

= Eddie Zosky =

Edward James Zosky (born February 10 , 1968) is a former professional baseball shortstop . He played all or part of five seasons in Major League Baseball , between 1991 and 2000 , for the Toronto Blue Jays , Florida Marlins , Milwaukee Brewers and Houston Astros . He also played in the Baltimore Orioles , San Francisco Giants and Pittsburgh Pirates minor league systems .

Zosky was a collegiate star prior to playing professionally , becoming a member of Fresno State University 's athletic Hall of Fame . He developed into a promising shortstop prospect for the Toronto Blue Jays in the early 1990s , being named their starting shortstop of the future multiple times , though injury problems and a lack of offense ended his hopes of stardom .

Zosky began his professional career in 1989 at the age of 21 and played for 12 seasons until the age of 32 in 2000 . He spent most of his professional career in the minor leagues , spending parts of two seasons at the rookie level , part of one season at the Single @-@ A level , two full seasons at the Double @-@ A level , parts of three seasons at the Triple @-@ A level and seven full seasons at the Triple @-@ A level . In total , he played in 1 @,@ 056 minor league games , hitting .257 with 59 home runs and 407 RBI in 3 @,@ 670 at @-@ bats . Defensively , he spent 752 games at shortstop , 147 games at third base , 139 games at second base , two games at pitcher and one game in the outfield . As a pitcher , he threw 11 ? 3 innings , striking out two batters and allowing one earned run , posting a 6 @.@ 75 ERA .

He spent parts of five seasons at the Major League level ? 1991 , 1992 , 1995 , 1999 and 2000 . He played in 44 big league games , collecting eight hits in 50 at @-@ bats for a .160 batting average . Though he never hit a home run , he did collect two triples and a double , while driving three runs in . Defensively , he played 30 games at shortstop (starting eight of them) , four games at third base and three games at second base . He committed two errors for a .967 fielding percentage , while turning eight double plays .

At all levels , both Major League and minor league , Zosky hit a combined .256 with 59 home runs and 410 RBI in 3 @,@ 720 at @-@ bats .

= = Early and personal life = =

Zosky , who is Jewish , was born in Whittier , California to Ed and Yvonne Zosky and attended St. Paul High School in Santa Fe Springs , California , graduating in 1986 .

= = College career = =

After his graduation from high school , he attended Fresno State University , where he mostly played shortstop . He hit .292 in his first season with Fresno State University , earning second @-@ team all @-@ league honors . In May 1988 , he suffered from mononucleosis and an ankle sprain , slightly shortening his sophomore season . In addition , Zosky was selected to try out for the United States Olympic baseball team in June of his sophomore season , along with teammates Tom Goodwin and John Salles . Though he was considered the front @-@ runner for the shortstop position on the Olympic squad , he did not make the team . During his junior and final season at Fresno State University , Zosky was named Sporting News and Baseball America All @-@ Americans after posting a .370 batting average . In addition , he was named first @-@ team All Big West , along with teammates Bobby Jones , Tom Goodwin and Rich Crane .

= = Draft = =

Zosky was drafted by Major League Baseball teams twice . Originally , he was drafted out of St. Paul High School by the New York Mets in the fifth round of the 1986 amateur draft , 128th overall . He did not sign , choosing to attend college instead .

He was next drafted by the Toronto Blue Jays 19th overall in the first round of the 1989 draft , out of Fresno State University . He was one of three Fresno State University alum drafted in the first round

that year , the others being Steve Hosey (14th overall) and Tom Goodwin (22nd overall) . It was the first time since the 1979 draft that one school had three different players selected in the first round . The last school to do it was the University of Michigan . The Toronto Blue Jays gave Zosky a \$ 185 @, @ 000 (\$ 353 @, @ 000 today) signing bonus .

= = Professional career = =

= = = Early minor league career = = =

The initial plan was to have Zosky begin his professional career with the Dunedin Blue Jays of the Single @-@ A Florida State League . However , citing poor performances by his current shortstops , Double @-@ A manager Barry Foote had Zosky start with the Southern League Knoxville Blue Jays . He made his professional debut on July 4 , collecting a hit and driving in the Knoxville Blue Jays lone run in his first professional game . He played 56 games at shortstop for the Knoxville Blue Jays , batting .221 with a .303 slugging percentage .

