

= David Freese =

David Richard Freese ( born April 28 , 1983 ) is an American professional baseball third baseman for the Pittsburgh Pirates of Major League Baseball ( MLB ) . He began his MLB career with the St. Louis Cardinals , where he was a key player during the 2011 postseason , batting .545 with 12 hits in the 2011 National League Championship Series ( NLCS ) . He also set an MLB postseason record of 21 runs batted in ( RBI ) , earning the NLCS MVP Award and World Series MVP Award . In addition , Freese won the Babe Ruth Award , naming him the MVP of the 2011 MLB postseason .

A star high school player , Freese declined a college baseball scholarship from the University of Missouri . Needing a break from baseball , he sat out his freshman year of college before feeling a renewed urge to play the game . He transferred to St. Louis Community College ? Meramec , a junior college , where he played for one season before transferring to the University of South Alabama . The San Diego Padres selected Freese in the ninth round of the 2006 MLB draft .

The Cardinals acquired Freese before the 2008 season . He made his MLB debut on Opening Day 2009 due to an injury to starting third baseman Troy Glaus . Despite suffering his own injuries in the minor leagues and in his first two MLB seasons , Freese batted .297 with 10 home runs and 55 RBI during the Cardinals ' 2011 World Series championship season . The next season , he batted .293 with 20 home runs and was selected to his first MLB All @-@ Star Game . Freese authored a 20 @-@ game hitting streak in 2013 , but back injuries limited his effectiveness , and the Cardinals traded him to the Angels following the season . He played for the Angels for two seasons before signing with the Pirates in March 2016 .

= = Early life = =

Born in Corpus Christi , Texas , Freese was raised in the Greater St. Louis area , in Wildwood , Missouri . He grew up a fan of the St. Louis Cardinals . He graduated in 2001 from Lafayette High School in Wildwood . Freese recorded a Lafayette @-@ record .533 batting average and 23 home runs during his senior season . He was considered to be the best shortstop in the state .

As a senior in high school , Freese was offered a scholarship to play college baseball for the University of Missouri 's baseball team . Feeling burned out , Freese decided to quit the sport , but he studied computer science at Missouri and was a member of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity .

During the summer after his freshman year , Freese worked for the Rockwood School District maintenance department . When he visited Lafayette High School towards the end of the summer , he realized how much he missed baseball . Freese asked Tony Dattoli , the coach at St. Louis Community College ? Meramec , for a roster spot . In one season at St. Louis Community College , Freese hit .396 with 41 runs batted in ( RBI ) and 10 home runs and was named to the National Junior College Athletic Association All @-@ America second team .

Dattoli recommended Freese to Steve Kittrell , the head coach of the Jaguars baseball team at the University of South Alabama . At South Alabama , opposing teams respected his hitting ability ; scouts told their pitchers : " Don 't let Freese beat us . " As a junior in 2005 , Freese hit .373 , with a .443 on @-@ base percentage ( OBP ) , .525 slugging percentage ( SLG ) , and 52 runs scored in 56 games . He was seventh in the Sun Belt Conference ( SBC ) in average and led the school one year after Adam Lind had done so . Freese was even better in 2006 , hitting .414 with a .503 OBP and .661 SLG with 73 runs and 73 RBI in 60 games . He won the SBC batting title and led the conference in RBI . He tied for ninth in Division I in RBI , was 12th in average and just missed the top 10 in runs scored . He made the All @-@ Conference team at third base and was named SBC Player of the Year . He was named an American Baseball Coaches Association All @-@ American as the top third baseman in NCAA Division I , ahead of Evan Longoria and Pedro Alvarez , among others . Kittrell considers Freese to be the best player he coached at South Alabama , where he also coached Lind , Luis Gonzalez and Juan Pierre .

= = Professional career = =

== Minor leagues : 2006 ? 2008 ==

Prior to the 2006 Major League Baseball Draft , the Boston Red Sox attempted to sign Freese for \$ 90 @, @ 000 . However , South Alabama made the College World Series regional playoffs , which extended their season past the pre @-@ draft signing deadline .

Freese was drafted by the San Diego Padres in the ninth round ( 273rd overall ) of the draft . Freese played for the Eugene Emeralds of the Class @-@ A Short Season Northwest League , Fort Wayne Wizards of the Class @-@ A Midwest League and Lake Elsinore Storm of the Class @-@ A Advanced California League in the San Diego farm system in 2006 and 2007 . He batted .379 with a .465 OBP , .776 SLG , 19 runs and 26 RBI in 18 games for the Emeralds and .299 with a .374 OBP , .510 SLG and 44 RBI in 53 games for the Wizards in 2006 . Freese batted .302 with a .400 OBP and .489 SLG for Lake Elsinore in 128 games during the 2007 season . He scored 104 runs and drove in 96 . He ranked seventh in the California League in OBP , seventh in RBI and tied with Tony Granadillo for third in runs . He made the California League All @-@ Star team . However , the Padres had third basemen Chase Headley and Kevin Kousser as well , potentially blocking Freese 's path to the majors . As a result , Freese began to practice as a catcher .

