

A-Rod acknowledges friendship with Jeter has cooled

The Associated Press

On the first day of his fourth season with the New York Yankees, Alex Rodriguez finally acknowledged his relationship with Derek Jeter has cooled.

NOTEBOOK

After insisting for three years that they remained close, Rodriguez said it was important to him to publicly confirm what others have said since he joined the team.

"People start assuming that things are a lot worse than what they are, which they're not. But they're obviously not as great as they used to be. We were like blood brothers," Rodriguez said Monday at the New York Yankees' training camp complex in Tampa, Fla. "You don't have to go to dinner with a guy four, five times a week to do what you're doing. It's actually much better than all you guys expect, but I just want to let the truth be known."

Jeter, the Yankees' captain, has distanced himself since a 2001 Esquire article in which A-Rod said, "Jeter's been blessed with great talent around him" and "he's never had to lead."

"You go into New York, you wanna stop Bernie (Williams) and (Paul) O'Neill," A-Rod was quoted as saying. "You never say, 'Don't let Derek beat you.' He's never your concern."

Sitting in jeans and a black sweat jacket in the first-base dugout at Legends Field after his physical,



New York's Alex Rodriguez listens to reporters' questions Monday at Legends Field in Tampa, Fla. A-Rod said his friendship with shortstop Derek Jeter isn't the same as it was a decade ago.

Rodriguez did three rounds of interviews: English-language television, Spanish-language television and print reporters. He addressed his relationship with Jeter in all three.

"We were best of friends about 10, 13, 14 years ago, and we still get along well. We have a good working relationship. I cheer very hard for him. He cheers hard for me. And most importantly, we're

both trying to win a world championship," Rodriguez said.

"The reality is there's been a change in the relationship over 14 years and, hopefully, we can just put it behind us," Rodriguez said. "You go from sleeping over at somebody's house five days a week, and now you don't sleep over. It's just not that big of a deal."

During the offseason, former Yankee

Darryl Strawberry said Jeter needs to embrace Rodriguez. A-Rod said he didn't feel Jeter needed to support him more.

"I'm a big boy. I'm 31 years old now," he said. "I think it's important for us to be on the right page, and we are."

Sweeney says Bonds issue 'over'

Mark Sweeney showed up at spring training Monday in Scottsdale, Ariz., ready to strictly talk baseball, not the report that teammate Barry Bonds blamed a failed amphetamines test last season on something he got from Sweeney's locker.

Sweeney insists there will be no issues between them and he isn't harboring any hard feelings toward Bonds, scheduled to move out for the first time today with a frenzy of media following his every move and utterance.

"Everything's been fine," said Sweeney, who received a public apology from Bonds. "It was over and done with. It's time to move on and talk about baseball, which has been good. Barry and I have been fine. ... That's how I am. I'm back to it. Everyone is in here. It's not about me and Barry."

Bonds' arrival this year might be crazier than even in recent springs. Not only is he fully healthy and only 22 home runs from passing Hank Aaron's career record of 755, but the reported amphetamines result and the situation with Sweeney is still fresh in everyone's minds.

Not to mention he could be indicted if a federal grand jury finds that he perjured himself when he testified in 2003 in the BALCO steroid distribution case that he hadn't knowingly taken performance-enhancing drugs.

Last month, the New York Daily News reported that when Bonds first learned of his failed amphetamines test, he attributed it to a substance he took from Sweeney's locker. Sweeney plans to take a lead role in helping build chemistry in the clubhouse once all the position players are in camp.

Shortstop Omar Vizquel doesn't expect Bonds to stand up and say sorry to the group, though hinted it might be a nice gesture.

Gibbons, Jays agree to extension

The Toronto Blue Jays and manager John Gibbons have agreed to a one-year, \$650,000 contract extension, a team official said Monday.

Gibbons led the Blue Jays to an 87-75 record and a second-place finish in the AL East last season.

Gibbons will make \$500,000 this year, one of the lowest salaries for a manager in the majors. The extension covers the 2008 season.

Gibbons might have cost himself a longer extension after getting into altercations with infielder Shea Hillenbrand and pitcher Ted Lilly last season.

He is 187-187 since replacing manager Carlos Tosca in August 2004.

NBA set for second half of season, especially Iverson, Riley, Nash

By BRIAN MAHONEY
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LAS VEGAS

Time for Allen Iverson, Pat Riley, Steve Nash and the rest of the NBA to get back to work.

Jason Kidd, too, though even he wasn't sure how much longer he'll be doing it in New Jersey.

The show is over in Las Vegas, where the NBA capped its weekend of All-Star festivities with the West's 153-132 victory against the East on Sunday night.

Now it's time to get serious again. "Being in Vegas, it's a great place to be, a great place to chill," Minnesota's Kevin Garnett said. "But it's out with the fantasy and back to reality."

