

= Kevin Youkilis =

Kevin Edmund Youkilis ( / ʔju?k?l?s / ; born March 15 , 1979 ) , also known as " Youk " / ʔju?k / , is an American former professional baseball first baseman and third baseman . A native of Cincinnati , Ohio , he was drafted by the Boston Red Sox in 2001 , after playing college baseball at the University of Cincinnati . He played in Major League Baseball ( MLB ) for the Red Sox , the Chicago White Sox , and the New York Yankees . He is currently a special assistant to the Chicago Cubs and former Red Sox GM Theo Epstein .

Known for his ability to get on base , while he was still a minor leaguer , Youkilis was nicknamed Euclis : The Greek God of Walks in the best @-@ selling book , Moneyball : The Art of Winning an Unfair Game . A Gold Glove Award @-@ winning first baseman , he once held baseball 's record for most consecutive errorless games at first base ( later broken by Casey Kotchman ) . He is also a three @-@ time MLB All @-@ Star , two @-@ time World Series Champion , and winner of the 2008 Hank Aaron Award .

An intense performer on the playing field , Youkilis was known for his scrappiness , grittiness , dirt @-@ stained jerseys , home @-@ plate collisions , and his strange batting stance . He excelled despite a physique that led many observers to underestimate his athletic ability . He was called " roly @-@ poly " by his high school coach , " pudgy " by his college coach , a " fat kid " by general manager Billy Beane , and a " thicker @-@ bodied guy " by the Red Sox scout who recruited him . As Jackie MacMullan wrote for the Boston Globe : " He does not look like an MVP candidate ; more a refrigerator repairman , a butcher , the man selling hammers behind the counter at the True Value hardware store . " Youkilis was named to the Sporting News ' list of the 50 greatest current players in baseball , ranking No. 36 on the list in 2009 , No. 38 in 2010 , and No. 35 in 2011 .

= = Background and early life = =

Youkilis ' Jewish great @-@ great @-@ great @-@ grandfather , a native of 19th @-@ century Romania , moved to Greece at the age of 16 to avoid conscription at the hands of the notoriously anti @-@ Semitic Cossacks . He became homesick , however , and returned to Romania after a couple of years , although he changed his surname from " Weiner " to " Youkilis " to avoid army and jail .

Youkilis was born in Cincinnati , the son of Carolyn ( née Weekley ) and Mike Youkilis , a wholesale jeweler . His father was born to a Jewish family , while his mother , a native of West Virginia , converted to Judaism after her marriage . Youkilis has described his father as a " well @-@ known third baseman in the Jewish Community Center fast @-@ pitch softball league . "

Youkilis is Jewish and had a Bar Mitzvah at a Conservative synagogue . At the age of 14 , he had an uncredited one @-@ line speaking role in the romantic comedy film Milk Money . He attended Sycamore High School in the northeastern suburbs of Cincinnati , where he played third base , shortstop , first base , and the outfield for the school team which won the Amateur Athletic Union National Championship in 1994 , and he was the only player to homer off his future Red Sox teammate Aaron Cook in high school .

= = College = =

When he graduated from high school in 1997 , Youkilis weighed about 227 pounds and was 6 ' 1 " . He was recruited by two Division I schools : Butler University and his ultimate choice , the University of Cincinnati ( UC ) ? an institution that was the alma mater of both his father and Youkilis ' longtime idol , Sandy Koufax , and had just finished a 12 ? 46 season . UC coach Brian Cleary spotted Youkilis at a winter camp . " I looked at him and said , Well , we need somebody " , said Cleary . " I 'd love to tell you I saw something no one else did , but he was just better than what we had . "

While majoring in finance , Youkilis excelled as a player for the Cincinnati Bearcats from 1998 to 2001 . " I take no credit " , said Cleary . " He coaches himself . He knows his swing . Any time we said anything to him , he was already a step ahead . He made the adjustments he had to make . I

just think he 's a really smart guy who had a great feel for what he had to do . " In his junior year in 2000 , he was a second @-@ team All @-@ American and first @-@ team All @-@ Conference USA , as he set school records by hitting three home runs in one game and 19 for the season ; still , he went undrafted . " He was kind of a square @-@ shaped body , a guy [ who ] in a uniform didn 't look all that athletic " , Cleary said . " He wasn 't a tall , prospect @-@ y looking guy . He looked chubby in a uniform . ... It wasn 't fat . He was strong . [ But ] I think the body did scare some people away . "

During the period between his junior and senior years , he played in the Cape Cod League , finishing sixth in the league in batting average . In his senior year in 2001 he repeated as second @-@ team All @-@ American . He set UC career records for home runs ( 56 ) , walks ( 206 ) , slugging percentage ( .627 ) , and on @-@ base percentage ( .499 ) with a batting average of .366 . " He had a great eye ... he hardly ever struck out looking " , said Brad Meador , UC 's associate head coach . " When he did , you knew the ump missed the call . " Cleary , noting how driven Youkilis was to succeed , told his father : " Your son 's going to be a millionaire some day . I don 't know if it 's in baseball , but he 's going to make some money one of these days . " Youkilis was later inducted into UC 's James Kelly Athletics Hall of Fame .

