

= Barry Zito =

Barry William Zito ( born May 13 , 1978 ) is an American former professional baseball pitcher . He played 15 seasons in Major League Baseball ( MLB ) for the Oakland Athletics and San Francisco Giants . His pitching repertoire consisted of a curveball ( his strikeout pitch ) , a four @-@ seam fastball , a two @-@ seam fastball , a circle changeup , and a cutter ? slider .

Zito attended the University of California , Santa Barbara , Los Angeles Pierce College , and the University of Southern California . Drafted three times while in college , Zito signed with the Athletics when they chose him in the first round of the 1999 MLB draft . A year later , he was in the major leagues , finishing fifth in American League ( AL ) Rookie of the Year Award . He struggled to begin the 2001 season but improved greatly down the stretch , finishing the year with an 11 ? 1 win ? loss record over his final two months . He won 23 games ( while only losing five ) in 2002 and won the Cy Young Award . His record was only 14 ? 12 in 2003 , but he still made the All @-@ Star team for the second year in a row . In 2004 , he had his worst season at the time , going 11 ? 11 with a career @-@ high 4 @-@ 48 earned run average . He became Oakland 's Opening Day starter in 2005 and finished fifth in the AL with 171 strikeouts . In 2006 , he made the All @-@ Star team and posted a 15 ? 1 record when receiving two or more runs of support .

Following his seventh season with the Athletics , Zito signed a seven @-@ year deal with the Giants in December 2006 . At the time , it was the largest contract ever given to a pitcher . He posted double @-@ digit wins in his first three seasons , and in 2010 he helped San Francisco win their first championship since 1954 . However , he struggled the last month of the season and he was left off the postseason roster . After sitting out much of the 2011 season with a foot and ankle injury , he came back in 2012 and flourished , finishing with a 15 ? 8 record , his best season in a Giants uniform . The same October , Zito helped lead the Giants to their second World Series title in San Francisco history by going 2 ? 0 with a 1 @-@ 69 ERA in three postseason starts . In his first career World Series start , he outdueled Tigers ' ace Justin Verlander in Game 1 , setting the stage for San Francisco 's sweep to their seventh World Series title in franchise history . Zito struggled in 2013 but received a standing ovation from the fans in his final appearance as a Giant . Following the year , he became a free agent . Zito , a philanthropist , founded Strikeouts For Troops , a national non @-@ profit that provides comforts of home and lifts the spirits and morale of injured troops as well as offering support to military families .

= = Early life = =

Zito was born May 13 , 1978 , in Las Vegas , Nevada . His family moved to San Diego , California , to help him concentrate on his baseball career . His father even stopped working to coach him . He transferred from El Cajon 's Grossmont High School to University of San Diego High School , a Roman Catholic school .

Zito then attended UC Santa Barbara where he earned Freshman All @-@ America Honors with 125 strikeouts in 85 ? innings . In his sophomore season , Zito transferred to Los Angeles Pierce College so that he could be eligible for the Major League Baseball draft . At Pierce , he posted a 2 @-@ 62 earned run average ( ERA ) , went 9 ? 2 with 135 strikeouts in 103 innings , and was named to the all @-@ state and all @-@ conference teams . He then transferred to the University of Southern California ( USC ) , where he was a first @-@ team All @-@ America selected by USA Today Baseball Weekly , Collegiate Baseball , and Baseball America . With a 12 ? 3 record , a 3 @-@ 28 ERA , and 154 strikeouts in 113 ? innings , Zito was named Pac @-@ 10 Pitcher of the Year .

Zito also played in the Cape Cod Baseball League , a summer wooden bat league which showcases the nation 's top amateur prospects . He led the Wareham Gatemen to the league championship in 1997 , and a runner @-@ up finish in 1998 .

= = Professional career = =

== Major League Baseball Draft ==

Zito was taken by the Seattle Mariners in the 59th round ( 1,586th overall ) of the 1996 Major League Baseball ( MLB ) draft , and in the third round ( 83rd overall ) by the Texas Rangers in 1998 , but did not sign with either team . In the 1999 draft , he was selected by the Oakland Athletics with the ninth pick of the first round , and signed for a \$ 1 @. @ 59 million bonus .

== Minor leagues ==

In 1999 , Zito began his professional career with the Visalia Oaks , Oakland 's A team . He went 3 ? 0 with a 2 @. @ 45 ERA in eight starts . He struck out 62 in 40 ? innings . Zito was promoted to the Midland RockHounds , and went 2 ? 1 with a 4 @. @ 91 ERA to finish the AA schedule . He then got one start for the AAA Vancouver Canadians , allowing a lone run with six strikeouts in six innings .

