

= Freddy Galvis =

Freddy Jose Galvis (born November 14 , 1989) is a Venezuelan Major League Baseball shortstop for the Philadelphia Phillies . Galvis was born in Punto Fijo , Falcón , Venezuela , and played Little League Baseball including the Little League World Series there before being discovered by one of the Phillies ' scouts in the area . At age 16 , he signed a contract with the Phillies despite not receiving much attention from scouts ; he went on to spend the next several years in their minor league system , including a particularly lengthy stint with the Reading Phillies , the Phillies ' Double @-@ A (AA) affiliate . In 2012 , he made his major league debut on opening day at second base , substituting for the injured Chase Utley . He became a fan favorite for his performance early in the season , especially on defense , until he sustained an injury , and subsequently was suspended 50 games after a positive test for performance @-@ enhancing drugs . He missed the remainder of the season . Over the course of the next two seasons , he split time between the Lehigh Valley IronPigs ? the Phillies ' Triple @-@ A affiliate ? and the major league ball club , but struggled to establish himself offensively . Entering 2015 , his future with the club was uncertain , although with the departure of Jimmy Rollins , he was a candidate to be the team 's starting shortstop .

Galvis is an outstanding defensive shortstop , capable of making acrobatic plays and utilizing a strong throwing arm . Conversely , he has struggled to establish himself as an effective offensive player , having consistently posted batting averages below .250 at the major league level , which hinders the team 's ability to utilize him regularly . He aspires to emulate fellow Venezuelan Omar Vizquel , his role model .

= = Early life = =

Galvis was born November 14 , 1989 , in Punto Fijo , Falcón , Venezuela , and at age 14 , the Philadelphia Phillies began to scout him during his days playing youth baseball . He participated on Latin America 's team in the Little League World Series , but due to his slight stature (5 feet 10 inches (1 @.@ 78 m) 154 pounds (70 kg)) , struggled to captivate scouts ' attention . Galvis said , " They told me that I couldn 't play (pro) baseball . But I knew I had the ability . " In 2006 , scouts Sal Agostinelli and Jesus Mendez signed him during the amateur player signing period ; Galvis , 16 years old , was not a particularly heralded prospect , but did receive some attention from scouting experts before signing with the Phillies .

= = Professional career = =

= = = Minor league career = = =

Galvis participated in the Florida Instructional League in 2006 . The next season , he officially began affiliated baseball in 2007 with the Williamsport Crosscutters at age 17 , as one of just five players not born in the United States . He made an impression with Phillies ' personnel due to outstanding defensive skills that drew comparisons to those of Baseball Hall of Famer Omar Vizquel , and also demonstrated solid instincts while baserunning , despite struggling to get on base . Concurrently , he hit .203 with nine stolen bases in 38 games . In 2008 , with the Lakewood Blue Claws in the South Atlantic League , Galvis hit .238 with 14 stolen bases in 127 games . He had a particularly strong May , during which he hit .313 with 14 RBIs in May . He also earned placement on the league 's postseason all @-@ star team . He began 2009 with the Clearwater Threshers in Class A @-@ Advanced , and was the Phillies minor league player of the week after he hit .417 from April 20 to 26 . The following May , he fractured his right ring finger , and spent more than two months on the disabled list . Thereafter , he spent seven games with the GCL Phillies before finishing the season at Double @-@ A , where he hit just .197 .

Galvis returned to Reading for his 2010 season after earning an invitation to the Phillies ' major league spring training . He led all shortstops in the Eastern League in fielding percentage , assists ,

putouts , and total chances . He was named an Eastern League all @-@ star . After the season , he played for Navegantes del Magallanes in the Venezuelan Winter League . Entering 2011 , he was " was considered major @-@ league @-@ ready defensively but a major liability offensively . " But in 2011 , at age 21 , Galvis had the best season of his career to date . Always known as an excellent defender , but mediocre hitter , he was finally able to improve at the plate , thanks in part to a much more rigorous off @-@ season conditioning regimen , and also due to hitting higher in the batting order , where he was thus challenged to make greater offensive contributions by utilizing a more aggressive approach . He also improved his arm strength to the point that at least defensively , coaches and front office personnel felt he was ready to be a major league shortstop . Starting the year in Double @-@ A (AA) with the Reading Phillies , Galvis hit .273 , with 35 RBIs , in 464 plate appearances across 104 games . In August , Galvis was promoted to the Triple @-@ A (AAA) Lehigh Valley IronPigs , with whom he hit .321 with nine multi @-@ hit games and 13 runs scored in his first 23 games . He hit in the leadoff spot with Lehigh Valley as well . Overall with Lehigh Valley , he hit .298 , with eight RBIs in 126 plate appearances during 33 games . Between AA and AAA , he combined to hit .278 with eight home runs , 43 RBIs , 78 runs , and 23 stolen bases in 137 games . His excellent numbers were enough to earn the 2011 Paul Owens Award , which is given to the best position player and pitcher , respectively , in the Philadelphia Phillies minor league system . At the end of the 2011 season , Galvis was sent to the Venezuelan Winter League , and despite a brief ganglion cyst injury , played there until December 1 .

