

World Biography (../in... / A-Ca (index.html) / Carlos Beltran Bio...

## Carlos Beltran Biography



Carlos Beltran  
© Mike Segar/Reuters/Corbis.

(April 24, 1977 • Manati, Puerto Rico

### Baseball player

In baseball circles outfielder Carlos Beltran is known as a five-tool player. He has amazing fielding skills and a fine-tuned throwing arm; he has a high batting average and is a power hitter; and to top it all off, he can steal bases in the blink of an eye. During the 2004 Major League play-offs, Beltran utilized all of his tools, performing almost horizontal leaps to make tough catches and hitting at least one home run in five straight games to set a new play-off record. Although his team, the Houston Astros, did not make it to the World Series, Beltran emerged a star. Many teams in both the National and American Leagues courted the twenty-seven-year-old prized player, making him the most sought-after man in baseball. Finally, in January 2005, Beltran decided to sign with the New York Mets for \$119 million over seven years.

### From Puerto Rico to Kansas City

Carlos Ivan Beltran was born on April 24, 1977, in Manati, Puerto Rico. His parents are Wilfredo, a pharmaceutical salesman, and Carmen, a homemaker. Even as a youngster Beltran excelled in sports, especially baseball and volleyball. When he turned seventeen, however, his father encouraged him to give up the volleyball court in order to concentrate on baseball. Volleyball was fun and challenging, Wilfredo told his son, but with baseball he had a chance to make a good living.

In 1995, after graduating from Fernando Callejas High School in Puerto Rico, the eighteen-year-old was signed by the Kansas City Royals to play in their minor league on the Double A Wichita Wranglers. An awestruck Beltran spent that first year learning everything he could from the many veteran players around him. The next year, feeling a little more confident, Beltran decided to teach himself a few tricks. A natural right-handed hitter, the rookie trained to bat left-handed. Although it was a difficult task, and his batting average plummeted, Beltran felt the price was worth paying. He hoped that by becoming a switch-hitter, his move to the majors would be that much faster.

In September 1998, Beltran's hard work paid off when the Royals called him up from the minors. In his first shot at the big leagues, Beltran played fourteen games with a batting average of .276. Despite a disappointing start, he showed up at spring training ready for action. Beltran impressed Kansas City manager Tony Muser so much with his determination that he was

"I truly believe God has me here at the right time. The Mets are the team I'm supposed to play for."

kept on the roster for the 1999 season. In fact, Beltran was made the starting center fielder and the leadoff batter.

## Rookie of the Year

During his first full season with Kansas City, Beltran was on fire, and by mid-summer he had been moved to third in the batting order. (The player who bats third usually has one of the highest batting averages on the team; it is his job to move players forward who are already on base and to load the bases.) By the end of the season he had scored 102 runs and 108 runs batted in (RBI), making him the first rookie in over twenty years to top 100 runs and 100 RBI in a single season. For his impressive achievements Beltran was named the American League Rookie of the Year. Three days before receiving the honor he married his longtime sweetheart, Jessica Lugo.

Beltran's second season with the Royals was not a sweet repeat. A sprained wrist caused him to miss most of spring training, and a dejected Beltran fell into a batting slump. Then he suffered a bone bruise to his right knee, which was so disabling that Beltran was benched from July to September. As a result, the center fielder lost his starting position to fellow Royal Johnny Damon (1973–). When he returned to the lineup in early September he was sent to left field and dropped to number seven in the batting order. By season's end, Beltran's stats were less than spectacular. He was batting .247 (down from .293 in 1999) and he made a measly eight home runs compared to twenty-two the previous year.

The Royals, however, remained confident that Beltran would overcome his sophomore slump. When Damon was traded to the Oakland Athletics in 2001, Beltran again took over center field—and he returned with a vengeance. During the next three seasons the power hitter came out swinging, surpassing even his rookie year stats. In 2003 Beltran was batting .307 and had connected for twenty-six home runs and 100 RBI.

