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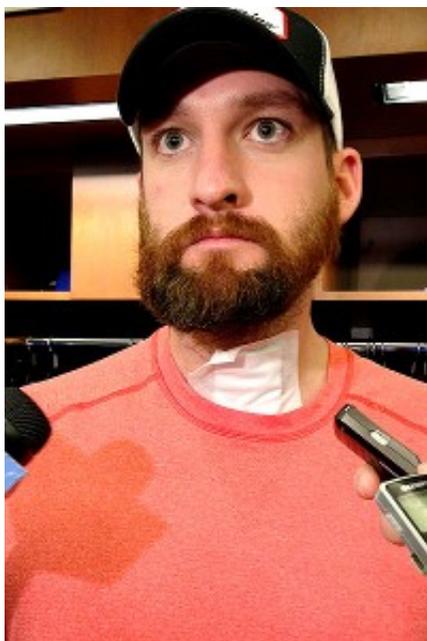
Thursday, September 19, 2013

Parnell expects recovery by spring training

By Adam Rubin

NEW YORK -- [Bobby Parnell](#) has complete faith he will be ready for spring training after undergoing surgery to repair a herniated disk in his neck in California. After all, the surgeon who performed his Sept. 10 procedure also performed a comparable operation on Peyton Manning.

"The chances are pretty good. I don't know the numbers or anything, but everyone has assured me that I will [be ready for spring training]," Parnell said Thursday, while saying goodbye to his teammates following a 2-1 loss to the [San Francisco Giants](#) at Citi Field to end the homestand. "All the discomfort that I had from the pinched nerve is gone, basically. It's just soreness from the surgery now. I feel very confident that everything is going to get back to normal. ...



Adam Rubin Bobby Parnell, who removed a neck brace before speaking with reporters Thursday, believes he will be OK for spring training.

"They said it's pretty straightforward, pretty common. I've never heard of it, either. And then I started talking to people, and people have had it left and right. It's something that people come back from and have a lot of success with.

"I know Peyton had it. He had seven touchdowns [in Week 1, three years after the surgery], so I was pretty comfortable."

Surgeon Robert Watkins entered through the front of Parnell's neck to perform the operation, which is preferable to going through the back side, where there are more obstructions that would need to be cut through.

Parnell had slept in a recliner rather than a bed for the six weeks before surgery because it was too uncomfortable lying down. For the past two nights, he now has been able to sleep in a bed.

Watkins removed the entire troublesome disk and replaced it with a bone graft from the closer's hip.

He had last appeared in a major league game July 30 and waited six weeks before undergoing surgery. He tried an epidural injection that was unsuccessful.

"Initially I didn't want to," Parnell said. "I had a follow-up MRI before I went to California. The herniation hadn't shrunk, and it possibly had gotten bigger. So for me to be ready for spring training, I needed to do it."

Parnell needs to refrain from activity, with the exception of walking, for the next four to six weeks. After that, he will see a therapist and go for a follow-up examination with Dr. Watkins.

Before the injury, Parnell had emerged as a reliable closer. He had 22 saves in 26 chances this season.

"It's never enough, but I feel confident with what I did," Parnell said. "I feel like it's a good stepping stone for the future. I learned a lot of things this year about myself and am going to continue to carry it on to next year."
