

Hall of Fame-Bound: Dodgers Legend and Outspoken Christian Clayton Kershaw to Retire

Clayton Kershaw, one of the most dominant pitchers of his generation, announced his retirement Thursday in an emotional news conference at Dodger Stadium. Surrounded by teammates, coaches, front office members, and his family, Kershaw reflected on his 18-year career with the Los Angeles Dodgers and made clear that he is stepping away with peace in his heart.

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“I’m really not sad,” Kershaw said as his voice broke with emotion, according to reports from ESPN. “I’m really at peace with this. It’s just emotional. I tried to hold it together. I told our guys not to make it weird today because I was going to get weird if you make it weird. And here I am, making it weird.”

A Career Marked by Greatness

Kershaw’s career is certain to land him in the Hall of Fame. He won three National League Cy Young Awards, an MVP, made 11 All-Star appearances, and collected 222 wins. His career ERA is the second lowest in the live ball era among pitchers with more than 1,500 innings. He also became only the 20th pitcher in history to record 3,000 strikeouts.

Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said, “I think he’s the greatest pitcher in this generation. There’s obviously a lot of great pitchers. I’ve just never been around a greater competitor.

Very accountable, very consistent. He's made me better. And I think that we have grown together, so I feel fortunate to have been able to manage him and be around him for 10 years. He's earned this right to walk away at his choosing."



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Faith That Anchored Him

While baseball defined much of his public life, Kershaw has consistently pointed to his Christian faith as the anchor that carried him through success and hardship. He has spoken openly about his belief that Jesus Christ is the foundation of his life, once saying, "Jesus is the only true way to Heaven." That conviction, combined with the support of his wife Ellen, guided him through seasons of dominance and times when injuries threatened to derail his career.

Kershaw has also used his platform to live out his faith through service. His foundation, Kershaw's Challenge, has helped children and families in need around the world. Whether on mission trips to Zambia or serving in Los Angeles, Kershaw has seen baseball not as an end in itself but as a gift that allowed him to serve a greater purpose.

Admired by Teammates and Fans

His humility and character left as deep a mark as his pitching. Dodgers first baseman Freddie Freeman, who had known about Kershaw's retirement plans for months, said, "Knowing Clayton, I thought he would just not even tell anybody and just retire. But I'm glad he did, so the fans and not only Dodger fans, but all baseball fans can enjoy his last start here at Dodger Stadium in the regular season tomorrow. It's just a heck of a career. Just in awe of him."

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Teammate Mookie Betts added, "The teammate he is, the competitor he is. Not just on the mound, but really everything. The person he is. I'll always remember that, and I'll always be able to say Clayton Kershaw is someone that I love."

A Fitting End

Even in his final season, Kershaw showed flashes of brilliance. He posted a 10–2 record with a ERA despite diminished velocity and injuries that had piled up over his career. "I can't think of a better season to go out," he said. "We still have a lot to accomplish, obviously, this month, and the last thing I want to do is be a distraction to anybody from accomplishing our ultimate goal – to win in the last game of the season."

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For Kershaw, retirement is not the end but a transition into more time with Ellen and their children, and more opportunities to serve through faith. He made that clear as he closed his remarks with simplicity and gratitude. Asked about his final start at Dodger Stadium, Kershaw smiled and said, "I anticipate pitching good."

It was a humble answer from a man whose faith, family, and fierce competitiveness have defined his journey.

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