

Transcript: Prepared Statement by Alex Rodriguez Spring Training 2009

Written by Alex Rodriguez

Tuesday, 17 February 2009 00:00

The following is the prepared statement read by **Alex Rodriguez** on 1/17/09, the first day A-Rod attended Spring Training in 2009. The statement was followed by a Q&A with the media, no follow-up questions allowed. The press conference was held by Rodriguez after he admitted in a televised interview with Peter Gammons that he had used substances now banned by the league from 2001-2003. The televised interview came after SI.com broke a story on Sat. Feb. 7th that Rodriguez had tested for steroids as part of the 2003 survey test.

"First, bear with me. I'm a little nervous, or a lot nervous, so bear with me a little bit.

"Let me start by thanking the Yankees, my teammates, our fans, for your support over the last couple weeks. The fact that you're sitting with me here today means the world to me. The last couple weeks have been difficult and emotional.

"On the one hand, it's extremely tough to admit mistakes. But on the other hand, it feels great to be moving forward. I know that I'm in a position where I have to earn my trust back, and over time I am confident that at the end of my career, people will see this for what it is: a stupid mistake and a lesson learned for a guy with a lot of baseball to play.

"Last Monday, I began the first step in the process of earning back trust when I sat down with Peter Gammons. I did so to accomplish two things: to tell the truth and to apologize to my teammates and baseball fans everywhere. Now the next step is to address the media about what I took and where it came from.

"On reflection, here's what I remember:

"As I discussed with Peter Gammons, in the year 2001, 2002 and 2003, I experimented with a banned substance that eventually triggered a positive test. In September 2004, I had a meeting with Gene Orza. During that meeting, he explained to me that I had been among the players from which people might conclude that I tested positive. That was as specific as Gene could be, because Gene stated to me that there were a number of players on that list who might not have actually tested positive.

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"I think it is important to know that the tests that were taken in 2003 were requested and voted by players to determine the extent of the drug problem in Major League Baseball.

"Going back to 2001, my cousin started telling me about a substance that you can purchase over-the-counter in DR know as, in the streets, known as boli or bole. It was his understanding that it would give me a dramatic energy boost and otherwise harmless. My cousin and I, one more ignorant than the other, decided it was a good idea to start taking it. My cousin would administer it to me, but neither of us knew how to use it problem, providing (sic) just how ignorant we both were.

"It was at this point, we decided to take it twice a month for about six months during the 2001, 2002 and 2003 season. We consulted no one and had no good reason to base that decision. It was pretty evident that we didn't know what we're doing.

"We did everything we could to keep it between us, and my cousin did not provide any other players with it. I stopped taking it in 2003 and haven't take it since.

"I stopped taking the substance for several reasons. In 2003, I had a serious neck injury and it scared me half to death. I was scared for my career and truly my career after baseball -- my life after baseball. Secondly, after our voluntary test, all the players voted for a major league drug policy. At that time, it became evident to me how serious this all was, and I decided to stop then.

"Since that time, I've been tested regularly. I've taken urine tests consistent with Major League Baseball and blood tests for the World Baseball Classic. Before I walked here today, I took a test as part of my physical, and I'll take another blood test next week for the Classic.

"In the days ahead, I know that a lot of people are going to debate my past with various opinions. People are going to talk about my future as though it's already been determined, however, I realize that these opinions are out of my control. What is within my control is going out and doing the job that I am blessed to do. Spring training represents a new start for me and a chance to win a championship, two opportunities I'm very excited about.

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"It isn't lost on me the good fortune I've received from playing baseball. When I entered the pros, I was a young kid -- the major leagues. I was 18 years old, right out of high school. I thought I knew everything, and I clearly didn't. Like everyone else, I've made a lot of mistakes in my life. The only way I know how to handle them is to learn from them and move forward. One thing I know is for sure that baseball is a lot bigger than Alex Rodriguez.

"And to my teammates -- (37-second pause)

"Thank you."