

# Smith returns after blood-clot treatment

**KNOXVILLE (AP)** — Tennessee offensive lineman Trey Smith was dealing with blood clots in his lungs when he missed spring practice.

Tennessee athletic department spokesman Zach Stipe confirmed Smith's issue Tuesday. ESPN first reported that Smith was diagnosed in February with blood clots in his lungs.

The ESPN report says Smith has been cleared to

play this season but will be held out of contact until he comes off blood-thinning medication, likely sometime around mid-August. Volunteers coach Jeremy Pruitt already had said during Southeastern Conference media days two weeks ago that Smith would be ready to play this fall.

When Smith missed spring practice, Pruitt cited a medical issue without going into specifics.

Tennessee opens preseason practice Friday. Smith earned second-team Associated Press all-SEC honors as a freshman last season.

Tennessee will begin its season Saturday, Sept. 1 against No. 20 West Virginia. The game will be played in Charlotte and begins at 2:30 p.m. on CBS. The Vols play their first home game Saturday, Sept. 8 against ETSU (3 p.m./SEC Network).

## Tom Moore

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Moore cited last year's Shelbyville game as a prime example of how important it is to be able to cover kicks and win field position battles.

"We played one of our best games last fall in Shelbyville, but we let two returns go back for scores," said Moore.

Aaron Myers will likely take over both kicking and punting this fall. The junior has been working diligently each day to strengthen the Pioneer special teams.

Myers won't be alone in pulling double duty. Moore is stressing conditioning because he knows

many of his players will have to play both ways. Numbers are still an issue for Warren County, which has around 40-50 players on the roster. Moore has stressed in-country recruiting for the program, both in county schools and inside the high school, but still sees more work ahead.

"We're going to hold another tryout when school starts for younger guys," said Moore. "We want to see if we can get more out. It's good to get them when they're younger. It's hard to come in as a junior or senior and learn everything."

Fans can expect a young roster to take the field this fall. Moore expects eight

sophomores to start, including two who are fighting for the vacated quarterback position.

Bryson Elrod and Clay Thompson have been battling to replace Isaiah Grayson, who Moore called "one of the best quarterbacks in the state," last year. Moore expects to make the decision on a starter early next week after reviewing Friday's scrimmage against Tullahoma.

Moore hopes nervousness subsides for both sophomores in their second scrimmage, though he can recall the days where he was in their shoes.

"When I was at MBA, I was second string and I had to go in," said Moore. "Our coach hated interceptions and fumbles – and I do too. I came in and fumbled four times in the first half."

"He didn't take me out and we came back and won the game. It feels good when somebody has confidence in you."

Moore is emulating the approach as he leads a young roster this fall.

"At least once a week, I tell our coaches that our kids will emulate our behavior," said Moore. "If we're confident, they will be too. That's what they need."

Improving each week will be the goal for the Pioneers, who Moore believes will grow as the season progresses. The hope is by the time Warren County plays its first home game Sept. 7 – the fourth game of the season – players will have matured on the field.

"We are inexperienced right now. From where we are today to where we'll be, there will be improvement," said Moore. "I know people want to see us hustle. We have a wonderful group of kids who are excited and want to improve. They're get after it and hustle."

The Pioneers open their season Friday, Aug. 17 at DeKalb County.

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