

Jews in Sports: The First Drafted Orthodox Jew In Major League Baseball

by Justice Robert E. Gordon

On July 12, 2021, Jacob Steinmetz, age 17, was drafted by the Arizona Diamondbacks in the third round of Major League Baseball's draft process. He was the 77th pick overall. Jake is a right-handed pitcher who pitched for the Hebrew Academy of the Five Towns and Rockaway located in Long Island, New York.

Jake has been offered a baseball scholarship at Fordham University but has not decided whether he will attend Fordham or sign with Arizona. Jake is six-foot-six, weighs 220 pounds, and is still growing. He has a 97-mph fastball.

ESPN says that no drafted Orthodox Jew has ever played in the big leagues. However, they made no mention of José Bautista, who was born in the Dominican Republic and pitched for the Chicago Cubs in 1993 and played for many other major league teams. José was not drafted but is and was an Orthodox Jew during his baseball career. In 1993, he won 10 games with the Cubs and had a 2.82 earned run average. José wore a tallis under his baseball uniform, kept kosher, and wore tefillin and davened daily. José did travel on Shabbat when it was required by the team and played on Shabbat and on important Jewish holidays. He now works in the White Sox organization. Jake, on the other hand, has never traveled on Shabbat, but has played baseball on Shabbat as well as on important Jewish holidays. He too keeps kosher and respects the other Orthodox traditions and lives a life as an Orthodox Jew.

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