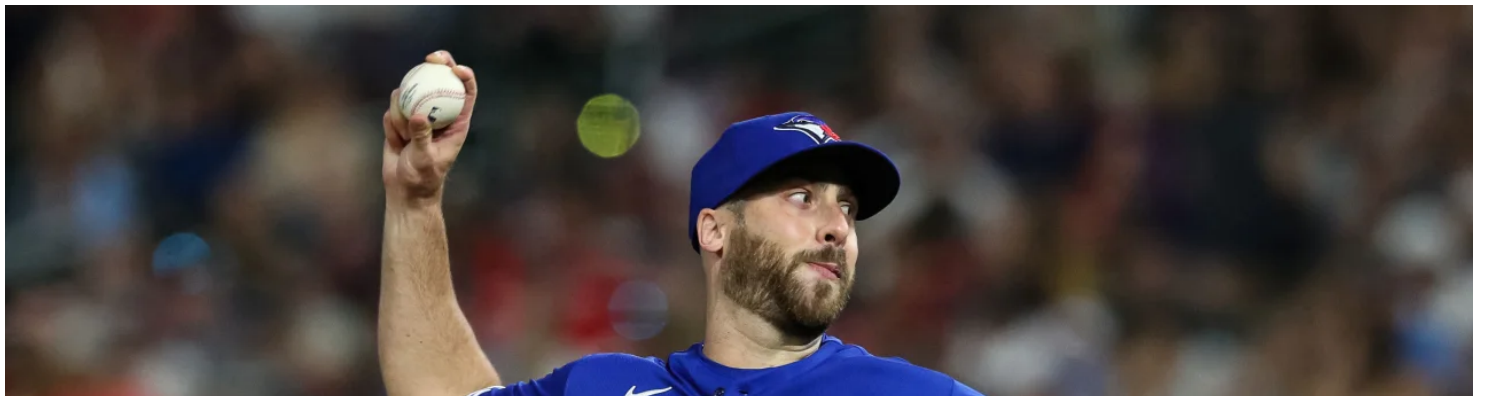


Toronto Blue Jays drop pitcher Anthony Bass following anti-LBGTQ comments

By [Jacob Lev](#), CNN

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David Berding/Getty Images

Anthony Bass of the Toronto Blue Jays delivers a pitch against the Minnesota Twins in the ninth inning of the game at Target Field on August 4, 2022, in Minneapolis.

(CNN) — The Toronto Blue Jays have designated pitcher Anthony Bass for assignment following an anti-LGBTQ post the 35-year-old shared on social media last month.

The move comes hours before the Blue Jays' first game of Pride Weekend when the team faces the Minnesota Twins. Bass was expected to take part in the festivities including catching the ceremonial first pitch on Friday.

Blue Jays general manager Ross Atkins said Friday that Bass's performance on the field was primarily a baseball decision.

"Performance was a large aspect of the decision," Atkins told reporters. "Distraction was a small part of it and something we had to factor in."

Atkins emphasized that the move was made to improve the team.

"I'm saying we're trying to build the best possible team we can build and this was a baseball decision to make our team better," Atkins said.



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Atkins added that the team values the LGBTQ community and expressed regret for any

Atkins added that the team values the LGBTQ community and expressed regret for any mishandling of the situation.

“We definitely don’t want anyone feeling any hurt,” Atkins said. “We’re focused on the environment. We care about this community. We care about our fans. And I deeply regret if people do feel that way. It certainly was not our intention.”

In May, Bass shared an Instagram post that called for anti-LGBTQ boycotts of Target and Bud Light over their support for the LGBTQ community and referred to the support as “evil” and “demonic.”

Bass later apologized for the post while speaking to reporters, but has been booed by fans at the Rogers Centre since.

On Thursday, Bass expanded on his original apology, saying he was sorry for “any harm or hurt” that he made toward the Pride community. However, he added that he stands by his “personal beliefs.”

“The video itself, obviously, I took it down,” Bass said. “I just felt like it was too much of a distraction, right? But I stand by my personal beliefs and everyone’s entitled to their personal beliefs, right? But also I mean no harm toward any groups of people. And I felt like taking that down the second time was the right thing to do and not being a distraction. As a team, our job is to win baseball games. And that’s my focus.”

Bass said he did not perceive the post to be “hateful” but added that he understood why some people viewed it as “hurtful.”

The 12-year veteran said he had a “productive” meeting with Pride Toronto’s executive director Sherwin Modeste earlier this week to understand more about LGBTQ community in the city and learn about Modeste’s story.

“Before I said anything, I really wanted just to listen to what he had to say. Those were

Bass met with Atkins and team manager John Schneider last week and according to Atkins on Thursday, Bass apologized to them and his teammates for “creating any harm and for hurting others.”

“That was not his intent,” Atkins added. “His emotion was very strong, as was mine. I was personally hurt, myself. He felt my disappointment and anger. It was a very charged exchange.”

Atkins said he felt Bass’s apology was “sincere” and that he felt he was holding himself “accountable.”

“That was the most significant piece is that he was accountable,” Atkins said. “He wanted to apologize, not just to me, which was very important, but more importantly to our community and this community. Without that, as I said, we’d have a very different outcome. And then I think the willingness to do something about it, being paramount and seeing that step taken is a good first step.”

As for a message for fans who may be against participating in the weekend’s festivities, Atkins said the organization will “continue to work hard to make sure that this is an inclusive environment and one where we will not stand for behavior that makes it otherwise.”

Bass has a 4.95 ERA in 22 relief appearances this season for the Blue Jays. Bass has also pitched for the San Diego Padres, Houston Astros, Texas Rangers, Chicago Cubs, Seattle Mariners and Miami Marlins.

In a corresponding roster move, Toronto reinstated right-hander Mitch White from the 60-day injured list.

Designated for assignment means the Blue Jays can trade Bass in the next seven days, and if they don’t, they can place him on irrevocable outright waivers – where he will be released or claimed by another team.



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