

= Matt Downs =

Matthew Russell " Matt " Downs , Sr. (born March 19 , 1984) is a former Major League Baseball infielder / outfielder . He stands 6 feet 1 inch (1 @. @ 85 m) tall and weighs 190 pounds (86 kg) . Previously , he had played for the San Francisco Giants and the Houston Astros . He bats and throws right @-@ handed .

Downs attended Shelton State Community College and the University of Alabama ; he was drafted out of Alabama by the San Francisco Giants in 2006 . Despite being a 36th round draft pick , Downs reached the major leagues in 2009 , starting at second base temporarily for the Giants during the season . He played a few games with them in 2010 before he was claimed off waivers by the Houston Astros in August . Downs spent the entire 2011 season in the major leagues , batting .276 and leading the major leagues with 15 pinch @-@ hit RBI . In 2012 , his average dropped to .202 . Following the season , the Astros made him a free agent . He signed a minor league contract with the Miami Marlins in 2013 , spending the season in the minor leagues before getting released .

= = Early life = =

Downs graduated from Bibb County High School in Centreville , Alabama , following which he played a year as a pitcher / infielder for Shelton State Community College in 2003 . For the next three years , he played college baseball at the University of Alabama . He was used mostly as a pitcher in 2004 and 2005 , posting a 2 ? 1 record and a 4 @. @ 91 earned run average (ERA) . In 2006 , used only as a batter , he batted .298 with seven home runs and 62 runs batted in (RBI) . Downs helped Alabama win the Southeastern Conference Championship in 2006 , earning a Player of the Week Award in May after his strong hitting against the University of Tennessee helped Alabama clinch the championship .

= = San Francisco Giants = =

= = = 2006 ? 2008 = = =

He was drafted in the 25th round by the Pittsburgh Pirates in the 2003 MLB June Amateur Draft , while he still played for Shelton State Community College . In 2006 , the San Francisco Giants drafted him in the 36th round out of Alabama . He played in 2006 for the Arizona League Giants of the rookie Arizona League , batting .310 with 34 runs scored , 52 hits , 16 doubles (second in the league behind John Alonso 's 17) , zero home runs , and 29 RBI .

Downs played in 2007 for the Salem @-@ Keizer Volcanoes of the Single @-@ A (short season) Northwest League . In 73 games (tied with Garrett Baker and Helder Velazquez for second in the league behind Darin Holcomb) , he hit eight home runs and had 48 RBI . He led the league in runs scored (68) and doubles (33) ; he finished second to Luis Durango in batting average (.338) and hits (97) . He was named the Northwest League co @-@ MVP in 2007 while playing for the Volcanoes ; aided by his contributions , the Volcanoes won the Northwest League championship .

In 2008 , Downs played for the Giants ' Single @-@ A San Jose Giants of the California League . In 109 games , he batted .304 with 74 runs scored , 133 hits , 30 doubles , 17 home runs , and 75 RBI . After the season , he was named to the California League All @-@ Star team . From June 23 through July 18 , he played for the Triple @-@ A Fresno Grizzlies of the Pacific Coast League . In 22 games with Fresno , he batted .244 with 10 runs scored , 21 hits , five doubles , three home runs , and seven RBI .

= = = 2009 = = =

In 2009 , Downs attended spring training with the Giants , but he began the season at Fresno . On June 16 , Downs was called up to the Giants , replacing Emmanuel Burriss as the Giants ' second

baseman . On June 17 , he recorded his first two major league hits against Matt Palmer in a 4 ? 3 loss to the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim . On June 28 , he hit his first home run (against Jeff Suppan) in a 7 ? 0 victory over the Milwaukee Brewers . He was optioned back to Triple @-@ A July 3 after batting .194 , but he was recalled again on July 21 after Juan Uribe (his replacement at second base) struggled . Downs started five games in a row at second on this stint ; after recording two hits in 17 at @-@ bats , he was returned to Fresno where he finished the season . In 109 games with Fresno , Downs batted .300 with 68 runs scored , 127 hits , 33 doubles , 14 home runs , and 74 RBI .