Yet , when asked what he liked about Youkilis , former Boston scout Matt Haas said : " At first glance , not a lot . He was unorthodox . He had an extreme crouch ? his thighs were almost parallel to the ground . And he was heavier than he is now . But the more I watched him , the more I just thought , ' Throw the tools out the window . This guy can play baseball . ' "

In 2001 , at Haas ' urging , the Boston Red Sox drafted Youkilis in the eighth round ( 243rd overall ) , to the chagrin of Billy Beane , who had hoped that he would be able to draft him in a later round . ESPN reported that : " questions about his defense and power with wood kept him out of the top part of the draft . " He signed for a mere \$ 12 @,@ 000 signing bonus . " Kevin would have played for a six @-@ pack of beer " , his father said .

" Teams didn 't appreciate performance as much then as they do now " , observed Red Sox VP of Player Personnel Ben Cherington eight years later . " His college performance was off the charts . If he [ were ] in the draft this year , he 'd be at least a sandwich pick , if not a first rounder . His performance was that good , in college and on the Cape . Now , teams appreciate what that means . There 's no way he 'd last that long now . "

= = Minor leagues ( 2001 ? 04 ) = =

In 2001 , Youkilis made his professional debut as a third baseman with the Lowell Spinners , a Short @-@ Season A Class franchise in the New York ? Penn League . He went on to lead the league with a .512 OBP , 52 runs , and 70 walks ( against just 28 strikeouts ) , while hitting for a .317 batting average ( third in the league ) in 59 games . He also reached base safely by hit or walk in 46 consecutive games ( the third @-@ longest such streak in the minor leagues ) . Peter Gammons wrote that August : " Remember this name : Kevin Youkilis , who resembles Steve Balboni . " Honored by the Spinners with a " Youkilis bobblehead night " , Youkilis said : " It 's an honor ? you know you 've made it when you get a bobblehead of yourself . " Promoted from Lowell towards the end of the season , he played five games with the Augusta GreenJackets of the South Atlantic League , a Low @-@ A Class league . He was named Red Sox Minor League Player of the Year .

In 2002 , Youkilis appeared in 15 games for Augusta , in 76 games for the Sarasota Sox ( 40 of them at first base ) , and in 44 games for the Trenton Thunder . He hit .310 , with eight home runs and 80 RBIs for the year , and he was voted Trenton 's " Player of the Year . " His .436 on @-@ base percentage was the fifth @-@ highest in the minors in 2002 , and his 80 walks were seventh @-@ most . In recognition of his performance , the Boston Red Sox named Youkilis their 2002 Minor League Player of the Year .

After the 2002 season , Boston 's then @-@ assistant general manager , Theo Epstein , sent Youkilis to the Athletes ' Performance Institute in Tempe , Arizona , where he engaged in an intensive six @-@ week training regimen . Youkilis then moved his off @-@ season home to

Arizona , and attended the Institute in the 2004 ? 08 off seasons as well .

In 2003 , Youkilis started the season with the Portland Sea Dogs . In 94 games , he led the Eastern League with a .487 on @-@ base percentage ( best all @-@ time for the team through 2007 ) , and was third in the league with a .327 batting average ( second @-@ best all @-@ time for the team through 2007 ) . Later , he earned a spot on the Eastern League All @-@ Star team , the Baseball America AA All @-@ Star team , and on the U.S. roster for the 2003 All @-@ Star Futures Game . After Portland , Youkilis moved up to play for the Pawtucket Red Sox , the Boston Red Sox Class @-@ AAA franchise . During his time with Pawtucket , Youkilis managed to complete a streak he started while in Portland : he reached base in 71 consecutive games , tying future teammate Kevin Millar 's minor @-@ league record for consecutive games reaching base . His 104 walks were the third @-@ highest number recorded in the minors in 2003 . Asked , however , about the focus in position @-@ playing baseball on five @-@ tool players , Youkilis quipped , " I don 't even know if I have a tool . "

Writing for ESPN , John Sickels evaluated him as follows in mid @-@ 2003 :

Youkilis is an on @-@ base machine . He never swings at a bad pitch , and is adept at working counts and out @-@ thinking the pitcher . Unlike some guys who draw lots of walks , Youkilis seldom strikes out . He makes solid contact against both fastballs and breaking pitches . Youkilis ' swing is tailored for the line drive , and he may never hit for much home run power . But he hits balls to the gaps effectively , and could develop 10 ? 14 home run power down the road . Youkilis does not have very good speed , though he is a decent baserunner . His defense at third base draws mixed reviews . His arm , range , and hands all rate as adequate / average . He doesn 't kill the defense at third base , but he doesn 't help it much , either , and is likely to end up at first base down the road .

Youkilis spent the 2003 ? 04 winter in Mexico , playing for Navojoa of the Mexican Pacific League . In 2004 , he appeared in 32 games for Pawtucket , hitting .258 with three home runs , and a .347 on @-@ base percentage , before being called up to the Red Sox on May 15 .

In his minor league career through 2005 , he batted .299 with a .442 OBP while playing 340 games at third base , 59 at first base , and 2 at second base .

