

HEALTHY BULLOCK EAGER FOR SENIOR SEASON

The Daily Reflector

Nathan Summers

April 1, 2012

Reggie Bullock said if he didn't get his severe leg contusion treated immediately last season, he could have faced amputation.

Now the senior East Carolina running back is on two legs again and is ready to shed the painful physical and mental memories of a season spent on the mend.

"It was horrible pain. I had to bend my knee every day and it was tough. It was a rare injury," Bullock said of the deep left thigh bruise, which he said worsened quickly by trying to continue playing on it, adding extreme pressure to the injured part of his leg. "I thought I was going to be done because my muscle was cut all open. If I didn't take care of it right after the game I would have gotten my leg cut off."

As he romped through the Pirates' first mini-scrimmage of spring drills on Saturday afternoon, Bullock said he was at full speed. He is joined this spring by a host of fellow backs, including juniors Torrance Hunt, Michael Dobson, Zico Pasut and transfer Hunter Furr, along with redshirt freshman Chris Hairston and sophomore John Barnes-Smith.

More than anyone else, ECU head coach Ruffin McNeill wants his backs to have plenty of company this season. One of the third-year coach's aims is to have a versatile, combination rush attack much like 2011 Conference USA title game participants Southern Miss and Houston.

"I like that committee," McNeill said following the scrimmage sequence on Saturday, noting that Dobson, Hunt, Bullock and Hairston were all involved, while Furr sat out with a concussion. "You add Hunter to that mix and we've got a good group, and I think that's important."

Bullock's initial season with ECU after transferring from Arizona Western began with promise but ended with pain. He made just six game appearances, yet still finished second on the team with 428 rush yards and four touchdowns on a mere 95 carries.

Given a full 12 or more games with which to operate, Bullock knows he could cash in a 1,000-yard campaign.

"I had a big injury, but I just stuck through it and believed I could come back," the senior from Las Vegas said. "I had to wait and wait until the spring, but the spring time is here, my leg is healthy, I'm fine and I'm ready to get back after it."

Although Furr sat out Saturday, the rest of the backs saw plenty of action in the Pirates' abbreviated scrimmage.

"We did pretty good today running the ball and passing, but our O-line did a great job in run-zone blocking," Bullock said.

"All of the backs got positive yards, nobody got negative, so that was a plus."

Practice wrap

McNeill said he was pleased with Saturday's overall effort, which was essentially a split practice.

"I felt like we needed to continue the development part," McNeill said of the workout, which included focus on special teams sequences, individual drills and sideline management prior to the 11-on-11 session inside Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium.

The coach continued to stress basics like keeping the tempo high and concentrating on pad level. The team will be back on the field Monday.