

Spotted Horse looks to rebound after injury

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Marie Spotted Horse spent most of last winter sitting on the bench in street clothes being irritated.

The United Tribes point guard blew out her knee just six games into the women's basketball season. She was angry because she couldn't play, and she was frustrated because she couldn't help her team.

"I knew they could use my help," the 5-foot-7 sophomore from Mandaree said. "I didn't want to watch then because I would get frustrated. It was irritating to just sit there and watch."

Spotted Horse shredded her left knee in a tournament at Bismarck State. She was trying to avoid a collision with another player. When she turned, her leg

stayed planted, causing her ACL to tear.

Spotted Horse had averaged 11.3 points and 6.7 rebounds a game before her injury. She also had 11 3-pointers and 33 assists.

Spotted Horse, who underwent surgery in April, was granted a medical red-shirt and will return for the season. The Thunderbirds open the campaign Saturday and Sunday at the NDSCS-Wahpeton Classic.

Even though Spotted Horse missed most of last season, she still stayed connected to the team. She attended each practice and sat on the bench during home and away games.

"I think that says a lot about it," United Tribes coach Daryl Bearstail said. "It showed she had a commitment to her teammates and to her team. Her presence alone was valuable to us.

"Marie is a very friendly person, and she was there to help anyone on and off the court. She doesn't talk a whole lot, but when she does, it's usually something positive."

Spotted Horse just wanted to show support for her team, even if that meant being on the sidelines. She also wanted to provide some help for Bearstail and assistant Erik Abby.

"I see things differently as a player," said Spotted Horse, an elementary education major. "Daryl and Erik showed me what needs to be done not only on the court but off the court. They showed me the perspective of a coach."

Being on the sidelines confirmed to Spotted Horse that she doesn't want to be involved with coaching.

"I don't know if I could stand girls and

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TOM STROMME/Tribune

Marie Spotted Horse, left, and Marisa Landreaux are the only sophomores on the United Tribes women's basketball roster.

United Tribes

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boys not listening to me and giving me attitude," Spotted Horse said.

"(Sitting) made me stronger as a person and as a student, too."

After surgery, Spotted Horse was able to get into the gym and shoot. She's is, however, concerned about her stamina heading into the season.

"I feel so slow," she said. "I could go five minutes here and there, but I know I

couldn't go a whole 20-minute half."

Spotted Horse is one of two sophomores listed on United Tribes' roster. Marisa Laundreaux of Eagle Butte, S.D., saw time last season.

Bearstail is hoping for the return of Olivia Spotted Bear, whose season was cut short last year because of a knee injury, and Shanaye Packineau, who has a back injury. Neither has been cleared to play, and Bearstail is hoping

for their return after Christmas break.

"We are trying to establish roles as far as chemistry goes," Bearstail said. "We have a long way to go, but we have some talent and quickness. It's going to take some time for us to get to the point where we feel the positives outweigh the negatives. The girls are working hard and buying into our system. They are a good group to work with."