

= Edwar Ramírez =

Edwar Emilio Ramírez ( born March 28 , 1981 ) is a former Dominican professional baseball pitcher . Ramírez appeared in Major League Baseball ( MLB ) as a relief pitcher for the New York Yankees ( 2007 ? 2009 ) and Oakland Athletics ( 2010 ) . After finding himself out of baseball in 2004 , Ramírez revitalized his career by developing an effective changeup .

Originally a member of the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim organization , Ramírez pitched for the Angels only in minor league baseball . The Angels released Ramírez before the 2004 season . After spending the next year mastering a changeup , he spent parts of the following two seasons in independent league baseball . Ramírez signed with the Yankees in 2006 , and made his MLB debut the next season . Ramírez enjoyed success and popularity among the fan base during the 2007 and 2008 seasons . He struggled in 2009 , and pitched for the Athletics early in the 2010 season before returning to minor league baseball in the Athletics organization . He pitched in the Mexican League in 2011 .

= = Professional career = =

= = = Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim : 2001 ? 2005 = = =

The Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim signed Ramírez as an international free agent in February 2001 . He made his professional debut in minor league baseball with the Arizona Angels of the Rookie @-@ level Arizona League in the 2002 season . He pitched in 13 games for Arizona , and also pitched in two games for the Provo Angels of the Rookie @-@ level Pioneer League . The Angels promoted Ramírez to Class A in the 2003 season . He pitched for the Cedar Rapids Kernels in the Class A Midwest League . He reached the Rancho Cucamonga Quakes of the Class A @-@ Advanced California League . When the Angels invited players of the Quakes to Angel Stadium in Anaheim , Ramírez refused to leave the bleachers and step on the field unless he was invited to play for the Angels .

Ramírez had difficulty with his vision ; he could not see which pitch the catcher was calling for . He was fitted for prescription goggles , which he continued to wear throughout his career . Angels ' MLB players of the time did not remember working with Ramírez ; catcher José Molina suggested that Ramírez must not have been in the Angels ' long @-@ term plans , as they had a number of right @-@ handed power pitching relief pitchers in the organization .

The Angels released Ramírez in March 2004 , without being promoted beyond the Class A level . Disappointed , Ramírez considered retiring from baseball . With the advice of his father , Ramírez decided that as Major League Baseball pitchers often relied on a slider or curveball as a complimentary pitch to their fastball , he would develop a different pitch . Ramírez spent his time that year learning a changeup on baseball fields in Miami , Florida , and did not pitch professionally during the 2004 season . Working with Maximo Soto , a fellow minor league pitcher released by the Angels , Ramírez developed his changeup to provide him with a new weapon in his pitching arsenal .

= = = Independent Leagues : 2005 ? 2006 = = =

Ramírez played independent league baseball for the next two seasons . After receiving an invitation to try out for the Pensacola Pelicans of the American Association of Independent Professional Baseball , the Pelicans signed Ramirez for the 2005 season . In 43 games with Pensacola , Ramírez pitched to a 1 @.@ 45 earned run average ( ERA ) , struck out 93 batters and walked only 15 . He finished the season with a record of 2 ? 2 with 11 saves over 62 innings pitched . In September 2005 , the Angels purchased Ramírez from the Pelicans . He pitched in one game for their Class AAA affiliate , the Salt Lake City Stingers of the Pacific Coast League ( PCL ) . The Angels released Ramírez in spring training in 2006 . Ramírez was not provided with a reason for his release .

Ramirez signed with the Edinburg Coyotes of the independent United League Baseball for the 2006 season . He served as the Coyotes ' closer . With Edinburg , he threw 25 1 ? 3 innings of relief over 25 games , finishing with a 1 ? 1 record and 16 saves . He also had 46 strikeouts , 10 walks and a 1 @. @ 07 ERA . He appeared in the United League All @- @ Star Game .

= = = New York Yankees : 2007 ? 2009 = = =

Searching for a pitcher recently released by an MLB organization to fill a relief pitching role in Class A , Yankees professional scouting director Billy Eppler purchased Ramírez from Edinburg for an unreported amount of cash , estimated to be between \$ 1 @, @ 500 to \$ 3 @, @ 000 . It was the first time a United League player was purchased by an MLB organization . Ramírez signed with the Yankees on July 9 , 2006 . Later that July , the Yankees purchased Carlos Mendoza from the Pelicans . Ramírez pitched for their Class A @- @ Advanced affiliate , the Tampa Yankees of the Florida State League , for the remainder of the 2006 season . He pitched 32 2 ? 3 innings , compiled a win ? loss record of 4 ? 1 , an earned run average ( ERA ) of 1 @. @ 17 , and 47 strikeouts .

