OSU's Woods returns from near paralysis

STILLWATER, Okla. (AP) _ Artrell Woods was in the Oklahoma State weight room when his life came crashing down.

With one misstep, the fleet-footed receiver's back had been broken by the force of the 185-pound weight he'd been carrying on his shoulders. In that instant football became an afterthought.

Forget scoring touchdowns. Just taking a few steps would be a major breakthrough for Woods.

Now, a mere 131⁄2 months later, Woods is talking touchdowns again. When the Cowboys open the season against Washington State on Saturday in Seattle, he'll be among Oklahoma State's top receivers.

"It's a miracle," said Woods, a sophomore from Bryan, Texas, who teammates know simply as Artie. "I thank God every single day."

Woods' weight room mishap, caused when he rolled his ankle, landed him in the hospital with what doctors called a fracture dislocation of vertebrae and an incomplete spinal cord injury. All his teammates knew was that it wasn't good.

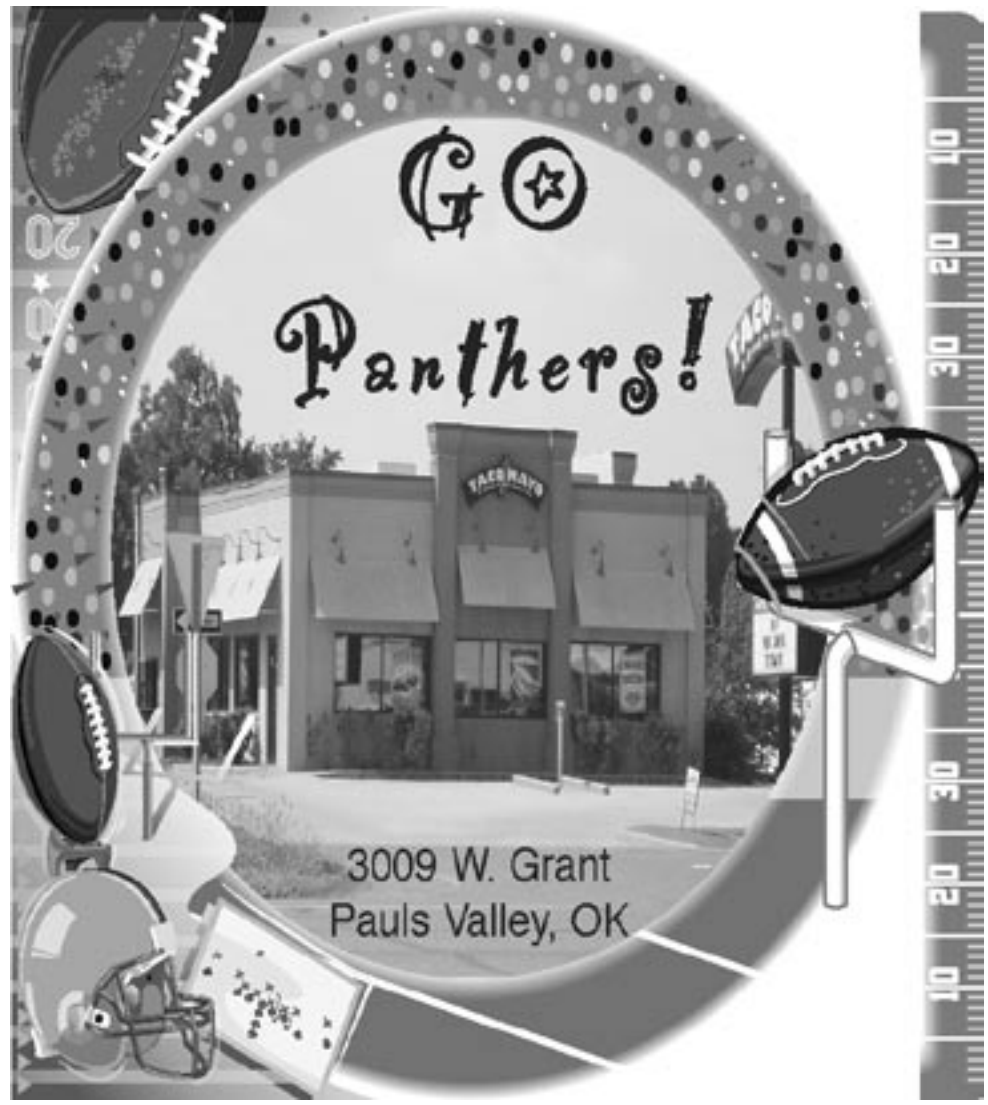
"We really didn't know what happened at first. The way he fell, it looked so bad. And then when he was just laying there and he said he couldn't move, everybody was kind of shocked," teammate Andre Sexton said. "You just hope that he's all right. You don't even think about football."

But soon, Woods did start thinking about it. The first day after his surgery, Woods was able to wiggle his toes. Within weeks, he was up and walking again with a brace supporting his back. Then he gave practice a try.

Woods isn't just going to walk onto the field and wave to the crowd. He fully expects to be a playmaker, like the Cowboys had envisioned him after he had 111 yards receiving in the 2007 spring game — about three months before his injury.

Coach Mike Gundy figures to put Woods on the field for about 30 plays, some as a receiver and some on special teams duty. There'll be no taking it easy on him, even

See COWBOYS page 21



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