Despite Beltran's success, at the end of the 2003 season the Royals finished almost last in the American League, and rumors that the star center fielder would be traded began circulating. The rumors were coming from both the Kansas City clubhouse and from Beltran fans. Kansas City is a small-market franchise in the world of baseball, and Beltran had essentially become too big of a star. According to Albert Chen of *Sports Illustrated*, "Beltran was an immense talent stuck playing in front of sparse crowds in Kansas City. He was Al Pacino playing at a local dinner theater, Bruce Springsteen jamming in a high school gymnasium." (Pacino and Springsteen are respected as among the best in their professions: Pacino in acting and Springsteen in music.)

## Ignites the Astros

At the same time, Allard Baird, general manager of the Royals, announced plans to dismantle the team and start fresh in 2005. Knowing that he had no chance of keeping the now high-profile Beltran, who was wanted by almost every team in baseball, Baird made a three-team deal and traded his star outfielder to the Houston Astros. "The nearly desperate Astros got what many consider the best young all-around player in baseball," noted John Donovan of *Sports Illustrated*. "The switch-hitting Beltran can do it all, both at the plate and in the field. He will instantly spark an Astros lineup that, curiously, has lost its way."

When Beltran moved to Houston in June 2004, the Astros were fifth in the Central Division of the National League, and the chance of them going to the World Series was slim. In fact, the team had never once been league champions. With Beltran on the roster, however, their luck was about to change. By October the Astros were the Central Division champs and they faced the St. Louis Cardinals in the best-of-seven game showdown. Sports analysts agreed that basically Beltran had carried the team on his back to within striking distance of the World Series.

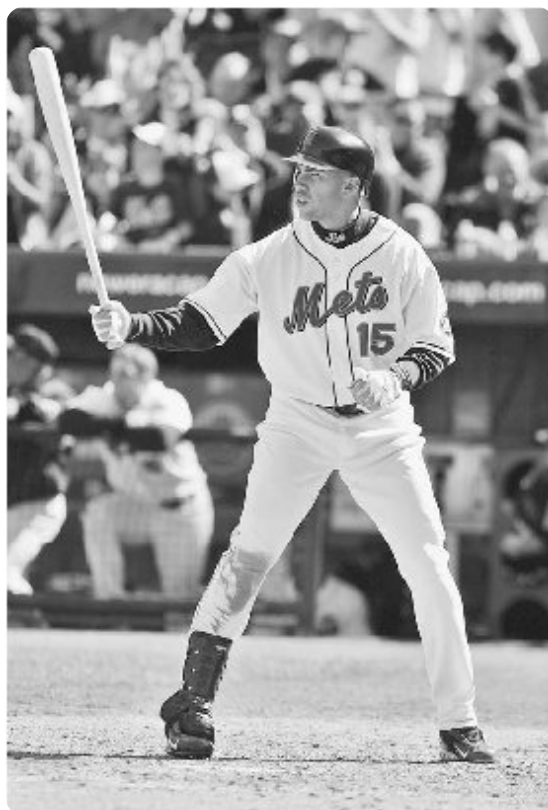
In postseason play, the Astros' star center fielder racked up an amazing number of records. He set a new record by slamming a home run in five consecutive play-off games. When he cracked his eighth home run, he tied a record with superstar Barry Bonds (1964–) for the most home runs during a single post season. As a result Beltran found himself at the center of media hype. The modest outfielder, who is unusually polite with the press, shooed away all the publicity. In an October 17, 2004, interview posted on *ASAP Sports*, Beltran remarked, "It feels great just to be able to do something that Barry Bonds did. But at the same time, I'm just going out there and trying to do my job."

Although the Astros eventually lost to the Cardinals in game seven, Beltran had his best season ever. His batting average was .435 and during forty-five attempted stolen bases, he was caught only three times. Beltran also chalked up some impressive year-end stats. He became the only player in baseball history to have four consecutive seasons of twenty or more home runs, one hundred or more RBI, one hundred or more runs scored, and thirty or more stolen bases. Albert Chen commented, "There may not be a more thrilling player on the field."

## Another trade

At the end of the 2004 season, Beltran became a free agent for the first time, which meant he was free to sign with any team he liked. He considered staying with the Astros, but he was also being heavily courted by almost every other major league team. Beltran was represented by Scott Boras, considered to be one of the smartest and most clever sports agents in the business. Knowing that his client was the hottest property around, Boras made an astonishing announcement to the press shortly after the World Series: Beltran would only accept a contract worth \$200 million over ten years. This would make him the highest-paid player in baseball history next to Alex Rodriguez (1975–) of the New York Yankees.

