

## Molina High quarterback Diondre Preston suffers severe spinal-cord injury

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Just a week ago, Diondre Preston was named Molina High School's homecoming king and had everything going for him as the starting quarterback and a highly sought-after recruit.

In a flash Thursday night, Preston's life changed dramatically when the senior suffered a severe spinal-cord injury in a game that left him motionless.

Molina football coach Charles DeVille said Preston, 17, has experienced no feeling or movement from the neck down.

Preston was stabilized on the Sprague Stadium field after the injury late in the fourth quarter of Molina's 45-38 loss to Pinkston. Preston was rushed to [Baylor University Medical Center](#) at Dallas, with his mother riding in the ambulance. He remains in the intensive care unit at Baylor after undergoing surgery Friday afternoon.

"The surgery was done to relieve pressure and find out what kind of damage we're looking at and to see what the next steps are," DeVille said. "More than two vertebrae are involved, and he'll be in ICU for a while."

Severe spinal-cord injuries are becoming all too common in North Texas.

On Oct. 1, 2009 – almost a year ago to the day of Preston's injury – another DISD football player was severely injured. Safety Jared Williams was paralyzed from the chest down after he was hit in the neck by a [North Dallas](#) player's helmet at Pleasant Grove Stadium.

In May 2009, [DeSoto](#) football player Corey Borner was paralyzed from the neck down after suffering an injury during a game.

Williams and his mother were among Preston's first visitors Friday morning at Baylor.

"If I can go through it and come out of my surgery moving my arms, he can come out of his surgery doing even better," DeVille said. WFAA-TV (Channel 8).

[Dallas Independent School District](#) counselors were at Molina on Friday to speak with students and football players.

"From our coaching staff to our athletes and students, it's been a very hard day on all of us," DeVille said. "This is the kind of thing you don't want this to ever happen. He is the heart of my team and that son every father wants, just a great kid who wasn't cocky and loved to play football."

Preston, also Molina's starting free safety, was playing quarterback when he was injured Thursday. He was leading the team on a final drive, with the Jaguars trailing Pinkston by a touchdown with about two minutes left in the game.

On a running play to the left side, Preston was trying to make his way into the end zone when a Pinkston player clipped him, causing him to fall forward. Another Pinkston player came in low to make the tackle and hit Preston's helmet with his helmet.

"It was across the field from me, and when I saw the contact, I knew it was a good lick," DeVille said, "and when I saw the contact, I thought was, 'I hope he's unconscious.'"

The 6-2, 205-pound athlete had elite speed and was a top recruit. Preston was receiving attention from several major colleges, DeVille said, with about 30 recruiting letters pouring in each week.

Preston was the seventh-leading rusher among Class 4A area players heading into Friday night's games, with 596 yards and 10 touchdowns on 68 carries. He had also passed for 268 yards and three touchdowns in five games for Molina.

"You're talking about one of the best athletes in the district and in the city," DeVille said. "The school, the faculty are in complete shock."

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