

SPORTS

ARod is still just a performer and entertainer, not a god

By MIKE GARRETT
The Chronicle-News

Mike Garrett

Saturday's "earth-shaking" revelation that Alex Rodriguez had tested positive for allegedly having used steroids back in 2003 shouldn't have been all that surprising or shocking. But what is really a sign of the times that we live in is that the story made big headlines on the front-page of Sunday's Denver Post, not the sports section but the front page.

Now in Tuesday's front-page of the Post sports section, we get confirmation from ARod himself that yes, he had used performance enhancing drugs over a three-year period from 2001-2003, which almost corresponds to the time that baseball's career home run king Barry Bonds had allegedly and reportedly been using steroids. It's to ARod's credit that he came clean with the public rather than try to pull a Roger Clemens or Bonds magic trick act or just not admit to anything at all like Sammy Sosa and Mark McGwire have done.

Most baseball and sports fans should be immune by now to any news that taints one of the steroid era's biggest home run hitters or top pitchers. Sure ARod, or as he is now being called ARoid or AFraud, ranks right up there with Bonds and Clemens among Major League Baseball's biggest names over the past 20 years whose career statistics would normally ensure first-ballot Hall of Fame election.

But if you want to point the finger of guilt at anybody, point it at the nation's hypocritical baseball and sports fans. We have been guilty of building up and putting on a pedestal guys like ARod, Clemens, Bonds, Sosa, etc. We also glorified Michael Phelps for winning eight gold medals in last summer's Olympic Games, then discovered a recent picture of Phelps with a marijuana pipe in his mouth. Now his image has been forever tarnished in the minds of most sports and Olympics fans.

Our entertainment dollars make multi-millionaires out of these guys and fuel their super egos and then when we learn these sports and entertainment "gods" are only human with feet of clay and give in to the same worldly temptations as most of the rest of us, we are so quick to start tearing down what we have constructed. And then the nation's media and Congress makes a federal case out of the fact that many of these athletes were apparently juiced up while they were performing feats of great athletic achievement for us.

Let's try to get real here. Does or should any baseball fan who paid to see ARod play for the Texas Rangers back in 2001-2003 really care now that he might have been juiced then? And if you as a fan (or any kid looking for a good role model) care that much now that his image has been tarnished as a result of "Sports Illustrated's" allegations, stay home and don't bother going to any Yankees games this year or watch their many games on ESPN. ARod makes \$27 million a year because all those Yankees fans (and some of their critics) pay their discretionary money to see him play or watch him on TV. A fact the sponsors of Yankees game telecasts are counting on so they can get their advertising messages across.

I think it's highly hypocritical of anybody to single out and accuse any major sports star of using performance-enhancing drugs and then try to determine how much of an impact they had on that athlete's on-field performance, especially at a time when baseball had no established policies or penalties against their use.

How many of our so-called rock stars or Hollywood actors were spaced out or high on illegal drugs or alcohol when they entertained us? If a rock or rap star was high on illegal drugs the night of their performance, did anybody who attended that concert really care? Many of their fans were and probably are using similar or the same substances at

those concerts or at home.

They were there to be entertained and listen to their music and could have cared less about the performer's state of mind or body unless it dramatically affected their performance. And we all know that many Hollywood stars use illegal drugs on a regular basis and are seldom caught. We still go see their movies. If they're too strung out to act out a role for a director, they get fired and another actor takes their place. Likewise, many sports stars' careers have ended prematurely due to drugs or alcohol eroding (or should I say "eroding") their talents and careers.

As a longtime baseball fan since the mid 1950s, I have always been totally fascinated with baseball statistics and records. They are the most sacrosanct of all sports statistics and records, especially home run records, the most glorified of any sport's statistics. So now ARod's 553 career home runs at age 33 are now tainted and if he ever does pass Bonds on the career home run list, both players home run totals will be considered tarnished by the court of public opinion.

Hank Aaron, who recently celebrated his 75th birthday, is still the career home run leader in the eyes of many fans, despite what the record books now say. And Roger Maris still holds the single-season home run record for some fans.

But regardless of how baseball fans may feel about steroids era players and their records, let's not be quick to judge every athlete based on whether they may or may not have used performance-enhancing drugs. If you paid your money to see that athlete perform and were rewarded in entertainment value for that performance, why worry now and make a big deal out of it if that performance was chemically enhanced?

