

# Tex to be dead man walking

INJURED Crows forward Taylor Walker tomorrow will have the tendon of a dead person grafted to the side of his damaged right knee.

The tendon has been sourced from a clinic in Queensland.

"I'm actually going to get an allograft for my lateral ligament, which I've torn as well - so someone who's passed away, I get a ligament from them," Walker confirmed at the weekend.

"Obviously I was pretty disappointed when I found the news out on Monday that I did my ACL but there's a lot of people out there worse off than me. So just looking forward to getting my operation done on Monday."

The process is not an AFL first as at least one unidentified player has used the procedure to rebuild a damaged knee. It is also common among athletes seeking quick recovery from serious knee injuries, even in Australia.

Winter Olympian Alisa Camplin relied on the tendon of a dead person to rebuild her right knee before she defended her Olympic title in Turin in 2006.

And Aussie taekwondo athlete Tina Morgan did the same to reconstruct her left knee so she could compete at the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

Walker, 23, needs the allograft to repair damage to the lateral collateral ligament (LCL) of his right knee that was damaged in an awkward landing while playing against Carlton at the MCG last week.

At the same time the key forward will have traditional surgery - with a graft from his own hamstring - to repair the ruptured anterior cruciate ligament (ACL).

Adelaide football operations chief Phil Harper said the surgery was neither unusual nor risky. However, he dismissed Walker making a quick comeback as Camplin and Morgan did in their Olympics campaigns.

And Walker will still have to spend



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12 months out of AFL football. The Adelaide Football Club - whose medics are refusing to give details of Walker's operation on the basis of patient confidentiality - said there was no gamble with the allograft surgery, which does rely on Walker's body not rejecting a tendon from another body.

Also in question is whether the tendon from an older person's body would hold up when Walker returns to AFL football.

Harper would not confirm Walker is using a dead person's tendon.

It is possible for the LCL to be rebuilt with a graft from either of Walker's hamstrings. However, Harper told the *Sunday Mail* the Crows were "extremely confident the surgery would work" after consulting two surgeons.

"The two surgeons are of the same opinion - they are extremely confident it will work," said Harper.

"It is not an unusual procedure."

Adelaide - while hosting AFL premiership favourite Hawthorn at AAMI Stadium yesterday - dealt with the massive challenge of rebuilding its attack without Walker.

His loss, seven months after fellow key forward Kurt Tippett defected to Sydney, has significantly weakened the Crows' scoring power and chances of qualifying for consecutive final series for the first time since 2009.

Walker's leadership, which has drawn the praise of his teammates, will not be lost as Adelaide coach Brenton Sanderson is intent on keeping Walker involved in the Crows' premiership campaign this season. "We'll get Tex doing some opposition analysis stuff when he's ready," hr said.



## ANATOMY OF WALKER'S KNEE

■ Anterior cruciate ligament ruptured.

One of four major ligaments in the knee, the ACL connects the bones at the knee joint.

Walker's will be repaired in the traditional method with a graft from the hamstring.

■ Lateral collateral ligament damaged.

This ligament limits the side-to-side movement of the knee.

Walker's will be repaired with a tendon from a donor clinic in Queensland on Monday.

■ At least one other unidentified AFL player has used patellar tendon allograft to rebuild his knee.

■ Olympians Alisa Camplin and Tina Morgan have used allograft surgery to keep their Olympic dreams alive in 2006 (Turin) and 2008 (Beijing) respectively.

■ Walker will have 12 months out of AFL football rehabilitating from surgery.

■ The concern with allograft surgery is patients rejecting the donated tissue - and athletes rushing their return to competitive sport. The graft needs at least 12 months to take hold.

**No quick fix:** Star Crows forward Taylor Walker on crutches after hurting his knee last Saturday