Zito began the 2000 season in AAA with the Sacramento River Cats ( the Canadians franchise had moved to Sacramento ) . He pitched 101 ? innings in 18 starts , going 8 ? 5 with a 3 @. @ 19 ERA , 91 strikeouts , and 41 walks .

== Major leagues ==

=== Oakland Athletics ( 2000 ? 06 ) ===

===== 2000 =====

Zito made his major league debut on July 22 , 2000 , against the Anaheim Angels wearing # 53 . He allowed one run in five innings , and got the win . In his next start , Zito went seven innings while giving up three runs to the Boston Red Sox . Zito continued to have great success early in his rookie season . In his third career start , he went seven innings and gave up one run against the Toronto Blue Jays . On September 10 , Zito pitched his first complete game shutout against the Tampa Bay Devil Rays . He threw 110 pitches , struck out eight , and allowed five hits . During the month of September , he went 5 ? 1 with a 1 @. @ 73 ERA . Zito finished with a 7 ? 4 record and a 2 @. @ 72 earned run average in 14 starts . Despite his late start to the season , Zito still finished fifth in American League ( AL ) Rookie of the Year Award voting .

Zito made his postseason debut in Game 4 of the AL Division Series ( ALDS ) against the New York Yankees . He went 5 @. @ 2 innings , struck out 5 , walked 2 , and allowed an earned run . Zito earned the win , outpitching Roger Clemens . However , the Yankees would win the series , 3 ? 2 , and would go on to win their third straight World Series .

===== 2001 =====

In 2001 , Zito Switched his Uniform Number to 75 ( which he would wear throughout the rest of his career ) finished third in the American League ( AL ) in strikeouts per nine innings ( 8 @. @ 61 ) , fourth in strikeouts ( 205 ) , sixth in wins ( 17 ) , eighth in ERA ( 3 @. @ 49 ) , and tenth in winning percentage ( .680 ) . Zito became the sixth lefty aged 23 or younger since 1902 to strike out at least 200 batters in a season . After a great rookie season , Zito struggled through the early part of the 2001 season , posting a 6 ? 7 record with a 5 @. @ 01 ERA in his first 22 starts . However , he rebounded nicely and by August , he was putting up good pitching numbers . Zito was named Pitcher of the Month in August , going 5 ? 1 with a 1 @. @ 02 ERA . Zito won Pitcher of the Month again in September , going 6 ? 0 with a 1 @. @ 89 ERA . During those last two months of the season , Zito went a combined 11 ? 1 with a 1 @. @ 32 ERA , best in baseball .

The Athletics made the postseason and again played the Yankees in the ALDS . Zito pitched in

Game 3 against Mike Mussina . He went eight innings , striking out six , walking one , and allowing an earned run . But Zito took the loss as the Yankees won the game , 1 ? 0 . The Yankees would end up taking the series , 3 ? 2 .

===== 2002 =====

In 2002 , Zito became one of the best pitchers in baseball . On June 22 , Zito won his 10th game of the season . It was the earliest that an A 's pitcher had reached the 10 @-@ win mark since Bob Welch got there on June 15 , 1990 . Zito was named to the All @-@ Star team for the first time in his career . On July 18 , he went 7 @.@ 1 innings while giving up no runs against the Angels . That win gave Zito a team @-@ record 16th straight win at home . Zito again faced the Angels in his next start and produced similar results . He went 6 @.@ 1 innings and gave up just one run . That win gave Zito the most wins by an AL pitcher ( 14 ) . Zito would become the AL 's first 15 @-@ game winner when he beat the Rangers . On August 23 , Zito recorded his 18th win of the season , giving him one more than his previous career high of 17 , in a game against the Detroit Tigers .

On August 28 , Zito earned his 19th win of the season against the Kansas City Royals . However , he lost his bid for a perfect game in the sixth inning when Neifi Pérez singled with one out . Zito gave credit to Pérez . " I wasn 't pitching to maintain a no @-@ hitter or something " , Zito said . " I left the ball up over the middle to Pérez , and he hit it up the middle . It was a good piece of hitting . "

On September 8 , Zito became the first pitcher in the AL to win 20 games when he pitched seven innings and allowed no earned runs against the Minnesota Twins . " I 'm not pitching for the Cy Young " , Zito said . " I 'm pitching to get the Oakland A 's into the playoffs and to the World Series . " In his next start , against the Seattle Mariners , Zito took a no @-@ hitter into the eighth inning before John Olerud singled to leadoff the inning . Seattle manager Lou Piniella said if he could vote for the Cy Young Award winner , " It would go to that young man who pitched for the Oakland team . There are other deserving pitchers , but [ Zito ] has won 21 games and he competes well . "

