

Jonathan Santucci - Mets Magazine

By Matt Levine and Cam Manna

New York Mets No. 3 pitching prospect Jonathan Santucci comes from a baseball family.

His father, Steven, was drafted by the St. Louis Cardinals in the 19th round of the 1993 MLB Draft, after a standout career at Assumption College, where he captained the team for two years.

Jonathan never felt forced to play the game, but it's all he can remember. From long trips with his father to tournaments, to having a catch in the yard, to arriving at random baseball fields to take batting practice, it has all brought him to where he is today.

Santucci was drafted by the Mets in the second round (46th overall) of the 2024 MLB Draft out of Duke University, and is currently in his second professional season. Over his first two seasons in the minors, there has been one constant: Jonathan and his dad text before every game, with his dad ending the conversation by saying, "It's time to go."

The phrase embodies who Jonathan is — a pitcher who wants to attack, both off the field through his preparation and on the field with his best stuff.

Santucci grew up in Leominster, Massachusetts, and attended Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, for high school. Santucci flourished as a baseball player from a young age and was a 2021 Perfect Game First Team All-American, while he ranked as the No. 2 recruit in all of Massachusetts and the No. 64 overall player in the class of 2021, but not solely as a pitcher.

Santucci's first love was hitting, and it showed throughout his high school career, as he produced a .322 batting average. Santucci committed to Duke with the mindset that he was a hitter.

"I went to Duke, in my mind, more so an outfielder than a pitcher," said Santucci. "I always could pitch, and always had it in my back pocket, but I always liked hitting more than playing outfield, more than pitching."

During Santucci's sophomore year, that mindset of being a hitter took a major shift, after he had season-ending surgery. Santucci, who grew up a Red Sox fan and loved watching the likes of David Ortiz and Dustin Pedroia, decided to focus solely on pitching going into his junior year, which was his draft-eligible season. A step behind most pitchers, Santucci leaned on his mindset to attack.

"I kind of was a step behind everybody else because everybody else who has been a pitcher has done it for a long time," said Santucci. "I knew that pitching was my future in professional baseball, so putting my full foot forward in that regard, and kind of going from there."

The routine was a challenge for Santucci, but he leaned back on his dad and his experience growing up as a hitter to help with the transition to pitching.

“[My dad] was a hitter in professional baseball, so yeah, he kind of has that mindset...,” Santucci said. “In hitting, you can’t be too hard on yourself because you have to go back up to bat in two innings or go to the field and make a play. So, I have that mentality on the mound, like a one-pitch-at-a-time mentality.”

In his first season as a full-time pitcher, Santucci found his routine and flourished at Duke in 2024, becoming an All-ACC First Team starting pitcher with a 6-1 record, a 3.31 ERA, and 90 strikeouts over 58.0 innings. He did it under former Duke head coach Chris Pollard, who led the program from 2013-25. Pollard left Santucci with a quote he has never forgotten and still brings with him to every start on the bump.

“My coach would say, everybody’s a nameless, faceless opponent,” he said. “I think that’s something that stuck with me, and it doesn’t matter who’s in the box. You’re just gonna go right at them with your best stuff, and good things will happen from there.”

The attack mindset is not only how Santucci lives, but it is exactly how the Mets want their arms to pitch. When Santucci was drafted, he was beyond grateful to join an organization as prestigious as the Mets, and he quickly learned what they preach.

“It’s a blessing to be here in the Mets organization and to be able to fulfill a childhood dream of mine of playing professional baseball,” Santucci said. “The New York Mets is a very prestigious organization. Knowing the resources we have and that everybody is here to make you better and help you fulfill your dream of becoming a big leaguer, that makes it easy to come to work every day and go about your work the right way. Everyone is in your corner and wants you to reach your dream.”

The New York Mets pitching department is led by Vice President of Pitching Eric Jagers and Pitching Coordinator Kyle Rogers. They have instilled organization-wide philosophies and Santucci has worked closely with Jagers and Rogers to execute on them.

The organization preaches the “Race to 2K,” which is the race to record two strikes before throwing two balls. The Mets also focus heavily on Attack%, which is the percentage of pitches thrown within the strike zone with less than two strikes in the count. These principles have helped the Mets’ No. 7 overall prospect understand the importance of attacking hitters.

“Our stuff is going to beat the hitters more times than not, so it’s just about trusting that,” Santucci said. “I think having that mentality when you’re out there goes a long way in terms of confidence and overall attacking.”

Santucci began his professional career with High-A Brooklyn in 2025. He made 15 appearances and 13 starts for the Cyclones and went 5-4 with a 3.46 ERA and 75 strikeouts in 67.2 innings, before earning a promotion to Double-A Binghamton in early July 2025.

With Double-A Binghamton in 2025, Santucci worked with pitching coach Dan McKinney and went 4-0 with a 2.52 ERA with 63 strikeouts in 50.0 innings in 10 regular-season starts. McKinney has since been promoted to the Mets assistant pitching coach at the major league level.

