

# Going under the knife?

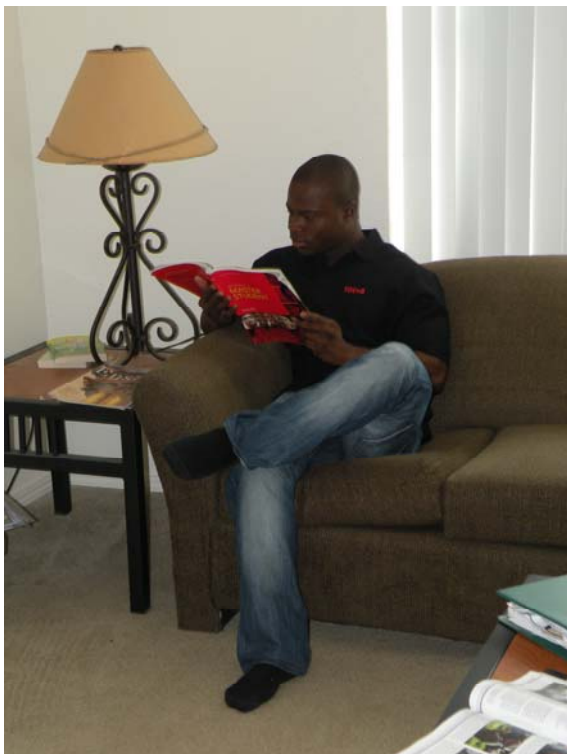
Sport, Monday 29 December 2008

Circumstances can change. That is the age-old Dutch expression going through my thoughts as I read my writings of the previous month. Back then I assumed that I would not have to be operated on my injured leg or hip, but that I would recover after standing five weeks next to the sideline. In the meantime I have discovered the real truth of the situation. Now it is certain; I will still have to go under the knife.

In the area of injuries I have an extended 'track record'. As a matter of fact I have been out injured from 2004 through 2007. The year before that, 2003, I became Dutch champion in the 200 meters. Because of my injury I was not able to defend my title and retain my status as champion. Therefore it was not so strange that when I was finally released to compete again that I ran too hard and gave too much. At the beginning of 2008 I felt as strong as an ox and I ran the best times of my life. Now I realise that I ran that hard because I felt I owed the people and my family good times and because I wanted to catch up for the years being lost.

Of course I was also very reluctant to listen to my head coach Sammy Monsels in that time. He was certainly correct when he said that there was but one important theme in life: patience. Even when you are at the end of the rope there will always be a bit of patience left to get one through the situation at hand. Here in Utah I often think: Sammy, I really hope that you are right, because my patience could dry up at any moment.

My trainer of then has an ally in my current trainer, coach 'Sheriff' Randy. He also is a man of patience. Take the time for your injury, get the right treatment, and see to it that you get fit quickly again for the trainings. This week I started training carefully again, but that was no success. I still experience pain, especially during the nights. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of January I have to go to a doctor who will tell me what kind of therapeutic intervention will be needed to correct my injury. Until then I have to watch after myself, believe in my ability, and keep on doing my best at school. That attitude could eventually be what saves me in the long run.



*Studying for the finals*

With regards to school I have little to complain. For five of the six subjects I have obtained an 'A' aggregate, and for the sixth one between an 'A' and 'B+' I think. If I can achieve an average mark of 2.0 I can keep my scholarship and will I be able to continue my sport and studies here in Utah. That should be possible.

Also a memorable day: 27 November, Thanksgiving. Before I came to Utah I thought that I would end up in an area full of KKK-enthusiasts. Nothing can be more from the truth because the people here are the goodness itself. They are hospitable, helpful, generous and heart-warming. Around Thanksgiving we have gone with a lot of our sportsmen to do some volunteering work for the benefit of less-privileged people in our city and community.

In the so-called 'sub-Santa-program' we aimed to collect as much money and food as possible. The wrestling team really did a great job as they managed to help us collect five thousand food parcels. We brought these food parcels to the houses of many of the poor families and to the homeless on the street. Doing this gave a very big satisfactory feeling.

Something that also feels very good at this moment is that I have got someone over from my tiny cold and wet country, my girlfriend Kimberly Willems. She has been enormously supportive over the past four years of our relationship. I guess that now, with a possible upcoming operation in sight, things will not be any different at all. I will have to keep on relying on her support, and on something that the coach of the Alabama Crimson Tide football team, Paul 'Bear' Bryant, once said: 'If you believe in yourself, have dedication and pride and never quit, you'll be a winner. The price of victory is high, but so are the rewards'. This guy really understood it. Take care!

The whereabouts of Akwasi Frimpong can be followed at:

<http://www.akwasifrimpong.com> and <http://www.rocva.nl>

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