In his last start of the season , Zito went six innings and allowed just a run against the Texas Rangers . In his last 10 starts , Zito went 8 ? 0 , boosting his chances of winning the AL Cy Young Award . " Barry pitched another gem " , said Oakland manager Art Howe . " He 's certainly had a Cy Young @-@ type season . He 's just been steady all season long . "

In Game 3 of the ALDS , Zito went six innings and gave up three earned runs against the Twins , earning the win . However , the Twins defeated the Athletics in five games , making the Athletics the first team to lose the deciding game of a series three years in a row .

Zito would go on to win the AL Cy Young Award with a 23 ? 5 record , narrowly defeating Pedro Martínez in the voting . He led the league with 23 wins , was second in winning percentage ( .821 ) , and third in both ERA ( 2 @.@ 75 ) and strikeouts ( 182 ) . Zito 's 23 wins were the most by an AL left @-@ hander since Frank Viola had 24 wins for Minnesota in 1988 . Zito also allowed a .185 average to opposing hitters , the lowest in the AL . Martínez , who 'd led the AL in ERA ( 2 @.@ 26 ) , strikeouts ( 239 ) , and winning percentage ( .833 ) , became the first pitcher since the introduction of the award to lead his league in each of the three categories and not win the award . Zito became the first A 's pitcher to win the Cy Young Award since Dennis Eckersley did it in 1992 . Zito was also named AL TSN Pitcher of the Year .

===== 2003 =====

In 2003 , Zito started off with a win against the Mariners . He went 6 innings and allowed an earned run , an RBI single by Olerud in the first inning . In his next start , Zito went 7 innings , struck out 7 , walked 4 , and allowed one run against Texas . In the process , he became only the fifth A 's pitcher to win 10 straight games , the first since Welch in 1990 . On April 18 , Zito went nine innings , allowing six hits and no runs in a start against the Rangers . Zito improved to 9 ? 0 in his career against Texas . After the game , Texas manager Buck Showalter said , " I got the feeling he made it look pretty easy . When he has that kind of command , you can see what happens . " Zito struggled

in his second @-@ to last start before the All @-@ Star Break on July 8 . He allowed seven earned runs and 15 hits against the Devil Rays . The 15 hits allowed were a career high . Devil Rays manager Piniella was stunned by Zito 's bad start . He said , " If you 'd have told me we 'd get 15 hits off Zito in five or six innings , I would have looked at you a little funny . " Nevertheless , Zito bounced back in his next start . He went eight innings without surrendering a run against the Baltimore Orioles . Zito was again named to the All Star team , the second time he has been named to the team .

In 2003 , Zito was seventh in the AL in ERA ( 3 @.@ 30 ) . He had a 14 ? 12 record and 146 strikeouts over a career @-@ high 231 2 ? 3 innings pitched .

In Game 2 of the ALDS against the Red Sox , Zito went seven innings , striking out nine , walking two , allowing one earned run , and earning the win in Oakland 's 5 ? 1 triumph . In Game 5 , Zito went six innings and allowed four earned runs , taking the loss as the Red Sox won the game and the series .

===== 2004 =====

In 2004 , Zito struggled and posted the worst numbers of his career at the time . Zito went 2 ? 3 with a 6 @.@ 83 ERA in the month of April . On May 28 , facing Cliff Lee , he threw eight shutout innings but received a no @-@ decision in a 1 ? 0 loss to the Cleveland Indians . He threw eight shutout innings of four @-@ hit ball in a 5 ? 0 victory over the Devil Rays on August 21 . Oakland manager Ken Macha would have let him throw a complete game , but Zito said , " I was worrying about being fresh for the next game . I didn 't want to end up [ throwing ] 115 ? 120 [ pitches ] , so I took advantage of the situation and shut it down . " On September 12 , he threw seven shutout innings and had 10 strikeouts , earning the win in a 1 ? 0 victory over the Indians . For the season , he went 11 ? 11 with a 4 @.@ 48 ERA . That was his only year with the Athletics that his ERA was more than 4 @.@ 00 . He still finished 10th in the league in strikeouts with 163 .

