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Sep 12, 2009 6:20 pm US/Central

Hamilton Optimistic He Can Return Next Weekend

DAVID JIMENEZ, Associated Press Writer

ARLINGTON (AP) — Texas Rangers outfielder Josh Hamilton is feeling much better after receiving two more injections in his back, and the All-Star is optimistic he will be able to return next weekend.

Hamilton, who has not played since Sept. 2, said Saturday he received an epidural for a pinched nerve and a cortisone shot for inflammation caused by what he described as a "small stress fracture" in his back.

Back specialist Dr. Robert Watkins administered the shots Friday in California.

"When I woke up, it was a night-and-day difference," Hamilton said.

Hamilton received two earlier injections, one on Sept. 4 and another Monday that didn't alleviate his pain.

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Outfielder Josh Hamilton #32 of the Texas Rangers on September 1, 2009 at Rangers Ballpark in Arlington, Texas. Ronald Martinez/Getty Images

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