= = Major leagues ( 2004 ? 14 ) = =

= = = Boston Red Sox = = =

= = = = 2004 = = = =

On May 15 , 2004 , when Red Sox regular starting third baseman Bill Mueller was placed on the disabled list , Youkilis was called up for the first time . " I didn 't sleep much " , Youkilis said . " I got about four hours of sleep . ... They told me the night before I was playing .... I got in there , and man , I was just amped up and excited . " During his first major @-@ league game in Toronto , with his parents watching from the second row behind the dugout , Youkilis ( in his second at bat ) homered against 1996 Cy Young Award winner Pat Hentgen , becoming just the seventh player in team history to hit a home run in his first game . As a prank , the team initially gave Youkilis the silent treatment when he returned to the dugout after his homer . " This one will go down probably as the greatest day of my life " , he said .

Later , Youkilis was swept up in the team 's ritual annual hazing , in which he and other rookies were made to wear skimpy Hooters waitress outfits , orange satin shorts and tight , clingy white tank tops , for the team trip from Canada through US Customs in Florida . " I walked into the locker room , and all my clothes were gone " , Youkilis said . " There was just a Hooters outfit and shoes . " Youkilis was named the American League ( AL ) Rookie of the Month for May , after leading AL rookies with nine walks and a .446 OBP as he batting .318 with 7 RBIs , and 15 runs in 13 games . Noting ways that his life had suddenly changed , he said : " I 'm staying in the best hotel I 've ever

stayed in , and my paycheck has quadrupled . " In mid @-@ July he was sent back down to AAA , however , to make room for Ramiro Mendoza , though he was brought up again towards the end of the season .

On September 24 of that year , which was Yom Kippur , Youkilis appeared in the dugout in uniform , but declined to participate in the game out of deference to the religious holiday . Youkilis was named the club 's Rookie of the Year by the Boston chapter of the Baseball Writers ' Association of America . For the season , in 44 games , he saw an average of 4 @.@ 67 pitches per plate appearance , first among major leaguers with at least 90 plate appearances . As Youkilis observed , " Fighting off pitches , fouling off pitches , laying off pitches , making it so the opposing pitcher can 't breathe ; that 's my job . " He was on the roster for the Red Sox for the 2004 American League Division Series ( ALDS ) , making his sole appearance in Game 2 against the Anaheim Angels . " It 's been an unbelievable ride " , Youkilis said . " It 's a great first year , a year you probably can 't top . Hopefully , it ends like a Cinderella story . " He was removed from the roster for the next round , the American League Championship Series ( ALCS ) , and was on the roster but did not play in the World Series .

= = = = 2005 = = = =

While virtually nobody else knew it , Youkilis broke his toe during spring training in 2005 , and was back playing again in a matter of days . It was " in Vero Beach " , Youkilis said . " I was trying to make the team . "

On the Red Sox Opening Day roster for the first time in his career in 2005 , Youkilis found himself on the way back down to Pawtucket on April 13 as the team needed to activate Curt Schilling , and Youkilis happened to still have minor league options ; but told that he would be back , Youkilis decided to keep his Boston apartment and commute to Pawtucket . Up and down all season as the Red Sox made use of his options , he got a call @-@ up ? prompted by Bill Mueller having back spasms in batting practice ? one August day as he was in Pawtucket 's clubhouse before a game . Without changing out of the same white pants that he wore for both Boston and Pawtucket home games , he packed his car , drove the 40 miles to Boston , walked into the Red Sox clubhouse , changed his jersey and cleats , and was ready to play .

He ultimately played 43 more games for Pawtucket in 2005 before being called up permanently . On September 18 , he fractured the tip of the ring finger of his right hand fielding a ground ball , and did not play again until October 2 , the final day of the regular season . In 2005 with Boston , Youkilis hit .278 with a .400 on @-@ base percentage in 79 at @-@ bats in 44 games during five stints with the team . He saw an average of 4 @.@ 68 pitches per plate appearance , the most of any Red Sox player with at least 50 at @-@ bats . He made 23 appearances at third base , 9 at first base , and 2 at second , and batted at least once from all nine spots in the batting order .

= = = = 2006 = = = =

In 2006 , his first full season in the majors , Youkilis became a regular first baseman ( with 127 games at first ) . Until that time , he was primarily a third baseman , though he did play nine games at first base with the Red Sox in 2005 , and 56 games at first base in his minor league career . Also in 2006 he played in the outfield for the first time in his professional career , 18 games in left field . Despite his inexperience in the outfield , Youkilis did not commit an error while in the outfield ; he did , however , commit eight errors while playing the infield .

Youkilis tied for the major league lead in sacrifice flies ( 11 ) and led the AL with 4 @.@ 43 pitches per plate appearance and by hitting line drives 24 % of time that he put balls in play . Also that year , Youkilis finished second in the AL in pitches seen ( 3 @,@ 009 ) and percent of pitches taken ( 63 @.@ 8 ) , 4th in OBP with runners in scoring position with two outs ( .524 ) , 7th in bases on balls ( 91 ; the six players ahead of him averaged 41 home runs and 14 intentional walks , while Youkilis hit only 13 homers and was not intentionally walked once ) , tied for 7th in " bases taken " ( 22 ; advanced on fly balls , passed balls , wild pitches , balks , etc . ) , 8th in doubles ( 42 ) and batting

average with runners in scoring position with two out ( .375 ) , 9th in walk percentage ( 13 @ .@ 8 % ) , and 10th in times on base ( 259 ) . He scored 100 runs , hit for a .325 batting average with runners in scoring position , and hit four first inning leadoff home runs . He did this despite struggling in the second half of the season with plantar fasciitis and a problematic abdominal muscle .

