

= Curtis Granderson =

Curtis Granderson , Jr . (born March 16 , 1981) is an American professional baseball outfielder for the New York Mets of Major League Baseball (MLB) . He has also played in MLB for the Detroit Tigers (2004 ? 2009) and the New York Yankees (2010 ? 2013) . He throws right handed and bats left handed . While primarily a center fielder throughout his career , Granderson transitioned to right field in 2014 for the Mets .

Granderson played college baseball at the University of Illinois @-@ Chicago , and was selected by the Tigers in the 2002 MLB draft . He made his MLB debut with the Tigers in 2004 , and signed a contract extension with Detroit in 2008 . After the 2009 season , he was traded to the Yankees . After his contract expired following the 2013 season , he signed a contract with the Mets .

Granderson is a three @-@ time MLB All @-@ Star (2009 , 2011 ? 2012) . He won the Silver Slugger Award in 2011 . Off the field , Granderson is recognized for his commitment to the community through outreach and charity work . Many of his charitable endeavors support inner @-@ city children . He has also served as an ambassador for MLB abroad . Granderson won the Marvin Miller Man of the Year Award in 2009 for his on @-@ field performance and contributions in the community .

= = Early years = =

Granderson grew up in Blue Island , Illinois , a south suburb of Chicago . His father , Curtis , Sr. , was a dean and physical education teacher at Nathan Hale Elementary School in Chicago . His mother , Mary , taught chemistry at Curie Metropolitan High School in Chicago . Granderson 's half @-@ sister , Monica , is an English professor at Jackson State University .

As a child , Granderson grew up a fan of the Atlanta Braves , choosing not to root for the hometown Chicago Cubs because he often rushed home from school to watch *Saved by the Bell* and was disappointed when a Cubs game was on instead . Granderson attended Thornton Fractional South High School (T.F. South) in Lansing , where he played baseball and basketball . During his high school baseball career , Granderson batted .369 with 11 home runs and 88 runs batted in (RBI) , and was named an All @-@ State selection his senior year . Granderson wore # 14 at T.F. South , choosing the number because his father wore it while playing softball . T.F. South honored Granderson by retiring his jersey in a December 2011 ceremony .

= = College career = =

Granderson was recruited by a number of college baseball programs , and he chose the University of Illinois @-@ Chicago (UIC) , in part because they allowed him to play basketball in addition to baseball . However , Granderson quit basketball two weeks into his freshman year in order to concentrate on baseball .

As a freshman at UIC in 2000 , Granderson led the UIC Flames baseball team with seven home runs and 45 walks . He followed that by hitting .304 as a sophomore , leading the team in runs , home runs , and walks . After his sophomore year , Granderson played in a summer collegiate league for the Mankato Mashers , now known as the MoonDogs , of the Northwoods League , where he batted .328 in 44 games , with eight doubles , two triples , one home run , 17 RBI , 28 runs scored , and 15 stolen bases .

During his junior season at UIC , Granderson batted .483 , second in the nation to Rickie Weeks . Granderson was named Second @-@ Team All @-@ American by Baseball America and USA Today 's Baseball Weekly and a Third @-@ Team Louisville Slugger NCAA Division I All @-@ American . He graduated from UIC with a double major in business administration and business marketing . On February 6 , 2013 Granderson had his number 28 retired by UIC .

= = Professional career = =

== Minor leagues ==

The Detroit Tigers selected Granderson in the third round of the 2002 Major League Baseball draft . The Tigers assigned Granderson to the Oneonta Tigers , their minor league baseball affiliate in Class @-@ A. With Oneonta , Granderson batted .344 in 52 games . Determined to complete his college education , though the fall semester began before the minor league season ended , Granderson made arrangements to begin his senior year at UIC via internet courses .

The Tigers assigned Granderson to the Class @-@ A Advanced Lakeland Tigers in 2003 and the Class @-@ AA Erie Seawolves in 2004 . With the Seawolves , Granderson hit .303 with 21 home runs and 93 RBI . Baseball America named Granderson the Tigers ' minor league player of the year and top prospect after the 2004 season .

