

# Jacobs bounces back for senior year at Valley Vista

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*Valley Vista safety Stacy Jacobs (21) sprints on the field during a game against Mountain Pointe. (Photo provided by Stacy Jacobs)*

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Despite tearing his ACL late last season, Valley Vista senior safety Stacy Jacobs fought his way back and has played in six games this season.

Jacobs injured his knee when Valley Vista played Tolleson Union High School. The Monsoon were 6-3 at the time and looking forward to the playoffs.

“The injury happened in our second-to-last game of the season,” Valley Vista Coach Derek Wahlstrom said. “He missed the rest of the game, our final game against Shadow Ridge and our playoff game against Pinnacle.”

Jacobs was engaged in a routine football play when the injury happened.

"I had made contact on a tackle with a receiver and he wasn't going down," Jacobs said. "I dragged him out of bounds and I took a wrong step. I felt a pop in my knee and I felt my knee pop out. Once I fell to the ground I felt it pop back in."

Jacobs is a defensive player so he's used to making hard hits. However, this play was different.

"It felt different," Jacobs said. "I never felt a pop like that before. The pain afterward was there, not too much because of the adrenaline during the game."

Jacobs got a slow start with rehabilitation because his injury was misdiagnosed.

"Nothing suggested Jacobs had torn his ACL against Tolleson Union," Valley Vista Athletic trainer Britney Huddleston said.

"Initially we thought it was a torn meniscus," Wahlstrom said. "Once Stacy went to the doctor in February they confirmed he had torn his ACL."

The timing of Jacobs' return is significant because most ACL recoveries take 10 months. Jacobs recovered in six months.

"He was back on the field before our first game of the season," Wahlstrom said.

Jacobs was determined not to miss his final season of high school football and took the necessary steps to return to the field.

"He was diligently working to do what was required so he could come back and play this year," Wahlstrom said.

Huddleston and Jacobs' physical therapist helped him recover.

"We did a lot of stuff beforehand through track season because of insurance issues," Huddleston said. "We had to wait a little bit before we could get him into the doctor for an MRI. We did a lot of quad strengthening to keep him strong."

Strengthening the quads helps prevent atrophy, which is the breakdown of muscle tissue, according to Huddleston.

When athletes suffer major injuries like Jacobs did they need something to lean on. Jacobs chose to connect with God.

Jacobs is a God-fearing Christian who has always had faith.

“That moment really pushed me to cling on to my faith and build a relationship with God,” Jacobs said.

Jacobs wasn’t prepared for the diagnosis of a torn ACL and was overwhelmed when he received the news.

“I was devastated when I found out I tore my ACL,” Jacobs said. “Mentally it was hard. I thought my football career was over.”

The recovery process was extensive and Jacobs had to lock in in order to get back on the field. Huddleston made sure Jacobs was getting appropriate treatment.

“We did a lot of quad sets and straight leg raises to get the quad area stronger,” Huddleston said. “We focused on quads because you don’t want to stress other parts of the body.”

Jacobs experienced a range of emotions while rehabbing and faced mental demons while he was at home.

“There were nights after the surgery when I was in bed and couldn’t move,” Jacobs said. “I had a hard time dealing with the pain in my knee.”

Jacobs’ mom, Dora, was his biggest supporter.

“My mom was there for me during the whole process,” Jacobs said. “I was really angry and my mom would pray for me and tell me things were going to be OK.”

Jacobs has received scholarship offers from the Maricopa Mustangs junior college football team and the Sonoran Sidewinders junior college football team.

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