===== 2005 =====

Following the departure of Tim Hudson and Mark Mulder , Zito was given his first Opening Day assignment in 2005 . He allowed four runs over six innings in a 4 ? 0 loss to the Orioles on April 4 . In 2005 , Zito again struggled in the month of April , going 0 ? 4 with a 6 @.@ 60 ERA . In his first 16 starts of the campaign , he was 3 ? 8 with a 4 @.@ 41 ERA . However , Zito pitched better the rest of the season . He had a streak of 14 consecutive starts from May 17 through July 25 ( and 20 out of 21 through August 30 ) in which he gave up fewer hits than innings pitched . From June 28 through August 4 , he earned the win in eight consecutive starts . On June 6 , Zito allowed two runs in six innings in a 2 ? 1 loss to the Washington Nationals . During the game , he collected his first major league hit , against Tony Armas , Jr .. Zito was named Pitcher of the Month in July , going 6 ? 0 with a 2 @.@ 51 ERA . In 35 starts , Zito went 14 ? 13 with a 3 @.@ 86 ERA . Zito 's 35 starts were the most in Major League Baseball that season , demonstrating his durability as a pitcher . He also had 171 strikeouts , good for fifth in the league .

===== 2006 =====

In 2006 , Zito went 1 @.@ 1 innings and allowed seven earned runs on Opening Day ( April 3 ) against the Yankees . It was the shortest outing of his career . However , Zito quickly rebounded from that bad start . On June 1 , he allowed four hits over seven innings in a 4 ? 0 victory over the Twins . During the game , he recorded his 1,000th career strikeout by punching out Lew Ford . On July 2 , Zito and Brandon Webb both allowed one run through eight innings before Zito gave up two unearned runs while only getting two outs in the ninth ; Webb threw a complete game as the Arizona Diamondbacks beat the Athletics 3 ? 1 . When the All @-@ Star Break rolled around , Zito was 8 ? 6 with a 3 @.@ 29 earned run average . He was named to the 2006 All @-@ Star Game . On August 25 , Zito earned his 100th career win when he defeated the Rangers 9 ? 3 . He had a no @-@ hitter

going into the eighth inning , but Mark DeRosa singled to lead it off . In 35 starts ( first in the league again ) , he had a 16 ? 10 record , a 3 @.@ 83 ERA , and 151 strikeouts . Zito was tied for eighth in the league in wins , he ranked tenth in ERA , and he was third in innings pitched ( 221 ) . He had the eighth @-@ lowest run support of AL pitchers ( 4 @.@ 97 ) but had a 15 ? 1 record if he received at least two runs of support .

Zito helped the Athletics reach the postseason . In Game 1 of the ALDS , he allowed one run and four hits over eight innings , outdueling Johan Santana and earning the win in a 3 ? 2 victory over the Twins and setting the stage for an Oakland sweep . Zito did not fare as well in Game 1 of the AL Championship Series ( ALCS ) against the Tigers , allowing five runs over 3 2 ? 3 innings in a 5 ? 1 defeat . The Tigers went on to sweep the Athletics in four games .

Zito replaced his agent Arn Tellem with Scott Boras in July 2006 . Zito was a focal point of the 2006 trade deadline , and was widely rumored to be headed to the Mets in a potential deal for prospect Lastings Milledge . Susan Slusser of the San Francisco Chronicle wrote that if the Mets were unwilling to trade Milledge , the Athletics might be interested in Aaron Heilman and John Maine . However , Athletics ' general manager Billy Beane decided to keep Zito for the rest of the season .

= = = = San Francisco Giants ( 2007 ? 2013 ) = = = =

= = = = = 2007 = = = = =

Following his seventh season with the Athletics , Zito signed a seven @-@ year deal with the San Francisco Giants worth \$ 126 million , plus \$ 18 million option for 2014 with a \$ 7 million buyout . Zito 's contract on December 29 , 2006 , became the highest for any pitcher in Major League history at the time .

During spring training in 2007 , he and Barry Bonds made shirts that read " Don 't ask me , ask Barry " with an arrow pointing to the other Barry . By all accounts , Zito and Bonds got along well during their short time as teammates , and Zito made a point of saying he would stand by Bonds through onslaughts from the media .

In his first start as a member of the Giants , Opening Day ( April 3 ) , Zito went five innings and allowed two earned runs against the San Diego Padres . He would take the loss . In his next start , Zito struggled . He went six innings but allowed eight earned runs against the Los Angeles Dodgers . Zito would earn his first win as a member of the Giants in his next start on April 16 when he went six innings , gave up three hits , and allowed no runs to the Colorado Rockies . " I 've been trying to have a good game " , Zito said . " You can 't try to do anything . You either do or you don 't . I tried to get too fine with my pitches . I wasn 't aggressive . " Rockies manager Clint Hurdle gave Zito credit by saying , " We faced a tough pitcher . We are not playing the way that we believe we can play . We have to continue to believe what we believe in , but you can 't let your confidence get swayed . "

On May 18 , Zito made his return to Oakland as a Giant . He lasted only four innings as he gave up seven runs while walking seven , including two bases @-@ loaded walks . The A 's beat the Giants , 15 ? 3 . He faced his old team again on June 9 , this time in San Francisco . Zito pitched four innings while giving up three earned runs on nine hits in a 6 ? 0 defeat .