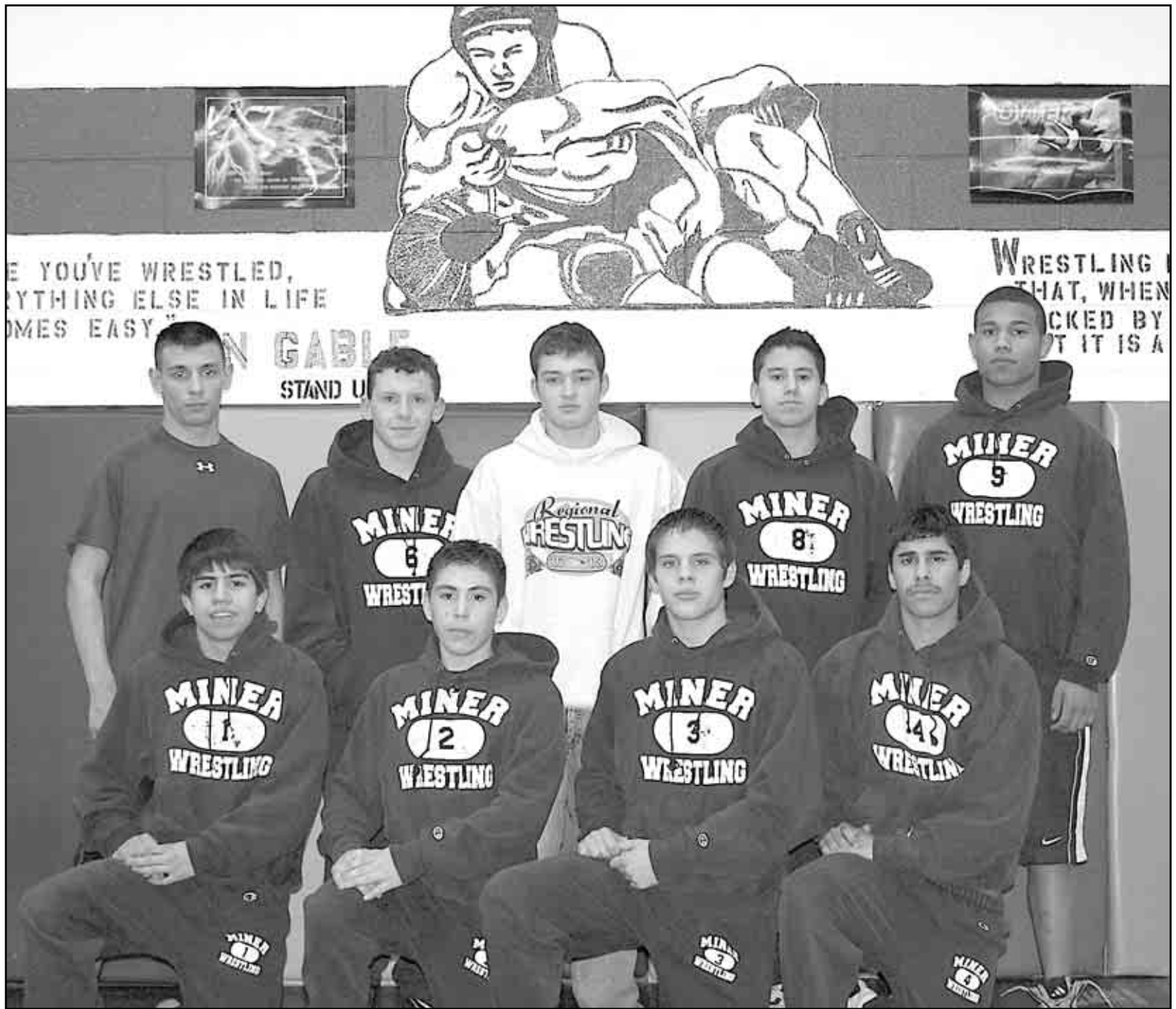
The three seasons that ARod admitted to taking steroids were among the three best of his career with a combined 156 home runs. But taken in the context of his many other superstar caliber seasons, ARod would still have to be considered a Hall of Fame player; even assuming the steroids might have added 10 homers a season to his total during the years in question. The 57 he hit in 2002 is the highest total in the American League since Maris' 61 in 1961. But ARod smacked 54 homers in 2007 when steroid testing was in effect and we can assume he was tested clean.