Santucci was named Double-A Binghamton's starter for its first postseason game. He started Game One of the Eastern League Division Series at Double-A Somerset (New York Yankees) and allowed one run over 4.2 innings in the Rumble Ponies' victory, en route to winning the 2025 Eastern League Championship.

Over his first 15 starts in 2026, Santucci held a 3.84 ERA and recorded 83 strikeouts in 68.0 innings with Double-A Binghamton. At the end of June, Santucci ranked T-7th in Double-A and T-2nd in the Eastern League in strikeouts. He is working under pitching coach Matt Carasiti, who pitched for parts of four seasons in the major leagues for the Colorado Rockies and Seattle Mariners, after a standout career at St. John's University.

"I think his mentality is always the same," Carasiti said. "In our pregame meetings, he's always very confident and knows what he wants to do. I think his ability to take over a game is going to separate him ... great pitchers have that. When you couple that mentality with the actual ability to throw the pitches that he has, I think he's moving in the direction that he could be really special."

When Santucci takes the mound, his goal is to attack the hitter and attack the strike zone with a fearless attitude.

"Not nibbling around the corners and kind of living in the heart of the zone," he said. "I know how my stuff plays against both lefties and righties and I go from there without trying to be too cute. Good pitching is always going to beat good hitting."

The 23-year-old throws a four-seam fastball that averages around 93-95 mph and generates carry towards the top of the zone. His fastball sets up the 88-90 mph slider, which tunnels well off the fastball and breaks late enough to generate whiffs. Santucci also possesses a changeup and a curveball, and he has used those two offerings more in 2026 than ever before.

"The ability to have four plus pitches creates this certain confidence that not many people can have, because it's rare to have that," Carasiti said. "As he continued to climb, his eyes opened a little bit more to the necessity of adding a couple extra 'auxiliary weapons' that turned out to be plus pitches. That alone gives him the ability to not overcomplicate things."

The 6-foot-2 left-hander watches all kinds of other pitchers and believes he could learn something from everyone. From the dugout, he has watched the rise of numerous other Mets pitching prospects.

New York has seen homegrown starting pitchers like Nolan McLean, Jonah Tong, and Zach Thornton reach the majors since August 2025. Mets' No. 2 pitching prospect Jack Wenninger is currently with Triple-A Syracuse. The organization's No. 4 pitching prospect Will Watson and

No. 6 starting pitching prospect R.J. Gordon are both currently with Double-A Binghamton, along with Brendan Girton, who ranked as the Mets' No. 29 prospect entering the season. All of these pitching prospects have been teammates of Santucci's in Double-A at some point.

"It's nice that we can all rely on each other," Santucci said. "Whether it be in spring training, camps, or just being teammates with each other. If you have a question or want to know about what they do or how they go about something you can always ask them. It's really cool and doesn't happen everywhere. We're all open-minded and want everyone to have success and it's nice to have everyone in each other's corner."

With such a loaded group of pitching prospects, the New York Mets have built a culture that stands on making sure their players feel comfortable, but challenged at all times.

"It creates an environment that everybody's challenged enough and they're all competing against each other, which I think creates this push for development for all of them," Carasiti said. "It creates an environment where everybody wants everyone else to do well and get better. That's a huge factor that I see with the Mets that's not everywhere. The culture [the Mets] have created allows them to do that with each other ... and push each other."

Santucci said that there is something that he can take from every single one of his teammates, in an organization that has an abundance of top pitching prospects.

"That's what I am learning how to do," he said. "I was always a thrower growing up, but now I am learning how to actually pitch ... there is something to take from each other and that's why I think we're all going to hopefully be big leaguers one day."

Santucci is locked in on his recovery and preparation in between his starts with Double-A Binghamton, but he does not lose sight of the fact that there is only one more level separating him from Major League Baseball.

"When you're [in Double-A] it doesn't really feel like you're that close [to the Majors]," he said. "Looking at Thornton, who was here and then made his MLB debut two weeks later ... It can happen just like that. That's exciting and reminds me to just always be on full throttle and that anything can happen at any point, just be ready when it does."

For the remainder of this season, Santucci will be on full throttle, chasing his childhood dream of playing Major League Baseball. A dream that started when he was a kid in Leominster, Massachusetts, with a glove in his hand in the yard with his dad, and a dream that continued even when he made the tough decision to transition to being a pitcher only. It's a dream that he continues to chase, even if he is far from the person who has been there with him from day one.

"I can't work with [my dad] as much as I used to," said Santucci. "He's always a good resource in terms of talking and knowing the experiences I'm going through because he's been there every step of the way."

Santucci is pleased with how far he has come, but the ones who keep rising through the ranks are the ones who are ever-changing. That is Jonathan.

"My goal is to feel my best week in and week out and be able to go out there and be at my best," said Santucci. "But that's always constantly changing."

There is a lot of change ahead for Santucci, and that has been the story of his baseball career. But, change has never stopped him. He hopes the next shift in his baseball journey brings him one step closer to The Show.

It's a big step, but one constant remains: Steve will be in Jonathan's corner, telling him, "It's time to go."