He began the 2007 season with the Yankees ' Class AA affiliate , the Trenton Thunder of the Eastern League . In nine relief appearances , he had a record of 3 ? 0 and one save , allowing only one run in 16 2 ? 3 innings , for an ERA of 0 @. @ 54 . He compiled 33 strikeouts and eight walks . He was promoted to the Scranton / Wilkes @- @ Barre Yankees of the Class AAA International League , where he pitched 26 2 ? 3 innings of relief in 15 games , allowing only two runs over that span , an 0 @. @ 67 ERA . He recorded 47 strikeouts and walked nine batters in that time .

Ramírez was called up to the Yankees , his first promotion to MLB , on July 1 , 2007 . In his MLB debut , on July 3 , 2007 against the Minnesota Twins , Ramírez pitched the ninth inning for the Yankees and struck out all three batters he faced , including reigning American League Most Valuable Player Justin Morneau , in an 8 ? 0 win for the Yankees . The last Yankee to strike out the side in his MLB debut was Stan Bahnsen during the 1966 season . The only other rookies to strike out the side in their debut inning are Tyler Robertson , Jordan De Jong , Todd Wellemeyer , Jeremy Fikac , Braden Looper , Angelo LiPetri , and Paul Giel .

Ramírez remained with the club for nearly three weeks . However , Yankees ' manager Joe Torre used Ramírez sparingly , despite the belief in the Yankees ' front office that Ramírez could be an effective strikeout reliever . At the time of his debut , the Yankees bullpen ranked 25th in MLB in strikeouts . Torre had a reputation as preferring veteran relief pitchers , but the organization needed to wait until the trading deadline to obtain a veteran pitcher from another club . Ramírez was a member of the Yankees for a July series against the Angels at Angel Stadium , finally stepping foot onto the field as an active Yankees player . On July 6 , against the Angels , he gave up one run on two hits in 1 1 ? 3 innings ; as the pitcher of record , he was awarded his first career win in the 14 ? 9 Yankees victory . Molina , now serving as the Yankees ' backup catcher , admitted that he didn 't remember Ramírez from their shared years in the Angels ' organization .

In the final relief appearance of Ramírez 's first stint with the major league club , he faced the Tampa Bay Devil Rays on July 20 . Without an appearance since July 6 in Anaheim , he was pitching on two weeks of rest . Without control of his pitches , Ramírez walked four batters and allowed a grand slam to Dioner Navarro without recording an out . Only two of his 19 pitches were called strikes . After the game , Ramírez , shaken by his performance , cut short his comments to reporters , and was seen crying at his locker . The Yankees optioned Ramírez back to Scranton / Wilkes @- @ Barre the following day . In his first appearance with Scranton / Wilkes Barre following his demotion , Ramírez continued pitching effectively , striking out two in 1 1 ? 3 hitless innings , helping Joba Chamberlain hold onto his first career Class AAA victory .

Between Class AA Trenton and Class AAA Scranton / Wilkes @- @ Barre , Ramírez pitched 56 2 ? 3 innings , in which he allowed 26 hits and 22 walks while striking out 102 . He held opponents to a .135 batting average and allowed only five earned runs , good for a 0 @. @ 79 ERA . For his performance , Ramírez was named the Minor League Baseball Reliever of the Year for the 2007 season .

After the conclusion of the minor league season , Ramírez was recalled by the Yankees on August

15 . He struck out three Baltimore Orioles in 2 1 ? 3 scoreless innings in his return . The success of Ramírez and Joba Chamberlain in the bullpen convinced Yankees ' general manager that he had enough relief pitching depth to trade Scott Proctor for Wilson Betemit . On August 19 , 2007 , Ramírez earned his first save in MLB , in a game against the Detroit Tigers , with two hitless innings , striking out the side in the eighth inning , and remaining in the game to pitch the bottom of the ninth after Betemit added insurance runs in the top of the ninth .

Yankees closer Mariano Rivera took Ramírez and fellow reliever José Veras under his wing , mentoring the two in the Yankee bullpen during games . Rivera instructed Ramírez to use his fastball more and save his changeup for key situations . Ramírez started the 2008 season in Scranton / Wilkes @-@ Barre . He was recalled from Class AAA on April 18 , 2008 , but was optioned back a day later . He was called up again on April 29 , 2008 . He did not give up a run at any level of baseball through May 31 , a total of thirteen consecutive appearances . In a July 2008 game against the Orioles , Ramírez intentionally threw a pitch in the area of Kevin Millar 's head during the top of the seventh inning ; in response , Daniel Cabrera threw a fastball near Alex Rodriguez 's head in the eighth inning . Ramírez was suspended three games , while Cabrera was suspended six games . On the season , his 10 @.@ 25 strikeouts per inning ratio was seventh @-@ best among American League relievers .

