

Eye on Sports

A-Rod is an A-Fraud?

By Thomas A. McGlinchey - *Lion's Eye Sports Editor* - tam5160@psu.edu

Alex Rodriguez, otherwise known as A-Rod, was supposed to bring some sobriety to the All-Time Home Run (HR) list, but that is not to be. According to a recent article published by Sports Illustrated, A-Rod took steroids during his 2003 campaign as a Texas Ranger.

Alex Rodriguez has been in the sport of baseball for many years and was supposed to be the last clean all-time home run hitter, post 1990. He was said to be the one that would overthrow the controversial Barry Bonds from the "top spot" of the All-Time leader in HR. This was predicted because A-Rod was the youngest to 500 HR. He was only 30 when he hit his 500th, and many would have expected him to past Bonds and sober up the HR lead. At the end of the 2008 season, A-Rod was clocked in at 553 HR and well ahead of the infamous leader.

A-Rod started his career in Major League Baseball (MLB) as a Seattle Mariner. He was hitting ahead of one of the greats, Ken Griffey Jr. In 2000, the two dynamic sluggers were split up, but were still on pace to break the leader, at the time, Henry "Hank" Aaron's record of 755 HR. Injury plagued seasons kept Jr. from accomplishing that feat. Meanwhile, A-Rod had been traded to the Texas Rangers in 2001, and was still on a tear, but not as much as people expected him to be.

In a recent interview with Baseball Tonight correspondent Peter Gammons, Rodriguez sat down to talk about the allegations that he was taking steroids in 2003. A-Rod said that it was not just in 2003 that he "juiced" up, but it was actually the whole time he was a Texas Ranger, spanning 2001-2003. This was shocking because in an interview with Katie Couric a few years earlier, Rodriguez denied all allegations that he "juiced" up.

Now as a New York Yankee, A-Rod is in the spotlight. Many people want to see how this confession will affect his legacy, and whether he will surpass Bonds in the future. Many baseball analysts see this differently than say Bonds, or Yankee teammate Roger Clemens' situation. They see this as a turning point in A-Rod's career. Bonds was accused of "juicing" up in his later years, he is now 44, and Clemens was in his mid 40's when the Mitchell Report came out and said that Clemens had "juiced", which he is still fighting in US Congress to this day. A-Rod however, is only 30, and many baseball analysts see this as A-Rod having something to prove after the confession. Analysts seem to think that if A-Rod can clear his name, he will still stand a chance of being inducted into the Hall of Fame after his retirement. This could also hinge on Rodriguez not being linked with names like Bonds, McGwire, Sosa, and Palmero.

What is next for Rodriguez? Will this confession set him up for a tear in 2009? What will the Commissioner, Bud Selig, do about this? Will he suspend A-Rod or take some of the "dingers" away from his total? Only time will tell.



Alex Rodriguez as a Texas Ranger. (photo courtesy http://www.stephenholland.org/images/holland_alex_rodriguez_lg.jpg)

Howard Avoids Arbitration With New Contract

By Pat Grant

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Ryan Howard, after three years of carrying this team in September, and two years of carrying this team into the post-season, has finally earned himself a new contract. On February 10th, Howard signed a three year \$54 million deal which locks him up through 2011. The contract breaks down where Howard earns \$15 million in 2009, \$19 million in 2010, and \$20 million in 2011.

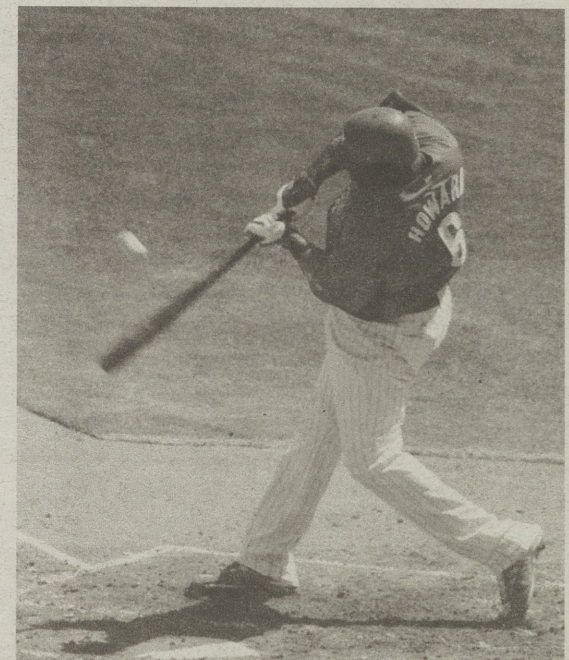
After three straight Septembers of proving that he is worth the money, (hitting around 10 home runs and 30 RBI's per September) Howard will have the opportunity to show his power as a Phillie for at least three more years.

Howard, 29 years old, with the peak of his career still to come, many suspect him to power his way to the top of the Majors. With the World Series trophy in house, Howard should be proud to repeat his league leading home runs and runs batted in. With three straight outstanding Septembers, many would expect nothing less of him, but to carry the load in the later months of the season.