===== 2007 =====

Youkilis had a career @-@ high 23 @-@ game hitting streak starting on May 5 , 2007 , and ending on June 2 , 2007 , in which he hit .426 ( 43 ? 101 ) with 13 doubles , 6 HRs , 21 RBIs , and a .468 OBP . At one point during the hitting streak , he had 9 straight games with at least two hits ( tying a Red Sox record set by Jim Rice in 1978 ) , and became the first Red Sox hitter since Trot Nixon to hit an inside @-@ the @-@ park home run . During the hitting streak , on May 20 , he hit what would be the shortest homer by a Sox player during the season ? a 321 @-@ foot homer around the Pesky Pole . The home run would not have cleared the fence at any of the other 29 ballparks in baseball . Although the hit streak ended on June 2 , he did walk three times in an 11 ? 6 win over the Yankees .

His manager Terry Francona said , " He 's taking more of what the pitchers give him , using the whole field . He 's going to work the count about as good as any hitter in baseball . Last year if he got a two @-@ strike breaking ball , he might swing and miss . This year he 's fouling it off , or taking it to right field . "

On June 1 , Yankees pitcher Scott Proctor hit Youkilis in the head with a pitch ; Proctor was ejected from the game . On August 30 , Yankees pitcher Joba Chamberlain threw a pair of 98 mph pitches over Youkilis 's head ; Chamberlain was ejected , and later also suspended two games for " inappropriate actions . " " That 's the second time " , Youkilis observed . " Scott Proctor hit me in the head . Coincidence ? I don 't know . It doesn 't look good . "

On June 25 , 2007 , Youkilis played in his 120th consecutive game at first base without an error , breaking the prior Red Sox record set in 1921 by Stuffie McInnis . On September 7 , he played in his 179th consecutive game at first base without an error , which broke the prior AL record set in 1973 by Mike Hegan .

On September 15 , Yankees pitcher Chien @-@ Ming Wang struck Youkilis on his right wrist with a pitch , resulting in a deep tendon bruise that kept him out until September 25 , when he returned with the aid of a cortisone shot . In 2007 , Youkilis was 6th in the AL with 15 hit by pitch ( HBP ) .

Youkilis 's error @-@ less streak at the end of the regular season was 190 games ; while he was charged with an error in the sixth inning of an October 16 , 2007 , playoff game against the Cleveland Indians , postseason games are not included in the record . Youkilis said , " I 'm not worried about making the error . I 'm worried about trying to help the team win and trying to get an out any way we can . " Leading the league with a perfect 1 @ .@ 000 fielding percentage , and an AL @-@ record 1 @ ,@ 079 error @-@ less chances at first , Youkilis won the 2007 AL Gold Glove award for first basemen .

While he batted .288 for the season , with men on base , he hit .340 with a .435 OBP . He was 6th in the league in pitches per plate appearance ( 4 @ .@ 27 ) .

In the first inning of Game 1 of the ALDS against the Angels he hit his first post @-@ season home run . It was his first homer since returning from being hit by Wang , and Youkilis said his wrist " felt a lot better as the days have progressed . I think the best thing about it is that it 's playoff time , and adrenaline helps the most . " In the 7 @-@ game ALCS against the Indians he hit three more home runs , had 14 hits ( tying the LCS record jointly held by Hideki Matsui and Albert Pujols since 2004 ) , and scored 10 runs ( bettering Matsui 's 2004 ALCS record ) while batting .500 ( another new ALCS record , bettering Bob Boone 's .455 in 1986 ) with a .576 OBP and a .929 slugging percentage .

Still , in the World Series against Colorado , he did not start the team 's away games . Francona faced a dilemma when playing without a DH in the NL park of having to bench either Youkilis , 120 @-@ RBI man Mike Lowell , or 117 @-@ RBI man David Ortiz , as he had to choose from among them which two would play first base and third base . Bob Ryan of The Boston Globe called it " the most difficult decision any American League manager has had to make in the 34 @-@ year history

of the DH " . Youkilis said , " It doesn 't bother me . I want to play , but I totally understand the situation . Look , I 'm doing everything I 've always wanted to do . I 'm playing in a World Series . I 'm playing every day . I 'm happy . I just want to win .... If I have to take a seat , that 's just the way it has to be . " Youkilis hit two doubles ( both in Game 1 ) and had three walks in only 12 plate appearances in the 4 @-@ game win over Colorado , as he was not in the starting lineup for the away games . Dismissing questions as to whether he was upset about being benched for the last two games of the World Series , Youkilis said , " Move on and go to another team if you ? re worried about your playing time , and think you deserve to play over somebody else . "

Youkilis was selected the 2007 recipient of the Jackie Jensen Award for spirit and determination by the Boston BBWAA chapter .