In 1990 , Zosky was ranked the third best prospect in the Southern League . Though he attended Major League spring training , he spent the entire season in the minor leagues , playing for the Double @-@ A Knoxville Blue Jays and hitting .271 in 115 games ? tying William Suero for the team lead in triples with seven .

Prior to the 1991 season , Baseball America named Zosky the 22nd best prospect in professional baseball , ahead of Jeff Bagwell (32nd) , Chipper Jones (49th) and Jim Thome (93rd) . That season , he attended his second Major League spring training , and was in competition with Manuel Lee and Rene Gonzales for the starting shortstop position . However , after making six errors during the spring , he was deemed unready for Major League action and sent to minor league camp on April 1 .

He spent most of the season with the Triple @-@ A International League Syracuse Chiefs , hitting .264 with six home runs , 39 RBI and 69 runs . He led the team in both plate appearances and at bats , and , despite committing 24 errors in the field , he led league shortstops with 221 putouts , 371 assists and 88 double plays . His performance landed him a spot on the 1991 International League All @-@ Star Team , as well as a September 1 promotion to the Major Leagues .

= = = Major League debut = = =

Though Zosky spent the majority of the 1991 season with the Syracuse Chiefs , he made his Major League Baseball debut that season as well . He appeared in his first big league game on September 2 , against the Baltimore Orioles replacing shortstop Manuel Lee , who had been feeling dizzy and suffering from a stiff neck , in the top of the fourth inning . In the fifth inning , facing pitcher Dave Johnson in his first at @-@ bat , Zosky singled to left field . Later in the game , he was replaced by Rance Mulliniks .

So anticipated was Zosky 's debut that Toronto Star writer Dave Perkins compared Zosky 's debut to Lou Gehrig in 1925 , asking " Did Manuel Lee just become Manuel Pipp ? " (in reference to Gehrig usurping Wally Pipp 's first base position that season) . The next day , September 3 , he made his first Major League start , again against the Baltimore Orioles . Batting ninth in the starting lineup , he collected zero hits in three at @-@ bats , striking out twice against pitchers Ben McDonald and Mike Flanagan .

He spent 18 games in total with the Toronto Blue Jays in 1991 , batting .148 with two runs and two RBI in 27 at @-@ bats . Though he did not hit a home run , two of his four hits were for extra bases ? the first was a triple off of Bob Welch and the second was a double off of Denny Neagle . He also drove in his first career RBIs against Welch , scoring John Olerud and Candy Maldonado on the same play .

= = = 1992 ? 1994 : Zosky 's Blue Jays career = = =

Prior to the 1992 minor league baseball season , Baseball America ranked Zosky as the 82nd best prospect in professional baseball . Though he was expected to unseat Manuel Lee as the starting shortstop for the 1992 Major League season , he began the year with the Triple @-@ A Syracuse Chiefs after posting a batting average of .151 and committing five errors during spring training . Rather than giving Zosky the backup job , the Blue Jays gave it to non @-@ roster invitee Alfredo Griffin , who had been signed previously .

He struggled early during the season with batting averages of .150 and .160 in April and May , respectively , and though he batted .350 in June , his season batting average was only .231 . Following the conclusion of the 1992 minor league season in September , Zosky was promoted to the Toronto Blue Jays , with whom he appeared in eight games . He batted .286 in seven at @-@ bats , with one of his two hits being a triple (which he hit off of José Mesa on September 14 ? exactly one year after his first career extra @-@ base hit , which was also a triple) . Following the 1992 regular season , Zosky played for the Tucson Javelinas in the newly formed Arizona Fall League , hitting .326 .

