

IN BRIEF

New Mariner Beltre reports to spring training

PEORIA, Ariz. — Adrian Beltre knows there will be a period of adjustment this season. New team. New manager. New league.

But he's ready for it.

"I'm not nervous at all," the new Seattle Mariners starting third baseman said Monday after reporting for spring

training. "I'm just looking forward to getting to know everybody."

Beltre, 25, took his physical and then joined his new teammates for a round of hitting, something he excels at and the main reason the Mariners signed him to a \$64 million, five-year contract in December.

Playing with the Los Angeles Dodgers in 2004, he led the majors with 48 home runs while hitting .334 with 121 RBIs. He finished second to San Francisco's Barry Bonds in the National League MVP voting.

Beltre and new Mariners first baseman Richie Sexson, who signed a \$50 million, four-year contract, are expected to rejuvenate Seattle's offense after the team lost 99 games last season. Mariners manager Bob Melvin was fired after the season.

New Mariners manager Mike Hargrove doesn't know Beltre well because he's managed in the American League, while Beltre has played in the National League. But Hargrove gave Beltre's shoulder a squeeze Monday, almost as if to see if one of

the team's two major power additions was for real.

"I didn't squeeze it very hard," Hargrove said. "It looks like he's in great shape."

All the social aspects of the new slugger's adjustment to Seattle aside, Beltre is most concerned about learning to hit against AL pitchers.

"It's not going to be easy," he said. "It's going to take time to adjust to it. I hope my new teammates are going to help me."

Beltre isn't going to put too much

pressure on himself, though.

"I'm here to help this team be in the playoffs and win a World Series," he said. "I want to be a part of that. But it's not going to be a one-guy team."

Hargrove said it won't take Beltre long to have a clubhouse full of friends.

"As long as I've been around this game, the players who command the most respect from their peers are the ones who play the game hard," he said. "Special players do things to catch your eye."

— The Associated Press



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