

= Zack Greinke =

Donald Zackary " Zack " Greinke (/ ʒr??ki / GRAIN @-@ kee ; born October 21 , 1983) is an American professional baseball pitcher for the Arizona Diamondbacks of Major League Baseball (MLB) . He previously played for the Kansas City Royals , Milwaukee Brewers , Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim , and Los Angeles Dodgers .

The Royals selected Greinke in 2002 MLB draft after he won the Gatorade National Player of the Year Award as a high school senior . After playing in the minor leagues , he made his MLB debut in 2004 . His career was almost derailed by his battles with depression and anxiety in 2005 ? 2006 , and he missed most of the 2006 season . He returned in 2007 as a relief pitcher before rejoining the starting rotation in 2008 and developing into one of the top pitchers in the game . In 2009 , he appeared in the MLB All @-@ Star Game , led the major leagues in earned run average , and won the American League Cy Young Award .

= = Early life and high school = =

Donald Zackary Greinke was born in Orlando , Florida , the son of teachers Donald and Marsha Greinke . He was active in Little League and also excelled in tennis and golf tournaments as a youth . As a teenager , Greinke helped lead his team to the Senior League World Series title in 1999 . He played shortstop for the team and his coach estimated that he hit close to .700 in the tournament .

Greinke was primarily a shortstop when he started playing baseball at Apopka High School . He hit over .400 with 31 home runs in his high school career . He worked as a relief pitcher as a sophomore and junior , before becoming a starting pitcher as a senior . During his senior season , in 2002 , Greinke compiled a 9 ? 2 win @-@ loss record , a 0 @.@ 55 earned run average (ERA) , and 118 strikeouts in 63 innings . He also held opposing batters to a .107 average . He led his team to a 32 ? 2 record and their third straight district title , and he was selected as Gatorade National Player of the Year . After the high school season ended , he played in the Florida Athletic Coaches Association All @-@ Star Classic and impressed pro scouts with his performance against some of the best hitters in the country .

Greinke was selected in the first round of the 2002 Major League Baseball draft by the Kansas City Royals , who felt he was a polished player who could move quickly through their system . Greinke turned down a scholarship offer from Clemson University to sign with the Royals for a \$ 2 @.@ 5 million signing bonus .

= = Minor leagues = =

Greinke pitched in six minor league games for the Royals farm teams in 2002 : three games for the Gulf Coast Royals , two for the Low @-@ A Spokane Indians , and two innings for the High @-@ A Wilmington Blue Rocks of the Carolina League . He had a 3 @.@ 97 ERA in 111 ? 3 innings .

In 2003 , Greinke opened the season with Wilmington , where he was 11 ? 1 with a 1 @.@ 14 ERA in 14 starts . Those numbers earned spots on the Carolina League mid @-@ season and post @-@ season all @-@ star teams as well as Carolina League Pitcher of the Year award . The Blue Rocks ' manager , Billy Gardner , Jr . , remarked that Greinke was " the best pitcher I 've ever seen at this level of the minor leagues . " He was promoted in July to the AA Wichita Wranglers of the Texas League , where in nine starts he was 4 ? 3 with a 3 @.@ 23 ERA . He had a couple of games where he struggled at Wichita and gave up a lot of runs . However , he bounced back and helped them make the playoffs with a victory in the final game of the season .

Greinke was named the organization 's Minor League Pitcher of the Year for 2003 . He was promoted by the Royals in 2004 to the Omaha Royals of the Pacific Coast League , where he was 1 ? 1 with a 2 @.@ 51 ERA in six starts .

= = Major league career = =

== Kansas City Royals ==

Greinke was called up to the major leagues on May 22 , 2004 , and made his major league debut against the Oakland Athletics , allowing two runs in five innings . At 20 years old he was the youngest player in the majors and came close to picking up the win , but the team 's closer , Jeremy Affeldt , gave up the lead with two outs in the bottom of the ninth inning .

Greinke recorded his first career win on June 8 , when he pitched seven scoreless innings against the Montreal Expos . His first major league hit was a home run off Arizona Diamondbacks pitcher Russ Ortiz in a 12 ? 11 loss on June 10 , 2005 ; however he also allowed 15 hits in that game , which tied a club record .

