

Rocky Mount Academy player in ICU after football collision

By **Trevor Seibert**

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Rocky Mount Academy football player Colt Brake is in an intensive care unit after injuring his spinal cord and neck Friday night at Kinston Parrott Academy.

The 16-year-old junior was making a tackle on a kickoff in the first quarter when he collapsed and did not move. He was responsive, but Brake told coaches and training personnel he could not feel any of his extremities.

Eagles coach Andy Jackson said Brake was taken to a local hospital and then airlifted to Pitt County Memorial Hospital in Greenville for surgery. Brake then underwent two surgeries overnight and remains in ICU today at Pitt Memorial. He will remain heavily sedated for the next few days, Jackson said, so it is unclear whether Brake will have feeling in his arms and legs when he regains consciousness.

According to Care Pages, a University Health Systems website, Brake crushed his C4 vertebra and fractured his C5 vertebra.

“(Brake) has a long road to go,” Jackson said. “He had surgery, and it seems there isn’t much hope of walking again. It’s really tragic. I can’t really explain how I feel right now. Surgery went well, though. He’s a young boy, and young people are a lot more resilient. We’re just all praying he gets better.”

Friends and classmates continue to flood Brake’s Facebook page with prayers and well wishes. Jackson said Brake was one of the more outspoken players on the team.

“He’s a little mischievous and fun loving,” Jackson said. “He always has got something going on. That’s the way he is, but he’s a well-mannered boy. Colt is Colt, everybody knows that. Not many words that can describe him other than that.”

Although the injury occurred early in the first quarter, the Eagles continued to play. Jackson said he found out about the severity of the injury at halftime, but he waited until the end of the game to tell the team. When he did, the emotions poured out from the Eagles.

“The reaction when the injury first occurred was to win the game for Colt,” Jackson said. “He was mentioned several times right up until the end. When I told my players after the game they didn’t have a lot of hope about him walking anymore, the color went out of their faces. They were shocked and hurt. (Brake’s) going to need us now more than ever. We’ll be strong, and we’ll be with him.”

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