



Bailey overcomes injury, orthopaedic surgery to lead Bolingbrook to first state football title

With barely 5 minutes remaining in the Illinois Class 8A state championship final, the No. 2-rated Bolingbrook High School Raiders trailed the No. 1-rated Loyola Academy Ramblers from Wilmette, 17-14. Junior Bolingbrook quarterback Aaron Bailey was in the toughest game of his life, but one he and his teammates will remember the rest of their lives. Determined not to let their 13-1 season end with a title loss, the 6-foot-2, 215-pound Bailey broke through Loyola's defense bolting 33-yards for the winning touchdown and the first state title in the school's history. Little did any of the rain-soaked fans know that Bailey had arthroscopic knee surgery by Dr. Steven Chudik, orthopaedic surgeon and sports medicine physician with the Steven Chudik Shoulder and Knee Injury Clinic that enabled Bailey to play that memorable game and season.

"I actually injured my knee during a baseball game when an opponent slid into my knee," Bailey said. "I had X-rays, but they didn't show anything conclusive. Dr. Chudik ordered additional X-rays because he wanted to see my knee from other angles. Unfortunately, they didn't show anything either so I had to have an MRI," Bailey explained.

According to Dr. Chudik, Bailey's MRI revealed deep bruises on his knee, but no obvious ligament or meniscus damage. "I recommended a conservative approach to start—limiting activities to prevent pain and physical therapy followed by a gradual return to activity," said Dr. Chudik. "After a few weeks and not much improvement, I knew something more was wrong and recommended a diagnostic injection. Because Aaron got almost immediate relief, but only temporary, I knew the pain was coming from inside the joint so I recommended arthroscopic surgery to determine the actual cause of the pain," Dr. Chudik explained.

"The outpatient surgery only took about 30-minutes and it provided the answers the X-rays and MRI couldn't," Bailey said. "Dr. Chudik removed part of my medial plica which he told me is typically a normal tissue in my knee. Sometimes with an injury, the plica scars and thickens and can cause a lot of pain and problems. That's what happened to me," he added.

Following the knee surgery, some might think the Raiders QB might be cautious or overly protective to prevent re-injury, but it never entered his thoughts since returning to the gridiron. "If I worry about getting hurt, I will. I just go out and play and give it my all," Bailey said. "I'm good to go and haven't had any problems thanks to Dr. Chudik."