= = = = 2008 = = = =

In 2007 , Youkilis had earned \$ 424 @,@ 500 , the fourth @-@ lowest salary on the club . In February 2008 , he signed a one @-@ year contract for \$ 3 million , avoiding salary arbitration . In March 2008 , his role as the designated player representative of the Red Sox became known during the resolution of a player @-@ management dispute regarding non @-@ payment of coaches and staff for the Red Sox trip to Japan .

On April 2 , 2008 , on an unassisted game @-@ ending play against the Oakland A 's , Youkilis broke the Major League record for most consecutive error @-@ less games by a first baseman , previously held by Steve Garvey , at 194 games . In his 205th game without an error on April 27 , Youkilis also established a new major league record for first basemen , when he fielded his 1,701st consecutive chance without an error , passing the old mark of 1 @,@ 700 set by Stuffy McInnis from 1921 to 1922 . His streak , which started on July 4 , 2006 , was snapped at 238 games ( 2 @,@ 002 fielding attempts ) on June 7 , 2008 against the Seattle Mariners .

He was named AL Player of the Week for May 5 ? 11 , after batting .375 while leading the AL with five home runs , and tying for the American League lead with 10 RBIs .

In an early June game at Fenway Park , one camera reportedly showed Manny Ramirez taking a swing at Youkilis , and the two had to be separated by teammates in the Red Sox dugout . " I think they were just exchanging some views on things " , manager Terry Francona said . " We had a lot of testosterone going tonight . " Asked about the incident the following year , Youkilis said : " We have two different approaches to the game . Winning and losing isn ? t life and death to Manny . "

He was the AL 's starter at first base on the 2008 AL All @-@ Star team that played the 79th Major League Baseball All @-@ Star Game at Yankee Stadium , voted in by the fans with 2 @,@ 858 @,@ 130 votes in his first year on the ballot . Youkilis became the sixth Red Sox first baseman to start an All @-@ Star Game at first base , following Jimmie Foxx ( 1938 ; 40 ) , Walt Dropo ( 1950 ) , Mickey Vernon ( 1956 ) , George Scott ( 1966 ) , and Mo Vaughn ( 1996 ) .

In late July , Manny Ramirez was traded away by the Red Sox . Youkilis took over the cleanup spot of the lineup .

In 2008 , Youkilis led the AL in at bats per RBI ( 4 @.@ 7 ) , was 3rd in slugging percentage ( .569 ) and sacrifice flies ( 9 ) , 4th in RBIs ( 115 ) , extra base hits ( 76 ) , and OPS ( .958 ) ; 5th in hit by pitch ( 12 ) ; 6th in batting average ( .312 ) and on @-@ base percentage ( .390 ) ; 7th in doubles ( 43 ) and in times advanced from first to third on a single ( 14 ) ; 8th in total bases ( 306 ) , 10th in at @-@ bats per home run ( 18 @.@ 6 ) , and 12th in home runs ( 29 ) . He was also 2nd in extra base hit percentage ( 12 @.@ 2 % of all plate appearances ) and tied for 7th in times advanced from first to third on a single ( 14 ) .

Youkilis also batted .356 against relief pitchers , .358 with men on base , and .374 with runners in scoring position . He drew seven intentional walks during the 2008 season , the first season he had garnered any , and also led the AL with a .353 batting average after the sixth inning . Youkilis became just the third modern major leaguer ( since 1901 ) ever to bat over .300 with more than 100 RBIs during a season in which he spent at least 30 games at both first and third base ; St. Louis ' Albert Pujols ( 2001 ) and Cleveland 's Al Rosen ( 1954 ) are the only other players to accomplish the feat .

Youkilis finished third in the balloting for the 2008 AL MVP Award , receiving two first @-@ place votes ( one from Evan Grant of The Dallas Morning News ) , while his teammate Dustin Pedroia won and Justin Morneau came in second . Only Youkilis and Morneau were named on all ballots .

In the ALCS Game 5 vs. the Tampa Bay Rays , the Red Sox were down by seven runs in the bottom of the seventh inning . Youkilis scored the winning run for the Red Sox to complete the second @-@ largest comeback in MLB postseason history . Before Game 4 of the 2008 World Series , he was named the winner of the AL Hank Aaron Award for the best offensive performance of the 2008 season .

===== 2009 =====

Youkilis signed a four @-@ year , \$ 41 @. @ 25 million contract with the Red Sox on January 15 , 2009 . The deal also included a team option ( at \$ 14 million , with a \$ 1 @. @ 25 million buyout ) for 2013 . Later that year , he was voted # 36 on the Sporting News list of the 50 greatest active baseball players , voted on by a panel that included members of the Baseball Hall of Fame .

Youkilis batted cleanup for Team USA in the 2009 World Baseball Classic , tying for the lead among all WBC players in home runs ( 3 ) and runs ( 9 ) , and tying for second on the team in RBIs ( 6 ) and walks ( 6 ) , through the first two rounds . He had to leave the team with a left ankle sprain , however , before the WBC semifinals .