Before the 2008 season , Freese was traded by the Padres to the Cardinals for Jim Edmonds . He spent the season with the Memphis Redbirds of the Triple @-@ A Pacific Coast League ( PCL ) , where he batted .306 with a .361 OBP and .550 SLG , hit 26 home runs and recorded 91 RBI . He led PCL third basemen in fielding percentage ( .967 ) and double plays ( 26 ) .

== St. Louis Cardinals ==

=== Early MLB career : 2009 ? 2010 ===

Freese emerged as a potential starter when an injury seemed likely to put Cardinals starting third baseman Troy Glaus on the disabled list at the beginning of the 2009 season . Freese made his MLB debut on Opening Day of the 2009 season , coming off the bench and hitting a go @-@ ahead sacrifice fly in the Cardinals ' home opener against the Pittsburgh Pirates . Freese was expected to be the team 's starting third baseman , but was quickly passed over by Brian Barden and Joe Thurston . He was optioned to Triple @-@ A Memphis on April 20 , 2009 to make room for newly acquired reliever Blaine Boyer . He later had surgery to repair a left ankle injury that hampered him during spring training . He missed two months of the season . He was activated and assigned to the Springfield Cardinals of the Double @-@ A Texas League in late July , before he was assigned to Memphis . He led the Memphis Redbirds to a PCL division championship . He was recalled in the September call @-@ up on September 23 , 2009 . Freese played only 17 games for the Cardinals in 2009 , in addition to 56 games for Triple @-@ A Memphis .

Freese began the 2010 season as the Cardinals ' starting third baseman . However , he suffered a right ankle injury in June . This injury required him to have two ankle surgeries and ended his season after 70 games .

=== Breakout season : 2011 ===

Freese was projected to start the 2011 season , and he was named the starter on Opening Day , despite suffering minor ailments during spring training . He started off the year batting over .320 , but he missed 51 games after being hit by a pitch that fractured his left hand . After returning to the starting lineup , he finished the season with a .297 batting average , 10 home runs , and 55 RBI . He recorded hits in eight of the final nine regular @-@ season games . Freese credited his improvement in power hitting to hitting coach Mark McGwire , who helped him refine his stroke .

=== 2011 postseason ===

In his first playoff series , he drove in 4 runs against Philadelphia in Game 4 to force a fifth game . In the National League Championship Series ( NLCS ) against Milwaukee , Freese had a .545 batting average , hit 3 home runs , drove in 9 runs , and scored 7 runs . He was named the NLCS Most Valuable Player . Through Game 3 of the World Series against Texas , Freese had a 13 @-@ game postseason hitting streak , a Cardinals record and just two short of matching the all @-@ time National League record . The hitting streak was snapped in Game 4 .

In Game 6 of the 2011 World Series , with the Texas Rangers leading the game 7 ? 5 , and leading the series by 3 games to 2 , Freese came to bat in the bottom of the ninth with two out and two men on base . With a count of one ball and two strikes , Freese hit a two @-@ run triple off Neftalí Feliz just out of the reach of Nelson Cruz to tie the game and send it to extra innings . In the 11th inning , again with two strikes , Freese hit a game @-@ winning lead @-@ off , walk @-@ off , solo home @-@ run to deep center field ( 420 feet ) , to send the World Series to its first Game 7 since 2002 . Freese joined Jim Edmonds , the man he was traded for , as the only players in Cardinals history to hit an extra @-@ inning walk @-@ off home run in the postseason . He joined Aaron Boone ( 2003 ) , David Ortiz ( 2004 ) and Hall of Famers Carlton Fisk ( 1975 ) and Kirby Puckett ( 1991 ) as the only players to hit an extra @-@ inning walk @-@ off home run when their team was facing postseason elimination .

In Game 7 of the World Series , Freese hit a two @-@ run double in the bottom of the first inning , bringing his 2011 postseason RBI total to 21 , an MLB record . The Cardinals went on to win the game and the series , making Freese a World Series champion for the first time . For his efforts , Freese was named the World Series MVP . He became the sixth player to win the LCS and World Series MVP awards in the same year . Freese also won the Babe Ruth Award as the postseason MVP .

