

Star-Ledger

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Sheffield takes a very big step

YANKEES NOTEBOOK

BY ED PRICE
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

BALTIMORE — Gary Sheffield hit 40 balls off a tee yesterday and is in line to take batting practice Tuesday upon joining the Yankees for their homestand.

"This is the news we were hoping to get," general manager Brian Cashman said after hearing that hand specialist Charles Melone cleared Sheffield to fully swing a bat.

Sheffield, who has been out since May 29, underwent surgery June 13 to repair a torn ligament and dislocating tendon in his left wrist. He had been allowed to swing a bat in a pool over the past three weeks.

"It couldn't have gone better," said Gary Flink of Fort Lee-based Excel Orthopedic Rehabilitation, who has been overseeing Sheffield's rehabilitation. "Every shot that he was hitting was solid. He had no soreness at all from start to finish."

Flink said if all goes as planned, Sheffield would progress to 50 swings today, hit off a tee again tomorrow, take Monday off from swinging and take live batting practice Tuesday.

"He's done amazingly well," Flink said. "He's right where he should be right now. His range of motion and strength are excellent."

"We've given him the tools. Now he's got to put it to use, test it."

Monday, September 11, 2006

YANKEES NOTEBOOK

■ Gary Sheffield is "absolutely" ready to take live batting practice tomorrow, physical therapist Gary Flink said. "I don't see any reason why he can't," said Flink, who is overseeing the care of Sheffield's left wrist at Fort Lee-based Excel Orthopedic Rehabilitation. Flink said Sheffield took 50 swings off a tee yesterday and today will rest the wrist. ...

Bobby Abreu's sixth-inning single ended a 0-for-13 skid. ... Over the past 12 games, Yankees starters are 7-3 with a 3.16 ERA. ... Jay Gibbons, 4-for-7 in his career against Jaret Wright, was scratched from the Baltimore lineup shortly before game time because of a strained right trapezius (neck).