== = 2010 == =

Downs attended spring training with the Giants again in 2010 but began the season in Fresno . On April 17 , he was called up to be a reserve player after Aaron Rowand was injured . At the beginning of May , he became the Giants ' everyday second baseman when Uribe was moved to shortstop to replace the injured Edgar Rentería . Downs batted .264 with five RBI in 15 games as the Giants ' second baseman , but on May 19 , he returned to a utility role as Freddy Sanchez was activated from the disabled list . He was sent to Fresno on May 27 to make room for Waldis Joaquín on the roster . He was called up again in June ; he appeared in three games before he was returned to Fresno . Downs was designated for assignment by the San Francisco Giants on August 23 to make room for Cody Ross . In 29 games with the Giants , he batted .244 with six runs scored , 19 hits , seven doubles , one home run , and seven RBI . In 56 games with Fresno , he batted .254 with 37 runs scored , 50 hits , nine doubles , seven home runs , and 28 RBI .

== Houston Astros ==

== = 2010 == =

Downs was claimed off waivers by the Houston Astros on August 25 and sent to the Triple @-@ A Round Rock Express of the Pacific Coast League . He was called up by the Astros on September 1 but was unavailable for a few days due to a rule which requires players claimed off waivers to spend at least 10 days in the minor leagues . Used sparingly by the Astros , Downs batted .105 with two runs scored , two hits , no home runs , and no RBI in 11 games . In 40 games with San Francisco and Houston in 2010 , he batted .216 with eight runs scored , 21 hits , seven doubles , one home run , and seven RBI . In six games with Round Rock , he batted .105 with two hits , one double , no home runs , and two RBI .

== = 2011 == =

In 2011 , Downs made the Astros out of spring training as a reserve player . He had a game @-@ winning double against Nick Masset on April 7 , giving the Astros their first victory of the year as they defeated the Cincinnati Reds 3 ? 2 . On June 22 , he hit a game @-@ winning , pinch @-@ hit , two @-@ run home run against Neftalí Feliz as the Astros defeated the Texas Rangers 5 ? 3 . On September 19 , he hit a game @-@ winning home run against Masset as the Astros beat the Reds 3 ? 2 . He also made his first major league start in the outfield that day . Three days later , he had a game @-@ winning , pinch @-@ hit , three @-@ run double against Matt Reynolds as the Astros beat the Colorado Rockies 9 ? 6 . In 106 games (199 at bats) , Downs batted .276 with 29 runs scored , 55 hits , 18 doubles , 10 home runs , and 41 RBI . He batted .349 as a pinch hitter , (fifth in the league among pinch hitters) , and he tied for the league lead with three pinch @-@ hit home runs . His 15 pinch @-@ hit RBI led the majors and were second for a single season in Astros ' history to Orlando Merced 's 17 in 2001 .

== = 2012 == =

Downs was again used as a reserve player in 2012 . He received starts occasionally at several positions , most often at first base . His home run against Clayton Richard accounted for all of the scoring on June 27 as the Astros beat the San Diego Padres 1 ? 0 . On July 18 , he had three hits , two home runs , and four RBI against Richard in an 8 ? 4 loss to the Padres . He was optioned to the Oklahoma City RedHawks of the Pacific Coast League on August 9 to make room for the newly acquired Tyler Greene on the roster ; however , he was recalled on September 1 . In 91 games (178 at @-@ bats) with the Astros , Downs batted .202 with 15 runs scored , 36 hits , four doubles , eight home runs , and 16 RBI . In 24 games with Oklahoma City , he batted .267 with 14 runs scored , 24 hits , two doubles , three home runs , and 15 RBI . After the season , Downs was outrighted off the Astros ' roster ; he became a free agent .

= = Miami Marlins organization = =

In January 2013 , the Miami Marlins signed Downs to a minor league contract with an invitation to spring training . He failed to make the team and was sent to minor league camp on March 26 . Downs spent the season with the New Orleans Zephyrs of the Pacific Coast League where , in 82 games , he batted .215 with 27 runs scored , 58 hits , 11 doubles , eight home runs , and 35 RBI before getting released by the Marlins .

= = Personal life = =

Downs is married to Leah . The couple has one child , Matthew Russell Downs , Jr . , born July 18 , 2011 .