== == 2012 season == ==

Freese won the All @-@ Star Final Vote in 2012 , joining the All @-@ Star roster with teammates Lance Lynn , Carlos Beltrán , Rafael Furcal , and Yadier Molina for the National League in the 2012 MLB All @-@ Star Game . Freese had a .294 batting average , along with 13 home runs and 50 RBI in the first half of the season . After being injury @-@ plagued in previous years , Freese played in a career @-@ high 144 games in 2012 , finishing the season with 79 RBIs , 20 home runs and a .293 batting average . In the 2012 NLCS against the San Francisco Giants , Freese hit a two @-@ run home run off Madison Bumgarner in Game 1 . Through this point in his postseason career , Freese had played 25 games , batting .386 with 11 doubles , six home runs , 25 RBIs and a .739 slugging percentage in 100 plate appearances . Only Carlos Beltrán ( .824 ) and Babe Ruth ( .744 ) had higher slugging percentages among players with 100 or more plate appearances in the postseason . However , he slumped after that game , batting just .192 for the series as the Giants won in seven games and advanced to the 2012 World Series .

== == 2013 season == ==

On February 8 2013 , Freese and the Cardinals reached agreement on a one @-@ year contract , avoiding arbitration . This was the first season he was arbitration @-@ eligible and when filing he had requested a 2013 salary of \$ 3 @. @ 75 million . The Cardinals counter @-@ offered \$ 2 @. @ 4 million . After suffering a back injury in spring training and starting the 2013 season on the disabled list , Freese struggled at the plate for much of the first six weeks of the season , having only four RBIs by mid @-@ May . However , on 17 May , Freese began a twenty @-@ game hitting streak , the longest of any MLB player to that point in the 2013 season . The streak ended on June 12 .

On August 16 , the Cardinals promoted Kolten Wong to play second base , intending for Matt Carpenter to play third base , reducing Freese 's playing time . In the postseason , he collected just 10 hits in 56 at @-@ bats as the Cardinals fell to the Boston Red Sox in the 2013 World Series .

= = = Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim = = =

= = = = 2014 season = = = =

After the 2013 season , the Cardinals traded Freese and Fernando Salas to the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim for Peter Bourjos and Randal Grichuk . Again eligible for salary arbitration for the 2014 season , Freese filed for a \$ 6 million salary while the Angels countered with \$ 4 @. @ 1 million ; they settled on a \$ 5 @. @ 05 million salary . Freese had a slow start , ending May with a .203 batting average , and improved from June through August , batting .292 in those months . He hit a home run against the Kansas City Royals in the first game of the 2014 American League Division Series for his 24th postseason extra @-@ base hit and 30th RBI .

= = = = 2015 season = = = =

In his last year of arbitration before becoming eligible for free agency , Freese requested a \$ 7 @. @ 6 million salary for the 2015 season , while the Angels filed for \$ 5 @. @ 25 million . The two sides avoided arbitration by agreeing on a \$ 6 @. @ 425 million salary . Freese entered the 2015 season as the Angels everyday third baseman , and hit .240 with 11 homers and 43 RBI in 90 games . He broke his right index finger when it was hit by a pitch on July 22 , and went on the disabled list .

= = = Pittsburgh Pirates = = =

Freese entered free agency after the 2015 season . Rather than re @-@ sign Freese , the Angels chose to trade for Yunel Escobar . Unsigned at the beginning of spring training in 2016 , Freese signed a one @-@ year contract with the Pittsburgh Pirates worth \$ 3 million on March 11 . Neal Huntington , the Pirates ' general manager , indicated that Freese would play third base while Jung @-@ ho Kang rehabilitated from an injury , and would join John Jaso in a platoon at first base after Kang 's return .

= = Personal life = =

Freese 's father , Guy , is a civil engineer . His mother , Lynn , is a retired teacher . Freese also has a sister , Pam . According to his mother , Freese ? a professed lifelong Cardinals fan ? had an original Ozzie Smith glove , and while pitching in his younger years always used number 45 in honor of another Cardinals legend , pitcher Bob Gibson . Freese is a Christian . He is of German descent , the Freese family originally hailing from Westerkappeln , Westphalia .

In December 2009 , Freese was arrested for driving under the influence in Maryland Heights , Missouri , a suburb of St. Louis . Breath tests indicated a .232 blood alcohol content ; the state 's legal limit is .08 . Freese had also been arrested in November 2002 in Maryland Heights for driving while intoxicated . The 2009 arrest was a violation of Freese 's probation , due to a September 2007 arrest for resisting arrest ( amongst other charges ) in Lake Elsinore , California .

Freese crashed his Range Rover SUV into a tree in Wildwood , Missouri , a suburb of St. Louis , on November 22 , 2012 . Local investigators stated that the crash was a result of Freese 's swerving to avoid hitting a wild deer . Alcohol was not a factor in the crash .

In June 2013 , Freese signed a three @-@ year deal to endorse and serve as spokesman for Imo 's Pizza , a Midwestern pizza chain headquartered in the St. Louis area . No financial terms of the deal were announced other than as part of the contract Imo 's would also donate \$ 10 @, @ 000 to a St. Louis area charity in Freese 's name .

During the offseason , he lives in St. Louis .