

**Warning:** count(): Parameter must be an array or an object that implements Countable in </home/lasvega1/mopupduty.com/wp-includes/post-template.php> on line 284



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/ May 30, 2011

# Yunel Escobar

by Callum Hughson(<http://mopupduty.com/author/newcal/>)



From the streets of Havana, Cuba to the bright lights of Toronto's Rogers Centre, this is the story of the Blue Jays' flashy shortstop **Yunel Escobar**.



(<http://i1.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Yunel-Escobar-leap.jpg>).

Yunel Almenares Escobar was born November 2nd, 1982 in Havana, Cuba. Like most Cuban children, Escobar began playing baseball at an early age in the streets of the Buena Vista(<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0186508/>) neighbourhood of Havana. At age 9, Escobar began playing organized baseball with his childhood best friend Brayan Peña. Both players were excelled at the game and 2 years later they found themselves playing on the Junior National Team. The experience on the National Team opened the eyes of both Escobar and Peña as to what life was like outside the Cuban border. Their first tournament was in Mexico and the two youngsters tuned in to a MLB game for the first time in their lives from their hotel room.

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“That was the first time we saw Major League Baseball, and it was the Braves,” Peña says. “It really kept our attention because of their uniform.”

**SOURCE**(<http://www.kansascity.com/2011/05/21/2892866/royals-pena-journey-to-the-states.html>)

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It was then that the two boys had thoughts about leaving the only home they had ever known.

In 1999, at an under-17 tournament in Venezuela, Peña made his move. He hopped through the window in a hotel lobby bathroom into a waiting car and left his family and country behind. Because of Escobar’s close relationship with Peña, he had to deal with allegations and increased scrutiny immediately following his friend’s defection. Escobar was questioned relentlessly by Cuban authorities. They considered suspending him but couldn’t prove he knew of Peña’s plans. However they did suspend him for flipping balls into the stands and

wearing his pants too long. These suspensions combined with a suffocating security presence motivated Escobar to join his friend in the US even more.

Escobar eventually joined the famed Havana Industriales as a backup shortstop and utility infielder. As is the case in Cuba, one may be a great player but play sparingly in the Cuban National Series. Since players can not be traded between teams, if a player is blocked at a position, he is **really** blocked.

In 2004 Yunel Escobar boarded a dangerous makeshift raft in the middle of the night with a group of 35 defectors (5 of them fellow National Team teammates([http://havanajournal.com/culture/entry/more\\_details\\_on\\_defection\\_of\\_cuba\\_baseball\\_player\\_yamel\\_guevara/](http://havanajournal.com/culture/entry/more_details_on_defection_of_cuba_baseball_player_yamel_guevara/))) headed towards the United States. They were on the water for 2½ days. They had to avoid U.S. Coast Guard patrols and find safe harbour in Florida. The whole process, he says, took 13 days.

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“My family never knew about me from the day I left until I arrived in Florida,” he says. “They probably thought I was dead, maybe I had drowned. They knew I was trying to leave, but they didn’t know what happened.”

“It was tough, because I left my mother and brothers and sisters back home. I was 21 years old, not knowing what was in front of me. I just took a chance that I would make it to Florida and try to start a career. Yes, I was scared, because I left everybody behind.”

**source**(<http://sports.nationalpost.com/2011/04/16/escobar-eager-to-prove-himself-with-jays/>)

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The raft washed ashore on the Florida Keys and Escobar immediately made contact with Brayan Peña’s family. Once he established American residency, Escobar was made eligible for the Rule 4 draft.

In 2005 the Atlanta Braves selected Yunel in the 2nd round of the draft. It was a risky pick and many teams shied away from the Cuban because of questions about his “real” age, the level of his development and the fact that there were no scouting reports on him – both in regards to playing ability and makeup.

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“We saw him as a premium talent,” says Roy Clark, Atlanta’s scouting director. “A lot of clubs didn’t feel that they had enough background [on him].” Escobar’s tense relationship with Cuban authorities in the aftermath of Peña’s defection had limited his exposure to major league scouts.

Clark peppered the young catcher with questions about everything from Escobar’s skill set to his command of English to his family background. “The best recommendation we got was from Brayan,” Clark says.



[source\(http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/article/magazine/MAG1130711/index.htm\)](http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/article/magazine/MAG1130711/index.htm)

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By that time Brayan Peña was playing for the Braves' AA affiliate in Greenville, South Carolina. It was friend Brayan Peña's glowing report that ultimately led the Braves to select Escobar.