Youkilis hit a walk off home run against the Yankees on April 24 , 2009 . " He has skills , man " , said David Ortiz . " I don 't know how he do it . He just do it . " He was subsequently placed on the disabled list a few days later , but returned to play on May 20 . " It 's frustrating not being able to play " , he said . " Watching baseball is not something I like to do . "

Youkilis was picked to be a reserve on the AL 2009 All @-@ Star team by Tampa Bay and AL manager Joe Maddon , after coming in second in the fan vote to Mark Teixeira , 3 @, @ 309 @, @ 050 to 3 @, @ 069 @, @ 906 .

On August 6 , 2009 , with the Red Sox suffering numerous injuries , Youkilis played left field for the first time since he played 18 games there in 2006 . On August 8 , he again played left field , and made a couple of twists and turns on a fly ball hit by Johnny Damon before committing an error .

On August 11 , 2009 , after 6 ' 5 " pitcher Rick Porcello of the Detroit Tigers hit him in the back with an 89 mph pitch , Youkilis immediately charged Porcello on the mound . Youkilis threw his helmet at the fast back @-@ pedaling Porcello , and Porcello tackled Youkilis , both went down , and both benches cleared . Both players were tossed from the game , and each received a five @-@ game suspension .

Hearing that his friend and former minor league teammate Greg Montalbano had died of testicular cancer at the age of 31 late on August 21 , Youkilis dedicated his next game to his friend 's memory . After inscribing " GM " in marker on his cap , he hit two home runs in the game against the Yankees , while driving in six runs . Both times as he crossed home plate , he looked up and pointed to the sky . " That was for him " , Youkilis said . " There are some crazy things that have happened in my life . You ... feel like there 's somebody out there somewhere pushing balls out for you , and doing great things . "

In 2009 , Youkilis was 2nd in the AL in OBP ( .413 ) and OPS ( .961 ) , 4th in hit by pitch ( 16 ) , 5th in slugging percentage ( .548 ) , and batted .305 overall and .362 with runners in scoring position . He also led the AL in pitches per plate appearance ( 4 @. @ 42 ) , was 6th in batting average on balls in play ( .363 ) , and 10th in walk percentage ( 13 @. @ 6 % ) . " Statistically , if you consider 2008 and 2009 , you could make the case there has been no better player in the league [ in that time ] " , said Red Sox EVP Epstein . Of the players with 1 @, @ 000 plate appearances in the AL over the 2008 ? 09 seasons , none had a higher OPS than Youkilis ( .960 ) .

In the field , while Youkilis split his time primarily between first base and third base and therefore did not qualify for the fielding percentage title at either , his .998 fielding percentage in 78 games at first matched that of the league leader Lyle Overbay , and his .974 fielding percentage in 63 games at third base was better than league @-@ leader Melvin Mora 's .971 .

Youkilis finished sixth in balloting for the 2009 AL MVP Award , receiving two second @-@ place

votes . He was selected as the Red Sox most valuable player ( winner of the 2009 Thomas A. Yawkey Memorial Award ) in voting by the Boston Chapter of the Baseball Writers ' Association of America .

===== 2010 =====

In 2010 , Youkilis was again named to Sporting News ' list of the 50 greatest current players in baseball , ranking No. 38 on the list . A panel of 21 MLB executives was polled to arrive at the list .

On May 18 , 2010 , Youkilis hit his 100th career home run off C.C. Sabathia .

On August 2 , Youkilis ' season was cut short by a right thumb abductor muscle tear , which he had played through for two weeks . At the time of his injury , he was tied for 3rd in the major leagues in runs scored ( 77 ) , and led all major leaguers with a .798 slugging percentage against left @-@ handed pitchers . He was 3rd in the AL in on @-@ base percentage ( .411 ) , tied for 5th in walks ( 58 ) , tied for 7th in extra @-@ base hits ( 50 ) , 8th in slugging percentage ( .564 ) , and 9th in total bases ( 204 ) . He had surgery to repair the tear on August 6 .

The injury limited him to only 102 games for the season , his fewest since his 2005 sophomore year . Slowed by his injury , he had only 362 at @-@ bats , but batted .307 / .411 / .564 with 19 home runs and 62 RBIs . For the years 2008 ? 10 , his .964 OPS ranked second in the major leagues , behind Albert Pujols ( 1 @.@ 074 ) .

===== 2011 =====

During the offseason the Red Sox acquired All @-@ Star first baseman Adrian Gonzalez , and with the imminent departure of Adrián Beltré , Youkilis agreed to the make the switch back to third base .

In 2011 , Youkilis was again named to Sporting News ' list of the 50 greatest current players in baseball , ranking No. 35 on the list . A panel of 21 MLB executives was polled to arrive at the list .

Youkilis was named a reserve for the 82nd All @-@ Star Game . At the All @-@ Star break , he was 3rd in the league in doubles ( 26 ) , 4th in on @-@ base percentage ( .399 ) , 6th in RBIs ( 63 ) , 7th in OPS ( .911 ) , and 9th in walks ( 49 ) . For the season , he led all AL third basemen in fielding percentage , at .967 . However , he batted only .258 , his lowest MLB season average of his career .

The Red Sox suffered a collapse late in the 2011 season , losing their playoff positioning . A source among the Red Sox claimed that Josh Beckett , Jon Lester , and John Lackey spent games they did not pitch in the clubhouse eating fried chicken and drinking beer ; some Red Sox teammates speculated that Youkilis was the source of this information , alienating him from his teammates .