Greinke was quiet and sometimes awkward in the clubhouse . To alleviate some of his anxiety and solitude , the Royals arranged for him to live with Royals Hall of Fame third baseman George Brett . Still , Greinke 's uneasiness grew . By the 2005 ? 2006 offseason , he almost quit baseball . Greinke later remarked that , at the time , he did not expect to return to baseball . He left spring training for personal reasons in late February 2006 . It was later revealed that he was suffering from social anxiety disorder and depression . He reported back to the Royals ' spring training facility in Surprise , Arizona , on April 17 , where he underwent ongoing pitching sessions . He was placed on the 60 @-@ day disabled list due to psychological issues and took time away from baseball entirely . He began seeing a sports psychologist and taking anti @-@ depressant medication .

In 2007 , Greinke returned to the Royals rotation at the start of the season , but was sent to the bullpen in early May . Greinke returned to the rotation in 2008 and performed well that season . His 3 @.@ 47 ERA was the best by a full @-@ time Royals starter in 11 years . On January 26 , 2009 , he agreed to a four @-@ year contract with the Royals worth \$ 38 million .

After ending the 2008 season with 15 scoreless innings , Greinke started off 2009 by not allowing a run in his first 24 innings , which meant that for 39 innings in a row , he had not given up a run . Greinke was named American League (AL) Pitcher of the Month for April , his five wins , 0 @.@ 50 ERA and 44 strikeouts all tops in the Majors . On August 25 , Greinke struck out 15 batters , breaking Mark Gubicza 's team record for strikeouts in a single game . On August 30 , Greinke had a one @-@ hit complete game against the Seattle Mariners .

Greinke 's record for the 2009 season was 16 ? 8 , and he posted an ERA of 2 @.@ 16 , the lowest in MLB . On October 21 , he was named American League Pitcher of the Year by Sporting News . On October 28 , Greinke was awarded the MLBPA Players Choice AL Pitcher of the Year . On November 17 , 2009 , he won the AL Cy Young Award . Greinke credited some of his performance to his use of " modern pitching metrics " ? statistics on team defense and defense independent pitching statistics ? to calibrate his own approach to pitching . Greinke specifically mentioned FIP (fielding independent pitching) , an indicator developed by sabermetrician Tom Tango , as his favorite statistic . " That 's pretty much how I pitch , to try to keep my FIP as low as possible .

== Milwaukee Brewers ==

On December 17 , 2010 , Greinke reportedly asked the Royals to trade him , claiming that he was not motivated to play for a rebuilding team . The Royals were unlikely to afford signing Greinke to a long @-@ term deal once he became a free agent , so they agreed to trade him for some quality prospects . On December 19 , he was traded to the Milwaukee Brewers with Yuniesky Betancourt and \$ 2 million for Alcides Escobar , Lorenzo Cain , Jeremy Jeffress , and Jake Odorizzi . He was given the number 13 , instead of his preferred number 23 , due to number 23 already being issued to Rickie Weeks . Greinke would later admit that he handled the trade request poorly , that he was " pretty rude " on the way out , but the deal worked out well for both teams .

In February 2011 , before reporting to his first spring training with the Brewers , Greinke suffered a fractured rib while playing basketball . He started the 2011 season on the disabled list .

Greinke made his Brewers debut in the second game of a doubleheader on May 4 , 2011 . Despite missing the first month of the season because of his injury , Greinke finished second on the team in

wins with a 16 ? 6 record . He also had a 3 @.@ 83 ERA , and 201 strikeouts (7th in the National League (NL)) in 171 innings pitched while surrendering 45 walks . Greinke became only the fifth Brewer pitcher to strike out 200 + batters in a season . He was fourth in the NL in won @-@ lost percentage (.727) and sixth in wins . He went a perfect 11 ? 0 in his starts at Miller Park , the Brewers ' home stadium .

On April 7 , 2012 , the Brewers defeated the Cardinals 6 ? 0 in Greinke 's first start of the season after he pitched seven scoreless innings while giving up four hits and striking out 7 .

