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A.J. EWING:

LEADING OFF

By Kenny Burgess



A.J. Ewing always wanted to play baseball. From a young age, he was in love with the game – so much so that at the age of three, his Mom had to call the local league to get him started early. “I remember my mom had to call and persuade the rec league to let me play because it was a five-and-up league,” Ewing recalled.

Fast forward to today: Ewing’s tremendous rookie season. At only 21 years old, the center fielder has cemented himself as the Mets’ leadoff man now and seemingly for the foreseeable future.

Ewing’s love of the game began at home in Kettering, Ohio, where he grew up in a baseball family. His dad, Joe Ewing, was a high school pitcher and loved the game. There were very few nights in the Ewing household when a baseball game wasn’t on in the living room.

From those early years on, it was always about baseball for Ewing. Growing up, Ewing never paid attention to how he stacked up to the competition; he just competed. It wasn’t until he reached the high school level that Ewing realized he had real talent and ability, with his junior year marking a turning point for the athlete. “I would always say I worked hard, but around my junior year of high school is when I kicked it up an extra gear,” recalled Ewing. He had decided to put his eggs in the baseball basket, and he never looked back.

Ewing played for Springboro High School in Ohio, and his extra work began to pay dividends. He earned All-Conference First Team honors in his sophomore, junior, and senior seasons, earned All-Southwestern Ohio Conference honors in 2022 thanks to a .386 batting average to go along with 4 home runs, and was named Great Western Ohio Conference Player of the Year in 2023 after winning the triple crown.

Ewing had committed to the University of Alabama, but those plans quickly changed when he got the call from the Mets in the fourth round of the 2023 First-Year Player Draft.

While many youngsters find themselves at a crossroads between collegiate and professional ball, the decision to turn pro was a no-brainer for Ewing. When asked about this choice, he confidently replied, “For me, no, it was not a hard decision. When I was growing up, I always dreamed of being a professional baseball player. I never dreamed of being a college baseball player. I wanted to get into this type of environment early.”

Ewing began his professional career shortly after signing in 2023, playing in seven games at rookie ball to finish up the year. Entering his first full professional season in 2024, Ewing was



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ready to hit the ground running on the life he had dreamed of, but he had a difficult first professional season, batting just .233 over 90 games between Rookie Ball and Low-A.

While many prospects might have let this setback derail them, Ewing's tough 2024 season is a big reason that he is the player he is today.

"In my first full season, I struggled really badly in Low-A," Ewing recalled. "I honestly think I was trying to find out who I was as a hitter. In high school, I was a big home run guy, but I just had to learn how to hit more line drives."

Following the 2024 season, Senior Vice President of Player Development and now Interim Manager Andy Green told Ewing he would begin the 2025 season in Low-A. As Green recalls, Ewing responded to the news by saying, "I'll only be a short time, not a big deal." Even after struggling in 2024, Ewing remained confident in himself and ready for the challenge ahead.

Ewing used his time in Low-A as an opportunity to hone in on his elite traits. He focused on his bat-to-ball skills and used his speed to his advantage on the bases and in the outfield. In the end, Ewing spent only 18 games at Low-A in 2025, hitting .400 at the level and proving he meant it when he said that his time in Low-A would be "short."

Ewing carried that momentum with him through the rest of the season, and by the end of 2025, he had played his way up to Double-A Binghamton. Overall, over 124 minor league games, he batted .315 and stole 70 bases – ranking him fifth among all minor leaguers in steals, tied for sixth in triples and eighth in hits. Among Mets Minor Leaguers, he ranked first in average, on-base percentage, hits, triples and stolen bases.

Ewing entered the 2026 season as the No. 4 prospect in the Mets' farm system and was invited to Major League Spring Training. He turned some heads batting .381 in 10 Major League Spring Training games but ultimately ended up back with Double-A Binghamton.

Leaving camp, Ewing was confident he'd end up on the Major League roster this season. However, he did not expect the call to come as quickly as it did.

Ewing was called up to the big leagues on May 12 vs. Detroit and had a debut for the ages. He went 1-2 with a triple, two RBI, three walks, two runs scored and stole a base. He became the first Met in franchise history to record a triple in his Major League debut and the first to draw at least three walks in their debut.



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After he drew a walk in his first at-bat, Ewing took it all in, and it hit him that he had achieved his dream: "It didn't click when I first ran out there. It wasn't the first time I caught a fly ball. It was the first time I got to first base. I stepped on the base and that was the moment it all hit me."

This standout performance was truly just the start of it for Ewing. He finished the first half batting .276 with 17 extra-base hits, 24 RBI and nine stolen bases.

Additionally, Ewing has consistently leveled up his game since arriving at the Mets, earning him the trust of Green and the entire organization. Ewing's talent, dependability, and improvement have earned him placement in the leadoff spot.

When asked about moving Ewing up to the top of the order so quickly, Green gushed about his success thus far and emphasized his makeup as the perfect leadoff batter, sharing: "When you take a step back and look at what he's done in a short stint in the big leagues, he's putting up a .380 – .390 on-base percentage against right-handed pitching. That is incredibly rare for a rookie. It really fits his long-term skillset."

After a tough start to his minor league season in 2024, not many would have foreseen Ewing in the majors at this point, let alone thriving.

Green credits Ewing's rise and success in part to his attack mentality. Green has emphasized that he doesn't want Ewing's personality/nature to change as he grows more comfortable in the big leagues, sharing that: "I always want him on the attack. I don't know if I like A.J. Ewing and comfortable in the same sentence. He thrives on challenges."

While it is only the beginning for A.J. Ewing, early indications are that the Mets have found the leadoff hitter and center fielder of the future, and maybe their dreams. No matter what comes next for Ewing, there is no doubt that he will attack through any adversity or roadblock in his way.