

NITRO COACH GOBEL SET FOR SURGERY TODAY

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Bob Gobel has certainly had an eventful start to his coaching career at **Nitro**. Just not one you want to remember.

Gobel, 53, a veteran Kanawha Valley coach, suffered a leg injury during a drill at Wednesday's football practice and is scheduled for surgery today. He will likely be away from workouts and games for at least a few weeks, and possibly much more.

"We were doing a tackling drill like the 'Oklahoma' drill, and a couple kids came toward me," Gobel said. "I backpedaled to get away from them and the quadriceps tendon on top of my leg snapped off the bone. I had to go to the emergency room."

Doctors have told Gobel he'll be in a cast from his toes to his hip for six weeks. Gobel isn't sure how long he'll be sidelined.

"As far as getting out there or to start teaching again, it may be a couple months," Gobel said. "The evaluation will come within a couple weeks [after surgery], but I hope I can sneak out every once in a while [for practice]."

The injury comes after the Wildcats lost their first three games and their starting quarterback. Mark Chandler was suspended for last week's game after being ejected from the previous contest, and has since enrolled at Huntington High.

Gobel has remained upbeat despite the setbacks.

"I'll just have to tell myself what I tell the players all the time - FIDO," Gobel said. "Forget it, drive on. It's going to be hard to do, but I tell myself it could always be worse. Like I try to tell the kids, you have to fight through adversity."

"I have to get up every morning and check and see how many teeth marks there are from being snake-bit. Hopefully, this is the last thing."

Gobel isn't sure how the coaching staff duties will break down during his absence.

"I haven't discussed that much," he said, "but I expect all the guys will get together and do it all together. They're very capable. They're taking care of everything. I have confidence in our coaching staff."

"I'll be able to break down film and help with game planning - I'll just be sitting around, anyway. I don't know the time frame for actively getting after anything."

Gobel has served as head coach at both West Virginia State and WVU Tech, and has worked as a head coach or assistant at high schools such as Herbert Hoover, George Washington, Van, Sissonville and Hurricane, along with Andrew Jackson Middle School.

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