

= Tyler Clippard =

Tyler Lee Clippard (born February 14 , 1985) is an American professional baseball pitcher for the Arizona Diamondbacks of Major League Baseball (MLB) . He previously played for New York Yankees , Washington Nationals , Oakland Athletics , and New York Mets .

After playing baseball at J. W. Mitchell High School in New Port Richey , Florida , the Yankees drafted Clippard in the ninth round of the 2003 MLB draft . He debuted with the Yankees as a starting pitcher in 2007 . The Yankees traded him to the Nationals before the 2008 season , and the Nationals converted him into a relief pitcher in 2009 . The Nationals traded Clippard to the Athletics before the 2015 season , who traded him to the Mets during the 2015 season . He signed as a free agent with the Diamondbacks before the 2016 season .

Clippard led the major leagues in holds in 2014 . He was named to the MLB All @-@ Star Game in 2011 and 2014 , and won the MLB Delivery Man of the Month Award in June 2012 .

= = Amateur career = =

Clippard was born in Lexington , Kentucky . His family moved to Florida when he was a toddler . Clippard played baseball in Little League ; in eleven years , he won seven district titles , but was never able to reach the Little League World Series . He learned to pitch when he was eight years old . In 2001 , he was a member of the Palm Harbor team that won the Senior League World Series .

Clippard began his high school career at Palm Harbor University High School in Palm Harbor , Florida . After failing to make the varsity baseball team in his first two seasons , he transferred to J. W. Mitchell High School in New Port Richey , Florida , where he played for the school 's baseball team . As a junior , in 2002 , he won six games . He was named to the All @-@ Conference first team .

In 2003 , his senior season , Clippard had a 1 ? 1 record with an 0 @. @ 81 ERA and 31 strikeouts in 17 1 ? 3 innings pitched . However , he was dismissed from the school 's baseball team after being charged with driving under the influence of alcohol . Clippard transferred to Dunedin High School in Dunedin , Florida , which had a nationally ranked baseball team . Clippard attempted to play for their team , but the move was blocked by the Florida High School Athletic Association , as players are not allowed to transfer during the course of a season , nor are they allowed to transfer to avoid sanctions given for disciplinary reasons . After taking classes at Dunedin for a month , Clippard transferred back to Mitchell in order to graduate from high school with his friends .

Clippard competed for the Central Florida Renegades in Connie Mack Baseball , an amateur 18 @-@ and @-@ under competition organized by the American Amateur Baseball Congress . He earned pitcher of the week honors in the Florida State Elite Baseball League in June 2003 .

Clippard also played golf at Mitchell . As a sophomore , in 2001 , Clippard was named one of the ten best golfers in Pasco County . He registered the best individual score in the Sunshine Athletic Conference tournament that year . He was named to the All @-@ Conference first team as a junior and to the All @-@ County as a senior , and helped lead Mitchell to victory in the Sunshine Athletic Conference tournament during his senior year .

= = Professional career = =

= = = Draft = = =

Without the benefit of a full senior season to show himself off to scouts , Clippard proactively sent scouts a schedule of when he was throwing and attended as many showcases as he could . He trained with Roy Silver , a retired professional baseball player , who worked with Clippard on his mechanics and his maturity . Clippard 's father , Bob , teamed up with Tom Kotchman , father of Florida high school player Casey Kotchman , to form showcases with past teammates of Clippard .

Clippard was drafted in the ninth round of the 2003 Major League Baseball (MLB) draft , with the

274th overall selection , by the New York Yankees . Though he had signed a National Letter of Intent in the fall of 2002 to attend the University of South Florida on a baseball scholarship , allowing him to play college baseball for the South Florida Bulls , he chose to turn professional due to his draft position and the opportunity to play for the Yankees .

= = = New York Yankees = = =

Clippard made his professional debut that year in the Rookie @-@ level Gulf Coast League (GCL) with the GCL Yankees , pitching to a 3 ? 3 win ? loss record with a 2 @.@ 89 ERA . In 43 2 ? 3 innings , he allowed 33 hits and five walks while striking out 56 . Moving up to the Battle Creek Yankees of the Class A Midwest League for the 2004 season , Clippard had a 10 ? 10 record with a 3 @.@ 44 ERA and a strikeout @-@ to @-@ walk ratio of 4 @.@ 53 : 1 in 25 starts .

Clippard was 10 ? 9 with a 3 @.@ 18 ERA for the Tampa Yankees of the Class A @-@ Advanced Florida State League (FSL) in 2005 . He was named to the West team in the FSL All @-@ Star Game . However , he did not appear in the game , as the Charleston RiverDogs of the Class A South Atlantic League needed another pitcher that day . Clippard was named FSL pitcher of the week for the week of July 10 through 17 . For the season , opponents batted .219 against him and he struck out 169 batters in 147 1 ? 3 innings , while walking 34 . He led Yankees farmhands in strikeouts and finished fifth in the affiliated minor leagues , behind Francisco Liriano , Joel Zumaya , Rich Hill and Chuck James . He also led the FSL in strikeouts and was seventh in ERA . However , he did not make the FSL post @-@ season All @-@ Star team and Baseball America did not rank him as one of the league 's top prospects .