That means trade talk for some teams, playoff pushes for others. It all gets started tonight when play resumes with 10 games. Riley returns to Miami's bench the following night, and the next big event on the league's calendar comes quickly after that.

The trade deadline is Thursday, with

"We need some wins. This first half of the season was rocky for us. Hopefully we can put that behind us and get better."

Carmelo Anthony
Denver Nuggets' All-Star forward

Pau Gasol and Kidd among the big names who will wait to see if they have a new destination. Gasol has asked out of Memphis, and the Grizzlies are trying to accommodate him. Kidd, who missed the All-Star game because of a back injury, acknowledged during the break that teams have asked about getting him out of New Jersey.

In the East, landing one proven star could be all a team needs to seize control in a mediocre conference.

Teams in the West could be looking to deal for a better chance to compete with powerful Dallas and Phoenix.

Denver hoped it had done that when it acquired Iverson from Philadelphia in

December to pair with All-Star forward Carmelo Anthony, but the results haven't been there yet, mostly because the duo hasn't been on the court enough. Anthony was serving his 15-game suspension when Iverson was acquired, and Iverson missed eight of the past nine games because of a sprained ankle.

So despite having two of the NBA's top five scorers, Denver is only seventh in the West, two games ahead of the ninth-place Clippers. But Anthony thinks the Nuggets are ready to make their move.

"Now that this is over with, I can focus on my season, the rest of the season," Anthony said. "A.I. told me (Monday) he'd be ready to play (tonight), so that was a good sign."

"We need some wins. This first half of the season was rocky for us. Hopefully we can put that behind us and get better."

Nash joined Iverson on the West bench because of a shoulder injury that forced him to miss the past four games, though hopes to return today. The Suns couldn't keep up their sizzling pace without their two-time MVP, losing three times to fall

4½ games behind Dallas for the league's best record.

After testing his sore right shoulder in practice Monday, Nash said he hopes to return to the lineup when the Suns visit the Los Angeles Clippers tonight.

The Heat already know their big piece is ready. Riley is set to take the coaching reins back from Ron Rothstein when Miami visits Houston on Wednesday night. He returns to a team that looks much different from the one he left on Jan. 3 to have knee and hip surgery.

Shaquille O'Neal has since come back, and the Heat have won seven of their past eight games, rebounding from a horrendous start and moving into eighth place in the Eastern Conference. The defending NBA champs are four games behind Washington in the Southeast Division.

"We wanted at the beginning of the year to come out of the blocks strong but it wasn't scripted that way," Dwyane Wade said. "So we have to take what we have and go into the second half of the season, and hopefully Jason Williams gets back healthy and we have all our

guns and we have our coach back and just try to defend our title. It's going to be very tough, and whatever happens, we can say we all did it together."

The Heat still have plenty of time to move up in the East, where Detroit has looked like the class of the conference since signing Chris Webber. Even teams such as Atlanta and New York, both coming off dismal seasons and well below .500 in this one, still have playoff hopes heading into the final two months.

The West has four teams right behind Garnett's Timberwolves for the final playoff spot, but it's hard to imagine any of the teams at the bottom doing any damage in the playoffs since they'd have to face the Mavs or Suns right away.

But teams like Utah and Houston could be dangerous second-round foes, especially if injured All-Stars Carlos Boozer and Yao Ming make successful comebacks.

That can wait. There's enough to keep the NBA busy Thursday — trades during the day and an NBA finals rematch in Dallas as it hosts the Heat that night.

Richard W. Jackson, M.D.
Kevin E. Julian, M.D.
Kurt R. Martin, M.D.

GENERAL ORTHOPAEDICS
as well as Joint Replacement, Arthroscopic Procedures & Fracture Care

GREENWOOD ORTHOPAEDICS

1550 E. County Line Rd • Suite 200
Community Hospital South Campus
(317) 497-6497

Rx & E We've Got The Prescription For All Your Health Care Needs!

Ostomy Supplies and Wound Care

Henderson Pharmacy & Home Health Care
100 E. Jefferson St., Franklin
736-5631
Your Community Health Source
Home Medical Equipment & Services (Home Care) ConvivaCare Services is Accredited by the Community Health Accreditation Program

GREENWOOD PEDIATRICS

Gail L. Goettler, M.D. | Carol G. Johnson, M.D.
Jane E. Wilson, M.D. | Debbie Beville, R.N., C.P.N.P.
Mary Ann Reklau, R.N., C.P.N.P.

All physicians are welcoming new patients and look forward to meeting you and your children.

Call 887-6060

For more information or to make an appointment.

1030 E. County Line Rd. • Ste B2
Indianapolis, IN 46227
(Conveniently Located at Shelby and County Line Roads)

ALL ABOUT HEALTH

Can oral health prevent heart disease?

By the faculty of Harvard Medical School

Q: My dentist told me that seeing a periodontist for my gums might protect me from heart disease. How is this possible?

