



## Jordan's lanky, 6-6 frame was made for the hardwood, but he's settling in to life on the diamond.

We recently sat down with MJ to discuss his baseball career and his former job, as NBA superstar.

**SPORT:** What's been the most difficult part of the adjustment to baseball?

**JORDAN:** The mental part of the game. The mental exhaustion. It's very difficult getting mentally prepared and ready to play every day. I deal with a lot more disappointments in baseball than in basketball. Far more. Mentally, you have to be very, very strong to fight back and try to get yourself into a positive frame of mind. And that's very tough. I was always in control in basketball. Here, I'm not nearly in as much control. Everything relies on what the pitcher does. That's not control to me.

**SPORT:** What do you say to yourself to help you prepare and deal with the let-downs, the disappointments?

**JORDAN:** I have to keep pumping myself up. I have to keep telling myself: "Everyone goes through this. Everyone goes through tough times. Fight through it." Positive reinforcement, that's what I call it. My success in basketball was so rapid. Here, obviously, it's not. I have had to deal with a lot more disappointment. [As a result] I've had to set my standards lower to try and achieve. That was very tough for me early on because I'm such a competitor and I wanted to do so well so early. But I've adjusted. I had to.

**SPORT:** What's been the easiest part of playing baseball?

**JORDAN:** Getting along with the guys. Fitting in has been easy. Easier than I thought.

I thought there might be some resentment, but there hasn't been. The guys have been great. Really great. Baseball players are a fun bunch.

**SPORT:** Are baseball players different from basketball players?

**JORDAN:** Very different. The camaraderie is different, especially inside the clubhouse. Baseball players tend to hang around the clubhouse more. They tend to spend a lot more time together and go out together a little more. Baseball players are more group-oriented. Basketball players tend to break out in twos and threes and go their separate ways. I love the camaraderie here. In basketball, you have a shootaround in the morning for an hour, then get to the stadium an hour and a half before game time. That's not much time to get to know people. In baseball, you're in the clubhouse three or four hours before a game. You play cards, you wrestle around. You really get to know the people. I love it.

**SPORT:** How much progress do you feel you've made since you started playing baseball?

**JORDAN:** I feel I've made tremendous progress. I've made progress just from being comfortable around the diamond and the game itself. The biggest thing I didn't have at the beginning is the comfortable attitude and confidence in myself. [As time has passed] I've gotten the necessary confidence and the fundamentals to build off.

**SPORT:** How do you equate the confidence you had in basketball, where you were essentially Superman and could do anything you wanted, to your confidence in baseball, where you struggle?

**JORDAN:** The confidence I experienced in basketball is nothing like the confidence

I've experienced here. Like night and day. Remember, I didn't play baseball for 14 years. If I had played sometime during those 14 years, my confidence obviously would be much different, much better. For me coming in cold turkey after 14 years, I had to see some form of success just to build my confidence up a little. Luckily I did. That's what kept me going, that early confidence. If I didn't experience that, it would have been much, much harder.

**SPORT:** Is confidence everything when it comes to success?

**JORDAN:** I think it is, in anything anyone does. Confidence allows you to progress in something you're attempting to accomplish, whether it's playing basketball or baseball, or whether it's trying to succeed in business.

**SPORT:** At this point, do you feel you can compete and succeed on the major-league level?

**JORDAN:** No. Right now, I'm not there. I need to improve more and take time to evaluate all the information that I have taken in and see how I can implement that in my talent and skills. I'm really not sure I can play on that level...but wouldn't it be something if I did? That'd be some kind of accomplishment, a 31-year-old guy making it after not playing for 14 years.

**SPORT:** For someone who never saw a slider or forkball until just recently, how do you begin to explain the difficulty of dealing with such maddening pitches?

**JORDAN:** It's been tough. Very tough. As tough as dealing with the failure and disappointment, as tough as dealing with the mental fatigue. The toughest part of all may be the recognition of pitches. The more I see those kinds of pitches, the better I become at hitting them. In the early stages, it