

WILLIAMS

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dose of reality. I didn't think he was injured that bad."

That night, 15 year-old Ben Williams collapsed on the football field minutes after telling one of the Silverado trainers his feet felt numb, he was suddenly dizzy and had a severe headache.

When Williams arrived at the trauma center, a CAT scan revealed the headache was actually a blood clot on the left side of Williams' brain. The young football player's parents were informed that surgery was necessary right away, and that is when their nightmare began.

When Williams didn't wake up the day after the injury, doctors suspected that he may not come out of the coma he had slipped into, and the nightmare continued.

"It's been an emotional roller coaster," says Robertson, who is actually Ben's step-father. He married Christine ten years ago, two years after Ben's natural father died in a motorcycle accident. Robertson says that in those ten years, he has grown

close enough to consider himself Ben's real father.

"It rips your heart out just the same way. You sit in here and look at him like he is your son 'cause he is."

Dr. Sri Halthore told Christine last Saturday that Ben's MRI showed multiple contusions on the first layer of his brain, an injury that, he says, had to have come from playing football.

Through Saturday, there were no signs of physical movement from Ben whatsoever, and then he was visited by his little brother, seven year-old Nickolas.

Although a bit apprehensive at first, Nickolas made his way into Ben's room and was urged by Christine and Art to say hi to his older brother. When Nickolas spoke, Ben's arm sprang from his hospital bed and began to wave. His eyes popped open, bringing smiles to everyone in the room.

Since Saturday's breakthrough, the nursing staff has made Ben do all of his own personal hygiene, which includes: brushing his teeth, washing his

face and putting on his own deodorant. When he yawns, there is an occasional tear that will drop from his eye and he'll quaintly use his gown to wipe it away.

His right eye has developed a severe redness but Christine explains that when he falls asleep, it is tough for him to get it completely shut and it'll tend to get dry. She admits that her biggest worry since seeing her son's eyes open up, has been his vision.

"I asked about his eyesight because he's got one eye that kind of wonders to the right, while the left one stares straight. My first question was, 'Will he be blind?'"

The doctors have told her that he will be just fine, and as a

matter of fact, Dr. Halthore told her that he expects Ben to eventually recover 100%. If not, it'll be about 98%. Many head injuries similar to Ben's result in somewhat of a slight memory loss, yet according to Dr. Halthore, three to four months of eventual rehabilitation will have Ben back on his feet once again.

Christine says she has had a lot to think about since her son's accident, and still has many questions she is looking for answers to.

"You mentally go through whether your child is going to make it. Once you get past that, you get to the point where, 'What is he gonna be like when he does (fully recover)? Is he gonna suffer a memory loss? Is he

gonna remember things? Is he gonna remember he was on the football team? Will he still like football? Is he gonna want to play football again? A lot of things go through your mind."

One question was answered Wednesday evening in his Pediatric Intensive Care Unit room when his grandfather, Telma Williams, asked him who was going to win this Sunday's football game between San Francisco and Dallas.

Williams can respond to questions by raising his right arm, whether it pertains to football, watching television, if he is in a comfortable position or simply how he's doing. Monday night, Ben's nurse asked him if he wanted to watch the football

game and he responded with an affirmative nod. When Art and Christine arrive nightly around 7:30 p.m., Ben now greets them with a high-five and a forced grimace. They both talk to him and let him know that he is doing better every day, and you can sense he knows it. Watching him maneuver himself gives you the feeling that he is ready to get up and forget the whole incident.

As for Sunday's game, Williams is looking forward to watching his San Francisco 49ers beat his grandfather's favorite team, Dallas. The elder Williams teased his grandson repeatedly about the game, telling him things like, 'Michael Irvin is gonna run all over Deion Sanders,' and,

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