

= Brian Wilson (baseball) =

Brian Patrick Wilson (born March 16 , 1982) is a former American professional baseball relief pitcher . He has pitched in Major League Baseball (MLB) for the San Francisco Giants and Los Angeles Dodgers . He stands 6 feet 2 inches (1 @. @ 88 m) tall and weighs 205 pounds (93 kg) . He throws and bats right @-@ handed . He throws a four @-@ seam fastball , a cutter , a slider , and a two @-@ seam fastball .

Wilson pitched collegiately at Louisiana State University . His college career ended during his junior season , when he injured his elbow and underwent Tommy John surgery . The San Francisco Giants selected him in the 2003 draft . He reached the major leagues in 2006 and had become the Giants ' regular closer by the end of 2007 . In 2010 , he led the National League (NL) with 48 saves and posted a 1 @. @ 81 ERA , and he saved clinching games at every level of the playoffs , including the World Series .

In the first week of the 2012 season , Wilson injured his elbow and subsequently underwent his second Tommy John surgery . He completed his recovery midway through the 2013 season and signed with the Los Angeles Dodgers , pitching effectively with them as a late @-@ inning reliever through the playoffs . However , he was not able to continue his success in 2014 , and the Dodgers released him after that season .

Wilson is known for his large black beard , which he began growing during the 2010 pennant race .

= = Early life = =

Wilson was born in Winchester , Massachusetts on March 16 , 1982 . While he was in second grade , he moved to Londonderry , New Hampshire . Today , he talks little of his childhood except to discuss his father , Mike Wilson , who was an Air Force veteran and a demanding perfectionist . During fall , he would have Brian bag leaves and bury them in the woods ; and in winter , he would have Brian spend seven hours shoveling snow on weekends . Brian said in a 2011 interview , " I think that 's how you need to be raised . It 's not your friend , it 's your dad . And he 's going to be strict . And one day you 're going to understand why . And sometimes , it 's a little too late . They might pass away , and you might not get that chance to say thanks or understand why you did those things . But when you become a man , you understand why . "

When Wilson was 12 years old , his father was diagnosed with cancer . His father fought the disease for five years before dying while Wilson was attending Londonderry High School ; Wilson today says he had to become a man when his father was diagnosed . In a 2011 story , ESPN.com writer Elizabeth Merrill said about Wilson 's high school years , " He was an honor roll student at Londonderry , but clashed with various authority figures who didn 't appreciate his occasional lack of a filter . " In the same story , a number of Londonderry faculty speculated that some teachers didn 't understand Wilson 's life situation at the time . Art Psaledas , an assistant principal at the school , added , " It happened at probably the worst time anybody could lose your dad . Watching his dad deteriorate over the years was probably the singular thing that formed his personality . "

= = High school career = =

Bob Napolitano , Wilson 's coach at Londonderry High School , noticed Wilson 's ability to concentrate on baseball . Napolitano specifically remembered the first home game of Wilson 's senior year , which happened shortly after his father 's death . No fewer than 29 professional scouts , all with radar guns , showed up to see him pitch . According to Napolitano , Wilson was completely oblivious to their appearance ; he ate and drank in the dugout , warmed up , and pitched a two @-@ hitter while apparently not noticing that scouts were there . The Cleveland Indians offered him a contract straight out of high school , but he did not sign , opting to attend college instead .

= = College career = =

After a coach saw Wilson pitch well at a tournament in California , he was offered a scholarship to Louisiana State University (LSU) , where he played for the LSU Tigers baseball team , eventually becoming their No. 2 starter . In his time at LSU , Wilson pitched in 51 games (22 starts) and accumulated 18 wins , 10 losses , and five saves . He was in the middle of his third season on March 28 , 2003 , when he injured his elbow and underwent Tommy John surgery . He also played for the Keene Swamp Bats of the New England Collegiate Baseball League , a summer league for collegiate prospects . Despite facing extensive rehabilitation , Wilson chose to enter the 2003 Major League Baseball draft .

