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7-year-old cancer survivor drafted to Tufts University men's lacrosse team

Posted by Matt Rocheleau November 20, 2013 02:14 PM

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(Alonso Nichols / Tufts University)

Seven-year-old Jacob Beranger takes a break from signing autographs with members of the lacrosse team after the draft ceremony on Nov. 15.

By **Matt Rocheleau**, Town Correspondent

The newest member of Tufts University's men's lacrosse team is by far its smallest and youngest, but his toughness is unmatched.

Jacob Beranger, a 7-year-old from Woburn, was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer three days after his third birthday. He has since withstood lengthy surgeries, a bone marrow transplant, a medically-induced coma and relearning how to eat, sit up and walk.

He continues to battle through regular MRIs and blood transfusions, but his cancer is now in remission.

Jacob was healthy enough this fall to attend his first grade classes, and the Tufts lacrosse team last week found him fit enough to draft.


His new collegiate teammates, coaches and the school's Jumbo the elephant mascot picked him up from school on Friday and escorted him to the university's athletic center, where he was welcomed with balloons and banners.

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The youngster held a press conference, signed autographs, tried on his No. 52 jersey and checked out his own official, name-plated locker.

Of course, the celebration also featured a pizza party and a cake decorated with a Spiderman action figure.

Jacob had been recruited by the squad in the days leading up to his official signing. Lacrosse players went trick-or-treating with Jacob on Halloween and had him visit campus to help him with homework, play video games in the film room or to just hang out.

"This is one tough kid," coach Mike Daly said in a statement. "We are so happy, humbled and grateful to be a part of Jacob's life."

The team connected with Jacob through Team IMPACT, which stands for "Inspire, Motivate and Play Against Challenges Together."

The program aims to improve the quality of life for children facing life-threatening and chronic illnesses through team-based support networks. The initiative was founded and funded by a group of friends and colleagues, many of whom attended Tufts together, played sports in college and have had business dealings with each other.

To see more photos from Jacob's introduction as the team's newest member, [click here](#).

Matt Rocheleau can be reached at mjrochele@gmail.com. Looking for more coverage of area colleges and universities? Go to our [Your Campus pages](#).

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