As early as January 1993 , Zosky was expected to be the Toronto Blue Jays ' starting shortstop for the 1993 regular season . However , later that month Zosky was shut down due to a muscle problem in his throwing elbow . To provide insurance in case Zosky floundered , the Toronto Blue Jays signed veteran free agent Dick Schofield , who had played for the California Angels and New York Mets the previous season . They also re @-@ signed Alfredo Griffin and traded Kelly Gruber and cash to the California Angels for Luis Sojo , who would provide even further insurance in case Zosky failed . Though Zosky was expected to be the starting shortstop earlier in the year , by February Schofield was the leading contender for the position . Due to his struggles in 1992 ? not only did he hit .231 , he also committed 27 errors ? and his injuries , the Blue Jays began looking beyond Zosky as the future starting shortstop for the team , paying more attention to their other prospect Alex Gonzalez .

After undergoing a surgery on his bad elbow to remove a bone spur on March 16 , Zosky 's starting prospects dimmed even further ? he was placed on the 15 @-@ day disabled list on March 26 , 1993 , later spending some time in extended spring training . He returned to the playing field in late July , and played in 33 minor league games ? five in a rehabilitation stint with the Hagerstown Suns , for whom he hit .100 in 20 at @-@ bats and 28 for the Syracuse Chiefs , for whom he hit .215 in 103 at @-@ bats . Overall , he batted .195 with zero home runs and nine RBI , while committing five errors in the field . He did not play in the Major Leagues in 1993 . Instead , Dick Schofield was the Opening Day starter , though Tony Fernandez seized the starting job after his June 11 trade to the Blue Jays from the New York Mets . Following the 1993 season , he played for the Scottsdale Scorpions in the Arizona Fall League .

By 1994 , Alex Gonzalez had all but replaced Zosky as the Blue Jays ' shortstop of the future . Though he had some bright moments during that season 's spring training , including a game @-@ winning three @-@ run home run in an exhibition game on March 23 , Zosky had become relegated to back @-@ up status as Dick Schofield was set to make another Opening Day start ? this time as a placeholder for Gonzalez , rather than Zosky . As it turned out , Gonzalez won the starting shortstop job and was the Opening Day performer at that position . By April 28 , however , Gonzalez was struggling , Schofield had retaken the starting shortstop position , and ? because he was performing well with the Syracuse Chiefs ? Zosky was back in the mix as a potential suitor for the position himself . Schofield retained a hold on the job , however , and Zosky spent the entire year in Triple @-@ A with the Chiefs , batting .264 with seven home runs and 34 RBI in 85 games , rattling off a 16 @-@ game hitting streak at one point . Though he played a shortened season due to injury , he tied Robert Montalvo for the team lead in sacrifice hits with six . Despite hitting .264 , his on @-@ base percentage was only .287 as he walked only nine times in 284 at @-@ bats . Though a shortstop by trade , he played more games at second base (41) than shortstop (34) that season .

= = = Florida Marlins = = =

On November 18 , 1994 , Zosky 's Blue Jays career came to an end when he was traded to the Florida Marlins by for a player to be named later , who ended up being minor league pitcher Scott Pace . That was the first trade ever made by new Blue Jays general manager Gord Ash , who replaced Pat Gillick following the 1994 season . Zosky made the Marlins Opening Day roster for the 1995 season and on April 29 , he played in his first Major League game since October 4 , 1992 . Facing Trevor Wilson of the San Francisco Giants , Zosky singled in his first big league at @-@ bat in over two seasons . He played the whole game , going 1 @-@ for @-@ 3 at the plate . Appearing in only six games at the Major League level in 1995 (with the single in his first at @-@ bat his only big league hit) , Zosky spent most of the year with the Triple @-@ A International League 's Charlotte Knights , to whom he was optioned after the Marlins cut their roster from 28 to 25 players on May 15 . With Charlotte , he hit .247 with three home runs and 42 RBI in 92 games , walking only seven times in 312 at @-@ bats . On October 16 , he was granted free agency .

= = = Baltimore Orioles and San Francisco Giants = = =

On January 24 , 1996 , Zosky signed a contract with the Baltimore Orioles . He spent most of the season with the Orioles ' Triple @-@ A International League affiliate , the Rochester Red Wings , though he also spent a game with their rookie @-@ level affiliate , the Gulf Coast League Orioles . That season , he hit a combined .257 with three home runs , 34 RBI and a career @-@ high 23 doubles . With eight double plays grounded into , he tied Joe Hall for the Red Wings team lead . On October 15 , he was granted free agency by the Orioles .