Prior to the 2005 season , Baseball America rated Granderson as the 57th best prospect in baseball . Granderson competed for the role as the Tigers ' starting center fielder in 2005 spring training , but the organization decided he needed more seasoning , and assigned him to the Class @-@ AAA Toledo Mud Hens . With Toledo , he hit .290 with 15 home runs , 65 RBIs and 22 stolen bases .

== Major leagues ==

=== Detroit Tigers ===

==== 2004 ? 2005 ====

The Tigers promoted Granderson to the majors for the first time in September 2004 . He made his major league debut on September 13 against the Minnesota Twins . He received his second promotion to the majors in July 2005 , and he appeared in six games . After his third promotion to the majors , in August , he remained in the majors permanently . Granderson had his first career inside @-@ the @-@ park home run on September 15 , a five @-@ hit game September 18 and a walk @-@ off home run on September 26 against the Chicago White Sox .

==== 2006 =====

Granderson became the Tigers starting center fielder for the 2006 season after beating out Nook Logan for the position during spring training . From the start of his major league career in 2004 , Granderson began a 151 @-@ game errorless streak , the longest by a position player to start his career since Dave Roberts went errorless in 205 games . Granderson hit two home runs during the 2006 American League Division Series and one in the 2006 American League Championship Series , but struggled in the 2006 World Series , batting .095 , as the Cardinals defeated the Tigers .

Through June , Granderson ranked first among American League (AL) outfielders in triples (14) , third in doubles (22) , tied for fourth in runs (58) and tied for 10th in homers (11) with a .289 batting average in the 2007 season . Although Granderson was not listed on the 2007 All @-@ Star Game ballot , due to the Tigers ' decision to put Gary Sheffield as an outfielder on the ballot , he still received 376 @,@ 033 write @-@ in votes , the most write @-@ in votes for any player . Granderson was named the AL Player of the Week on July 16 , the first time he had won the award , as he hit .500 (8 for 16) with two doubles , a triple , and a home run during that week . Granderson slugged .938 , drove in two runs , scored seven runs , and had fifteen total bases during Detroit 's four @-@ game series against the Seattle Mariners .

On August 7 , Granderson became the second player in franchise history to have at least 30 doubles , 15 triples , 15 home runs , and ten stolen bases in a single season when he hit a double in a game against the Tampa Bay Devil Rays . The other Tiger to accomplish this feat was Charlie

Gehring in 1930 . He became the sixth member of baseball 's 20 ? 20 ? 20 club on September 7 , joining the Kansas City Royals ' George Brett (1979) , Willie Mays of the New York Giants (1957) , Cleveland 's Jeff Heath (1941) , St. Louis ' Jim Bottomley (1928) , and Frank Schulte of the Chicago Cubs (1911) . Granderson stole his 20th base of the season on September 9 , joining Mays and Schulte as the only players in major league history to reach 20 doubles , 20 triples , 20 home runs , and 20 stolen bases in a season , a feat accomplished by the Philadelphia Phillies ' Jimmy Rollins 21 days later .

Granderson hit .302 with 23 home runs for the season , and was 26 for 27 in stolen base attempts . He also improved his plate discipline , as he finished seventh in the AL in strikeouts with 141 . He was one of only six batters in the AL to have at least 20 home runs and 20 stolen bases , along with teammate Gary Sheffield , Ian Kinsler , Alex Rodriguez , Grady Sizemore and B. J. Upton .

===== 2007 =====

During the 2007 season , Granderson accumulated 23 triples , which led all of baseball . The American League and Detroit Tigers record is 26 triples , a feat achieved by the all @-@ time triples king , Sam Crawford , in 1914 . Granderson is the first player since 1949 to manage at least 23 in a single season . Only ten of his triples were at home despite the fact Comerica Park has seen more triples since it opened in 2000 than any other ballpark in baseball . Granderson joined the 20 @-@ 20 @-@ 30 @-@ 20 club , having more than 20 triples , 20 home runs , 30 doubles , and 20 stolen bases . The last player to accomplish the feat was Wildfire Schulte in 1911 . Granderson 's 23 triples were as much or more than six entire teams managed in 2007 , the Chicago White Sox , Cincinnati Reds , Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim , Oakland Athletics , Seattle Mariners and St. Louis Cardinals all had no more than 23 team triples .

