

# Holding up #25:

*How Seamus Henderson's injury changed not only his story but his team's*

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PHOTO BY GRACIE LORDI



Devastating. A gut shot. That's how Coach Dave Logan described senior Seamus Henderson's ACL injury.

Last year, Henderson was a key component to the varsity football team's rise to the state championship. As the starting running back, he totaled 752 yards and 8 touchdowns last year.

This year, the team expects to rise back to the top and take back the title they lost to Valor, and Henderson was supposed to be a big part of that.

"It's redemption season," senior captain Carson Lee said. "A lot of people have a lot of doubts about us, and we lost a lot. But I think we're just as good or even better than we were last year. It's going to be a show a lot of people are going to want to see."

Henderson was out for the majority of summer training after sustaining a hip injury in mid-June. As he continued to strengthen his hip, he was ready to jump back into practicing with the team again.

"I was feeling very fresh and very excited," Henderson said. "It was the first time I've actually hit someone since last year's championship."

In a practice against the scout team, Henderson took the ball and ran 10 yards before the play was done. According to what people told him, his leg got stuck in a ditch in the field. At that moment everything was fine and the play had ended, but then one of his defensive teammates tackled him after the fact, what Henderson referred to as a cheap shot.

"So my knee was simultaneously caught in the ditch as I got hit," he said.

Despite feeling a lot of pain, Henderson believed it was just a hyper extension and continued on placing more stress on the torn ligament.

"I didn't want to get hurt again, and I'm not sure if this helped the injury, but I started running and I was like 'I'm fine coach, I'm fine. Don't worry about it,'" he said. "But I knew something was wrong. Every 10th step, my knee started to buckle."

With this, the team knew they were going to have to do without him on their journey back to the championship.

"It's devastating to him and to us to lose him like this before he even has a chance to play a game," Logan said.

Henderson's story took the stage as the Denver Post and other local news outlets reported on the rough conditions of the Campus Middle School fields, where the football teams practice.

Rumors had spread that he and his family were potentially filing a lawsuit against the school district for the field conditions. Henderson extinguished the rumors.

"No. That was just funny talk. That wasn't true at all. I wish we did, because that field, a lot of people say it's good, but the people that say it's good don't have to play on that field every single day," he said.

He describes them as consistently uneven, and as players run on what looks to be solid, flat ground, they begin to feel unbalanced.

"I think they have to take into consideration that

we're on that field 24/7, right? Everyday. That field is really hard especially to be tackling on and cutting on and there are a lot of dips," he said. "It's not good at all for playing well."

Despite dissipating rumors, the issue of the fields remained and was brought to the forefront of local news.

In interviews with the Denver Post and other local outlets, Logan refused to comment on the state of the fields.

However, he reasoned that the movement from the Campus Middle School fields to the Belleview Elementary fields was to ensure the safety of his team.

"One of my jobs as head coach is to make certain my players are put in situations that are as safe as they can possibly be."

A prominent aspect of a senior injury is the mental stress it places on player. Henderson will have to re-evaluate his approach to college.

Senior year is a key period where players are scouted by colleges and given offers to play at the collegiate level. Because of Henderson's 1-year recovery he won't be able to play through this time of scouting nor will he be able to participate in football his freshman year of college.

"I have to continue forward," he said. "I'll be able to play college football sophomore year because it's a year-long recovery. If I don't go to Mines, I will probably walk on to three schools. I have three schools in mind."

Logan has a strong belief that Henderson will be able to play at the collegiate level.

"Seamus is a smart young man who has worked hard in the classroom, but my hope is that he'll be able to bounce back, fully recover, and have a good college career," Logan said.

Despite having a firm idea of how he will continue on, one thing that's tough for Henderson to rotate is his mindset.

"It is hard," Henderson said. "Colleges would come to me and talk to me instead of me having to seek out colleges."

The stress of a major injury can be hard, however Henderson isn't a fan of sympathy or pity.

"I get annoyed when people say 'keep your head up' because I hear that 1,000 times, right?" he said. "I don't want a lot of sympathy."

Henderson has his teammates whom he describes as consistently supportive of him by repping his jersey number, 25. According to Henderson, they wear 25 under their jerseys and hold up the number in the end zone after touchdowns.

Logan believes Henderson has handled the stress well.

"He has kept his spirits up and is in a good frame of mind. He's a mentally tough kid," Logan said.

For Henderson, however, maintaining those spirits is a lot harder than it looks.

"That's on the outside. Outside it looks good, but inside it's a little tough," he said.