

= Eduardo Núñez =

Eduardo Michelle Núñez Méndez (born June 15 , 1987) is a Dominican professional baseball infielder for the Minnesota Twins of Major League Baseball (MLB) . He played in MLB for the New York Yankees from 2010 through 2013 . Although shortstop is his primary position , Núñez serves as a utility infielder , and played in the outfield for the Yankees as well .

The Yankees signed Núñez as an international free agent in 2004 . He played minor league baseball in their organization from 2005 through 2010 , until he made his MLB debut with the Yankees on August 19 , 2010 . He has served to allow Derek Jeter and Alex Rodriguez the ability to take days off in the field . Due to struggles and inconsistency , the Yankees designated Núñez for assignment at the start of the 2014 season . He was traded to the Twins , and enjoyed a breakout season in 2016 , when he was named to appear in the MLB All @-@ Star Game .

= = Professional career = =

= = = Minor leagues = = =

The New York Yankees signed Núñez as an international free agent in February 2004 . The organization introduced him to Derek Jeter , his childhood idol , at a press conference , where they told Jeter that Núñez was to be their eventual replacement for Jeter as the Yankees ' starting shortstop .

Núñez made his professional debut in minor league baseball with the Staten Island Yankees of the Class A Short Season New York ? Pennsylvania League in the 2005 season . Nunez represented the Yankees in the league 's All @-@ Star Game . That season , the Yankees won their third consecutive league championship , and Nunez was rated as the fourth @-@ best prospect in the New York ? Penn League . Going into the 2006 season , Baseball America ranked Núñez the sixth @-@ best prospect in the Yankees organization , and the prospect with the best throwing arm . The Yankees started Núñez with the Tampa Yankees of the Class A @-@ Advanced Florida State League in 2006 ; he struggled with Tampa , and the Yankees demoted him to the Charleston RiverDogs of the Class A South Atlantic League (SAL) on May 17 . Overall , Núñez had a .214 batting average for Tampa and Charleston .

In 2007 , Núñez started the season with Charleston , and was named the starting shortstop for the Southern Division in the SAL All @-@ Star Game . He was promoted to Tampa on July 28 . He played for Tampa in 2008 , batting .271 with six home runs and 42 runs batted in (RBI) in 94 games . He was promoted to the Trenton Thunder of the Class AA Eastern League for the 2009 season . With Trenton , he had a .322 batting average in 123 games and appeared in the Eastern League All @-@ Star Game , in which he got two hits . The Yankees promoted Núñez to the Scranton / Wilkes @-@ Barre Yankees of the Class AAA International League for the 2009 playoffs . Following the 2009 season , the Yankees added Núñez to their 40 @-@ man roster to protect him from being selected by another franchise in the Rule 5 draft . In 2010 , the Yankees assigned Núñez to Scranton / Wilkes @-@ Barre . There , he batted .289 in 118 games , with 55 runs scored , 25 doubles , three triples , four home runs , 50 RBI , and 23 stolen bases . He was named to the International League All @-@ Star team , the postseason All @-@ Star team , and the Topps Triple @-@ A All @-@ Star Team . Núñez won the Kevin Lawn Award as the Yankees ' minor league player of the year for 2010 .

= = = New York Yankees = = =

Núñez was called up to the majors for the first time on August 19 , 2010 after Lance Berkman was placed on the 15 @-@ day disabled list . Núñez debuted on the same day , replacing Jeter in the seventh inning and fouling out in his only plate appearance . Núñez received playing time as a fill @-@ in for Jeter and the then @-@ injured Alex Rodriguez . On August 21 , Núñez recorded his

first major league hit , a go @-@ ahead RBI single into right field . Núñez hit his first career home run against the Chicago White Sox on August 28 , 2010 . He also stole his first career base the same day . In 30 games for the Yankees , Nunez hit .280 , with one home run , seven RBIs , and scored 12 runs . After the season , Baseball America rated him as the eighth @-@ best prospect in the Yankees organization , while also naming him the " Best Defensive Infielder " and the " Best Infield Arm " in the Yankees organization . Núñez was part of the Yankees postseason in case Jeter or A @-@ Rod get injured again . The Yankees ventured through the playoffs until losing to the Texas Rangers in the 2010 ALCS .

