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I remember getting gas and saying goodbye to my mom before I left,” Jacob Lewis said. “I remember getting on the highway and that’s all I remember until I woke up two weeks later.”

On March 24, Lewis was driving back to campus after a job interview. In the snow and ice, he hit a patch of slush and collided with a semi-truck. The semi flipped and Lewis’s car was totaled. First responders from Mercy Air Care in Sioux City, Iowa, airlifted him to the hospital. In critical condition, Lewis was sent to Omaha, Nebraska, where he spent more than 24 hours in surgery.

“He had a lot of fractures,” said men’s basketball Head Coach Ross Douma. “Most notably the vertebrae and the pelvis. What was really remarkable—and a miracle from God, for sure—was that he did not sustain any head injuries. From his neck down to his knees, he had something that was broken or injured virtually every four inches.”

Lewis spent long weeks at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital in Lincoln, Nebraska, relearning how to stand and walk and perform daily tasks. The men’s basketball team visited him there to help lift his spirits and get his mind off rehab.

“There was a lot of joking and normal talk,” Lewis said. “It was good.”

Lewis returned to Dordt and his basketball family this fall. Looking back, he says the toughest part of his rehab was the mental one.

“I had to ask my parents and nurses for everything,” Lewis said. “That was probably the worst—having to rely on everybody for everything, from feeding me to getting a glass of water.”

Back at school, Lewis is working with Dordt’s athletic trainers two to three times a week to get his strength and coordination back. Although he won’t be on the basketball court this winter, he will be helping the team as a student manager, encourager, and friend.

“He’s been a positive example of somebody who just keeps on fighting,” Douma said. “He had two concussions during the season last year, and he was undeterred. It would’ve been easy to just throw in the towel and look for another school close to home. But he wanted to come back and finish what he started. I think that speaks volumes about him and his character and how he was raised.”

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