

Palmeiro's statement - 10-day suspension

Written by Palmeiro Statement
Sunday, 31 July 2005 12:00

Rafael Palmeiro's opening statement during a

conference call following his

10-day suspension for a positive steroids test

8/1/2005

Thank you very much for joining me on this call today. I am saddened that we are here to address this issue, but because of the importance of it, I feel the need to make a brief statement and address your questions. At the outset, let me say that under the rules of the basic agreement and the order of the independent arbitrator, there is an order of confidentiality governing the specifics of this case. I will attempt to state as much as I can and be as forthright as possible, but there will be issues I can't address based on orders imposed on me by the basic agreement and the arbitration process.

I am here to make it very clear that I have never intentionally used steroids. Never. Ever. Period.

When I found out that I failed a test under the new drug policy, I filed a grievance and challenged the suspension on the basis that I have never intentionally taken a banned substance. Ultimately, although I never intentionally put a banned substance into my body — the independent arbitrator ruled that I had to be suspended under the terms of the program.

I am sure you will ask how I tested positive for a banned substance. As I look back, I don't have a specific answer to give. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to explain to the arbitrator how the banned substance entered my body. The arbitrator did not find that I used a banned substance intentionally — in fact, he said he found my testimony to be compelling — but he ruled that I could not meet the heavy burden imposed on players who test positive under the new drug policy.

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I accept this punishment and want to address it publicly. I want to apologize to MLB, the Baltimore Orioles organization, my teammates, and most of all, my fans. Given my role with the No Tolerance Committee and my relationships with Congress, I feel the need to communicate a serious message to my fellow players and to kids everywhere. All of us have to be responsible and exercise extreme care in what we put in our body. I hope that all MLB players and kids will learn from what has happened to me. I have never intentionally used a banned substance, but I unfortunately wasn't careful enough.

I take my role as a professional athlete seriously. I love baseball and have great respect for all of the players who played before me. I have always done my best to live each day in ways that would make my family proud. Everything I have accomplished is the result of hard work and dedication to being the best possible player I can be.

I feel terrible that this has happened, but I think there is something to be gained from it. If my situation results in the education of current and future players about the dangers of taking anything without a prescription from a licensed physician — that is a positive. At the end of the day, it is important for all players to understand the risk of contamination and to be very careful about what they put in their body.

This suspension is going to be incredibly difficult for me, my wife and my 2 boys. Over the next week and a half, I am going to spend time with my family. I am going to come back and will be as determined as ever to help the Orioles win this pennant race that we are in. We have worked very hard to be in a position to bring our fans a title, and I will not let this be a distraction.

Finally, I would like to thank Commissioner Selig and Mr. Angelos for their strong words of encouragement. I had the opportunity to speak with both of them and I am extremely appreciative of their support and friendship.