Baseball America ranked Clippard as the Yankees ' tenth best prospect heading into the 2006 season . Promoted to the Trenton Thunder of the Class AA Eastern League in 2006 , Clippard again led Yankee farmhands in strikeouts (175) . He allowed just a .200 batting average and had three times as many strikeouts as walks . Clippard was 12 ? 10 with a 3 @.@ 35 ERA for the Trenton Thunder . He threw the first no @-@ hitter in franchise history on August 17 , shutting down the Harrisburg Senators . He was named the Eastern League 's pitcher of the week for his accomplishment . Earlier in the season , Clippard flirted with a perfect game , retiring the first 21 batters in a game against the Binghamton Mets . Clippard also won nine straight games at one point , breaking the club record of eight shared by Tomo Ohka and Carl Pavano . He teamed with Phil Hughes to form one of the best pitching duos in minor league baseball . Clippard again was fifth in the affiliated minors in strikeouts , trailing Yovani Gallardo , Francisco Cructa , Matt Maloney and Franklin Morales . He led the Eastern League in strikeouts and was seventh in ERA . Baseball America ranked him as the tenth @-@ best prospect in the Eastern League .

Clippard began 2007 with the Scranton / Wilkes @-@ Barre Yankees of the Class AAA International League . He was 3 ? 2 with a 2 @.@ 72 ERA in his first eight starts , striking out 41 in 39 2 / 3 innings but allowing 40 hits and 17 walks . Though the Yankees experienced injuries in the starting rotation , they called on Matt DeSalvo and Chase Wright before Clippard . When Darrell Rasner broke his finger in May , Clippard was called up to New York . He became the seventh rookie to start a game for the 2007 New York Yankees , following Hughes , DeSalvo , Rasner , Wright , Kei Igawa and Jeff Karstens .

Making his MLB debut on May 20 , 2007 , in an interleague game against the New York Mets , Clippard recorded his first MLB win . He pitched six innings , giving up one run off the bat of David Wright and three hits . He struck out his first major league batter , José Reyes , on three pitches . He recorded his first career hit in his second at @-@ bat off Mets pitcher Scott Schoeneweis , a double to right center in the sixth inning . Clippard was optioned back to the minor leagues in June . He struggled in his return to the minor leagues for Scranton / Wilkes @-@ Barre , and was demoted to Trenton in July . Though he was a member of the Trenton team as they won the Eastern League championship , Clippard struggled in the playoffs . The Yankees recalled him in September . Overall with , he had a 3 ? 1 record and a 6 @.@ 33 ERA with the Yankees .

= = = Washington Nationals = = =

Clippard was traded on December 4 , 2007 , to the Washington Nationals for relief pitcher Jonathan Albaladejo . The Nationals viewed him as a contender for a spot in the starting rotation . However , he began the season with the Columbus Clippers , Washington 's Class AAA affiliate . He pitched his first game for the Nationals on June 9 , 2008 , after Odalis Pérez was placed on the 15 @-@ day disabled list . He was optioned to the minor leagues after this start , but was given a second start a few days later , as Pérez was not yet ready to return . The Nationals then optioned Clippard to Columbus after his second start , in which Clippard pitched to a 1 ? 1 record and 4 @.@ 35 ERA . He was recalled later in June as Shawn Hill was placed on the disabled list . He spent most of the season with Columbus , going 6 ? 13 with a 4 @.@ 66 ERA . He tied Yorman Bazardo and Charlie Haeger for the most losses in the International League that season .

During spring training in 2009 , the Nationals optioned Clippard to the Syracuse Chiefs , Washington 's new Class AAA affiliate . Despite starting six games with the Yankees in 2007 and two for the Nationals in 2008 , he was converted to a relief pitcher for the 2009 campaign . Nationals ' pitching coach Steve McCatty told Clippard that his future was pitching in relief , because his pitch count tended to get too high in starts , and opposing batters hit Clippard well by the third time the lineup turned over in a game . Clippard at first resisted the transition to the bullpen , but conversations with his father and agent , Casey Close , reassured him to continue pursuing his dream . Clippard appeared in 20 games for Syracuse in 2009 , posting a 4 ? 1 record , 0 @.@ 92 ERA , and 42 strikeouts in 39 innings . Clippard pitched in 14 consecutive scoreless appearances before being promoted to the Nationals on June 21 , 2009 , replacing Kip Wells in the Nationals ' bullpen . Used sparingly in the first weeks after his promotion , he posted a 2 @.@ 69 ERA through 60 1 ? 3 innings , with 67 strikeouts .