(<http://i2.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Brayan-Peña-Yunel-Escobar.jpg>).

*Brayan Peña and Yunel Escobar*

The Braves assigned Escobar to the Rookie-level Danville Braves of the Appalachian League. His stay was short, as Yunel outclassed his competition while posting a 1.206 OPS in 8 games. He finished the season with the single-A Rome Braves and was impressive there as well, putting up a .313/.358/.470 line in 48 games. So much for worrying about lack of development for the 22-year old.

The following season Escobar was assigned to AA Mississippi of the Southern League. It was here that Escobar experienced his first bump in the road – both on the field and off. Escobar posted a pedestrian .264/.361/.346 line in 121 games, but more importantly he developed a contentious relationship with then-manager Jeff Blauser. A former shortstop himself, Blauser was a no-nonsense “old school” style of manager who wanted to curb Escobar's flashy style of play.



([http://i2.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Jeff\\_Blauser.jpg](http://i2.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Jeff_Blauser.jpg)).

*Mean old  
Jeff  
Blauser*

The Braves sent Yunel to the [Arizona Fall League](http://mopupduty.com/index.php/arizona-fall-league-2007/)(<http://mopupduty.com/index.php/arizona-fall-league-2007/>) at the conclusion of the season in order to clear his head and it worked wonders; Escobar was the [AFL batting champion](http://mlb.mlb.com/mlb/stats/stats.jsp?y=2006&sid=119&lid=119&t=1_bat)([http://mlb.mlb.com/mlb/stats/stats.jsp?y=2006&sid=119&lid=119&t=1\\_bat](http://mlb.mlb.com/mlb/stats/stats.jsp?y=2006&sid=119&lid=119&t=1_bat)) (hitting .407 with a 1.021 OPS) and showed his versatility by playing 3B, SS & 2B.

In 2007, after a strong spring training, Escobar was assigned to AAA Richmond and picked up right where he left off at the Arizona Fall League. For the first 2 months of the season, Escobar put up a .333/.379/.456 line along with 7 steals to go with his flawless defense. On June 2nd, 2007, the Atlanta Braves called up Yunel Escobar and he made his major-league debut against the Chicago Cubs at 3B. He hit a single in his first at-bat and finished 2 for 4 with a double a run scored, and the game winning RBI.

Two days later, facing the Florida Marlins at home, Escobar hit his first major league home run. It was an opposite-field shot on a high Wes Obermueller fastball. He finished the day 4/4 with 2 singles and a double to go with his home run.

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Afterwards the media asked him if he was nervous in his first game since he hit a home run. His reply was “no, when I came over on the boat from Cuba, I was nervous. Tonight was nothing like that.”

**SOURCE**(<http://www.thisisamericansoccer.com/tias-barometer/the-barometer-37/>)

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([http://i1.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/yunel\\_escobar.jpg](http://i1.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/yunel_escobar.jpg))

He finished the season having played 94 games, mostly spelling Chipper Jones at 3B, Kelly Johnson at 2B and Edgar Renteria at SS. Renteria played a crucial role in Escobar's development as a big league ballplayer. Both Miami residents, Renteria mentored Escobar

every day beginning at 7am during the offseason. Ironically, Renteria was traded to the Detroit Tigers in November because of Escobar's rapid development. Regardless, Renteria continued to show up every day at 7am with his familiar “¿Estas ready?” call.

As Escobar's life on the field began to stabilize, so did his family situation. In the spring Escobar was reunited with his Mother, Father & Wife(<http://cubainternet.impela.net/2007/07/moms-exit-from-cuba-thrills-rookie-escobar/>) after finding a way to bring them to the US from Cuba. Now Escobar could truly focus on baseball.

In his first three big-league seasons, Yunel Escobar never hit less than .288 and twice reached double-digits in home runs to go with his dazzling defensive play. However, the same issues that he had with Jeff Blauser back in AA started to rear their ugly head in Atlanta. Fans and players alike questioned his hustle and level of commitment. (Strange that there were whispers about his hustle & heart when he won the Atlanta Braves' Heart & Hustle Award([http://mlb.mlb.com/news/press\\_releases/press\\_release.jsp?ymd=20080811&content\\_id=3290960&vkey=pr\\_atl&fext=.jsp&c\\_id=atl](http://mlb.mlb.com/news/press_releases/press_release.jsp?ymd=20080811&content_id=3290960&vkey=pr_atl&fext=.jsp&c_id=atl))...) He made careless throws and made mental errors. If he felt a foul ball would go out of play or be caught, he wouldn't run hard out of the box. Teammates and reporters found him to be aloof in the clubhouse. When questioned by reporters, Escobar explained that 99% of the (mis)perceptions about him were due to the language barrier. Bench coach Chico Cadahia explained further:

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“He's got to continue to try and [improve his English] ... But he has put tremendous effort into it. He's come a long way ... A lot of the stuff that happened probably wouldn't have happened [if Escobar was fluent in English]. Reporters are hesitant to approach him.”