In an oddity , Greinke became the first pitcher to start three straight games in the Majors in 95 years . On July 7 , he was ejected from the game after just 4 pitches for angrily throwing the ball into the ground following a close play at first base . The following day , Greinke started again , but lasted only until the third inning . The All @-@ Star break followed , and Greinke was the Brewers ' starter on July 13 , the team 's next game . Greinke 's third start ended after 5 innings . Before this , the most recent pitcher to start three consecutive games was Red Faber in the 1917 , who started both games of a September 3 doubleheader , throwing just six innings in total , followed by a complete game win the following day .

Greinke never recorded a loss in any of his starts at Miller Park .

= = = Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim = = =

Despite his success with the Brewers , the team was struggling and not likely to make a playoff run . When talks on a contract extension broke down , the team traded Greinke to the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim on July 27 in exchange for top infield prospect Jean Segura and pitchers Ariel Peña and Johnny Hellweg . Brewers General Manager Doug Melvin remarked that it was one of the tougher decisions he had to make because he was very fond of Greinke .

Greinke made his first start for the Angels on July 29 . After a stretch of four unproductive starts from August 3 ? 19 (1 ? 1 , 7 @.@ 20 ERA in 25 innings) , Greinke followed up with four consecutive starts of at least seven innings and two or fewer runs ? all of them wins . In those starts , he produced a 1 @.@ 88 ERA in 281 ? 3 innings .

Greinke became the first pitcher since 1920 to record 13 strikeouts in five innings or less in a game against the Seattle Mariners on September 25 . He then combined with four other Angels pitchers to tie an American League record by striking out 20 batters in a nine @-@ inning game . He finished his time with the Angels with a 6 ? 2 record and a 3 @.@ 53 ERA in 13 starts .

= = = Los Angeles Dodgers = = =

Greinke agreed to a six @-@ year free agent contract with the Los Angeles Dodgers worth \$ 147 million , on December 8 , 2012 . The deal , which was finalized on December 10 , was the largest ever for a right @-@ handed pitcher at the time it was signed . It was surpassed a year later by Félix Hernández 's seven @-@ year \$ 175 million contract extension with the Seattle Mariners . Greinke later claimed that he chose the Dodgers over the Texas Rangers , who also were pursuing him , primarily because they offered more money .

On April 11 , 2013 , Greinke fractured his left collarbone in a brawl with Carlos Quentin of the San Diego Padres after Quentin was hit by an inside pitch and charged the mound . He was placed on the disabled list and it was revealed that he would require surgery , which was performed on April 13 . It was estimated that he would miss eight weeks of the season . However , he returned to action on May 10 when he pitched in a rehab game for the Class @-@ A Rancho Cucamonga Quakes . He returned to the Dodgers on May 15 .

On June 11 , 2013 , Greinke was hit in the head and neck area by Arizona Diamondbacks pitcher Ian Kennedy , leading to a bench @-@ clearing brawl . Because Greinke did not participate in the fight , he was not ejected .

Greinke picked up his 100th career win on August 5 , 2013 , against the St. Louis Cardinals . He was 5 ? 0 with a 1 @.@ 23 ERA during the month of August and was selected as National League Pitcher of the Month . Greinke finished his first season with the Dodgers with a 15 ? 4 record and 2

@. @ 63 ERA in 28 starts . He also batted .328 , the highest batting average for a Dodgers pitcher since Orel Hershisier in the 1993 season . He was awarded with the Silver Slugger Award as the best hitting pitcher in the National League .

Greinke began the 2014 season by setting an MLB record with 22 straight starts (dating back to July 2013) where he allowed two or fewer earned runs . He was selected to the National League squad at the 2014 Major League Baseball All @-@ Star Game and finished the season with a 17 ? 8 record and a 2 @. @ 71 ERA in 32 starts , the highest win total in his career . He won the Gold Glove Award as the best fielding pitcher in the National League .