===== 2008 ? 2009 =====

Prior to the start of the 2008 season , the Tigers signed Granderson to a five @-@ year , US \$ 30 @. @ 25 million contract with a club option for 2013 . Granderson continued hitting well during the 2008 regular season , finishing with a .280 batting average , 13 triples and 22 home runs . He continued to improve his plate discipline , striking out only 111 times (versus 141 in 2007 and 174 in 2006) and drawing a career @-@ high 71 walks . During August , he hit six triples , including two in consecutive innings during a game against the Texas Rangers .

With the Tigers failing to make the playoffs in 2007 and 2008 , TBS employed Granderson as a commentator alongside Cal Ripken , Jr . , Dennis Eckersley and Frank Thomas for its coverage of the 2007 and 2008 postseasons .

Granderson was chosen to appear in the 2009 MLB All @-@ Star Game . It was his first All Star appearance . In the game , he hit a triple in the top of the 8th inning and scored the winning run .

===== New York Yankees =====

===== 2010 =====

After the 2009 season , the Tigers began shopping Granderson to other franchises in an effort to reduce their payroll . The Yankees acquired Granderson in a three @-@ team trade on December 9 . In the deal , the Yankees received Granderson while sending Phil Coke and centerfielder Austin Jackson to Detroit . Also , the Arizona Diamondbacks received Yankees pitcher Ian Kennedy and Tigers pitcher Edwin Jackson in return for young pitchers Max Scherzer and Daniel Schlereth , who joined the Tigers .

Granderson hit a home run in his first Yankee at bat on April 4 , 2010 , becoming the twelfth player to do so . Although he missed some games due to a strained groin , Granderson finished the season with 136 games played , a .247 batting average , and 24 home runs . Granderson , who

struggled against left @-@ handed pitching throughout his career , also put up subpar numbers against right @-@ handed pitchers , causing Granderson to revamp his swing with the help of hitting coach Kevin Long in August 2010 .

===== 2011 =====

Granderson 's work with Long was credited as a reason for his strong 2011 campaign . Granderson received over 6 @. @ 6 million votes for the 2011 MLB All @-@ Star Game . In August 2011 , Granderson and Mark Teixeira became the first Yankees teammates to hit 30 home runs in 115 games since Roger Maris and Mickey Mantle in 1961 . On August 10 , Granderson hit two home runs against the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim to tally a career @-@ high 31 home runs . Granderson , Robinson Canó , and Russell Martin all hit grand slams in a game against the Oakland Athletics on August 25 , the first time a team had three grand slams in one game . Granderson was named American League Player of the Month for August 2011 , in which he batted .286 , with a .423 on @-@ base percentage , slugged .657 , hit ten home runs , recorded 29 RBI , and scored 29 runs . He became the first player to record 40 home runs , 10 triples and 25 stolen bases in one season . Granderson finished fourth in balloting for the American League Most Valuable Player Award .

===== 2012 =====

On May 6 , 2012 , Curtis achieved his 1,000th hit against the Kansas City Royals . On August 26 , 2012 , Granderson hit his 200th career home run against the Cleveland Indians . He finished the 2012 season with a .232 batting average , 43 home runs , 106 RBI , and set a new Yankees season record by striking out 195 times .

===== 2013 =====

On October 19 , the Yankees exercised Granderson 's club option for 2013 . Originally worth \$ 13 million , it became a \$ 15 million option after he placed 4th in the MVP voting in 2011 . In his spring training debut against the Toronto Blue Jays on February 24 , 2013 , Granderson was hit by a pitch from J. A. Happ that fractured his right forearm . He was placed on the 15 @-@ day disabled list to begin the 2013 season . He returned to the Yankees on May 14 . On May 18 , 2013 , Granderson made his first start at right field . May 24 , 2013 , Granderson broke the knuckle of his left pinkie finger after getting hit by Tampa Bay 's Cesar Ramos ' pitch in the 5th inning . He was again placed on the 15 @-@ day disabled list . On May 29 , 2013 , Granderson underwent surgery in which a pin was inserted to the knuckle to stabilize the fracture . On August 2 , 2013 , Granderson was activated from the disabled list . Granderson was limited to only 61 games in 2013 batting .229 with 7 home runs and 15 RBI . He became a free agent for the first time of his career after the season .