“If he could speak English, it'd be a way different story. He likes to talk about the game ... But sometimes he doesn't say things [on the field] because he doesn't know how to say them.”

SOURCE(<http://blogs.ajc.com/mark-bradley-blog/2009/07/21/yunel-escobar-i-dont-believe-im-that-person/>)

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Many of the players on the Braves chafed at Escobar's flair when it comes to turning plays. His whistling was distracting to infielders. Having a perspective that there is only one “right” way to play baseball, Escobar's critics in the Atlanta organization frowned upon his creativity, passion and display of emotion.

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“He's always whistled. He's always clapped his hands when he's gotten a game-winning hit. He shows his emotions. But we've cut that down a lot over the years we've had him,” said Chico Cadahia.



Braves' 3B Chipper Jones added: "He can play, but sometimes the antics that come along with that rub people the wrong way. That's the way Cuban players are. They play with a flair."

[source\(http://blogs.ajc.com/mark-bradley-blog/2009/07/21/yunel-escobar-i-dont-believe-im-that-person/\)](http://blogs.ajc.com/mark-bradley-blog/2009/07/21/yunel-escobar-i-dont-believe-im-that-person/)

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(<http://i2.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Bobby-Cox.jpg>)

*Mean Old Bobby Cox*

Because the Braves tried to stifle Escobar's personality and playing style, he began to struggle in 2010. The mental lapses became more frequent, the batting average began to plummet. After 75 games in Atlanta, Escobar was hitting .238/.334/.284. On July 14, 2010 the Toronto Blue Jays acquired Escobar and left-handed pitcher Jo-Jo Reyes in exchange for shortstop Alex Gonzalez and two minor leaguers (Tyler Pastornicky & Tim Collins(<http://mopupduty.com/index.php/tim-collins-bio/>)).

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"It's easier to put up with some of that stuff when the guy is hitting .300," an anonymous Braves player said after Escobar was traded.

[source\(http://sports.nationalpost.com/2011/04/16/escobar-eager-to-prove-himself-with-jays/\)](http://sports.nationalpost.com/2011/04/16/escobar-eager-to-prove-himself-with-jays/)

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The trade was questioned from both sides. From Toronto's perspective, why trade for a SS when there is a hot shot SS prospect moving up through the system in Adeiny Hechavarria? Why trade for Escobar when it looks like he's already peaked? Could his career-path mirror that of fellow SS Angel Berroa(<http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/b/berroa01.shtml>)? What about Escobar's makeup? Why risk adding a cancer to an otherwise harmonious clubhouse? He must really be a team-chemistry polluting psychopathic bad-mojo-making machine for the Braves to cut him loose. After all, one year prior he was 3rd among MLB shortstops in WARP(<http://www.baseballprospectus.com/sortable/index.php?cid=993005>), behind only Hanley Ramirez and Jason Bartlett. Is he another Shea Hillenbrand?

Following the trade the Jays' GM, Alex Anthopoulos, said that the trade has no impact on Hechavarria. If anything, it would be Escobar – who is more versatile – that changes positions down the road should the need arise. As far as Escobar's struggles early on in the season, a lingering groin injury(<http://www.thestar.com/sports/baseball/mlb/bluejays/article/835681>) is most likely the cause. As far as questions about his character? Yunel had this to say:

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“I feel bad that I was getting a label I don't think I deserved. It was inappropriate because I'm not the type of person and not the type of player that people were putting the label on me as being.”

SOURCE(<http://sports.espn.go.com/mlb/news/story?id=5387181>)

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Alex Anthopoulos echoes Escobar's words:

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“Everybody that we spoke to — former teammates, coaches, minor-league staff, everybody — the response was the that this was a good kid,” said Anthopoulos.

