

BASEBALL

AIDS lawsuit filed against ex-Jays star Alomar

12-time all-star acted with 'wanton reckless disregard of the health, safety and well-being' of former girlfriend, lawsuit alleges

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NEW YORK -- An ex-girlfriend of Roberto Alomar filed an explosive lawsuit alleging the former Toronto Blue Jays star insisted on unprotected sex for four years, despite having AIDS.

The lawsuit, filed Jan. 30 and transferred to U.S. District Court yesterday, contains accusations that could not be corroborated but portray Alomar as someone who demanded sex without a condom despite showing obvious signs of HIV.

Ilya Dall is seeking at least \$15-million (U.S.) in punitive damages from the 41-year-old former infielder. Alomar, who was once engaged to tennis star Mary Pierce, spent 17 years in the major leagues and was one of the game's great second basemen.

"This is a very private, personal matter and I greatly appreciate all the support I have received in the past few days from my family, friends and colleagues in baseball," Alomar said in a statement. "I am in very good health and I ask that you respect my privacy during this time.

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"As for the lawsuit, it is filled with lies and I am deeply saddened that someone I cared for would make such terrible accusations and try to hurt me in this way."

Calls seeking comment to lawyers for Alomar and Dall were not immediately returned. Alomar lawyer Charles Bach told the New York Daily News the allegations are "frivolous and baseless."

News of the lawsuit was "something out of the blue," Alomar's father, Sandy Alomar Sr., told El Nuevo Dia newspaper in Puerto Rico. "We've never talked about something like this."

Dall said the two began dating in the spring of 2002, and had unprotected sex for the next four years. She said on several occasions during that time, Alomar refused to get tested for HIV, despite severe fatigue, sores on his mouth and throat, a constant cough and an infection of the esophagus that is associated with AIDS.

She said Alomar finally relented and tested positive for HIV in February of 2006.

Dall said she was angered by the disclosure and was tested herself; the result was negative. She said follow-up exams determined Alomar had full-blown AIDS.

By then, she said Alomar had purple skin, was foaming at the mouth and was too sick to walk, forcing him to need a wheelchair to get around at an airport.

Alomar was honoured before the Blue Jays' home opener last April and showed no obvious signs of health problems.

Dall said the ordeal caused her severe emotional and mental distress and fear she may one day test positive for HIV herself.

She called the conduct of Alomar "outrageous with wanton reckless disregard of the health, safety and well-being" of Dall.

The lawsuit does not say why Dall continued to have unprotected sex with Alomar. Dall said the couple lived together until last year.

Alomar was one of baseball's best players in the 1990s, making 12 consecutive all-star appearances and winning two World Series titles with the Blue Jays.

A career .300 hitter with 10 Gold Glove awards, Alomar broke in with the San Diego Padres in 1988, and also played for the Baltimore Orioles, Cleveland Indians, New York Mets, Arizona Diamondbacks and Chicago White Sox. He was out of baseball by 2005.

One of the most memorable moments of Alomar's career came in 1996, when he became enraged after a third strike and spit on umpire John Hirschbeck. He drew a five-game suspension that was later overturned.

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