= = Professional career = =

= = = Minor leagues = = =

Coming off his surgery , Wilson was drafted by the San Francisco Giants in the 24th round in 2003 . He began his career with the Hagerstown Suns of the Class @-@ A South Atlantic League in 2004 . In 23 games , he had a 2 ? 5 record , a 5 @.@ 34 earned run average (ERA) , 41 strikeouts , and 22 walks in 57 1 ? 3 innings pitched . He made three starts that year , the only time he ever started games professionally . The Giants switched single @-@ A affiliates the next year and Wilson began pitching for the Augusta GreenJackets . In 26 games , he had a 5 ? 1 record , a 0 @.@ 82 ERA , 30 strikeouts , and seven walks in 33 innings pitched while notching 13 saves , good for second in the league behind Brett Campbell 's 19 . His performance with Augusta caused Mark Camps of the San Francisco Chronicle to mention him in his " Minor Report " on May 15 . He also pitched for the Norwich Navigators of the double @-@ A Eastern League (posting no record , eight saves , a 0 @.@ 57 ERA , 22 strikeouts , five walks , and 15 2 ? 3 innings pitched in 15 games) and the Fresno Grizzlies of the Triple @-@ A Pacific Coast League (posting a 1 ? 1 record , no saves , a 3 @.@ 97 ERA , 13 strikeouts , eight walks , and 11 1 ? 3 innings pitched in nine games) .

= = = San Francisco Giants = = =

= = = = 2006 season = = = =

Wilson began 2006 with the Grizzlies before getting called up to the majors on April 23 to replace Tyler Walker , who was designated for assignment after struggling to begin the season . He made his major league debut that day in relief , pitching two innings , surrendering two hits and no runs while striking out three . He later revealed that he hurt himself during his first inning but continued pitching through the second without informing anyone of his injury . Afterward he was placed on the disabled list for a month . On May 23 , he returned from the DL . He was optioned to Fresno on June 7 when Tim Lincecum was activated from the DL ; Giants ' manager Felipe Alou said Wilson was not getting enough playing time . Wilson would go on to have three more stints with the Giants in 2006 . On July 2 , he got his first career save , stranding three inherited runners in the eighth inning and throwing 1 2 ? 3 scoreless innings in a 6 ? 2 victory over the San Diego Padres . In 31 games , he had a 2 ? 3 record , a 5 @.@ 40 ERA , 23 strikeouts , and 21 walks in 30 innings pitched . In 24 games with Fresno , he had a 1 ? 3 record , a 2 @.@ 89 ERA , 30 strikeouts , and 14 walks in 28 innings pitched .

= = = = 2007 season = = = =

Wilson competed for the closer role with Armando Benítez in 2007 spring training . After he struggled and posted a 7 @.@ 71 ERA , the Giants optioned him to the minors to start the season . After building a 1 ? 2 record , 2 @.@ 10 ERA , 37 strikeouts , 24 walks , 11 saves , and 34 1 ? 3 innings pitched in 31 games with Fresno , Wilson was called up on August 11 when Jonathan

Sánchez was demoted . He was initially used as the setup man for closer Brad Hennessey , but he took over as closer on September 11 when Hennessey lost the role due to ineffectiveness . He went on to pitch in 24 games , recording a 1 ? 2 record , a 2 @.@ 28 ERA , 18 strikeouts , six walks , 23 2 ? 3 innings pitched , and six saves .

= = = = 2008 season = = = =

Wilson remained the Giants ' closer in 2008 and kept the role all season . He recorded 24 consecutive saves from May 3 through August 17 , the longest streak by a Giant since Robb Nen had 28 straight in 2000 . Wilson was named to the All @.@ Star Game after leading the NL in saves with 25 in the first half of the season . He gave up no hits and struck out one in 2 / 3 innings in a 4 ? 3 loss to the American League . He continued to lead the league in saves until José Valverde passed him at the end of August . Despite posting a 4 @.@ 04 ERA through September 6 , Wilson converted 37 of 40 save opportunities . In his final seven games of the year , however , he posted a 9 @.@ 56 ERA while converting just four out of seven opportunities . In 63 games , he had a 3 ? 2 record , a 4 @.@ 62 ERA , 67 strikeouts , and 28 walks in 62 1 ? 3 innings pitched . He converted 41 saves in 47 attempts ; his 41 saves were tied with Brad Lidge 's total for second in the league behind Valverde 's 44 .