SOURCE(<http://sports.nationalpost.com/2010/07/14/shortstop-swap-nets-jays-yunel-escobar/>)

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Since coming to Toronto, Escobar has flourished both on and off the field. Escobar made a strong first impression([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=12905031](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=12905031)) after joining the club – hitting a grand slam in his 3rd game. Blue Jays fans have embraced Escobar's slick fielding([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=10318395](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=10318395)) & laser-like throws([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=10362933](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=10362933)). Yunel can be himself in the Jays clubhouse, in part to a Latin-friendly culture that the organization has always been known for. Blue Jays superstar José Bautista has taken Escobar under his wing and mentored the young shortstop. “You've got to have your patience with him sometimes,” Bautista says. More importantly, upon his arrival in Toronto the Blue Jays have done nothing to curtail Escobar's exuberant style of play.

(<http://i1.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/yunel.gif>)

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“I'm a guy that's going to bring a lot of joy to the field, I'm going to play the game with fun and enthusiasm. I feel like I can bunt, hit-and-run, play the small game, and once in a while I'm going to get into a ball and hit it out of the field. I'm a guy that's going to make a spectacular play([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=10318395](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=10318395)) once in awhile and bring the fans up to their feet. I feel like I can do all that stuff.”

SOURCE(<http://sports.nationalpost.com/2011/04/16/escobar-eager-to-prove-himself-with-jays>)

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(<http://i2.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/yescobar-john-lott.jpg>).

*Photo credit: John Lott*

After seeing the positive impact that both Edgar Renteria & José Bautista had on Yunel in a mentorship-type role, the Blue Jays hired legendary shortstop Tony Fernandez to mentor Escobar during the offseason(<http://mopupduty.com/index.php/tony-fernandez-to-coach-yunel-escobar-in-the-offseason/>). With plays like this([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=3072107](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=3072107)), it's no wonder the Jays chose Tony to provide tutelage. Judging by Escobar's play this season, it seems to have worked.

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During infield drills in spring training this year, Escobar was whistling and yelling again, and Bautista — then playing third base — joined right in. Manager John Farrell was not complaining.

“Yunel is in a great frame of mind,” Farrell said. “He’s happy. He feels comfortable here. He feels like he can be himself.”

“It’s tough for him to trust that he’s not under the microscope anymore, and that every single little move is not going to get analyzed, and they’re going to try to figure out what his mindset was, if he was trying to play hard or not, or trying to show off,” Bautista says.

“He doesn’t do that sort of thing to show off. He doesn’t make the bad throw or get too flashy because he’s dogging it or being fancy. Sometimes he tries to overdo it because he feels he’s getting looked at so closely.”

**SOURCE**(<http://sports.nationalpost.com/2011/04/16/escobar-cager-to-prove-himself-with-jays/>)

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(<http://i2.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Yunel-Escobar-John-Farrell-Embrace.jpg>).

Since 1998 the Blue Jays have had **12** starting shortstops: Alex Gonzalez, Tony Batista, Chris Woodward, Felipe Lopez, Chris Gomez, Russ Adams, John McDonald, Royce Clayton, David Eckstein, Marco Scutaro & Alex Gonzalez (no relation to the first!). If Jays GM Alex Anthopoulos' comments are any indication, the arrival of Yunel Escobar will hopefully end the neverending game of shortstop roulette in Toronto:

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“We have a great shortstop – ready to be an all star and two more years of control. We have areas on this club we need to improve, shortstop is not one of them.”

[source\(http://feedproxy.google.com/~r/JeffBlairShow/~3/8HAP3oIC\\_ZM/jb\\_20110527\\_100031--May-25,-2011-Edition-of-The-Jeff-Blair-Show-\(9am-hour\).mp3\)](http://feedproxy.google.com/~r/JeffBlairShow/~3/8HAP3oIC_ZM/jb_20110527_100031--May-25,-2011-Edition-of-The-Jeff-Blair-Show-(9am-hour).mp3)

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In fact, he is becoming one of the best shortstops in all of baseball([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=13937659](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=13937659)).

Speaking of previous Jays shortstops before him, Escobar has gone through a name change reminiscent of Manuel Lee. When Lee first arrived in Toronto, he went by “Manny” until he corrected the media and requested that he would like to be addressed as Manuel. So too have Toronto media been getting Escobar’s first name wrong. Upon his arrival in Toronto, members of the local sports media pronounced Escobar’s first name as “Joo-nell.” Only recently has Yunel corrected their pronunciation: he prefers “You-nell.”