A: It's true that people with gum disease and tooth loss tend to have more heart disease than those with good oral health. Researchers are still trying to pin down the nature of this connection. So far, we don't know if improving your oral health will help you prevent a heart attack, but future studies may answer this question.

Periodontitis: Teeth, gums in peril

Gum disease (periodontitis) is an infection that attacks the gums and bones around the teeth, leading to inflamed gums. Left untreated, the teeth may loosen and fall out. Some doctors believe that periodontitis may play a role in the development of heart disease. Researchers are exploring possible mechanisms that may connect the two processes.

Two possible links between your mouth and your heart are bacteria and inflammation, the body's response to injury or irritation. Take gum disease, for example. Gum disease gets a foothold when the sticky, bacteria-laden film that forms on teeth (called plaque) extends into the sulcus, the shallow groove where gum meets tooth (see illustration). Toxins released by the bacteria irritate the surrounding tissue. The immune system responds to the infection and irritation. Inflammation follows. Plaque slowly hardens into calculus, which further inflames the gum. Eventually, some of the tissue and bone that supports the teeth can erode away. This is gum disease, also known as periodontitis.

People with heart disease develop blockages filled with cholesterol in the walls of their arteries. Inflammation causes these blockages to grow and rupture -- an event that triggers heart attacks and most strokes.

In people with gum disease, chewing and tooth brushing release bacteria into the bloodstream. Several species of bacteria that cause gum disease have sometimes been found in the fatty blockages in arteries. It is possible they contribute to the inflammatory damage that leads to heart disease.

Bacteria that inhabit the mouth could also cause trouble by releasing toxins that find their way into the bloodstream or artery walls. The immune system's response to these toxins could harm artery walls or make blood clot more easily. Inflammation in the mouth might "rev up" inflammation throughout the body. This could set the stage for heart problems.

Unfortunately, research in humans hasn't yet revealed clear connections between oral health and heart health. Several studies have shown a strong link between gum disease and the risk of heart attacks. But others turned up no connection at all. And even if the association is real, it doesn't necessarily mean that gum disease actually leads to heart problems. Instead, it's possible the two share common causes, such as advancing age, cigarette smoking, diabetes or low socioeconomic status.

Researchers at the Harvard Schools of Dental Medicine and Public Health have also suggested that gum disease and the resulting tooth loss may lead to poor eating habits. That, in turn, could contribute to heart-disease risk.

Treating gum disease usually involves scaling, a procedure that removes plaque and calculus above and below the gum line. In some cases, the dentist will surgically remove damaged gum tissue or prescribe antibiotics to reduce infection. Does this treatment lower the risk of heart disease? Some small studies suggest yes, while other say no. A larger, longer trial could cut through the confusion. Tentative plans call for giving intensive periodontal treatment to 2,000 people with gum disease and heart disease, and standard treatment to another 2,000.

But in the meantime, take care of your teeth for your teeth's sake. Brush and floss every day and see your dentist at least twice a year for regular cleanings and oral exams. Get help if you have sore or receding gums, or if your gums bleed when you brush. If you've already lost one or more teeth, talk with a nutritionist to find foods you can eat that are good for your overall health. All of these strategies will pay off for your oral health, and they just may benefit your heart -- and that should put some sparkle in your smile!

Copyright 2007 the President and Fellows of Harvard College. Developed by Harvard Health Publications (www.health.harvard.edu). Distributed by UFS. Submit questions to harvard_adviser@hms.harvard.edu.

INTRODUCING YOUR #1 ORTHOPAEDIC TEAM... THE ONE AND ONLY ORTHOPAEDIC TEAM YOU NEED TO KNOW.

Greg T. Hardin, MD Orthopedic Surgeon Sports Medicine	Douglas A. Flory, MD Foot & Ankle Surgery Sports Medicine	James H. Karpach, MD Palms, Orthopedic Foot Joint Replacement & Spine	Scott P. Olvey, MD Hand, Wrist, Elbow Surgery Total Shoulder Replacement	James K. Cole, MD Minimally Invasive Neck & Back Surgery
Timothy J. Wilson, MD Total Joint Replacement	David A. Levin, MD Minimally Invasive Neck & Back Surgery	John N. Lomas, MD Back & Neck Pain NCS & EMG	Tompson Lee, MD Back & Neck Pain NCS & EMG	Chas. Smith, MD Minimally Invasive Ankle/Arthroscopy

317-888-PAIN

St. Francis South Campus
8141 S. Emerson Ave., Ste. A
Indianapolis, IN 46237
(317)888-1051 or 1-877-468-5337

Greenwood Corners
8711 US Hwy 31 S.
Indianapolis, IN 46227
(Beside Krispy Kreme)

Scott M. Benjamin, DPM
Podiatry

Center for Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine
www.gotpain.org

Appointments scheduled within 24-48 hours.