Zito made his first Major League relief appearance on August 5 against the Padres due to an early exit by starter Noah Lowry and an overworked bullpen . He pitched a scoreless seventh inning . He recorded his first career run batted in ( RBI ) two days later against the Nationals ' Mike Bacsik , in the same game that Barry Bonds hit his record @-@ breaking 756th career home run .

After Zito 's start on August 12 , his ERA was 5 @.@ 13 . Over his final nine starts , he posted the fifth @-@ best ERA in the NL , at 3 @.@ 10 . He also had a 3 ? 2 record . He admitted that he had put pressure on himself to perform because of the large contract and was learning that he just needed to be himself . Zito also said that it had been difficult for him to adjust to a new league , team , and ballpark . On the final day of the season , in Los Angeles against the Dodgers , Zito allowed two runs on five hits and had four strikeouts in an 11 ? 2 win . For the first time in his career , Zito had a losing record , as he finished the season at 11 ? 13 . He failed to reach 200 innings ( 196 ?

3 ) for the first time since 2000 and posted a career @-@ high 4 @.@ 53 ERA .

===== 2008 =====

Zito began the 2008 season as the oldest starter and the veteran presence in the Giants ' starting rotation . In April , Zito went 0 ? 6 with a 7 @.@ 53 ERA and 11 strikeouts . He was the third pitcher in the last 52 years to go 0 ? 6 before May 1 . On April 28 , the Giants moved him to the bullpen . Zito did not make an appearance out of the bullpen and returned to the rotation on May 7 against the Pittsburgh Pirates . In that game , Zito allowed five hits and two earned runs over five innings and took the loss , his seventh of the season . On May 23 , Zito collected his first win of the 2008 season against the Florida Marlins . On June 13 , Zito became the first pitcher to record 10 losses in the Major Leagues following a 5 ? 1 loss to Oakland . His 5 @.@ 1 walks per nine innings pitched for the season , 51 @.@ 5 % first @-@ pitch @-@ strike percentage , and 14 sacrifice flies allowed , were all the worst in the majors . Beginning June 25 , Zito saw some improvement , as he posted an 8 ? 6 record for the rest of the season to go along with a 4 @.@ 33 ERA . He finished the year 10 ? 17 with a career @-@ high 5 @.@ 15 ERA and 120 strikeouts . His 17 losses led the National League and were the second @-@ worst total in San Francisco history ( Ray Sadecki lost 18 games in 1968 ) .

===== 2009 =====

The 2009 season seemed to mark a rebound in Zito 's pitching performance . Though starting the season 0 ? 2 with an ERA of 10 , Zito ended the season with an ERA of 4 @.@ 03 . His ERA would have been 3 @.@ 74 had it not been for his first two starts . Though going only 10 ? 13 in the season , Zito 's record was much more the fault of his spotty run support ( the second @-@ lowest in the major leagues ) than his performance on the mound . On June 21 , Zito pitched a no @-@ hitter through six innings against Texas before giving up a home run to Andruw Jones in the seventh inning . He won the game , his fourth win of the season . On July 7 , Zito pitched what could be considered his best game of the season . He pitched 8 ? innings against the Florida Marlins , allowing one run on four hits , striking out six , and walking one . He won the game , his fifth win of the season .

===== 2010 =====

Zito started the 2010 season by pitching six shutout innings against the Houston Astros to earn a win ; it was the first time he had won his season opening start since 2003 . On April 24 , Zito stifled the St. Louis Cardinals , throwing eight shutout innings with ten strikeouts for his third victory of the season , en route to starting the season 5 ? 0 for the first time in his career . It was the best start by a Giants ' pitcher since 2004 , when Lowry started 6 ? 0 . On June 12 , 2010 , Zito earned his first win against his former team , the Athletics , which gave him victories against every MLB team .

Through June 12 , Zito was 7 ? 2 with a 3 @.@ 10 ERA . After a strong start to the season , Zito regressed down the stretch , going 2 ? 12 with a 4 @.@ 97 ERA the rest of the way . He finished the season 9 ? 14 with a 4 @.@ 15 ERA , snapping a streak of nine straight seasons in which he had 10 or more wins . In a rotation featuring Tim Lincecum , Matt Cain , Jonathan Sánchez , and Madison Bumgarner , Zito was the odd man out for the playoffs . In fact , he was left completely off the Giants ' 25 @-@ man active roster for the postseason . Zito worked out throughout the playoffs so that he would be ready to join the roster in case of an injury , but he was never needed and remained on the secondary squad . Nevertheless , he won his first World Series ring as a member of the full roster .

