

Are the Tampa Bay Rays, losers of seven straight, about to fade?

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THE FIRST HALF'S MOST MEMORABLE GAMES: View the galleries at projosports.com/redsox

R.I.'s Olympian chats

Elizabeth Beisel talks about what it is like to be preparing for the Olympics, in a multimedia show at hsgametime.com

Creatures of habit

Of the 66 players in tonight's MLB All-Star Game, only four have been chosen to play in the Midsummer Classic more than eight times:

PLAYER	TEAM	GAMES
Manny Ramirez	Red Sox	12
Alex Rodriguez	Yankees	12
Derek Jeter	Yankees	9
Mariano Rivera	Yankees	9

For up-to-the-second stats and scores: projosports.com/redsox

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Halftime report

Red Sox had some ups and downs, and some surprises



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / GRETCHEN ERTL

WHAT WORKED

The starting pitching; Jonathan Papelbon; picking up the slack for injured starters; playing at home.

WHAT DIDN'T WORK

The rest of the bullpen; playing on the road.

BIGGEST SURPRISES

J.D. Drew (left, after hitting a two-run homer against Baltimore on June 10); Justin Masterson.

BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENTS

Hideki Okajima (right, after giving up a grand slam to Baltimore Orioles' Jay Payton on May 14); David Ortiz's injury.

HIGH POINT

A 7-2 homestand in June that put the Sox in front by 2 1/2 games.

LOW POINT

A 3-7 road trip this month that dropped them five games off the pace.

SINGULAR ACHIEVEMENTS

Manny Ramirez's 500th home run; Jon Lester's no-hitter; Kevin Youkilis setting a record for errorless games at first base.



AP / NICK WASS

Boston's bottom line: 57-40 record, 1st in A.L. East

BY STEVEN KRASNER
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

The traditional break between the first half and the second half of the regular season is here for the Boston Red Sox and the rest of the teams in the majors, even if it happens to be well beyond the mathematical halfway point.

And, as with most teams, Boston can look back on its first half and ponder whether the glass is half-full or half-empty.

It could have been better, it could have been worse. A few injuries here, a few injuries there. A few disappointments, a few surprises. A few peaks, a

few valleys. Some things worked, some didn't.

The bottom line is that the Red Sox are 57-40, good enough for first place in the American League East, a half-game ahead of the surprising Tampa Bay Rays in the tough division. It was an exhausting 97 games for Boston.

The regular season started roughly a week earlier than normal, with spring training cut down shorter than normal because the Red Sox opened their season in Japan with a two-game series against Oakland on March 25 and 26.

Further adding to the fatigue factor felt by the Sox was that they played

deep into October in 2007, winning their second World Series crown in four years.

Not that anyone was complaining about that, but the end result was a condensed off-season that fed into a regular season that took the team from spring training in Fort Myers, Fla., to Tokyo. Then it was off to the West Coast for exhibition games and two more regular-season games in Oakland, which were followed by a three-game series in Toronto before the Sox received their championship rings as part of a pregame ceremony for the Fenway Park opener on April 8.

TURN TO PAGE C5 FOR A REVIEW OF THE FIRST HALF OF THE RED SOX SEASON

If anyone deserves an All-Star bonus, it's Pedroia

In the wonderful world of Manny Being Money — oops, bit of a slip there; I meant to say Manny Being Manny — the sensational Senor Ramirez will receive a \$75,000 bonus from the Red Sox for playing in tonight's All-Star game in Yankee Stadium.

J.D. Drew, David Ortiz, Jason Varitek, and Kevin Youkilis will get \$50,000 apiece. Jonathan Papelbon will get \$25,000. Dustin Pedroia, last season's American League Rookie of the Year, will get nothing.

To my way of thinking, if

anyone ought to get a bonus for making the All-Star team, it ought to be Pedroia.

The key word here is "bonus."

Manny is making \$18,929,923 this season. For that kind of money, shouldn't he be expected to make the All-Star team? Shouldn't that be part of the package, part of the deal? Isn't that why Manny gets nearly \$19 a million a year — to play at an All-Star level? Does he really deserve another 75 grand for doing what he's already being paid royally to do?

The same holds true for Drew, who's Boston's second-highest-paid player, with a 2008 salary of \$14 million. He's having an excellent year — batting .302, with 17 homers and 55

runs batted in — and has helped tremendously in picking up the offensive slack in the absence of power-hitting David Ortiz, who's been sidelined with a wrist injury since May 31.

But, again, isn't that why he's getting the \$14 million?

Ortiz is on the books for \$13 million — not bad for a guy who seldom plays in the field, although he's certainly earned his salary with his bat over the years, as well as by being a team leader in the clubhouse.

Varitek, who was voted to the All-Star team by his fellow players over Chicago's unpopular A.J. Pierzynski, is getting paid \$10,442,030 in what so far has been a miserable year offensively. He's been in a horrendous slump since late May, and

is batting only .218 this season, with just one home run since May 21. On the plus side, his ability to handle the pitching staff, the way he prepares himself to call the game, have been invaluable to the Sox.

Still, he's fortunate to be on the team in the midst of what isn't remotely close to an All-Star season at the plate, and, considering his eight-figure salary, a bonus of \$50,000 hardly seems necessary.

That brings us to Youkilis, Papelbon and Pedroia.

Considering that this is "Youk's" first All-Star selection, and that he's batting .314 with 15 homers and a team-leading 63 RBI, as well as playing nearly

SEE DONALDSON, C3

HOME-RUN KING



AP / JULIE JACOBSON

Minnesota's Justin Morneau shows his winning form at last night's Home Run Derby at Yankee Stadium. Story, C4.