===== 2012 =====

On April 15 , 2012 , Red Sox manager Bobby Valentine publicly questioned Youkilis ' motivation and physical ability to succeed . Viewing rookie Will Middlebrooks as the superior third baseman , Valentine began to play Middlebrooks over Youkilis . The Red Sox traded Youkilis to the Chicago White Sox on June 24 for pitcher Zach Stewart and utility man Brent Lillibridge . The Red Sox agreed to pay \$ 5 @.@ 5 million of Youkilis ' salary to help close the deal . In the seventh inning of that day 's game , Ben Cherington , the Red Sox General Manager , informed Valentine that a transaction was pending . Youkilis hit a triple in his last at bat , and received a long standing ovation while tipping his helmet to the crowd after being taken out for pinch runner Nick Punto .

===== Chicago White Sox =====

===== Rest of 2012 =====

The next day , Youkilis started for the White Sox , playing against the Minnesota Twins . He went 1



? 4 with a single in a loss . He hit his first home run as a member of the White Sox on July 3 , against the Texas Rangers off of Roy Oswalt . He also went 3 ? 6 with 4 RBIs in that game . On July 9 , 2012 Youkilis was named the American League Player of the Week , after batting .478 with three home runs and ten RBIs in a 5 ? 1 span for the White Sox . White Sox manager Robin Ventura reported that Youkilis was a competitor with a " grinder mentality " , who fit in well with his White Sox teammates . He became a free agent after the 2012 season .

= = = New York Yankees = = =

= = = = 2013 = = = =

On December 11 , Youkilis accepted a one @-@ year contract worth \$ 12 million to play third base for the New York Yankees . Though Youkilis had not been popular with members of the Yankees and their fans , Robinson Canó and Alex Rodriguez publicly supported the signing , and Joba Chamberlain reached out to Youkilis in an attempt to smooth over their past differences . The deal became official on December 14 .

Youkilis was diagnosed with a back strain when the 2013 season began and was placed on the 15 @-@ day disabled list on April 30 , 2013 . He was activated and returned on May 30 , 2013 . He was placed back on the disabled list on June 14 , 2013 after restraining his back . He then underwent season @-@ ending surgery to repair a herniated disk in his back on June 20 , 2013 .

= = = Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles ( 2014 ) = = =

Youkilis agreed to a one @-@ year , \$ 4 million contract with the Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles of Nippon Professional Baseball for the 2014 season . He missed part of the season due to plantar fasciitis . In 21 games , Youkilis batted .215 with one home run with 11 RBIs .

= = Life after baseball = =

On October 30 , 2014 Youkilis announced his retirement from baseball .

In January 2015 , Youkilis was said to be opening a brewpub in California with his brother . In February 2015 , Youkilis was hired by his former GM Theo Epstein to scout and development consultant .

= = Moneyball = =

Michael Lewis 's 2003 best @-@ seller Moneyball : The Art of Winning an Unfair Game focuses on Oakland Athletics ' General Manager Billy Beane 's use of Sabermetrics as a tool in the evaluation of potential prospects . In the book , Lewis discusses then @-@ prospect Youkilis in detail , and refers to him as " Euclis , the Greek God of Walks " , a moniker that has stuck . Beane put more stock in empirical evidence than in scouts ' hunches , and did not care that Youkilis was pudgy ( or , as Lewis put it in the book , " a fat third baseman who couldn 't run , throw , or field " ) , but just loved his ability to get on base ( helped in no small part by his 20 / 11 vision ) . The book brought minor leaguer Youkilis his first national recognition .

Lewis also revealed that Beane repeatedly tried to trade for Youkilis before Youkilis reached the major leagues , but his attempts were blocked by then @-@ Red Sox GM Theo Epstein .

Asked by a reporter what he thought of the nickname , Youkilis quipped , " It 's better than being ' the Greek God of Illegitimate Children . ' " But according to his dad , " Kevin disliked that Greek God of Walks stuff . " Fans actually rooted for Youkilis to take pitches . " It was frustrating to hear fans say , ' Get a walk ! ' " Youkilis said . " I 'll take a walk ? a walk 's as good as a hit ? but don 't you want me to hit a home run or something ? "

= = Religion and community service = =

= = = Career highlights as a Jewish baseball player = = =

On August 8 , 2005 , while playing for the Red Sox , Youkilis took the field in the 9th inning along with Adam Stern and Gabe Kapler , setting a record for the most Jewish players on the field at one time in AL history , and the most in Major League Baseball history since four Jewish players took the field for the New York Giants in a game in 1941 .

Youkilis was featured in the 2008 Hank Greenberg 75th Anniversary edition of Jewish Major Leaguers Baseball Cards , published in affiliation with Fleer Trading Cards and the American Jewish Historical Society , commemorating the Jewish Major Leaguers from 1871 through 2008 . He joined , among other Jewish major leaguers , Ryan Braun , Brad Ausmus , Ian Kinsler , Brian Horwitz , Gabe Kapler , Jason Marquis , Jason Hirsh , John Grabow , Craig Breslow , and Scott Schoeneweis .