= = = = 2009 season = = = =

On June 5 , 2009 , Wilson saved Randy Johnson 's 300th win . Johnson , searching for his 300th win , gave up one unearned run in six innings in Game 1 of a doubleheader against the Washington Nationals ; the Giants had a 2 ? 1 lead in the eighth inning . With runners on first and second for the Nationals and two outs , Wilson was called on to get the save . He walked Ryan Zimmerman to load the bases and bring up Adam Dunn . He then loaded the count against Dunn before throwing a called strike three to end the inning . Wilson then pitched a scoreless ninth , preserving the victory for Johnson . On September 24 , with two outs and two strikes in the ninth inning and the Giants leading the Chicago Cubs by a 2 ? 1 score , Wilson gave up a two @.@ run home run to Jeff Baker . The loss hurt the Giants ' chances of reaching the playoffs . In 68 games , Wilson had a 5 ? 6 record , a 2 @.@ 74 ERA , 83 strikeouts , and 27 walks in 72 1 ? 3 innings pitched . He blew seven saves , but his 38 saves tied for third in the NL with Ryan Franklin 's total behind Heath Bell 's 42 and Francisco Cordero 's 39 . He led the league in saves requiring four outs or more , with eight .

= = = = 2010 season = = = =

In 2010 spring training , Wilson was asked whether or not he thought himself one of baseball 's elite closers . In what would turn out to be a very prophetic quote , he replied :

An elite closer is a closer who 's part of a World Series win . If you get that final out in the final win of the season , then you can consider yourself elite .

On March 25 , Wilson agreed to a contract extension with the Giants . He struck out five batters in 1 2 ? 3 innings on May 9 while recording a save in a 6 ? 5 victory over the New York Mets . On May 15 , against the Houston Astros with the bases loaded , two outs , and the Giants leading 2 ? 1 in the ninth inning , Wilson struck out Kazuo Matsui in a 15 @.@ pitch at bat to end the game . The next day , against Houston with runners on first and second , two outs , and the Giants leading 4 ? 3 in the ninth , Wilson retired Matsui to end the game . On June 12 , Wilson entered in the eighth inning with one out , the bases loaded , and the Giants leading the Oakland Athletics 5 ? 4 . Wilson struck out Adam Rosales and retired Rajai Davis to end the inning ; he then pitched a scoreless ninth to earn the save . He recorded 22 saves in his first 24 chances and was named to the All @.@ Star Game in which he threw a scoreless eighth inning in the contest , a 3 ? 1 victory over the AL . On October 3 (the final day of the regular season) , the Giants faced the Padres , whom they led by one game in the NL West . Wilson threw a scoreless inning to earn the save and clinch the division for the Giants . Wilson converted his 48th save that day , tying the Giants ' single season

save record of 48 held by Rod Beck . He finished the season with a 3 ? 3 record , a 1 @.@ 81 ERA , 93 strikeouts , 26 walks , and 74 2 ? 3 inning pitched in 70 games . He converted 48 of 53 save opportunities and led the majors in saves as well as leading the major leagues in saves of four outs or more (10) . He was named the This Year in Baseball Closer of the Year after the season . He finished 13th in NL Most Valuable Player (MVP) voting .

===== 2010 postseason =====

Wilson made his playoff debut in Game 2 of the NL Division Series against the Atlanta Braves ; he blew a save , but that was partly because of an error by Pablo Sandoval . He earned saves in Games 3 and 4 as the Giants defeated the Braves in four games . In the NL Championship Series , the Giants faced the Philadelphia Phillies . In Game 4 , Wilson threw a scoreless inning and earned the win in the 6 ? 5 victory . In Game 6 , Wilson entered with one out in the eighth inning , runners on first and second , and the Giants leading 3 ? 2 . He got Carlos Ruiz to line into a double play . He then pitched the ninth inning , striking out Ryan Howard with two runners on base , clinching the series for the Giants . He joined Dennis Eckersley , Mitch Williams , and John Wetteland as the only pitchers since 1969 to win or save four games in a postseason series . (In 2014 Greg Holland of Kansas City matched this feat .)