Facing such a high price tag most teams bowed out, leaving only three contenders: the Astros, the New York Mets, and the New York Yankees. The Mets pursued the center fielder aggressively and quickly became the front-runners. As Boras told ESPN, "Starting at Thanksgiving, they called me 31 straight days. They checked in every day asking where Carlos was at [in his thinking], saying they wanted Carlos." After a whirlwind courtship, which included a trip by managers to see Beltran



*Carlos Beltran steps up to bat at the beginning of the 2005 baseball season.*

© Michael Kim/Corbis.

in person in San Juan, Puerto Rico, the twenty-seven-year-old finally made his decision. On January 9, 2005, Beltran signed a seven-year, \$119 million contract with the Mets.

In addition to his salary, Beltran's contract came with a number of perks, including a hotel suite on all road trips, a fifteen-person luxury suite for all home games, and the lease of an ocular enhancer machine, a device that shoots colored tennis balls to batters at 150 miles per hour. But, for Beltran, the real draw was that his contract included a no-trade clause. After moving from Kansas City to Houston, the young man was looking for some stability. "When I was in Kansas City, I was always worried about being traded for five years," he commented to ESPN. "When I was traded to Houston, it was not a good feeling. I didn't want to go through that anymore. I would not sign without a no-trade clause."

## Lights up Shea Stadium

Signing Beltran was the richest deal in Mets history, but for them it was worth it. The team had not been to the play-offs since 2000 and they were losing their credibility in the eyes of fans. With Beltran they had a chance to turn their luck around. According to Alex Young of *FantasyInfoCentral.com*, "He would be the crown jewel of the organization. The marketing icon of New York. The man who can single-handedly restore the Mets to their glory."

In March 2005, it seemed that Beltran was already proving his marketing power. Ticket sales at Shea Stadium (home of the Mets) were up 25 percent over 2004 and corporations were snapping at the chance for sponsorships. By mid-2005, more than fifteen new sponsors had signed with the Mets, including Kellogg's and Subway. Mets general manager Omar Minaya was ecstatic. He was also pleased with the amount of press the organization was receiving. Although not known for being overly

charismatic, Beltran was always willing to give interviews and pose for pictures. In addition, in the sometimes rough world of sports, the young Puerto Rican was a welcome change. He never swears, he is always well dressed, and he is courteous and respectful. "He's a gentleman," Minaya told Peter Abraham of *TheJournalNews.com*. "Carlos is never going to do anything to embarrass the organization."

Some critics wondered if Beltran had not been grossly over-paid, claiming that his skills were overrated. They pointed to the fact that prior to the 2004 season he had never hit more than thirty home runs and that overall he was only a .280 hitter. Still others doubted whether Beltran could make it on the "big stage" of New York. Willie Randolph, general manager of the Mets, dismissed such concerns, citing the fact that just months after joining the team Beltran had emerged as a leader. "Guys watch how certain players handle themselves, and I think that has been the case with Carlos," Randolph explained to Abraham, "The younger guys especially are paying attention to what he does and what he says." And Beltran, himself, remained positive. As he told ESPN, "I have said this and I believe this: I can play anywhere I go. I know I can play anywhere because I have confidence in myself and my abilities."

Halfway through his first season in New York, however, Mets' fans also wondered whether or not Beltran's price tag had been too high. In July 2005 he was batting only .266, and when he returned to Shea Stadium following the All-Star break fans actually booed him. The All-Star game is played between two teams (one from the American League and one from the National League) midway through the baseball season. Players are voted on to the teams by fans. According to David Lennon, sportswriter for *Newsday.com*, a slow performance during the first half of the season was typical for Beltran, who throughout his career, tended to play his best games later in the year. And Randolph remained positive, remarking to Lennon, "We need him to have a monster second half, that's the bottom line. And I feel pretty confident he's going to do that."

## For More Information

### Periodicals

Clarkin, Greg. "Mets Bank on New Players to Cash In." *New York Post Online Edition*: (March 13, 2005).

