

# Winston Fox returns to kick field goals for Bobcats

## Senior kicker recovered from ACL, MCL surgery in less than two months

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Winston Fox's career was coming together.

After winning the kicking and punting competition at the Ray Guy camp in July, the Paradise High School senior football player was well on his way to having a successful final season on the gridiron.

A senior season that could easily have blossomed into a college or professional career after a member of the Detroit Lions kicking staff told Winston he had tremendous potential, Patricia Fox, Winston's mother, said via an e-mail submitted to The Post.

All the confidence, accolades and awards would hit a roadblock, however, on Aug. 6 after Fox tore his anterior cruciate ligament, (ACL), and medial collateral ligament, (MCL), as well as damaging his meniscus during a passing drill at one of the varsity squad's summer training sessions.

"I didn't really know how bad it was at first. I was like hopefully I'll be back pretty soon," Fox said. "Then I was pretty emotional at first and still (dwell) on it, but I know what happened and there's not much I can do."

Little did Fox know at the time of the injury that there was a lot he could do, and Patti Fox made sure of it.

Winston and his mom researched a procedure called Ligament Advanced Reinforcement System, "LARS," which as Patti Fox said, is an artificial ligament that scaffolds the ACL until it grows back together.

She and Winston spoke to numerous doctors about the surgery as well as athletes who had the surgery during their career.

"After I talked to pro BMX riders and skateboarders who had the (surgery), and have all done great with it, I started leaning more towards it and felt better," Fox said.

On Sept. 7, Fox agreed to travel to Montreal and let Dr. Nicholas Duval perform the surgery.

Less than two months later, Fox was back on the field last week against Chico High for the first time since the injury. The typical recovery process for a torn ACL and MCL ligament is six to nine months.

However, with the determination and tireless work ethic, Fox not only suited up, he attempted a punt last week against the Panthers.

While a botched snap prevented Fox from succeeding in his first punt attempt, Paradise High coach Rick Prinz said he was amazed when he saw Fox hit the field last week against Chico.

"Winston's incredible with the rehab and everything he's gone through to get the knee where it is, it amazes me after seeing many ACLs how quickly he's back here punting and kicking," Prinz said.

And it was without question difficult for both Fox and his family in the immediate aftermath of the injury.

"I had planned on getting the (surgery) here and taking my time with it, but then we found the (Lars procedure), talked to people who had it and got it scheduled," Fox said. "It was weird, but it was good and I'm glad I did it."

However, Bill Clancy an orthopedic surgeon, who invented the ACL reconstruction and posterior cruciate ligament reconstruction procedure, said he questions Fox's surgery on a long-term basis.

Clancy said the body repairs damaged tissue all the time and an artificial ligament doesn't allow the body to heal the tissue on its own, which is why the U.S. Food and Drug Administration doesn't allow it.

Nevertheless, Fox said the planning, research and interviews for this surgery wouldn't have happened without the support of his parents.

"If it wasn't for them, I don't know what I'd do," Fox said.

And now that he's nearly 100 percent for the final stretch of the regular season and playoffs, Fox said he feels a sense of relief, and is starting to gain back the confidence he had in July after he won first place in the Ray Guy kicking camp.

"I really appreciate everybody who's supported me - my coaches, my parents and all my friends," Fox said. "I'm excited I get to comeback to this team."

In addition, Fox said to comeback this year will bode well for his chances at kicking in college.

"I'm glad I got to comeback so soon, (so) I can try and play at Butte (College) next year," Fox said. "It'll help for other colleges too."

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