Núñez beat out Ramiro Peña for the role as the utility infielder to start the 2011 season . With the Yankees , Núñez played approximately two games a week , allowing Derek Jeter and Alex Rodriguez to rest more often . Núñez batted .339 while filling in for the Yankees as their starting shortstop for three weeks while Jeter was injured ; he later became the team 's starting third baseman when Rodriguez required arthroscopic knee surgery . In addition to playing various infield positions , manager Joe Girardi also used Núñez as an outfielder when Nick Swisher experienced tendinitis in his elbow . Núñez played in 112 games for the Yankees , and led the team in errors with 20 , despite only playing part @-@ time .

Despite his defensive struggles , the Yankees viewed Núñez as likely to make their 25 @-@ man roster out of spring training in 2012 as a utility infielder . With Brett Gardner , the Yankees ' starting left fielder , injuring his elbow , Núñez received playing time in left field , as well as the infield . In his first twenty games of the 2012 New York Yankees season , Núñez hit .294 , but committed four errors in 58 chances . The day after he committed two errors in a game against the Tampa Bay Rays , Núñez was demoted to the Triple @-@ A Scranton / Wilkes @-@ Barre team . The team decided to abandon their approach of using Núñez as a utility player so that he can receive daily playing time at shortstop and second base , as the organization still views him as an everyday shortstop .

On September 1 , 2012 , the Yankees promoted Núñez from Triple @-@ A and manager Joe Girardi placed him into the starting lineup against the Baltimore Orioles for that day . He finished the regular season with a .292 batting average in 82 at @-@ bats . Though he was left off of the Yankees ' postseason roster for the 2012 American League Championship Series , he was added to the roster when Jeter suffered a fractured ankle . In Game 3 of the 2012 ALCS , Núñez hit his first career postseason home run off of Tigers pitcher Justin Verlander . The Yankees lost the series to the Tigers in a 4 @-@ game sweep .

Heading into the 2013 season , Yankees ' General Manager Brian Cashman said that if Núñez were to make the team , he would do so as a utility infielder , reversing the team 's position . However , Núñez only played shortstop during spring training . Jeter began the season on the disabled list , and Núñez started at shortstop for the Yankees on Opening Day . Núñez was placed on the 15 @-@ day disabled list on May 12 after missing the previous week due to soreness in his left rib cage . He was then transferred to the 60 @-@ day disabled list due to a strained left oblique . He was activated from the disabled list on July 6 after missing 2 months . He ended the season with .a 260 batting average and 28 RBIs in 90 games played .

In spring training in 2014 , Núñez competed with Zelous Wheeler , Yangervis Solarte , Dean Anna , and Scott Sizemore for a reserve infielder role with the Yankees . With reserve infielder Brendan Ryan starting the season on the disabled list , the Yankees chose Anna and Solarte over Núñez . To add Solarte to the roster , the Yankees designated Núñez for assignment .

= = = Minnesota Twins = = =

With the hope of improving their offense , the Minnesota Twins acquired Núñez from the Yankees on April 7 , 2014 , in exchange for minor league pitcher Miguel Sulbaran . The Twins optioned him to the Rochester Red Wings of the International League . After batting 7 @-@ for @-@ 22 (.318) for Rochester , he was promoted to the Twins as the 26th man on their roster for a doubleheader on April 17 , and was optioned back the next day . He finished the season with a .250 batting average in 72 games played with the Twins .

Núñez and the Twins agreed to a \$ 1 @. @ 025 million salary for the 2015 season , avoiding salary arbitration . In 72 games in 2015 , Núñez hit .282 / .327 / .431 with 4 HR and 20 RBI across 4 positions for the Twins .

Avoiding arbitration with the Twins at \$ 1 @. @ 475 million for the 2016 season , Núñez entered the season expecting to compete for a reserve role . On the Twins Opening Day roster in 2016 , Núñez impressed in April , hitting .373 in 18 games in a reserve role . However , following an injury to shortstop Eduardo Escobar , Núñez began earning more playing time as the team 's starting shortstop . With an injury to third baseman Trevor Plouffe , Núñez remained in the lineup following Escobar 's return . He became the Twins ' leadoff hitter . On July 5 , Núñez was named to his first All @-@ Star Game . That day , he had a .315 batting average with 11 home runs and 19 stolen bases .

= = Scouting profile = =

The Yankees viewed Núñez as a possible replacement at shortstop for Jeter . Though they were willing to trade Jesús Montero , their top hitting prospect , the Yankees considered Núñez untouchable in trade negotiations . Scouts consider Núñez 's throwing arm to be strong , and compliment his ability to hit for average , hit for power , and baserunning ability . However , scouts feel he can get " lackadaisical in the field " and swings at too many pitches outside of the strike zone .