

## Rangers sets Tuesday A-Rod deadline

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In a story posted Sunday night on the Rangers' Web site, Hicks said Rodriguez has had "mixed feelings" about the proposed deal.

"Our position has been consistent since the beginning,"

Hicks said on the site. "We love Alex. He is the best in baseball, but we explored what could be a win-win opportunity for all involved. We only considered the opportunity because it would make us better faster, but we can still win with Alex. We

are prepared to have him come back and be the leader in the clubhouse and on the field."

Hart had hoped to have the situation resolved before the winter meetings ended last Monday. That passed with-

out a deal, as did commissioner Bud Selig's Thursday deadline for talks between Rodriguez and Boston.

*Associated Press Sports Writers Ronald Blum in New York and Howard Ulman in Boston contributed to this report.*

## Patriots still see room for improvement

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FOXBORO, Mass. — The New England Patriots have won 11 straight games, have the best record in the NFL, and are one win away from securing home-field advantage for the AFC playoffs.

Yet, they still think they can get better.

"We're not changing our routine no matter how many games it is," said defensive end Willie McGinest, who returned an interception for a touchdown Saturday in a 21-16 victory over the New York Jets. "There are a lot of things we need to work on to improve to get where we want to go to."

Which is, of course, the Super Bowl in Houston.

"We had a bad start to the year, but that doesn't matter," defensive lineman Richard Seymour said. "It's how you finish. We've been

able to string some wins together and we're playing well. But until we get to our ultimate goal - to Houston - we're not satisfied."

The Patriots' 11th straight win came in another close game that was decided on big defensive plays. It was the seventh time this season the Patriots (13-2) have won by seven points or less.

The Patriots intercepted a season-high five passes. Tedy Bruschi's interception in the first quarter led to the Patriots' first touchdown - a 35-yard pass from Tom Brady to David Givens. Brady finished 12-of-25 for 138 yards and two scores, both to Givens.

Ty Law made an interception in the end zone to kill a Jets' scoring threat in the third quarter and Eugene Wilson ended the Jets' final drive with another interception.

"It speaks of the individuals on this defense," said safety Rodney Harrison, who also had an interception. "You really have to give it to these guys, they're making plays. As a defense, we thrive on interceptions and sacks and we got enough of them (against the Jets)."

The Jets (6-9) lost by seven points or less for the sixth time this season, and will finish with a losing record for the first time since 1996 when they went 1-15. Chad Pennington finished 24-of-43 for 229 yards and ran for two touchdowns.

A victory in the Patriots' season finale at home against the Buffalo Bills would ensure New England of a first-round playoff bye and home-field advantage until the Super Bowl. The Patriots lost to the Bills 31-0 in the season opener.

"We're not jumping for joy.

We haven't done anything yet. We have bigger goals to achieve," Bruschi said.

That bigger goal is a trip to the Super Bowl for the second time in three years. The Patriots beat the St. Louis Rams 20-17 two years ago.

Running back Antowain Smith, who ran for a season-best 121 yards, thinks the Patriots are even better than the Super Bowl championship team.

"I think we are a lot better team," he said. "But we need to continue to get better to be an elite team and prove it."

## Black golfer one step away from making PGA Tour

By Vaughn Wilson  
THE CAPITAL OUTLOOK

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — One would imagine that if a man could hit 300-yard drives, soft middle irons and wedges into greens and putt with touch and precision, he would be a lock to get a shot at the Professional Golfers Association Tour.

Unfortunately, that is not all it takes, and with a highly skilled player such as Tallahassee's Kris Hannah still taking his shots, it becomes obvious

that the PGA Tour is made up of quite a select group.

Hannah has all of the accolades of an accomplished golfer. He was chosen

Big Bend player of the year in 1996 and 1997 as a junior and senior at Leon

High School. During that same year he won four of the five junior golf tournaments he entered.

He accepted a full golf scholarship to Florida State University and competed in the Atlantic Coast Conference and against the nation's best college players. He traveled and participated as a freshman and lettered four years.

He won six events as an amateur since attending FSU and won two events after turning professional.

Recently, Hannah participated in his first PGA Qualifying Tournament. He started off with an 8-under-par 64, but stumbled at the final two holes on the fourth and final day to miss the cut by one stroke. If he had gotten to the second level of Q-School he would have assured himself badly-needed attention and separated himself from the crowd. Playing without a caddie, it's a wonder he excelled at the level he achieved at Q-School.

Hannah was not always into golf. He started playing at the age of 12.

"My father taught me basketball and baseball when I was young," he said.

Born in Atlanta, Hannah was reared there until his family relocated to Tallahassee. While he was in Atlanta, his Smyrna community basketball league chose him to compete on the all-star team which played some inter-

national teams, including some from Barcelona, Spain.

"I broke my ankle while playing in that league and that's when I started concentrating on less strenuous, lifetime sports," Hannah said. That's when he got serious about golf.

"The man," is how Hannah describes his father and the influence on his life and success in golf. "Without his moral and financial support none of this would be possible," he added. "Sometimes it's rough out there and you need that model who you can always count on to say the right thing at the right time," he said.

"The game now is all mental for me," Hannah said. Plainly put, he feels he has the necessary physical skills to compete at the PGA tour level, but it is the access and focus that are his biggest inhibitors.

"People just don't know what a financial drain it can be attempting to get on this tour," he said. "Q-School costs \$4,000 to enter," he said. "Once (the money) gone, it's gone. The main reason I didn't have a caddie was because it did not fit financially with what I had to work with."

Hannah has been getting financial help from various sources in order to pursue his tour card. "I have had some very good support, but in order to continue, I need at least that support again," he said.

Hannah feels it's just a matter of time before he becomes a full-time tour player. "There are plenty of opportunities for minorities to go to school on golf scholarships, but there is nothing in place to help them pursue the next level," he said. "I hope that there can be a situation where at some point I don't have to raise money for my entry fees to Q-School and the tournaments as well, but just concentrate on playing as do my counterparts."

Hannah plans to earn his full-time status in the next few years.

"Through Q-School, Monday qualifying or sponsors exemption I will make it," he said. "I want to get where all I have to concentrate on is golf."

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