On November 25 , 1996 , the San Francisco signed Zosky to a contract , making him a non @-@ roster invitee to spring training . He was cut from the big league squad on March 17 and was assigned to minor league camp the following day . He then spent the entire 1997 season in Triple @-@ A , playing for the Pacific Coast League 's Phoenix Firebirds . He began the season with a bang , hitting a grand slam on April 6 against the Colorado Springs Sky Sox . In total , he played in 86 games that season , hitting .278 with nine home runs and 45 RBI . Defensively , he spent more games at third base (42) than at his natural shortstop position (30) . On October 15 , 1997 , he was granted free agency by the Giants .

= = = Milwaukee Brewers = = =

On December 17 , 1997 , the Milwaukee Brewers signed Zosky as a free agent , inviting him to spring training . By the second week of the 1998 season 's spring training , it looked as though Zosky would earn a spot on the Brewers ' 25 @-@ man roster ? he would eventually be cut after the Brewers purchased outfielder Eric Owens from the Florida Marlins , however , and spend the entire season with the Triple @-@ A Louisville Redbirds . That season , he hit .245 with eight home runs and 35 RBI in 90 games . He pitched for the first time in his career that season as well , appearing as a reliever in one game , allowing one hit and striking out the second batter he faced . He was granted free agency by the Brewers on October 15 , but was re @-@ signed on December 18 and given an invite to spring training .

Like in previous years , Zosky began the 1999 season in Triple @-@ A , playing for the Louisville RiverBats . He remained with the RiverBats through late July , though after catcher Bobby Hughes went on the 15 @-@ day disabled list , the Brewers purchased Zosky 's contract and brought him up to the Major League team . He made his first Major League appearance since May 14 , 1995 , when , on August 1 , 1999 , he pinch hit for Brewers pitcher Reggie Harris in the sixth inning and remained in the game , replacing Ronnie Belliard at second base . In his first Major League game in over four seasons , Zosky went 1 @-@ for @-@ 2 at the plate , collecting a single in his second at @-@ bat off of Montreal Expos pitcher Dan Smith . Just a few days later , on August 5 , he was assigned back to Louisville . He earned yet another promotion to the Major Leagues on September 5 with starting shortstop Mark Loretta injured and pitcher Chad Fox placed on the 60 @-@ day disabled list . In total , he played in eight games for the Brewers that season , collecting one hit in seven at @-@ bats for a .143 batting average . He had perhaps the best minor league season of his career in 1999

, as he hit .294 with 12 home runs and 47 RBI (all career @-@ highs) . Following the season , on October 7 , he refused a minor league assignment and became a free agent .

= = = Pittsburgh Pirates and Houston Astros = = =

On January 18 , 2000 , the Pittsburgh Pirates signed Zosky to a minor league contract , also offering him an invitation to spring training . On March 15 , the Pirates assigned him to minor league camp . He began the 2000 season in the Pirates minor league system , playing in 53 games for the Triple @-@ A Nashville Sounds (with whom he hit .221 with two home runs and 16 RBI) and in eight games for the rookie @-@ level GCL Pirates (with whom he hit .333 with six doubles in 30 at @-@ bats) .

On August 23 , he was traded to the Houston Astros for a player to be named later . He began his stint in the Astros organization in the minor leagues , playing in 11 games with the Triple @-@ A New Orleans Zephyrs and hitting .273 in 33 at @-@ bats . On September 12 , the Astros purchased his contract , bringing him up to the Major League squad . The Astros used him sporadically after his promotion as he played in four games with them , collecting zero hits in four at @-@ bats . His final appearance with the Astros , on October 1 , would also be the final game of his professional career . On October 11 , he became a free agent . No team ended up signing him . In the minor leagues that season , he hit a combined .247 with two home runs and 22 RBI in 72 games .

= = Jersey numbers and salaries = =