= = = Major league career = = =

Galvis was disappointed to learn that that Phillies ' shortstop Jimmy Rollins had re @-@ signed with the Phillies during offseason preceding 2012 , as Galvis had hoped to replace him . He said that he allowed himself to pout for two hours , and then moved on . With Rollins re @-@ signing with the Phillies , Galvis thought he was headed back to the minor leagues . He entered spring training as the " one of the most intriguing story lines " for the Phillies , and led the team in several statistical categories , but still presumed to open the season in AAA . However , on March 19 , 2012 , Phillies general manager Rubén Amaro , Jr. announced that Chase Utley would miss the beginning of the season due to a knee injury , and Galvis would be the opening day starter there .

Galvis became the first Phillies ' player to make his major league debut on opening day in 42 years when he did so on April 5 . In his debut , he hit into two double plays . Galvis recorded his first major league hit in his fourth career game on April 9 , a two @-@ run double off of Miami Marlins pitcher Aníbal Sánchez . Four days later , he hit his first major league home run off of R.A. Dickey in a game against the New York Mets . After spending two months as the Phillies ' starting second baseman , Galvis injured his back on June 8 ; the injury was initially thought to be a lower back strain , but eventually diagnosed as a Pars fracture in his back . He was placed on the disabled list shortly thereafter . By that time , he had " won the hearts of fans and earned the confidence of his manager ... with dazzling defense . " While on the disabled list , Galvis tested positive for having a metabolite of Clostebol in his system , a violation of Major League Baseball 's Joint Drug Prevention and Treatment Program . Galvis denied any wrongdoing , commenting , " I cannot understand how even this tiny particle of a banned substance got into my body . I have not and never would knowingly use anything illegal to enhance my performance . " He did not play for the remainder of the Phillies ' 2012 season .

There was considerable debate as to whether Galvis should open the 2013 season working on his hitting in AAA , or on the bench of the major league Phillies . Manager Charlie Manuel preferred the latter , commenting that even in 300 major league at bats splitting time between second base , shortstop , and third base , Galvis could make a greater contribution than in a season in the minor leagues . Ultimately , he did make the opening day roster , but struggled through the first third of the season , and was optioned to AAA on June 27 . Correspondingly , the Phillies acquired veteran infielder John McDonald . He performed better in AAA , including a 40 @-@ game streak during which he did not commit any errors , and a leadoff home run on the Fourth of July . He returned to the major league Phillies as a September callup , and on September 7 , 2013 , he compiled four hits

including a game @-@ winning home run against the Atlanta Braves . Overall , 19 at second base , 14 at third base , 10 in left field , and six at shortstop comprised his 49 total major league starts . At the major league level , he hit .234 with six home runs and 19 RBIs , and in AAA , he hit .245 with three home runs and 25 RBIs .

Galvis opened the 2014 season with a health scare . During spring training , Galvis contracted a methicillin @-@ resistant Staphylococcus aureus infection (more commonly known as MRSA) , ostensibly from the Phillies ' clubhouse at Bright House Field in Clearwater , Florida . " The team 's most versatile and best defensive player " , Galvis returned to the major league club on April 11 . After he struggled early in the season , the Phillies optioned him to AAA on May 9 in favor of Reid Brignac . Two days later , he broke his clavicle , and spent two months on the disabled list . After a rehabilitation assignment , he performed well at AAA , and earned a call @-@ up to the major leagues , replacing Brignac , whom the Phillies designated for assignment . Overall , Galvis posted his worst offensive season thus far ; he hit .176 at the major league level with four home runs and 12 RBIs . After the season , Michael Baumann of Crashburn Alley wrote , " After two years of medical and developmental setbacks , Galvis is still only entering his age @-@ 25 season , so it 's possible the bat develops from bad to below @-@ average and Galvis turns into something . I wouldn't count on it , but it 's still within the realm of possibility . "

When the Phillies traded Rollins to the Los Angeles Dodgers prior to the 2015 season , media reports speculated that Galvis and César Hernández were the presumptive nominees to start at shortstop for the upcoming season , likely seeking to bridge the gap between Rollins and J.P. Crawford , the top prospect in the Phillies ' organization .

= = Player profile = =

Galvis is a slap hitter who , throughout his major league career , has struggled to assert himself as a competent offensive player . Generally , he seeks to drive the ball in the center of the field , and has shortened his stroke . He has very little ability as a power hitter , but he has hit several home runs in key situations throughout his career , an anomaly that confounded Baumann , who noted that Galvis 's inability " to force his way into the lineup by this point has probably scuttled any chance Galvis has of being the Phillies ' starting shortstop of the future . " Despite his offensive struggles , Phillies staff and media have long recognized Galvis 's strong defensive skills , noting his propensity to make acrobatic and athletic plays , as well as utilize a strong throwing arm . He aspires to emulate Omar Vizquel , his role model . Sam Donellon , a columnist for The Philadelphia Inquirer , noted that " there are similarities between Galvis and his idol . Both were signed at 16 , both are switch @-@ hitters , both struggled to hit pitching at any level in their early minor league seasons . " Cognizant that he is a smaller player , Galvis has spent significant time working to improve his physical strength and conditioning in the offseasons .

= = Personal life = =

Galvis struggled off the field after his injury in 2012 , noting that he only emerged from the covers of his bed to answer the door for takeout food , namely Chinese food , pizza , and cheesesteaks . Since then , he has started a daily therapeutic routine aimed at preventing future injuries , to which he is apparently susceptible after his first back injury . His hobbies include relaxing at the beach and playing basketball . Galvis married his wife , Anna , in 2013 , and is the father of a girl named Anastasia .