Still, there is work to be done. Escobar has been guilty of missing bunt/hit-and-run signs, losing focus([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=11229097](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=11229097)) and putting too much pressure on himself. It is apparent that Escobar is not completely over his negative Atlanta experience:

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“He’ll come back in the dugout after hitting a ball hard, and it gets caught, and he’s like, ‘Man, I’ve got to show this team that I’m working hard. I should be getting more hits.’”

[source\(http://sports.nationalpost.com/2011/04/16/escobar-eager-to-prove-himself-with-jays/\)](http://sports.nationalpost.com/2011/04/16/escobar-eager-to-prove-himself-with-jays/)

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Escobar has a career OPS of .841 with RISP and has been displaying that clutch-hitting ability([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=15028167](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=15028167)) so far this season. As long as he keeps that up, Escobar’s need to show Torontonians that he is working hard will fade away. What won’t fade away are the memories of his dazzling defensive play that reminds Blue Jay fans of their favourite shortstop of days gone by, Tony Fernandez. If there ever was a fanbase that is yearning to embrace defensive panache, it is that of the Blue Jays. Braves bench coach Chino Cadahia, a fellow Cuban who is close to Escobar, said it best when describing Yunel: “He plays with ...” and pauses before adding ‘**ánimo**,’ or soul.” Welcome home, Yunel.



(<http://mopupduty.com/index.php/yunel-escobar/yunel-3/>)







(<http://i1.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Yunel-Escobar-Walkoff.jpg>).

For your viewing pleasure, I have compiled a Yunel Escobar highlight package. Enjoy:

[Escobar's behind-the-back-toss](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=10318395)([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=10318395](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=10318395)).

[Escobar's Grand Slam](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=10017991)([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=10017991](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=10017991)).

[Yunel shows off his strong arm](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=7479273)([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=7479273](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=7479273)).

[and again](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=4959379)([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=4959379](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=4959379)).

[Yunel Escobar gets Skip Schumaker by a hair at first when he barehands his chopper to short and throws to first in one motion](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=4354727)([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=4354727](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=4354727)).

[The YESCOBAR backhander](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=4523235)([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=4523235](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=4523235)).

[Yunel gets plunked and reacts Cuban-style](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=4280353)([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=4280353](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=4280353)).

[Ted Lilly tries it and Yunel motions for "tunnel time"](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=3311728)([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=3311728](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=3311728)).

[Escobar's head actually \*\*IS\*\* in the game](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=5791231)([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=5791231](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=5791231)).

[Escobar's 2-run home run](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=10060051)([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=10060051](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=10060051)).

Yunel Escobar makes the snag at short and fires to first to double off Hanley Ramirez([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=6255809](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=6255809)).

Yunel Escobar makes a diving stop at short, turning two on David Ortiz's ground ball([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=14718443](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=14718443)).

Escobar's game-tying HR off Philip Humber([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=15219805](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=15219805)).

Yunel Escobar makes a nice catch on a liner to short for the out([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=14633257](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=14633257)).

Escobar turns a DP on Derek Jeter([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=14008491](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=14008491)).

Yunel Escobar lifts the Blue Jays to a 7-6 win over the A's with a walk-off, two-run homer in the 10th inning([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=13502883](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=13502883)).

Escobar takes Tim Lincecum DEEP([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=5685501](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=5685501)).

Yunel Escobar displays his athleticism([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=12421967](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=12421967)).

Escobar solo shot([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=11772047](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=11772047)).

So smooth([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=11432873](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=11432873)).

Escobar spinning play([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=11266339](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=11266339)).

Yunel's game-saving diving stop([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=6003527](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=6003527)).

Escobar's strong throw([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=10712915](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=10712915)).

Dazzling([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=5607275](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=5607275)).

Escobar solo shot ([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=10505301](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=10505301)).

This is what we call "Range Factor"([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=4889487](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=4889487)).

More of the same([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=4434033](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=4434033)).

Escobar's game-ending spectacular play([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=9615287](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=9615287)).

Yunel lays out([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=5370715](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=5370715)).

Escobar's unassisted double play([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=6141345](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=6141345)).

Yunel's unreal play with the shift on([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=9472643](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=9472643)).

Escobar commits a robbery([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=9307061](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=9307061)).

Escobar's barehanded play([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=9099685](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=9099685)).

Escobar shows off the cannon([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=8850945](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=8850945)).

and again([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=2762645](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=2762645)).

Escobar's sliding stop and fires a bullet([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=8650019](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=8650019)).

