postseason roster over Marvin Benard and Eric Young where he batted 2 @-@ for @-@ 4 in Game 4 of the 2003 National League Division Series . Granted free agency at the end of the season , he re @-@ signed with the Giants for the 2004 season for \$ 1 million , as the replacement for Jose Cruz , Jr . , who had left after becoming a free agent . However , Hammonds was unable to sustain his improved performance and the Giants released Hammonds that June , after he batted .211 with three home runs and six RBIs .

Hammonds then signed with the Washington Nationals organization on a minor league contract . He started the 2005 season with the New Orleans Zephyrs of the PCL , but was recalled to the Nationals on May 3 . He batted .219 with one RBI in thirteen games for the Nationals , before returning to the disabled list with an injured hamstring on May 22 . While rehabilitating the injury , Hammonds decided to retire rather than return to the minor leagues .

Though Hammonds had great natural talent , his injuries limited his career . Hammonds announced his retirement on June 10 , 2005 . In his thirteen @-@ year career in MLB , he batted .272 , 110 home runs , 824 hits , and 423 RBIs .

= = Personal = =

Hammonds lives in Weston , Florida with his three children . He is currently a scout for the San Diego Padres . He has interest in digital media , aiding baseball prospects , and working for the Major League Baseball Players Association . On February 6 , 2014 , Hammonds was hired by the players ' union as special assistant for player program development .

Hammonds ' older brother , Reginald , played minor league baseball for the Pittsburgh Pirates ' organization , reaching Class @-@ AAA before suffering a career @-@ ending injury . He enrolled at Northwestern University , graduated , became a stockbroker and aided Hammonds in his 1992 contract negotiations .