### Web Sites

Abraham, Peter. "Beltran's Style a Hit with Mets." *The Journal News.com : Sports* (March 9, 2005).  
<http://www.thejournalnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050309/SPORTS01/503090350/1108>  
(<http://www.thejournalnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050309/SPORTS01/503090350/1108>)  
(accessed on August 10, 2005).

Chen, Albert. "The Real Thing." *SI.com* (October 19, 2004).  
[http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/2004/writers/albert\\_chen/10/19/astros.game5/](http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/2004/writers/albert_chen/10/19/astros.game5/)  
([http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/2004/writers/albert\\_chen/10/19/astros.game5/](http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/2004/writers/albert_chen/10/19/astros.game5/)) (accessed on August 10, 2005).

Donovan, John. "Everybody's Happy." *SI.com* (June 25, 2004).  
[http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/2004/writers/john\\_donovan/06/25/friday.ebag/index.html](http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/2004/writers/john_donovan/06/25/friday.ebag/index.html)  
([http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/2004/writers/john\\_donovan/06/25/friday.ebag/index.html](http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/2004/writers/john_donovan/06/25/friday.ebag/index.html)) (accessed on August 10, 2005).

Lennon, David. "Beltran Hoping for Huge Second Half." *Newsday.com* (July 14, 2005).  
<http://www.newsday.com/sports/baseball/mets/ny-spmside144342887jul14,0,3602272.story?coll=ny-mets-print> (<http://www.newsday.com/sports/baseball/mets/ny-spmside144342887jul14,0,3602272.story?coll=ny-mets-print>) (accessed on August 10, 2005).

"Like Pedro, Beltran Gets Suite on the Road." *ESPN.com : Baseball* (January 18, 2005).  
<http://sports.espn.go.com/mlb/news/story?id=1969134> (accessed on August 10, 2005).

"National League Championship Series: Carlos Beltran." *ASAP Sports* (October 17, 2004).  
<http://www.asapsports.com/baseball/2004nlcs/101704CB.html> (accessed on August 10, 2005).

"With \$119 Million Deal Comes Stadium Tour." *ESPN.com : Baseball* (January 12, 2005).  
<http://sports.espn.go.com/mlb/news/story?id=1964440> (accessed on August 10, 2005).

Young, Alex. "Carlos Beltran Recap." *FantasyInfoCentral.com* (December 30, 2004).  
[http://www.fantasyinfocentral.com/baseball/mlb/team-news/20041230\\_the\\_carlos\\_beltran\\_recap\\_1230.php](http://www.fantasyinfocentral.com/baseball/mlb/team-news/20041230_the_carlos_beltran_recap_1230.php)  
 ([http://www.fantasyinfocentral.com/baseball/mlb/team-news/20041230\\_the\\_carlos\\_beltran\\_recap\\_1230.php](http://www.fantasyinfocentral.com/baseball/mlb/team-news/20041230_the_carlos_beltran_recap_1230.php)) (accessed on August 10, 2005).

## (User Contributions:

Comment about this article, ask questions, or add new information about this topic:

**Name:**

**E-mail:**

Show my email publicly

**Human Verification:**

I'm not a robot
 

reCAPTCHA  
[Privacy](#) - [Terms](#)

**Public Comment: (50-4000 characters)**


/

[Send comment](#)

Other articles you might like:

Follow City-Data.com Founder on our Forum (<http://www.city-data.com/forum/search.php?do=finduser&u=2173187>) or Twitter (<https://twitter.com/LechMazur/>)


**Tweets** by [@LechMazur](#) ⓘ



**Lech Mazur**  
@LechMazur  
Replying to @LechMazur

And for the record, I'm against unjustified zoning restrictions that increase housing costs in cities. Then you get people asking for rent control, which makes matters worse.

♡   [↗](#)   4m



**Lech Mazur**  
@LechMazur

Doesn't Coronavirus put into question the widely held assumption that dense, walkable cities are better than the suburbs? I think it's fine to acknowledge that

[Embed](#) [View on Twitter](#)

### Carlos Beltran Biography forum (/forum/)

[< Bell, Kristen \(Bell-Kristen.html\)](#)

[Benedict XVI, Pope > \(Benedict-XVI-Pope.html\)](#)