

Switching up the game

Junior Max Webb switches sports after major knee surgeries

RHEA PATNEY

writer | @rheapatney

After an intense, two-part knee surgery Oct. 29, 2018, junior Max Webb knew he had an important decision to make. In addition to the long road of recovery ahead of him, he also had to decide whether his primary sport, baseball, would still be in his future.

Webb has played competitive baseball since he was a kindergartener in Columbia, Missouri. As his career progressed, he began to notice excessive pain in his knee and eventually went to the doctor. That's when he learned he had an osteochondral defect in his right knee.

"I didn't have any blood flow going to the bones in my knee, so the bone got brittle and started breaking off," Webb said. "I lost three centimeters of bone, but for a lot of people it's less than that."

To treat his condition, Webb received two surgeries on his knee at the Washington University Children's Clinic. During his first surgery, doctors implanted new bone onto the top of his knee, using screws to increase the blood flow. The second occurred four months later when doctors took the screws out of the bone. After this, the recovery process started.

"The first day he got his surgery he was really tired and down," freshman Victoria Webb, Max's sister, said. "The next week or two, all he did was lay on the couch and stay inside because he couldn't walk."

At times, his recovery was a long and hard process. Max spent eight weeks on

crutches and did physical therapy at least twice a week. As time passed, he began to notice significant developments in his mobility and eventually was able to walk.

"Once I started walking, that's when I really started noticing a lot of improvements with muscle building back up and flexibility," Max said.

After his recovery process started coming to a close, Max made the decision to no longer play baseball. Instead, he decided to start playing JV golf because of the similarities between the baseball and golf swing. He also appreciated the individuality of the sport.

"I like that golf is a lot more dependent on yourself," Max said. "If someone makes a mistake in baseball, you feel like you just want to blame them, but in golf, you can't really blame anyone else. I really like that mentality."

This surgery didn't only help Max physically; it also changed him as a person. Max learned many lessons he will continue to carry with him, and his family also discovered how great his capacity for success is.

"I learned that Max has a lot of character and determination," Harold Webb, Max's father, said. "No one is free from challenges in life, but adversity is just part of growth."

In the five months since the surgery, Max has made a near full recovery and will continue to play golf. He has hopes of participating in competitive out-of-school tournaments this summer.

"Just keep powering through," Max said. "You are going to have your low points and you're going to feel like you can't get through [surgery and recovery] but you will, and it will be better afterwards." ♦

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