===== 2011 =====

Early in the 2011 season Zito experienced his first trip to the disabled list after an injury to his right

foot during a fielding play . His replacement , Ryan Vogelsong , excelled , but Zito was able to rejoin the rotation when he returned in June because Sánchez was placed on the disabled list with left biceps tendinitis . Zito pitched well in his first few starts back , pitching well against the Tigers , Chicago Cubs , and Padres en route to three Giants wins , but later resumed his struggle , going 0 ? 3 with a 10 @.@ 91 ERA over his next three starts . He returned to the disabled list after aggravating his right foot injury ; ironically , his trip to the DL made room for Sánchez to return to the rotation . On August 13 , Zito injured his right ankle on another fielding play in a Triple @-@ A rehab start , sidelining him for another month . Zito returned from the DL on September 11 but was used out of the bullpen for the rest of the year ; he posted a 9 @.@ 00 ERA over his final four games . In a career @-@ low 13 games ( nine starts ) , he had a 3 ? 4 record , a career @-@ high 5 @.@ 87 ERA , 32 strikeouts , and 24 walks in a career @-@ low 53 2 ? 3 innings .

===== 2012 =====

After struggling mightily during spring training in which he threw with a new crouched delivery , Zito began the 2012 season with a start against the Rockies on April 9 . He threw arguably one of the best games of his career , throwing a complete game shutout while giving up just 4 hits in the 7 ? 0 Giants victory . It was his first shutout since 2003 when he was a member of the Oakland Athletics . In a June 3 home game matchup with the Cubs , Zito pitched four @-@ hit shutout ball into the ninth inning for a 2 ? 0 Giants win and brought his season ERA below 3 @.@ 00 . In earning the win , Zito earned his 150th career win , becoming the 246th pitcher to hit the mark . Zito had a hand in the Giants ' second road shutout win of the season when he pitched seven innings , allowing three hits and recording four strikeouts , in a July 17 game versus the Atlanta Braves . The win pushed his season record to 8 ? 6 . Zito would go on to finish the season with a 15 ? 8 record , his most wins in a season with the Giants , while sporting a 4 @.@ 15 ERA .

Zito faced off against the Reds in Game 4 of the National League Division Series ( NLDS ) on October 10 and struggled , being pulled in the third inning after allowing two runs . However , the Giants went on to win 8 ? 3 . The Giants , after losing the first two games of the series , became the first team to rally from a 2 ? 0 deficit in an NLDS , winning the series in five games . On October 19 , 2012 , Zito rebounded and pitched arguably the best game of his career , tossing 72 ? 3 shutout innings against the St. Louis Cardinals in Game 5 of the National League Championship Series ( NLCS ) , earning the win . It was his first postseason win since 2006 and according to Zito himself , was the biggest win of his career . That same day , Zito inspired the Twitter hashtag # rallyzito , which , behind the efforts of Giants fans , was trending worldwide on the social networking site . The Giants , after trailing 3 ? 1 in the series , prevailed in seven games .

On October 24 , 2012 , Zito pitched in the first World Series of his career . As the Game 1 starter , Zito earned the win , outpitching Detroit 's Justin Verlander by tossing 5 2 / 3 innings of one @-@ run ball . Zito also added an RBI single en route to an 8 ? 3 Giants win . The Giants went on to sweep the Tigers in the World Series , and Zito went 2 ? 0 with a 1 @.@ 69 earned run average in the postseason . Zito did not lose a single game after August 2 against the Mets , and San Francisco won his last 14 starts .

===== 2013 =====

On April 5 , 2013 , during the Giants ' home opener , Zito held the Cardinals scoreless over seven shutout innings , earning the 1 ? 0 win . He followed this performance with seven more shutout innings and some personal offensive contribution at the plate against the Rockies in a 10 ? 0 win to complete a 3 @-@ game series sweep . It was the Giants ' 16th straight victory in a row in games started by Zito ( including the 2012 regular season and postseason ) , the longest such streak by a Giants pitcher since 1936 by Hall of Fame left @-@ handed pitcher Carl Hubbell . However , Zito struggled for the rest of the season , going 2 ? 10 with a 6 @.@ 24 ERA after April 21 and losing his rotation spot a couple times late in the year .