Yes, steroids have produced a dark-stained blemish on the game and its history. But let's stop being hypocritical about it and put that big-money era into its proper context. The steroid era supposedly started about the same time that upper-echelon baseball players began to demand and get long-term multi-million dollar contracts. A coincidence? Is ARod's admission Monday going to alleviate his case to be enshrined in the Hall while writers will continue to hold it against other upcoming Hall candidates like Bonds, Sosa, Rafael Palmeiro and Clemens who haven't fessed up? McGwire has already been feeling the writer's wrath by getting only around 20 percent of their votes, far short of the 75 percent required.

To most fans way of thinking, to lie about it is far worse than the actual usage. After all, Texas Rangers star Josh Hamilton has readily admitted he was into illegal drugs over a four-year period that nearly destroyed his career in a big way. His story and the book he has written about it is now all the more inspiring for what he came back from to what he is now.

But the bottom line is we pay our money to have entertainers perform for us and to cheer their every exploit. If we stop our flow of \$\$\$ to them, maybe they will start to realize they don't need to take drugs to perform for us because maybe we've stopped caring about them.

If you still continue to PUT UP your money to see them perform regardless of what might be in their bodies, then SHUT UP!!!! And if you're a kid looking for a good role model in pro sports, then good luck trying to find one. They seem to be few and far between these days. The big money seems to have corrupted their values and morals.



Pictured here are the Miner grapplers that will head to the 3A Region Tournament at Centauri High School this weekend. Bottom row left to right. Junior Kevin Cole (29-10) 112 lbs., junior Nick Garcia (10-10) 119 lbs., junior Gadge Cole (28-7) 125., and junior B. J. VanSlyke (17-10) 130 lbs. Back row left to right. Junior, Angelo Gitano (13-18) 135 lbs., senior, Alex Boyette (17-9) 140 lbs., junior, Logan Rhodes (10-12) 145 lbs., junior, Stephen Bowman (19-20) 152 lbs., and junior, Tyler Holland (12-12) 171 lbs. (Photos by David Santistevan Jr.)

Miner Wrestlers set for a big weekend at Regionals

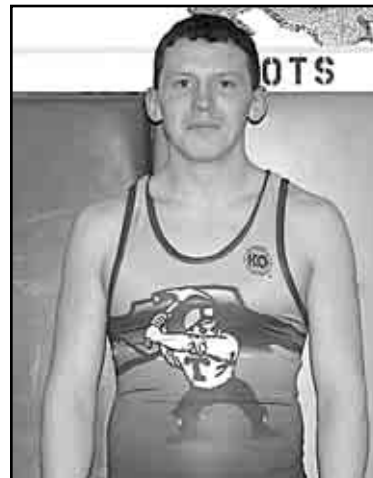
By DAVID SANTISTEVAN JR.
The Chronicle-News

This weekend the Trinidad Miner wrestling team is set for the Class 3A Southern Region 4 Wrestling Tournament at Centauri High school. Each Miners wrestler has been training for this chance just one step away from obtaining their ultimate goal of competing and representing Trinidad at the State Wrestling Tournament next weekend in Denver at the Pepsi Center.

Today it all starts at 2 pm for nine Trinidad High School wrestlers who proudly were the blue and white Miners colors. The preliminary rounds of the 2009 Class 3A Region 4 Wrestling tournament will begin. Followed by the Championship Quarter Finals and then at 5 pm tonight the second and third round consolation matches.

At 9 a.m. on Saturday, will be the Championship Semi Finals, and the consolation semis will take place. At 1 p.m. the Consolation finals will take place.

Then tomorrow afternoon at Centauri High School the



Senior Alex Boyette (17-9) at 140 lbs. will led the Miner wrestling team at the Region 4 Tournament this weekend.

Championship Finals will determine the Regional Champions in each weight and we will know who will be heading to full fill their dreams of competing at the 2009 State Wrestling Championships held at Denver's Pepsi Center.

Miner senior, Alex Boyette will led the team at 140 lbs. Boyette has been sidelined with an injury but looks to be ready for his opportunity to live the

dream. Boyette will face Cody Mathewson (23-17) of Florence a sophomore.