Off of the strength of his 2008 season , the Dominican Republic national baseball team offered Ramírez the opportunity to pitch for his country in the 2009 World Baseball Classic . However , Yankees ' manager Joe Girardi indicated that Ramírez was in competition for a middle @-@ relief job , and Ramírez focused on his chances of making the Yankees ' roster , declining the invitation and remaining in camp with the Yankees . In February , Ramírez suffered shoulder bursitis , which was initially considered mild . Ramírez underwent an MRI on his right shoulder during spring training . He made the Yankees ' Opening Day roster , but disappointed with poor results . Ramírez pitched to a 5 @.@ 19 ERA in 15 games , allowing 15 walks in 17 1 ? 3 innings . On May 19 , 2009 , Ramírez was optioned to Scranton / Wilkes @-@ Barre to make room on the roster for pitcher Brian Bruney , who was activated off of the disabled list .

Ramírez pitched for Scranton / Wilkes @-@ Barre for the remainder of the International League season , finishing with a Class AAA record of 1 ? 5 with a 3 @.@ 19 ERA in 29 games . Ramírez was promoted to the Yankees when MLB rosters expanded on September 1 . He remained with the Yankees for September ; along with fellow call @-@ ups Jonathan Albaladejo , David Robertson , Mike Dunn and Mark Melancon , Ramírez was expected to absorb some of the workload in the bullpen , helping to spare the overworked Alfredo Aceves , Phil Hughes , Phil Coke , and Dámaso Marte . Towards the end of the season , he was only used on blowout games as a result of his ineffectiveness . Ramírez finished the season with a 5 @.@ 73 ERA , allowing fourteen earned runs in 22 innings ; though he did strike out exactly one batter per inning , he also issued too many walks as he struggled with consistency . Though Ramírez did not appear in the 2009 postseason with the Yankees , the organization did present him with a 2009 World Series ring .

= = = Oakland Athletics and return to the minor leagues : 2010 ? 2011 = = =

During spring training in 2010 , the Yankees signed pitcher Chan Ho Park to a one @-@ year contract . To make room for Park on their roster , Ramírez was designated for assignment by the Yankees on February 28 , 2010 . The Texas Rangers acquired Ramírez from the Yankees on March 9 , 2010 in exchange for cash considerations . After the Oakland Athletics suffered injuries during spring training to relief pitchers Andrew Bailey , Michael Wuertz , and Craig Breslow , the Athletics traded infielder Gregorio Petit to the Rangers in exchange for Ramírez on March 24 .

Ramírez began the 2010 season with the Athletics on their Opening Day roster . In his first six appearances , Ramírez recorded 4 @.@ 50 ERA . He was optioned to the Class AAA Sacramento River Cats of the PCL on April 27 . The Athletics recalled Ramírez on May 7 and he made his seventh appearance on May 12 against Texas , allowing one run on two hits and two walks in one inning . After the game , he was designated for assignment , with a 1 ? 0 record and a 4 @.@ 91 ERA in seven relief appearances . He was outrighted to the River Cats on May 21 . He spent the

rest of the season with Sacramento , and did not return to MLB in September .

Ramírez pitched for the Leones de Yucatán of the Class AAA Mexican League in 2011 , where he joined other MLB veterans including Jorge Sosa and D 'Angelo Jiménez . The Leones activated him on their roster on May 21 , 2011 , and he made his first appearance for Yucatán the next day . The Leones released Ramírez in June .

= = Scouting report = =

At 6 feet 3 inches ( 1 @. @ 91 m ) and 150 pounds ( 68 kg ) , Torre once compared Ramírez 's appearance to a thermometer . Ramírez primarily throws a fastball with slight lateral movement that averages 91 miles per hour ( 146 km / h ) . He also has two offspeed pitches : a standard changeup , and a low 80s circle changeup , his primary strikeout pitch , that has similar movement to a palmball , and is particularly effective against left @- @ handed batters . The changeup , Bruney said , gave the fastball the appearance of being as fast as 98 miles per hour ( 158 km / h ) . He developed a low 80s slider into his repertoire . His delivery was unusual , making it difficult to pick up the ball out of his hand .

= = Personal life = =

Ramírez is from the Dominican Republic . He was born in El Cercado , and raised in Brecon . He is the only MLB player from El Cercado . Ramírez 's father resides in the Dominican Republic .