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After defeating depression and suicide through the help of Christ, and witnessing a Valley community who fully supported him, Keller's college experience was bound to be a walk in the park, right? Wrong.

The first day Keller stepped onto the practice field at Morehead, the coaching staff moved the former Valley running back to tight end. Keller, who attended MSU to play running back, never played one snap in the backfield.

Devastated by the recent turn of events, Keller called his brother-in-law, Kirk Thompson who played for the Cincinnati Bearcats.

"I told him I wanted to quit," Keller said. "I've never played tight end. I've never played with my hand in the dirt. I just said I'm done. I don't want to be here."

Thompson reminded Keller of the dream he had on the night before signing day, watching the Eagles play football. Thompson reminded Keller that he attended Morehead because he felt like God led him down that path.

"He said, 'I don't care what position you play,'" Keller said. "He said, 'you play that position and you be the best the school has ever seen at whatever position it is. There is a reason you're at that school.'"

After hearing the words of encouragement, Keller decided to remain true to his commitment. At the beginning of his freshman campaign, Keller started at tight end and at the beginning of this sophomore season, Keller's responsibility increased as he kept his starting position at tight end but he also started at one of the outside linebacker positions.

Although he was counted on to be a threat for the Eagles, Keller's sophomore year was about to start a downward spiral unlike any other.

In the first game of this season against Pikeville, Keller sprained his left ankle on a special teams play right after halftime. The injury was originally thought to be minor and Keller attempted to play through the pain but to no avail.

Keller sat out the following week in hopes of returning in week 3 against Youngstown State. The coaching staff attempted to play Keller in the game.

"I went out and played like three plays, but I couldn't move at all so I sat out the rest of the game," Keller said.

This time, the Eagle coaching staff decided to rest Keller's ankle for a month before allowing him to play again.

"They brought me back and I couldn't do a thing," Keller said. "I played like two plays and that was it."

After his second failed attempt to get back on the football field, Keller sat out until the last game of the season. Like the previous two attempts, Keller played a handful of plays and was once again pulled from the contest.

After the season was over, Keller applied for a medical redshirt but since he played in four games — albeit a handful of plays at most — his medical redshirt was denied based on the NCAA's guidelines, which ruled he played in too many games during the year.

Once the season was completed, Keller went to a doctor over his sprained ankle and found out that his ankle was fractured and the tendon was detached from the bone, which required surgery.

However, the surgery was far from a success. Keller woke up from the anesthesia and both of his ankles were heavily bandaged. The nurse came over and told Keller they operated on both ankles.

"I was shocked," Keller said. "I didn't know what to think. I didn't know what to do." Keller's mother, Dawn Keller, rushed into the room with tears in her eyes and told Keller the doctors had made a mistake, they operated on the wrong ankle.

"I thought what on earth," Keller said. "I really didn't know what to think."

Despite having both ankles operated on, Keller's pain never went away. Keller finally went to see Morehead's new team doctor, renowned surgeon in the sport's community doctor Timothy Kremchek.

After meeting with Kremchek, Keller was forced to have a second surgery on his left ankle to repair the original damage that wasn't fixed in the first operation.

Once Kremchek finally repaired the underlining damage in Keller's injured ankle, he began rehabbing as his junior season rapidly approached.

However, less than a month into his junior campaign and Keller suffered a broken wrist, which didn't show up on the initial X-rays. So, Keller played in two more games before realizing he was going to have to visit Kremchek once again.

After officially being diagnosed with a broken wrist, Keller was forced to have surgery to repair the damage. Keller kept his wrist in a cast for four months to allow the bones to properly heal, however, once the cast came off, he could barely move his wrist even though Keller was suppose to have full range of motion.

Once he visited with his local doctor, Keller was told he would need another operation because the bone in his wrist had grown to much and was blocking his range of motion.

A couple of weeks after the surgery, Keller began noticing a lot of draining from the wound. He notified his doctor but was told it was just a suture infection.

Shortly after the drainage began, Keller was traveling to Nashville and his wrist was still throbbing, and he was unable to make even the slightest movements. However, his doctor continued to tell Keller it was a suture infection but this time prescribed some antibiotics.

However, despite taking the antibiotics, the next day Keller's wrist took a turn for the worst.

"My wrist was bright red and the size of my shoulder," Keller said. "I sent a picture of it to the doctor that morning. He said, 'go to the ER now.' That was his only response."

Once he reached the Emergency Room in Nashville, the doctor sent Keller into emergency surgery. The local hospital called the hand specialist for the Tennessee Titans. After examination, Keller was diagnosed with MRSA.

"It was spreading through the rest of my body and they were hoping they could get it before it reach my heart valve," Keller said.

Keller spent a week in the hospital and even though the doctors were able to stop the infection, they delivered more bad news.

“The doctor came in and said, ‘Luke this is your senior year. It doesn’t look like you are going to be able to play again,’” Keller said.

Keller was going to have to undergo six to nine weeks of medication through a Pic line, which is a medical device used for administering medications over a long period of time. Then, based on blood results, Keller would be looking at oral antibiotics for a few months.

After a couple of weeks on the new medication, Keller began having an allergic reaction and was forced to return to Nashville. Keller’s doctor switched out his medication but admitted he wasn’t sure how Keller’s body would react to the drug. The only thing the doctor knew for sure was Keller didn’t have a prayer of playing football during his senior year.

However, the only thing Keller had was a prayer. Six weeks into the treatment, Keller receives a call from his doctor.

“He said, ‘hey, are you sitting down?’ I’m thinking oh no, what else is going to come up,” Keller said. “He said, ‘I just wanted to tell you that God has blessed you. Your blood work is perfect. It’s completely back to normal.’”

A stunned Keller was all of the sudden cleared to play football again and didn’t even have to finish his treatment for the MRSA.

“I didn’t know what to say,” Keller said. “He wasn’t the only one, several doctors had told me I wasn’t ever going to play again.”

Keller immediately contacted his coaches at Morehead and told them he was ready to play. They welcomed him back and told him to suit up.

On Oct. 10, against the Butler Bulldogs, Keller returned to the field.

“I had the same feeling I had when I was on the field for that postseason game and the official wouldn’t let me glorify God,” Keller said. “I was so overwhelmed by the fans that night. There have been a few moments in my life where I have gotten to experience that.

“And I know God is real. It’s the same feeling I had when I got saved while I was mowing my grass. It’s the same feeling I had when the crowd showed their support that night and gave credit to God. It’s the same feeling I had when I stepped back onto the field against Butler.”

Part one of this two part series ran in the Wednesday edition of the Daily Times.