Kevin Cole (29-10) 112 lbs., is starting to gain momentum and he looks to return the big show again. Kevin will take on Andrew Clark (3-11) of Pagosa Springs. Four of the seven wrestlers at this weight class will go to state.

Nick Garcia (10-10) at 119 lbs., will compete in a tough weight class. Garcia has worked hard all year and has a shot at heading to Pepsi Center.

Gadge Cole (28-7) has moved up and has been strong at 125 lbs., Gadge is peaking at the right time, and he has been ranked all season. According to the experts he should be in the regional finals and heading to state for the first time. Gadge will face the winner of the first round match of Mike Rollman (11-12) Manitou Springs and Jake McKeon (7-18) of Platte Canyon in the second round.

B. J. VanSlyke (17-10) is a strong contender at 130. VanSlyke has overcome an early season injury, and he too is coming on at just the right time. He will get a first round bye today.

In the second round he will square off with Clint Pagnotta (13-17) of Rye.

Angelo Gitano (13-18) will also get a well earned first round bye. Gitano has improved as the season has progressed, he should be ready to help the Miner team.

Logan Rhodes (10-12) is strong, and if he sticks to what got him to regionals there really are not too many kids at 145 lbs., that can match him.

Logan will in the second round will face the winner of the Alex Jimenez (8-14) and Jared Holman (31-8) match.

Stephen Bowman (19-20) at 152 lbs., just keeps improving every week, he has worked hard and wrestled some of the states best to prepare for regionals with ten grapplers competing at 152 lbs. Bowman's first round bye should give him a heads up on the competition.

Tyler Holland (12-12) is in a tough part of the brackets, but Holland may be the dark horse for the Miners. Holland is moving up to 171 lbs., were he wrestled with more intensity and had better success this year.

Good luck Miners!!!!

Regional wrestling and TSJC headlines weekend sports

By DAVID SANTISTEVAN JR.
The Chronicle-News

Nine Miners wrestlers will be heading to the Region 4 Wrestling Tournament this weekend at Centauri High School. Trinidad has an excellent shot of sending a hand full of kids to the state tournament next week.

The TSJC women's softball team (2-0) will host McCook on Saturday for a conference showdown at 1 p.m. Saturday.

The Trojan baseball team will be in

Roswell this weekend for four games at NMMI.

Coach Rich Holden and the men's basketball team will host Casper CC Saturday at 7 p.m.

The best game of the weekend is tonight at Weston as the Bulldogs and the Creede Miners battle for the District Six-second seed. Primero is riding high and is a force at home. Creede is looking to get back to the elite eight again this year.

HTA beat Moffat earlier at home, the Tigers are a better team now and they are full strength. HTA needs a win to move up in the district seeding.

HTA on Saturday will host Sierra Grande this is also a huge game for both the Tiger boys and girls.

Wrestling is the main local sports course, but there are some big league and district games that should fill your sports appetite this weekend.

Trojans pick up road win in Region IX against Otero

By MIKE SALBATO
Special to the Chronicle

Winning on the road in Region IX is never easy but that is just what the Trojans did on Wednesday night in La Junta.

Trinidad took an early ten point lead over the Rattlers but Otero managed to cut it to four, 34-30, at the break. The Trojans maintained the lead throughout the second half with the Rattlers never leading in the contest. TSJC sophomore Josh Henry hit a pair of key free throws down the stretch to ice the 67-61 win.

The Trojans shot 44 percent from the

field and made six 3-pointers. They continued their hot shooting from the charity stripe going 17-20. The Trojans are the top free throw shooting team in the entire region. Otero struggled from the field hitting only 37 percent of their shots.

The third leading scorer in Region IX, Donell Wells, improved his 19.2 points per game scoring average as he led the Trojans with 29 points, six rebounds and three steals. Henry is fourth in Region IX in rebounds averaging nine a game. He matched his average in the contest and added 16 points.

The Trojans are now 12-13 on the season

and 1-2 in the South Division of Region IX. Northeastern is on top of the region at 2-1. Lamar is second, the Trojans are third and the Rattlers are in fourth. Otero, however, does have a win over first place Northeastern. Trinidad has an advantage going into the second half of region play as they will play all of their remaining Region IX schedule at home.

The Trojans will host Casper in non-league action on Saturday at 2 p.m. before Northeastern comes to town for a key matchup. That game is at 7 p.m. next Wednesday in Scott Gym.