The Giants faced the Texas Rangers in the World Series . Wilson appeared in three games , allowing no runs . He recorded the save in the series @-@ clinching Game 5 as the Giants won their first World Series since 1954 .

===== 2011 season =====

Wilson strained an oblique muscle in 2011 spring training and opened the season on the DL . He was activated from the DL on April 6 . After posting a 3 @.@ 75 ERA in his first two games , Wilson posted a 1 @.@ 26 ERA in his next 35 outings . During a game against the Detroit Tigers on July 1 , Wilson blew a save for a second straight game and was taken out of the game by Bruce Bochy . Upon entering the dugout , Wilson took out his frustrations by throwing a Gatorade cooler and smashing it with a bat . The Giants still won the game 4 ? 3 as Jeremy Affeldt got the save . Wilson was elected to his third All @-@ Star Game ; he earned the save in a 5 ? 1 victory over the AL .

Wilson was placed on the DL on August 21 due to inflammation in his right elbow . At the time of his injury , he was third in the NL in saves , behind Craig Kimbrel and John Axford . On September 18 , the Giants reactivated him from the DL . After two games back , Bochy decided to shut down Wilson for the final two games of the season . In 57 games , he had a 6 ? 4 record , a 3 @.@ 11 ERA , 54 strikeouts , and 31 walks in 55 innings pitched . He converted 36 of his 41 save opportunities which tied Juan Carlos Oviedo for eighth in the NL .

===== 2012 season =====

Wilson 's 2012 season would be short @-@ lived . With the Giants leading the Colorado Rockies 4 ? 1 entering the bottom of the ninth inning on April 12 , he made his second appearance of the season to get the save for the Giants . He walked in a run to make it 4 ? 2 , but retired Marco Scutaro with the bases loaded to earn the save . He injured his elbow during the game and underwent Tommy John surgery for the second time in his career on April 19 , causing him to miss the remainder of the season . During his injury @-@ shorted season , Wilson made only 2 appearances with an ERA of 9 @.@ 00 and 1 save . The Giants went on to win their second World Series in three years . Wilson expressed confidence in an interview on April 15 that he would return to the Giants in 2013 . However , because he was coming off an injury and would be owed at least \$ 6 @.@ 8 million for 2013 , he was non @-@ tendered after the season , which made him a free agent for the first time in his career . As of the end of the 2012 season , he ranked third all @-@ time in saves as a Giant with 171 , behind only Robb Nen (206) and Rod Beck (199) .

== 2012 ? 2013 free agency ==

Wilson chose not to sign with any team before the 2013 season because he wanted to be 100 % recovered from surgery when he attempted his comeback . On July 25 , he threw a bullpen session in front of various teams ' scouts with the hope to sign with a contender .

== Los Angeles Dodgers ==

On July 30 , 2013 , Wilson agreed to a contract with the Los Angeles Dodgers for the remainder of the 2013 season . After a few weeks at the Dodgers training facility in Arizona , he began a minor league rehab assignment .

He joined the Dodgers active roster on August 19 and made his debut with the team on August 22 against the Miami Marlins at Marlins Park . He appeared in 18 games for the Dodgers with a 2 @-@ 1 record and a 0 @.@ 66 ERA . Regardless of signing for the team late in the season , Wilson made 3 relief appearances in the postseason without giving up an earned run until the Dodgers lost in the 2013 NLCS to the St. Louis Cardinals .

On December 5 , 2013 , Wilson agreed to a one @-@ year , \$ 10 million contract to return to the Dodgers . The deal also contained a player option for the 2015 season . His numbers were not as good in 2014 , as he had a 4 @.@ 66 ERA in 61 appearances . On October 8 , 2014 , he announced that he would be exercising his player option for 2015 . However , the Dodgers designated him for assignment on December 16 , 2014 . He was released by the Dodgers on December 19 and became a free agent .

