

Frankly Plank

By Duane Plank

Hope that none of the loyal *FP* readers were sitting behind me in traffic recently on Sepulveda. Cuz some moron idling right behind me at the stoplight hit the horn about a half-second after the light changed from red to green. Guess that I didn't accelerate quickly enough for the impatient fool.

Relax, folks. You are gonna get stopped at the next light anyway. We are just supposed to be safely getting from point A to point B, right? Not trying to win the pole position for the upcoming Indy 500.

It was mentioned to me by one of the characters occasionally referenced in this column that I owed him a retraction. So that means it wasn't *Dodger Girl* who complained, discerning readers. Seems I may have impugned his character. "Thrown him under the bus," according to him. But I disagree. All I print is the truth, at least the truth as I see it through these Lasik-aided eyes. And I have very reliable witnesses who could verify the veracity of my comments.

Anyway, consider this a blanket retraction to any and all who feel they may have been wronged by Plank. There, do you feel better about it? But don't some of you race out to get the paper to see if I take a shot at you?

One of the challenges of writing a weekly column that hits the streets on Thursday but must be filed early the prior Monday morning is to keep the references and opinions timely. Obviously, any earth-shattering event that takes place Monday through Wednesday will have happened after the story was filed.

So the recent revelation that Dodger icon Manny Ramirez was suspended for 50 games for taking a substance banned by Major League Baseball, which broke early last Thursday morning, was gonna be at least a week old by the time you are fortunate enough to read this column. But the whole

saga is just too big to let slide by without some input from Plank.

First, let me say that I have come around to the opinion that every player in the big leagues took or takes performance enhancing drugs. Heck, the mighty David Eckstein, possible future Hall-of-Famer, cranked out a couple of grand slams during the Angels' miracle World Series trek a few years ago. Don't think that the Eck has hit a granny since then. By the way, NASCAR guy, the Dodgers last won the Series when? Just asking. Hmmm? Was the diminutive middle infielder on the juice? Probably not, but because we will never apparently know the truth about who cheated and who didn't, I choose to indict all of the players.

Is that fair, you ask? Hell, no it's not fair. But it makes it simpler to deal with these revelations, which frankly bore the heck out of me. Didn't care about A-Rod, and don't really care about Man-Ram as it relates to performance enhancing drugs. Don't care if he accidentally took the female fertility drug that he tested positive for this spring. Or if he intentionally had the drug injected into his posterior. Don't care, don't care to differentiate.

See, I don't worship or glorify these guys. I support them, and if they happen to wear a hat with an "A" on it, I support them a little more. But the team down south is giving a lot of playing time to one Gary Mathews, Jr., who has had his own alleged problems with performance enhancing pharmaceuticals. Do I support Mathews? Sure do. When he swings the bat and makes decent contact. Or runs down a long drive into the alley, saving the struggling Angel middle relievers a couple of runs.

Of course, I don't look at these guys through the eyes of the younger generation. I

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Mother's Day 2009: Lots of Lakers, Ducks, Dodgers and Tiger

By Duane Plank

Sittin' here playing with the old laptop around 1 p.m. on Mother's Day, finishing up the eggs that my wife so graciously made for me. Kid still sleeping--assume he had another late night. Hope that he remembers today is Mom's Day.

Been fighting a bad cold and sore throat, so I do admit to taking a performance enhancing substance or seven before compiling this column. Don't know if the substance was listed on the banned list by the Writers Guild of America, but what the heck, I need to stay on top of my game. And nothing that I just took could be considered a female fertility drug. I think.

What a glorious day in the sports world. Especially for those of us lazy enough to waste most of the day watching TV. Got the Lakers and their game four against the now Yao-less Houston Rockets. Tiger is lurking near the top of the leader board at the Players Championship. The Dodgers, led by the Mighty Juan Pierre, are hooking up with the hated Giants and Cy Young winning pitcher Tim Lincecum, and my Halos are playing host to the surprising Kansas City Royals down in Anaheim.

The Anaheim Ducks, embroiled in a tight series with the defending Stanley Cup champs, are about to take to the ice in Detroit with the series tied at two. And in case that's not enough to try to watch at one time, I can always flip to channel 602 on the DirecTV box and watch the ponies run down the stretch at the ghost town in Inglewood known as Hollywood Park.

"So many women, so little time." Okay, so maybe that cliché doesn't apply to me, being married and all, but how about "so many games to watch, so few TVs at home?" Guess I may have to head down the road and do a little research where I can see all the games at the same time. That's what a diligent guy would do, right?

And lookie here, the Lakers are getting boat-raced by the depleted Rockets. Down by 10, down by 15. With towering Yao Ming down-and out for the series with a broken footsie, most fans would have thought that the series was over. And it is, cuz your Lakers

are going to bounce back from Sunday's sad defeat, and beat the undermanned Rockets in seven.

Which means that *Amazing Amanda*, who happens to be getting married on Sunday, may have to keep an eye on her husband-to-be. Game seven is slated for Sunday, and so is Amanda's wedding. She was claiming that her soon-to-be hubby would be keeping tabs on the Laker game if game seven happened to coincide with the nuptials.

Course the Lakers could make it simple for the bride-to-be by steamrolling the injury-depleted Rockets on both Tuesday and Thursday, but I see a stumble along the way. Especially if the locals sleepwalk through one of those contests like they did Sunday.

The Lakes mailed the game in, maybe thinking it was a regular season contest, where each individual game doesn't really matter that much, unless you are a gambler, or don't really have much of a life. Lost 99-87, and the final score could have been much worse, what with the Lakers outscoring the content Rockets by 17 in the fourth quarter.

Even veteran Laker fan RJ the Golfer packed it in early, heading to the local golf course to presumably duck-hook a shot or two at the local pitch-and-putt.

As I penned earlier, I went down the road in the afternoon to do my research, but it seemed like it was a little too raucous out there. Hard for a guy to concentrate. Some of the folks weren't minding their P's and Q's. Which is okay, I guess. Some of the folks weren't professional writers, I guess.

And there I go again. P's and Q's. *Dodger Girl* had called me straitlaced recently, and maybe she was spot on? Who else says mind your P's and Q's? Commented to *DG* recently about "toeing the line," and she looked at me like I was from another planet. Which may be close to the truth. Pluto?

Back to the elitist golfers. Tiger Woods never mounted much of a charge Sunday, spraying the ball somewhat erratically off of the tee. My friend AA calls that "army golf." Ya know, left, right, left, right. Funny, ha? Woods will never live up to some people's expectations, who think the guy should win

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