He was one of three Jewish players in the 2008 All @-@ Star Game , joining Braun and Kinsler , and one of three Jewish players on the Team USA 2009 World Baseball Classic team , joining Braun and Grabow . Kinsler says that " Youkilis always says something to me on the bases . ' Happy Passover , ' he 'll throw something at me . "

Youkilis was named the Jewish MVP for 2008 , beating out fellow All @-@ Stars Braun and Kinsler . He was voted the top Jewish baseball player of the decade 2000 ? 09 in online balloting , beating out Shawn Green and Braun . Through the 2010 season , his .294 batting average placed him 6th on the career all @-@ time list ( directly behind Phil Weintraub ) for batting average by Jewish major leaguers , his 112 home runs placed him 8th ( behind Braun ) , and his 470 RBIs placed him 9th ( behind Ausmus ) .

In Jews and Baseball : An American Love Story , a 2010 documentary film narrated by Dustin Hoffman , Youkilis noted :

It 's something that I probably won ' t realize until my career is over , how many people are really rooting for me and cheering for me . And it 's not just because I went 3 @-@ for @-@ 4 , or had a great game . It 's just the fact that I represent a lot of Jewish people and a lot of the Jewish heritage , and the struggles that a lot of our people have had .

He expressed interest in 2013 in playing for Israel at the World Baseball Classic if healthy . Since the 2013 qualifier was during the regular season , he was unable to complete , however he announced that he would play for the team if they made it past the qualifying round of the 2013 World Baseball Classic . Youkilis will be a coach for Israel during the 2017 World Baseball Classic

In an embarrassing formatting oddity , it was noticed in 2007 that multiple baseball websites such as Baseball @-@ Reference.com and Baseball Prospectus had been using " youkike " as part of their urls for webpages featuring Youkilis . This unintended quirk affected those sites that used an automatic url @-@ creating algorithm which combined the first five letters of a player 's surname with the first two letters of his first name . Following the discovery , the sites manually adjusted the urls to remove the inadvertent slur .

= = = Philanthropy = = =

Kevin Youkilis Hits For Kids is a charitable organization established by Youkilis in 2007 . Youkilis 's foundation focuses on raising support and awareness for the health , advocacy , safety , and medical healing of children across Massachusetts , in his hometown of Cincinnati , and beyond . Rallying the support of volunteers , local business , and the heart of Red Sox Nation , Kevin Youkilis Hits for Kids teams with existing , community @-@ based children 's charities and medical research efforts that lack sufficient funding and awareness . One organization that Hits for Kids works with is the Joslin Diabetes Center 's Pediatric Health Services . He has a special sensitivity about youth suicide , since his college roommate , a close and supportive friend of his since high school , committed suicide on Thanksgiving during his sophomore year . To this day , he said , " I sit back at

night and wonder what I could 've done . "

" In my religion , the Jewish religion , that 's one of the biggest things that 's taught , is giving a mitzvah , forming a mitzvah " , said Youkilis . " I was always taught as a kid giving to charity . You 're supposed to give a good amount of charity each and every year . ... It 's just a great thing when you can make a kid smile that 's going through some hard times in life ... I wish more people , not just athletes , would give people just a little bit of their time . It doesn 't take much ... It can make a huge difference . "

After the first game of the ALDS , Youkilis re @-@ shaved his head for good luck in a sign of solidarity with cancer patient Mitt Campbell . Following the team 's 2007 World Series victory , Youkilis shaved his goatee for a \$ 5 @, @ 000 donation by Gillette to his foundation .

All profits from his charity wine " SauvignYoouuk Blanc " , released in 2008 , support Hits for Kids .

= = Family = =

In November 2008 , Youkilis and Enza Sambataro held a wedding ceremony in Cabo San Lucas , Mexico , although the couple never formalized their wedding . The ceremony was attended by Red Sox teammates Mike Lowell , David Ortiz , and Dustin Pedroia . Sambataro , a Newton , Massachusetts native , was CEO of Youkilis 's charity , Hits for Kids , until the couple split up in 2010 .

In February 2012 , the Boston Herald reported that Youkilis was engaged to Julie Brady , the sister of New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady . Two months later , the couple were quietly married in New York City , and a pregnancy was rumored at that time . Twelve months after the Boston Herald article , the wedded Youkilises , along with their infant son , were featured in a 30 @-@ minute program on the YES Network .

= = In popular culture = =

During his tenure with the Red Sox and especially throughout the New England area , the phrase " Yoouuuk ! " became a commonplace term ; being seen on T @-@ shirts , bumper stickers , and advertising . The phrase represents Youkilis ' nickname but also replicates the phonetic spelling of the low , drawn out , guttural cheer that Red Sox fans in attendance would greet Youkilis with as he walked toward the batter 's box prior to hitting or after a successful play in the field .

Youkilis made an appearance in season 1 episode 8 of the Travel Channel show Man v. Food . The episode was recorded at Boston 's Eagle 's Deli and featured Youkilis rooting against host ( and New York Yankees fan ) Adam Richman in an eating challenge . In 2011 he appeared in the music video for the Dropkick Murphys song " Going Out in Style " .

= = Awards and distinctions = =