Since 2010 , Clippard has pitched exclusively out of the bullpen ; primarily in the eighth inning . That season , Clippard and Drew Storen served as setup pitchers to Matt Capps . After pitching effectively in the first half of the season , Clippard and Capps earned the nickname " Clip and Save " . Clippard finished eighth in the National League in appearances , with 78 . He won eleven games on the season , which led the team .

In the first half of the 2011 season , Clippard had a 1 ? 0 record and 1 @.@ 73 ERA . He struck out 63 batters and allowed only 26 hits in 51 1 ? 3 innings pitched , and allowed only six of 32 inherited runners to score . For his achievements , Clippard was selected to appear in the All @-@ Star Game . He earned the victory for the National League as the game 's winning pitcher , despite not retiring a batter . Adrián Beltré , the only batter Clippard faced , singled , but Hunter Pence threw out José Bautista at home plate , and the NL took the lead in the next inning . Clippard finished the season with a 3 ? 0 record , a 1 @.@ 83 ERA , and 104 strikeouts in 88 1 ? 3 innings pitched across 72 appearances . He led the National League in win probability added .

Before the 2012 season , Clippard and the Nationals agreed to a one @-@ year contract worth \$ 1 @.@ 65 million , avoiding salary arbitration . Clippard became the de facto closer for the Nationals in the first half of the 2012 season . After injuries to Storen and Brad Lidge , Henry Rodríguez became the closer , but Rodríguez lost the job to Clippard due to his struggles . The Nationals kept Clippard as their closer even after Storen returned to the team . He was named the Major League Baseball Delivery Man of the Month for his performance in June 2012 , recording ten saves in ten opportunities , and allowing zero runs in 11 2 ? 3 innings pitched .

Clippard earned \$ 4 million in 2013 . He had a 6 ? 3 record with a 2 @.@ 41 ERA and 73 strikeouts in 71 innings pitched . Clippard and the Nationals agreed on a \$ 5 @.@ 875 million salary for the 2014 season . He appeared in 20 of the Nationals ' first 40 games , and struggled with poor command of his pitches . His command improved as his workload decreased , and he was named to the appear in the 2014 All @-@ Star Game . He ended the season with a 2 @.@ 18 ERA , and led MLB with 40 holds .

== = Oakland Athletics and New York Mets == =

The Nationals traded Clippard to the Oakland Athletics for Yunel Escobar on January 14 , 2015 .

Clippard and the Athletics agreed on an \$ 8 @. @ 3 million salary for the 2015 season . With Athletics ' closer Sean Doolittle beginning the season on the disabled list , Clippard served as the team 's closer . Clippard saved 17 games for the Athletics , pitching to a 2 @. @ 79 ERA in 38 2 ? 3 innings .

On July 27 , 2015 , the Athletics traded Clippard to the New York Mets for pitching prospect Casey Meisner . Clippard returned to a setup role , with Jeurys Familia remaining the Mets ' closer . In 32 1 ? 3 innings with the Mets , Clippard pitched to a 3 @. @ 06 ERA . In the 2015 MLB postseason , Clippard allowed five earned runs in 6 2 ? 3 innings .

= = = Arizona Diamondbacks = = =

After receiving fewer contract offers than he had expected , Clippard signed a two @-@ year , \$ 12 @. @ 25 million contract with the Arizona Diamondbacks on February 8 , 2016 .

= = Scouting report = =

Clippard is listed at 6 feet 4 inches (1 @. @ 93 m) and 170 pounds (77 kg) . He has an unorthodox pitching delivery , rocking forward while sticking his gloved hand high in the air , which creates an unusual arm angle while pitching , making it difficult for hitters to pick up the ball in their line of vision . Clippard 's father taught him to pitch this way when Clippard was eight years old by having him throw his baseball glove . McCatty nicknamed Clippard 's delivery " The Funk " .

Clippard primarily throws a fastball and a changeup . His hard , straight four @-@ seam fastball averages about 92 ? 93 miles per hour (148 ? 150 km / h) , topping out at 96 miles per hour (154 km / h) , and sets up a deceptive changeup in the high 70s to low 80s . Periodically , he throws a cutter early in the count to right @-@ handed hitters and a curveball in the mid 70s . Nardi Contreras , who worked with Clippard as the Yankees ' minor league pitching coordinator , indicated that Clippard 's greatest success comes from his curveball and changeup .

Clippard has compiled a strikeout rate of greater than 10 per 9 innings over his career . According to Clippard , " I don 't try to strike out everyone that I face . Strikeouts just kind of happen with the way I pitch . "

= = Personal life = =

Clippard was raised by his parents , Bob and Debbie Clippard . He has a brother named Colin , who played Little League baseball with Tyler . He is from Tampa , Florida .