

Texans WR Williams to have surgery on Sunday

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HOUSTON – Houston coach Gary Kubiak said injured receiver Harry Williams will have surgery on Sunday to repair a fractured vertebra in his neck.

The 26-year-old Williams was hurt early in the Texans' 23-22 loss to Dallas on Friday night when he collided with teammate Nick Ferguson while trying to make a tackle on a kick return.

Williams was taken off the field on a stretcher and an ambulance took him to Presbyterian Hospital in Dallas. Kubiak said Williams' condition hadn't changed since team doctor Walter Lowe said early Saturday morning that Williams had regained feeling in his extremities and most of his normal neurological function.

Williams' agent Harold Lewis said he told his client that he was very lucky. Lewis told Houston television station KRIV that he doesn't want to see Williams try to play again.

"After what he has been through, I would find him a job so he doesn't have to play football," he said. "I would honestly pay him not to play."

Kubiak said Saturday that family members had joined Williams in Dallas and that the Texans would update Williams' condition on Sunday.

"He's in good spirits," Kubiak said.

The rest of Friday's game was a mix of good and bad for the Texans, who wrap up the preseason schedule against Tampa Bay on Thursday.

Ahman Green and Chris Brown, the top two running backs on the depth chart, sat out with injuries, but Kubiak liked what he saw from Chris Taylor and rookie Steve Slaton. Taylor rushed for 47 yards, Slaton ran for 44 and Kubiak said both of them blocked well on pass plays.

"They both rose to the occasion," Kubiak said. "They played well in protection, something we've been concerned about, and Dallas came after us a lot. We did not give up the sack and they ran extremely well. That's the thing we're feeling best about today."

Kubiak wasn't optimistic that either Green or Brown would return to full strength this week.

Green hasn't practiced since straining his groin early in the Texans' preseason opener and Brown continues to cope with a sore back. Kubiak was hoping to put Green back to work this week, but doubted he would play on Thursday. Kubiak listed Brown as day-to-day and added he was "very iffy, still."

The Texans didn't allow a sack, but Kubiak thought the offensive line was shaky in its pass protection. He said starting guard Chester Pitts, who sat out the game with a sprained ankle, was also day-to-day.

"I'd like to see Chester play this week," Kubiak said. "I think he needs to play."

The Cowboys piled up 266 yards by halftime and led 20-10. Dallas would've led by more, but Tony Romo overthrew Terrell Owens on a sure touchdown and was intercepted by linebacker Zac Diles in the end zone on another bad pass.

"They moved the ball too well on us," Kubiak said. "We've got to do a lot better. There are plenty of things to get corrected."

Diles, starting his second season, has been a bright spot in camp for Houston and Kubiak praised him again on Saturday. Kubiak also complimented cornerback Demarcus Faggins, who's fighting for playing time behind Jacques Reeves and Jamar Fletcher.

Kubiak wants to see more from Reeves, who was acquired as a free agent in the spring after the Cowboys released him.

"I like his effort, I like how he plays," Kubiak said. "But right now, it seems like a lot of things are coming his way and he's not making the play on the ball."

The Texans' pass rush was a weak spot again, as they failed to record a sack for the second straight preseason game. Kubiak said Mario Williams looked strong again and 33-year-old N.D. Kalu played well, but overall, he's not satisfied with the level of pressure Houston is putting on opposing quarterbacks.

"Mario has been exceptional, N.D. has done some good things," Kubiak said. "What we're searching for are complements to those players. We are taking a look at a lot of guys. We're not going to panic and start zero-blitzing people to try to make the quarterback get rid of the ball. If we start to do that, I don't think we're going to be a very good defensive team."

"We're trying to stay committed to what we're doing, trying to find out the guys who can do it and help us. We've just got to continue to push, continue to evaluate those players. It's a difference maker."

Kubiak has until Tuesday to trim Houston's roster from 80 to 75. He said Saturday that he had no specific timeline for making the cuts.

"It could be one tomorrow, one Monday," he said. "It could be all Tuesday. We've got a lot of work to do and some decisions to make."