When Justin Upton of the San Diego Padres homered against Greinke in the eighth inning on June 13 , 2015 , it was the last run he surrendered until the All @-@ Star break . Greinke was then selected to the All @-@ Star Game , his second straight appearance , and subsequently chosen to be the starting pitcher for the National League squad . At that point in the season , Greinke carried a major league @-@ leading 1 @. @ 48 ERA with a 7 ? 2 record and 35 2 ? 3 consecutive scoreless innings . After Greinke retired 28 consecutive batters over a span of two starts , Nationals outfielder Michael Taylor ended the streak in the third inning on July 19 . His scoreless inning streak lasted until a July 26 start against the New York Mets at Citi Field . He shared the NL player of the week honors with his teammate Clayton Kershaw for July 13 ? 19 . Greinke finished the 2015 season with a 19 ? 3 record , 200 strikeouts and a major league best 1 @. @ 66 ERA . His ERA was the second lowest in Dodgers history behind Rube Marquard in 1916 , and his ERA + (225) and WHIP (0 @. @ 844) were the best in franchise history .

Greinke pitched in two games in the 2015 National League Division Series against the New York Mets . He allowed five runs in 13 2 ? 3 innings and took the loss in the deciding fifth game in the series . At the conclusion of the series , it was announced that he would opt out of the last three years of his contract with the Dodgers and become a free agent . He officially opted out on November 3 .

After the season , Greinke was selected as the Outstanding National League Pitcher at the Players Choice Awards , and won his second Gold Glove Award . Greinke finished second in the NL Cy Young Award voting to Jake Arrieta .

= = = Arizona Diamondbacks = = =

On December 8 , 2015 , Greinke signed a six @-@ year , \$ 206 @. @ 5 million contract with the Arizona Diamondbacks . Greinke started on Opening Day 2016 at Chase Field against the Colorado Rockies ; he gave up seven runs in four innings , including two home runs to rookie shortstop Trevor Story , who was making his MLB debut . The Diamondbacks lost the game 10 ? 5 . In his second start , on April 9 , Greinke matched up against Kyle Hendricks and the Chicago Cubs . He allowed three runs in the first inning , and struggled through the rest of his outing . The Diamondbacks lost the game 4 ? 2 . Greinke got his first win as a Diamondback on April 19 , 2016 against the San Francisco Giants , allowing just one run in over six innings of work . On July 3 , 2016 , Greinke was placed on the 15 @-@ day disabled list due to a left oblique strain .

= = Pitching style = =

Greinke throws six different pitches :

Four @-@ seam fastball ? 91 to 96 miles per hour (146 ? 154 km / h)

Two @-@ seam fastball ? 91 to 95 miles per hour (146 ? 153 km / h)

Cutter ? 88 to 91 miles per hour (142 ? 146 km / h)

Slider ? 83 to 87 miles per hour (134 ? 140 km / h)

Curveball ? 68 to 77 miles per hour (109 ? 124 km / h)

Changeup ? 87 to 90 miles per hour (140 ? 145 km / h)

His curveball , like his divisional rival Madison Bumgarner , has two speeds with different types of movement , though he throws his slow curveball much more frequently than does Bumgarner , and will sometimes throw a curve that is more in the middle range combining the types of movement .

His two @-@ seamer is his most @-@ used pitch against right @-@ handed hitters and is used more frequently than against lefties , as is his slider . His changeup is only thrown to left @-@ handed hitters . Greinke 's curveball is typically used early in the count , while his slider is his most common 2 @-@ strike pitch .

Greinke 's slider has been one of his more effective pitches . Hitters have only a .154 batting average and .230 slugging percentage against the pitch . It has produced 51 % of his strikeouts . Its whiff rate is 42 % , and more than half the pitches put in play are ground balls . However , he limits the use of the slider in order to not put excessive strain on his arm .

Greinke has produced good strikeout @-@ to @-@ walk ratios throughout his career , finishing in his league 's top 10 five times and ranking fifth among active pitchers in the category , at 3 @. @ 5 : 1 as of the start of the 2014 season .

Greinke has been described as a " scientist as a pitcher " and is known for preparing for each start more extensively than most .

= = Personal life = =

Greinke is married to Emily Kuchar , whom he met while attending Apopka High School . Kuchar is a former Dallas Cowboys Cheerleader and was Miss Daytona Beach USA 2008 . On April 17 , 2015 , Kuchar announced via Twitter that they were expecting their first child . Their son , Bode , was born on July 23 , 2015 .

His younger brother , Luke , was also a pitcher . Luke played college baseball at Auburn University and was drafted by the New York Yankees in the 12th round of the 2008 MLB draft , but was out of baseball a year later because of injuries .