== Scouting report ==

Wilson was a power pitcher . He has a repertoire of four pitches . He throws a straight four @-@ seam fastball around 92 @-@ 95 mph ; this is one of his main pitches . He also has a slider , a cut fastball , and a two @-@ seam fastball . His slider traveled around 89 mph . His cut fastball has allowed him to use fewer four @-@ seam fastballs . In 2011 , he started throwing the two @-@ seam fastball as well . The two @-@ seamer starts away on a right @-@ handed hitter (or in to a left @-@ handed hitter) and has dramatic inward (or outward) movement over the plate . He has also experimented with curveballs , screwballs , and knuckleballs .

Wilson has said that when pitching , players cannot be worried about the potential outcome .

This is a man 's sport . You can 't go in there with doubts . You can 't accept failure , and you certainly can 't go into a situation thinking , ' Oh , gosh , what 's going to happen ? ' You make what 's going to happen This game isn 't for negative emotions , or being scared .

== Personality ==

Wilson is noted for his flamboyant personality .

In the 2010 MLB All @-@ Star Game , Wilson debuted a pair of bright orange cleats and continued to wear them throughout the season . On July 27 , Marlins ' manager Edwin Rodríguez complained that the shoes were too bright . Wilson received a \$ 1 @,@ 000 fine from MLB the next day , and he responded by coloring half of the shoes black with a marker . He said afterwards , " The fact that he (Rodríguez) thinks these shoes throw 97 ? 100 with cut might be a little far @-@ fetched . I guess we should probably have these checked for performance @-@ enhancing cleats . " He also stated that he was punished " for having too much awesome on my feet . "

In addition to his mohawk hairstyle , Wilson has a large black beard which he began growing and presumably dyeing during the Giants ' playoff run in 2010 . He never admitted to dyeing it , saying in 2010 , " It 's dark because we play a lot of day games . It 's tanned . It 's focused . " He decided he would not shave until the Giants ' season was over , and only if they failed to win the World Series . During the Giants ' playoff run in 2010 , Giants ' fans began growing their own beards or wearing fake beards . Many fans chanted " Fear the Beard " , and held up signs bearing the same motto .

Teammate Sergio Romo also began growing a beard in 2010 ; he has had it intermittently ever since .

Wilson has a number of tattoos . On his left shoulder , he has a dragon to honor his father which represents the " protection from fear " that Wilson 's dad gave him . Across his chest , he has the words " In nomine patris " (" In the name of the father ") , and on his right wrist he has a Celtic cross with lettering that says " All Honor To Him " in Gaelic ; both of these tattoos symbolize his Christian faith . Finally , he has Japanese Kanji characters on his arm which symbolize his faith ; they say , " Father . Son . Eternal Strength . "

Wilson has enjoyed a great deal of media attention during his career . He once had a locally produced , self @-@ filmed reality show called Life of Brian . He has often been on The Cheap Seats . Following the World Series in 2010 , a photo of Wilson celebrating with teammate Buster Posey appeared on the cover of Sports Illustrated . Wilson also appeared on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno and Lopez Tonight . He has frequently starred in commercials .

Wilson became a Christian at the age of 23 . He has adopted a gesture of crossing his arms , with his left hand in his glove and his right hand underneath pointing with the index finger while looking at the sky , which both honors The Holy Trinity as well as his late father who died of cancer when Wilson was 17 . He performs it when he records a save or closes out a game .

On May 30 , 2011 (Memorial Day) , Wilson announced that in memory of his father , an Air Force veteran , he would endow two scholarships for LSU Air Force ROTC cadets . The scholarship will be a need based scholarship available to any college junior or senior . Later that year , on July 7 , Wilson gave away 1 @, @ 000 baseball gloves to members of the Giants Community Fund 's Junior Giants baseball program .

Frequently , Wilson has made references to " The Machine " , a character from the movie 8mm . In an episode of The Cheap Seats , he had someone dressed as " The Machine " walk past in the background in full BDSM leather fetish apparel , supposedly unknown to him . Another time , in an interview with Rome , Wilson appeared to receive a call from " The Machine " and pulled a leather mask (allegedly " The Machine 's ") out of his pocket to show to Rome .