Escobar soars through the air and makes a diving catch([http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content\\_id=7691575](http://mlb.mlb.com/video/play.jsp?content_id=7691575)).



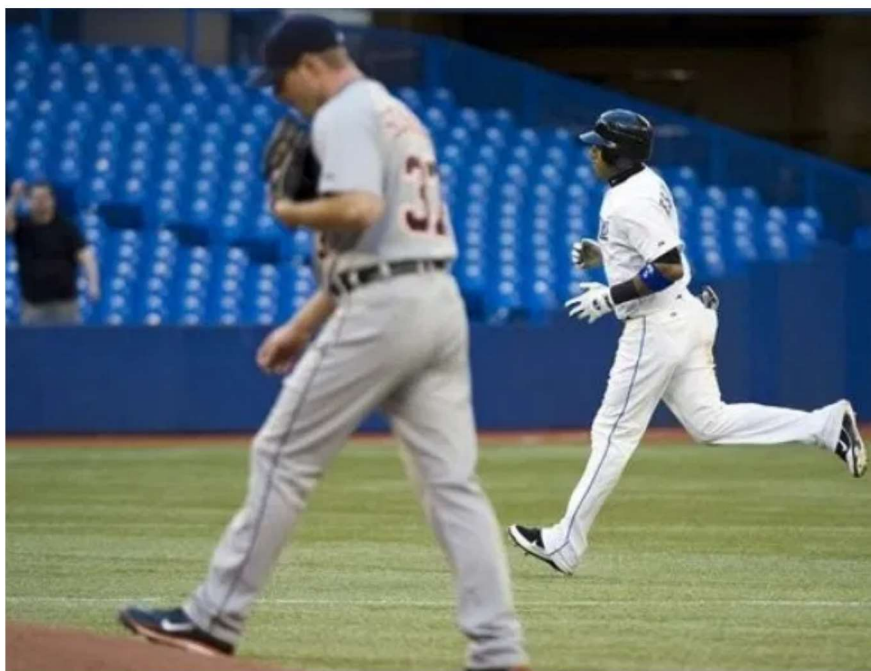
(<http://i1.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Escobar-Yunel-Photo-Day.jpg>).





(<http://i2.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/marry-me-yunel.jpg>).

([http://i1.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Yunel\\_Escobar.jpg](http://i1.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Yunel_Escobar.jpg)).



(<http://i1.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Yunel-Escobar-Max-Scherzer.jpg>).



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(<http://io.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/EscobarYunel.jpg>).



(<http://io.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Escobar-Yunel.jpg>).





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**JaysFang90** • 10 years ago

One of the best things i have read in a long time.

THanks a lot

^ | ▾ • Reply • Share &gt;

**Chris K** • 10 years ago

I've been reading you guys for quite a while and I'm always awestruck at how you manage to capture the stories of these players in such a captivating manner. Time and time again. I feel like every one of these profiles should have a link going back to the Roy Halladay story.

^ | ▾ • Reply • Share &gt;

**JaNae** • 10 years ago

Mi nombre es JaNae Armogan y debo decir que me siento muy conmovido por este artículo yo no tenía idea iba tiraron tanto para llegar a donde él está. He tenido el placer de reunirse con el Sr. Escobar y él es el más abajo en la tierra y modesta persona me he encontrado nunca. Me complace saber que ahora está cómodo en Toronto y se siente como él puede ser él mismo, en realidad, es la razón por la que se metió en ver béisbol, puedes decirle su pasión por él y esto es lo que nació para hacer, el jays no sería lo mismo sin él.

ENGLISH:

My name is JaNae Armogan and I must say I am really touched by this article I had no idea he went threw so much to get where he is. I have had the pleasure in meeting Mr. Escobar and he is the most down to earth and modest person I have ever met. I'm so glad to hear that he is now comfortable in Toronto and feels like he can be himself, He is actually the reason I got into watching baseball, you can tell its a passion for him and this is what he was born to do, the jays wouldn't be the same without him. I wish him nothing but great success he deserves it more than anyone, and he will ALWAYS BE MY FAVORITE SHORTSTOP/BASEBALL PLAYER :)

^ | ▾ • Reply • Share &gt;

**Callum Hughson** • 10 years ago

Great comment - gracias JaNae!

^ | ▾ • Reply • Share &gt;

**JaNae** → Callum Hughson • 10 years ago

Gracias for allowing me to share.

^ | ▾ • Reply • Share &gt;