

Kory Kiefer's career halted in midair

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assistant news editor

When freshman Kory Kiefer looks at the soccer field, he can't remember the last game he played.

In the second half of a game against La Roche College in mid-October, Kiefer jumped into the air to attempt a header. On the way up he had a head-to-head collision with La Roche's Maranol Azavedo.

Kiefer's temple took the full blow. "I was knocked out before I even hit the ground," Kiefer said. "I couldn't remember anything. I didn't know the date, who I was or where I was."

Behrend athletic trainers rushed to Kiefer as he lay motionless and began to check his condition.

"Teammates and the athletic trainer had to tell me how they even tested me," Kiefer said. "I was told the left side of my body was unresponsive, practically paralyzed. My pupils wouldn't dilate or anything."

The severity of the injury progressed and Kiefer remained unresponsive. An ambulance was called to be take him to Erie's Hamot Hospital.

Kiefer said, "the worst part began," when he was placed on a stretcher with a neck brace.

At Hamot Hospital, doctors diagnosed Kiefer's injury as a severe concussion. After being told his short term memory may or may not come back, he was advised to go home for a week to let his head heal.

While at home, Kiefer and his family looked to seek further opinions on his injury and consulted with a top doctor at UPMC. They found Dr. Mark R. Lovell, an internationally recognized sports concussion expert and founding director of the UPMC Sports Medicine Concussion Program. Lovell is also the doctor of the Pittsburgh Penguins and Steelers athletes.

At the hospital, Dr. Lovell gave Kiefer the typical

tests for a concussion injury. One of which was a half-hour computer memorization test.

"I had to retake the computer concussion test, like the one I took in ninth grade of high school," Kiefer said. "While taking the test I was getting sick and could barely read any longer. The room was spinning. I just wanted to lie down."

Another test given to Kiefer was a balance test. His objective: to sit on a pillow and to keep his balance for 30 seconds.

"I could only keep my balance for three seconds," Kiefer said. "My mom told me I was swaying back and forth and couldn't hold myself up."

Kiefer and his family received the news that his soccer career was possibly over. Dr. Lovell considered his concussion to be so severe that it was one of the worst they had ever seen.

"When Dr. Lovell told my parents and I about the results, he said my memorization test was not even close to the one I took four years ago," Kiefer said. "His prognosis of everything was that they didn't know when my short term memory will come back or if it ever will. He told me that soccer and any type of physical activity are all out of the question, for a long time."

Kiefer was sent home for another week by Dr. Lovell to continue resting. While at home he was to work on school work and try to relax as much as possible.

"Behrend professors have been really nice about it and understanding," Kiefer said. "I am just on a time schedule and it is a day-by-day process."

As the Behrend men's soccer team plays out the rest of the season, Kiefer still attends the games when he can.

"Right after my injury I wasn't even allowed out of my bed," Kiefer said. "I could eat, sleep and drink, and that was all. I'm glad I'm progressing enough to watch the guys play. I may not be able to be on the field, but at least I can still cheer them on."



Photos by Jo Kiefer
La Roche's Maranol Azavedo comes to the aid of Kory Kiefer as he lie motionless. Azavedo and Kiefer hit head-to-head moments before.

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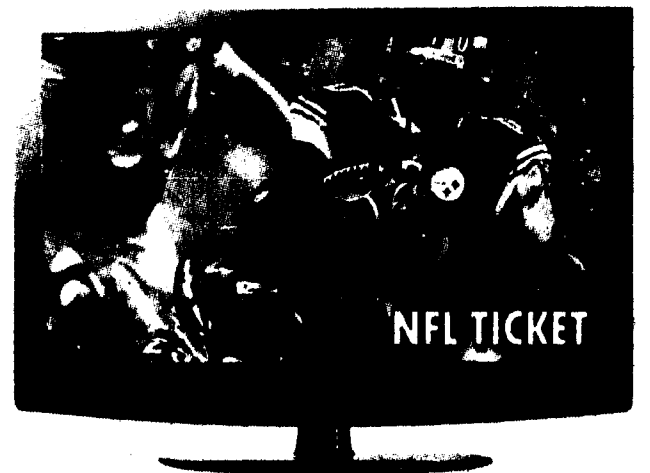
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