===== New York Mets =====

===== 2014 =====

Granderson agreed to terms with the New York Mets on a four @-@ year contract worth \$ 60 million on December 6 , 2013 . Granderson 's salaries were set at \$ 13 million in 2014 , \$ 16 million in 2015 and 2016 , and \$ 15 million in 2017 . The Mets played Granderson as their right fielder . He started 148 games with 130 in right field .

===== 2015 =====

In 2015 , he became the team 's primary leadoff hitter . He went on to lead the team in games played , runs scored , hits , stolen bases , walks , on @-@ base percentage and total bases en

route to a National League East division title . In the third game of the National League Division Series , Granderson picked up five RBI ? this tied a Mets single game postseason record previously set by Carlos Delgado in the 2006 National League Championship Series , Edgardo Alfonzo in the 1999 NLCS and Rusty Staub in the 1973 World Series . After beating the Los Angeles Dodgers in five games in the NLDS , the Mets went on to sweep the Chicago Cubs in four games in the NLCS and advance to their first World Series since 2000 .

Granderson and Daniel Murphy were the two most productive hitters in the Mets lineup during their 2015 postseason run to the World Series . While Murphy cooled off in the World Series against the Kansas City Royals , Granderson continued to be a consistent threat for the Mets out of the leadoff spot and also had three home runs and five RBIs in that World Series . In Game 1 , after the Royals tied the game in the ninth inning with a home run off Mets closer Jeurys Familia , Granderson made an excellent leaping catch with nobody out in the bottom of the 11th inning , off the bat of the Royals fastest runner Jarrod Dyson , preventing what would have at least been a lead off triple and likely saving the game at the time , though the Royals would go on to win the game anyway in the bottom of the 14th inning on a sacrifice fly by Eric Hosmer . Throughout the series , playing right field , Granderson played the most consistent and solid defense of any Mets fielder .

===== 2016 =====

On May 27 , 2016 , Granderson hit a walk off home run against the Los Angeles Dodgers . He was the first batter up in the bottom of the 9th inning . As of June 16 , 2016 , Granderson had hit 17 lead @-@ off homers since joining the Mets in 2014 , a franchise record .

== Personal life ==

Granderson is an avid fan of WWE , and attended WrestleMania 23 in Detroit . He considers The Ultimate Warrior , The Undertaker , Junkyard Dog , " Macho Man " Randy Savage , and Hulk Hogan to be his favorite wrestlers . He is also an avid fan of college basketball and of the Kansas Jayhawks .

Off the field , Granderson has served as an ambassador for Major League Baseball International . He has traveled to England , Italy , the Netherlands , France , South Africa , China , New Zealand , South Korea and Japan to promote baseball . In appreciation for his efforts , Commissioner Bud Selig penned a thank @-@ you letter to Granderson which read in part , " There are so many fine young men playing Major League baseball today , but I can think of no one who is better suited to represent our national pastime than you . " He has also served as something of an unofficial baseball ambassador to the African @-@ American community , often participating in and initiating dialogue about the lack of black players at all levels of the sport . When he endorsed Nike , Inc . , Louisville Slugger and Rawlings , he asked them to donate money to his foundation or equipment to inner @-@ city baseball programs rather than pay him .

His foundation , Grand Kids Foundation , has raised money to benefit the educations of inner @-@ city children around the country . Granderson wrote a children 's book , All You Can Be : Dream It , Draw It , Become It ! , which was published in August 2009 . The book is illustrated by students of the New York City public school system . In February 2010 , Granderson represented MLB at a White House function announcing Let 's Move ! , a childhood anti @-@ obesity effort sponsored by First Lady of the United States Michelle Obama . Granderson paid \$ 5 million to help UIC build a new baseball stadium in 2013 .

Granderson has been involved in the Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA) since 2006 . He has taken part in negotiations of the labor contract . Granderson was chosen as the 2009 Marvin Miller Man of the Year by the MLBPA for his off @-@ field work .

In 2011 , Granderson was also voted one of the friendliest players in the Major Leagues , according to a poll conducted by Sports Illustrated to 290 players . Granderson wears his socks high to honor players from the Negro leagues .

= = Publications = =

Granderson , Curtis (2009) . All You Can Be : Dream It , Draw It , Become It ! . Triumph Books . ISBN 1 @-@ 60078 @-@ 247 @-@ 7 . Retrieved December 13 , 2011 .