On September 25 , manager Bruce Bochy decided to give Zito one final start with the Giants as a

tribute to his tenure with the team . Zito responded by allowing two runs ( one earned ) over five innings and earning the win in a 7 ? 4 victory over the Dodgers . However , because Zito was removed between innings during the Dodger game , Bochy sent him in to pitch in relief in the final game of the year so that Giants ' fans could give him a standing ovation . Zito entered with two outs in the eighth inning on September 29 and struck out Mark Kotsay ( playing his final game ) as the Giants beat the Padres 7 ? 6 . He finished the 2013 season at 5 ? 11 with a 5 @.@ 74 ERA in 30 games , 25 of which were starts . Following the season , Zito took out a full @-@ page ad in the San Francisco Chronicle thanking Giants fans for their support . The Giants declined Zito 's 2014 option , buying it out for \$ 7 million .

= = = Second stint with the Athletics = = =

After taking a year off from baseball , Zito signed a minor league contract to return to the Athletics on February 16 , 2015 . In spring training , Zito competed for a role on the Athletics ' 25 @-@ man roster , possibly as a long reliever . On April 4 , 2015 , Zito accepted an assignment to the Triple @-@ A Nashville Sounds . Zito 's Nashville teammates lauded him for embracing the Triple @-@ A lifestyle and for his commitment to the team : charting pitches between starts , coaching first base , and even buying dinner for the entire team on his birthday . Zito spent the entire season with Nashville , including about a month on the disabled list with left shoulder tendinitis . He was activated on the next @-@ to @-@ last day of the season on which he pitched one scoreless inning of relief . In a total of 24 appearances ( 22 starts ) , he accrued an 8 ? 7 record with a 3 @.@ 46 ERA and 91 strikeouts .

Zito revealed in an interview that he had learned the Athletics would not be bringing him up to the major league club in September . However , following a season @-@ ending injury to Jesse Chavez , Oakland purchased Zito 's contract from Triple @-@ A on September 16 , placing him on the major league roster . Zito made his first major league appearance on September 20 , pitching an inning in relief . On September 26 , 2015 , Zito started for the Athletics against Hudson and the Giants in a matchup that was arranged as a tribute to the A 's " Big Three " of the early 2000s . Both pitchers received lengthy standing ovations from the sold @-@ out Coliseum crowd ( which included the third Big Three member , Mulder ) upon leaving the game .

On October 19 , 2015 , Zito announced his retirement from baseball in an article for The Players ' Tribune .

= = Pitching style = =

Zito 's fastball has hovered between 84 miles per hour ( 135 km / h ) and 88 miles per hour ( 142 km / h ) . He augments it with a circle changeup and a curveball that he uses as a strikeout pitch . His curveball was voted the best in the Major Leagues in a player poll conducted by Sports Illustrated in 2005 . Alex Rodriguez once stated that he had never seen anything like Zito 's curveball , commenting : " It 's such a high one , and it drops three to four feet . You might as well not even look for it because you 're not going to hit it . "

Since mid @-@ 2004 , Zito has added a two @-@ seam fastball and a cutter ? slider hybrid to his arsenal . In the 2009 season , this cutter @-@ slider became a prominent part of his repertoire , being used more frequently than his changeup . Zito 's diminished velocity at the start of the 2007 season ( his fastball velocity slowed to 83 ? 85 miles per hour ( 134 ? 137 km / h ) ) and loss of command were the key mechanical reasons for his struggles that year , as he more often got behind in the count and had to rely more on his fastball . During the 2009 season , Zito made changes to his delivery , lowering his arm slot from an over the top angle to a three quarters delivery . This change helped his fastball velocity go back up to the 86 ? 89 miles per hour ( 138 ? 143 km / h ) range as well as sharpening the break of his curveball . However , in 2011 , he was once again in the 84 ? 87 miles per hour ( 135 ? 140 km / h ) range with his fastball . In 2012 , Zito relied mostly on his two @-@ seam fastball and cutter , and reduced his reliance on the four @-@ seamer , which was the slowest four @-@ seamer in MLB among starting pitchers that year , at 84 @.@ 6



miles per hour ( 136 @ 2 km / h ) .

