



Sports

Loss of Lawson extends far beyond Norwell

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Norwell's Andrew Lawson had a special talent for making the Clippers' losses a little less heartbreaking and the wins that much sweeter.

His impact on the Norwell town and school community was immense.

But his passing after a two-year battle with cancer on Feb. 8 was felt by the entire South Shore community, not just Norwell.

"There is no doubt in my mind that Andrew Lawson has made this world a better place," said Hingham High athletic director Jim Quatromoni, who previously was Hull High's boys basketball coach.

Lawson, who had down syndrome, had the ability to make lifelong memories with whoever he encountered. Just look back to a 2008 Patriot League vs. South Shore League Boys Basketball All-Star Game.

Norwell High boys basketball coach John Willis was coaching the South Shore League team against Patriot League and Rockland High coach Fred Damon. Lawson, who was always a fixture on the Norwell High athletics teams' sideline, was on Willis' bench.

Although Lawson was not an all-star, the gym made it clear who they wanted to see in the game.

Fans began to chant, 'We want Andrew!'

"(Willis) had Andrew on the bench and he looked at me with about 10 seconds left and we got him in the game," said Damon. "It's something I'll always remember for the rest of my life. He got a basket and it made Andrew's life. He was so happy and every time I saw him after that he always gave me a hug."

"What a special and inspiring moment that was," said Hingham boys basketball coach Bob Kniffen.

Every South Shore League basketball game the day after Lawson's passing held a moment of silence for Andrew.

“Andrew’s competitive spirit and his loyalty to Norwell and the entire South Shore League was truly special,” said Norwell High athletic director Ryan Quigley. “His ability to inspire everyone he came in contact with was absolutely remarkable.”

Lawson made plenty of memories during his time as a student at Norwell High and after. In 2008, he scored buckets for the boys basketball team against Hanover and then again in the Division 3 South Sectionals against Bellingham. He also scored a goal for the soccer team and was a member of the track team.

Following his graduation, Lawson served as an assistant coach to the boys basketball and soccer teams.

This past fall, the Clippers dedicated their soccer season to Lawson. The undermanned team managed to reach the state championship for the first time in program history. During the season, the team surprised Lawson by making and wearing warm-up shirts with ‘Lawson’ on the back. One was for Andrew, which he proudly wore as the boys defeated Rockland.

“Even if you don’t know him that well, he greets everybody with a handshake and a hug,” said Norwell soccer player Matt Cawthorne at the time.

“He has inspired athletic directors, coaches, athletes and communities of the South Shore League to be more inclusive of all students,” said Abington High boys basketball coach and athletic director Peter Serino “ Andrew was, and always will be, a reminder of what high school sports are about, kids having fun and building long lasting positive relationships. Andrew’s legacy on the South Shore League is far greater than any star athlete.”

“He inspired a whole population, a whole community of people,” said Kniffen. “There’s not a person who has been around basketball here in the South Shore, whatever league you’re in, that wasn’t affected, that wasn’t emotional about our loss.”



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