

Scandal? Don Mattingly thinks Alex Rodriguez will be A-OK

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Old allegiances are hard to break for [Don Mattingly](#). The former Yankee great and coach may not be in the [Bronx](#) anymore, but just Sunday night he was talking shop with current Yankee hitting coach [Kevin Long](#).

Mattingly still has an eye on his players from four years as a coach with the [Yankees](#), three as the hitting coach and one as the bench coach. Last month, Long reached out to Mattingly for ideas on how to help struggling second baseman [Robinson Cano](#). So it was with both professional and personal interest that Mattingly has watched [Alex Rodriguez](#) the past two weeks as the superstar third baseman's marital problems have spread across the country's gossip pages.

"I said that with all the stuff going on around him, (Rodriguez) looks really relaxed to me," Mattingly said. "This is really as relaxed as I have seen him here in New York. He just seems really comfortable. He is going to have a really big second half. People forget he missed a month (in the beginning of the season with a strained quad) and he still had a pretty big first half. Nearly 20 home runs and 50-something RBI, that's not bad."

A-Rod has 19 home runs and 53 RBI at the break, although he's hitting just .256 since the tabloids put him and Madonna on the front page.

But Mattingly doesn't think that will get in the way of Rodriguez and the Yankees making a big second-half charge. "It's coming," Mattingly said.

Mattingly, who signed autographs at the [Sports Museum of America](#) in lower [Manhattan](#) yesterday, will start the second half as the Dodgers' full-time hitting coach. After losing out on the Yankees' managing job to [Joe Girardi](#), Mattingly initially accepted that job before the season, then backed out because of his own marital woes.

Instead, he asked to be a special assistant coach, wanting to make sure his youngest son, 16-year-old Jordan, had some stability as he proceeded with a divorce.

"I just wanted to make sure my youngest was on solid ground," Mattingly said. "That was my priority the last few months, but now we are OK. We are ready."

He will return to the Dodgers full-time on Friday when the team travels to [Arizona](#). Not only will it be a tough job getting a team that is hitting .253 and averaging just 4.1 runs per game going, but it will be his first time in the major leagues wearing a uniform other than Yankee pinstripes.

"It's a different organization, they do things a different way," he said. "It's fun to see the other side for a little bit."