

# 30 Days/30 Stories®

## Tommy

Diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia
in June 2019 at age 15

Tommy Stackhouse always wanted to be part of a team. His cousins all played baseball and to be honest, he couldn't throw a baseball to save his life. He was a big kid, not sized for baseball; but definitely for wrestling or football. He was first diagnosed with photosensitive epilepsy in 2013. He wanted to wrestle because his dad wrestled his entire life. He ended up not passing the hydration test. He couldn't play football because the sun was his enemy in his photosensitivity. He could go outside with special sunglasses. One day his teacher, Richie Smith encouraged him to be a varsity football manager. At first, he was apprehensive because he thought only girls were managers. I brought to his attention that you don't see any girls as football managers in the NFL. That changed his mind and his whole world changed. He is so dedicated to that team. Even though the sun and heat bother him tremendously, he didn't miss a practice or a game.

He started to work out at Iron Core, a gym that all the players go to and the owner, Kris, was very willing to accommodate his workout for his diagnosis. He wanted to lose some weight and tone up before the season started. He started watching his diet and he lost 10 pounds very easily. Then at the end of the school year, his stomach started bothering him and he was going to the nurse every day. He started to lose more weight and by the end of the school year, he was down 25 pounds. He also had an upper respiratory infection. I asked his family doctor to do some routine bloodwork. He went to the first football practice of the season on a Monday and was being admitted on a Wednesday with the diagnosis of Acute Myeloid Leukemia. The next day, he had his Broviac placed, a lumbar puncture and a bone marrow biopsy. By Saturday, he was having his first round of chemotherapy.

He has now finished rounds one and two and will be having round three as you are reading this. His attitude is "get it done and over with so I can get back to a normal life". He is hoping to make a few practices and games this season and be present at the 100th rivalry game between Bangor and Pen Argyl. We have become friends with several families in the Lehigh Valley who have already gone through similar treatment, and they have really helped our family understand more of the process and what to expect. The entire team has been so supportive and so has our community because No One Fights Alone!

**Written by his mom, Shelly**

**If you would like to donate in Tommy's honor** Click Here

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