Milestones are hopefully on Howard's 2009 plate. He is close to 600 hits, which he is 22 away from that feat, which is astounding in only three and a half years in the majors. Another milestone that is in his sights this season is the 200 home run mark. He was the fastest player to 100 home runs a few years ago, but has tapered off since that time. He is only 23 home runs shy of this and he could manage this if he starts off the season right.

One faulting statistic that has come with the 178 home runs that he has accumulated is the 692 strikeouts that have come with it. He set a major league record a few years ago for the most strikeouts in a season, and he was one shy of 200 this past season.

Many are weary as to if he deserves the raises when he had a batting average of .251 this past season, and for his career has a .279 batting average. Even though with the low batting average and the high strikeout ratio, he is still feared as one of the biggest threats in today's game.



Ryan Howard at bat. (photo courtesy http://www.thebroadstreetblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/05/ryan_howard.jpg)

"Golden Boy" Phelps Fallen From Grace

By Thomas A. McGlinchey - *Lion's Eye Sports Editor* - tam5160@psu.edu

Michael Phelps has been considered the Golden Boy of athletics. But is he really? Phelps was pictured in a British tabloid at a college campus party inhaling from a bong full of "dope". Phelps has been criticized since then and considered as falling from grace.

Many people are backing the "Golden Boy" as he was just being a young man, and he was just having fun.

Many people are also concerned about his endorsements and whether they would back him in his fight for a clean image. One team that has said they would not back him is the cereal company Kellogg's. Kellogg's has said that the reason that they will not extend their contract with the swimmer after it expires after February is because it is not what Kellogg's is about, (the image of Phelps is not great for their image). Although the major sponsors of the swimmer are sticking by him, such as Speedo, Visa, and many others. In an interview that was conducted by CNN's Anderson Cooper for 60 Minutes, the swimmer's agent said that Michael would be marketed well and that he could have inherited over \$100,000,000 throughout the swimmers career through endorsements.

Phelps has publicly said that it was a choice of bad judgment on his part. He also publicly apologized to the fans that supported him in his quest for the "ultimate" prize this past summer in Beijing. Phelps is training in the water for the 2012 Olympics in London, but said that with the rise of the photo he may have to rethink that and he might retire, if he doesn't retire than he said that 2012 would be his last Olympics anyway. The USA Swimming Commission has banned Phelps from racing for 3 months.

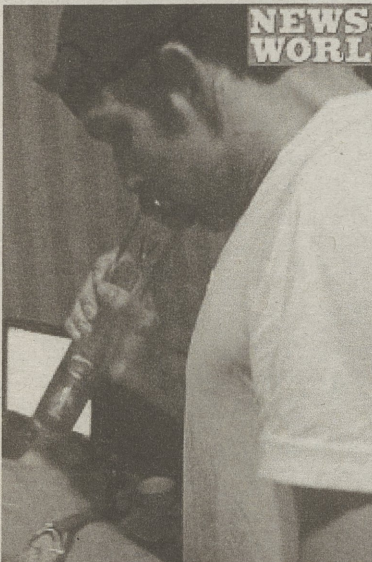
Phelps' main goal, which he has also publicly stated is to raise the bar in the sport of swimming, and he sure has over the past summer, or at least interest in himself. During the 2008 Olympics, the Cincinnati Reds played his 7th gold on the jumbo tron at the game. Bruce Springsteen had dedicated Born in the USA to Phelps after he won his 7th gold. Finally, his home football team, the Baltimore Ravens showed his 8th gold on the tron and 70,000 Ravens fans cheered in the stands after a preseason game.

In the current case, Phelps is being pursued by the state police for criminal charges. The state police have arrested 8 people that were at the party of the picture, and many analyst question whether that has to do with the police going after Phelps. If charges are brought what would that do to Phelps' reputation?

Phelps was in a police scuffle before. After the 2004 Olympics in Athens, Phelps was cited with a DUI for intoxication, but that was blown over way before this past Olympics in Beijing. Many people did not recall this event until this current incident arose.

What do you think of the Phelps controversy? Do you think that it is fair that he be arrested? Do you think Phelps should retire before the 2012 Olympics? Should his endorsements be behind him or bail on him?

Phelps infamous bong picture. (photo courtesy <http://image.examiner.com/images/blog/wysiwyg/image/michael-phelps-bong-4.jpg>)



Sixers

February 25 @ Washington @ 7 PM
February 27 @ New York @ 7:30 PM
February 28 vs. Orlando @ 7 PM
March 2 vs. New Orleans @ 7 PM

Flyers

February 25 vs. Los Angeles @ 7 PM
February 27 vs. Montreal @ 7 PM
March 1 @ New Jersey @ 1 PM
March 3 @ Boston @ 7 PM

Phillies Spring Training Schedule

February 25, 2009 @ Pittsburgh Pirates @ 1:05 PM
February 26 vs. Toronto Blue Jays @ 1:05 PM
February 27 @ Cincinnati Reds @ 1:05 PM
February 28 vs. Tampa Bay Rays @ 1:05 PM