Addressing his finesse pitching style , Zito said , " My fastball is set up by my offspeed , that 's no secret . So if I can command my fastball to both sides of the plate and throw most of my offspeed for strikes , I 'll get them to miss the barrel . That 's what I 'm going for . "

= = Legacy = =

From 2000 through 2004 with the Athletics , Zito , Hudson , and Mulder were known as the " Big Three . " Of the three , Zito had the highest single @-@ season win total and was the only one to win the Cy Young Award . Zito 's .618 winning percentage is 10th all @-@ time in Athletics history . His 6 @-@ 896 strikeouts per 9 innings pitched ranks seventh , his 1 @-@ 096 strikeouts rank eighth , and his 222 games started rank 10th . Zito also holds a couple more dubious positions on Oakland 's list : his 148 home runs allowed rank fifth , and his 65 hit by pitches rank fourth ( although he trails Eddie Plank , Chief Bender , and Rube Waddell in that category ) . Zito 's .821 winning percentage in 2002 is tied with Bender 's in 1910 for 10th among Athletics ' single @-@ season totals . His 8 @-@ 608 strikeouts per 9 innings pitched in 2001 rank seventh , and his 205 strikeouts in 2001 are tied for 10th ( with Dave Stewart 's 1987 total and Todd Stottlemire 's 1995 total ) .

Zito 's regular season performance with the Giants was less successful ; he went 63 ? 80 with a 4 @-@ 62 ERA . However , he had significantly more playoff success with them . Aided by his contributions in 2010 , the team won its first World Series since 1954 . Zito did not pitch in the playoffs that year , but did pitch in the 2012 postseason , saving the Giants ' season by pitching them to a Game 5 victory in the NLCS against the Cardinals , and then outdueling Tigers ' ace Justin Verlander in Game 1 of the 2012 World Series . The Giants went on to win their second World Series in three years .

= = Awards = =

1999 ? Pac @-@ 10 Pitcher of the Year

1999 ? First @-@ Team College All @-@ American

1999 ? Pac @-@ 10 Conference All @-@ Star

2000 ? Triple @-@ A All @-@ Star

2002 ? Baseball America First @-@ Team Major League All @-@ Star

2002 ? Cy Young Award ( AL )

2002 ? Sporting News AL Pitcher of the Year

2002 ? All @-@ Star ( AL )

2003 ? All @-@ Star ( AL )

2006 ? All @-@ Star ( AL )

2012 ? ML Hutch Award

2012 ? ML Lou Gehrig Memorial Award

= = Personal life = =

Zito became engaged to former Miss Missouri Amber Seyer in April 2011 , and they were married on December 3 , 2011 . His father , Joe Zito , who died June 19 , 2013 , at the age of 84 , composed and arranged music for Nat King Cole in the early 1960s ( ca.1961 ? 64 ) and arranged for the Buffalo Symphony Orchestra . Zito 's mother Roberta was a musician who sang in a choral group known as The Merry Young Souls and with Nat King Cole and his band . Zito is also a musician . He plays guitar , and he co @-@ wrote the song " Butterflies " that was used in the Eddie Murphy film A Thousand Words . Zito 's uncle is television actor Patrick Duffy .

Zito and wife Amber gave birth to their first child , a son , in July 2014 .

Zito is known for his idiosyncrasies and his offbeat personality . Early in his career , Zito dyed his hair blue . He earned the nicknames " Planet Zito " and " Captain Quirk " when with Oakland . Zito says he likes the way his uniform number 75 looks because the 7 and the 5 are like a " shelf " to

hold the name " Zito " up . He surfs and practices yoga . He has done yoga poses in the outfield , and meditated before games . Zito practices Transcendental Meditation and supports the David Lynch Foundation . Zito has said , however , that he believes terms such as " flaky " or " hippie " have been applied to him by people who do not know him well enough to know better .

Zito was raised in a " spiritual , metaphysical type church " that was founded by his grandmother and that his mother , Roberta , who died in 2008 , formerly preached at . In 2001 , Zito espoused a universal life force that he credited with his midseason turnaround . He said that he discovered this force by reading Creative Mind by Ernest Holmes .

However , in August 2011 , Zito became a Christian , saying he " committed to Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior . " Zito explained that God got his attention through his being left off the 2010 Giants postseason roster and a car accident and freak foot injury in early 2011 . He got a tattoo ( his only one ) of a golden calf on the inside of his right bicep as a reminder for him to " not worship false idols " and to remember that God comes first . Zito said that his wife is a Christian as well .

Zito founded the charity Strikeouts For Troops . The charity provides comforts of home and works to lift the spirits and morale of injured US troops and offers support to military families . In 2010 , Zito announced that he would donate \$ 1 @, @ 500 for every strikeout in the Giants ? Padres game on September 11 . There were a total of 14 strikeouts in the game .

In 2003 , Zito portrayed a United States Navy petty officer in an episode of JAG on CBS . Zito 's character , a pitcher , faced assault charges after hitting a Marine with a ball during the annual Navy @-@ Marine all @-@ star baseball game .