

Good evening ladies and gentlemen,

About three weeks ago I was asked to write a speech on my experience with Kennebunk High School athletics. As I prepared I found myself thinking not about goals scored, assists given, or saves made, but rather about something less tangible but much more meaningful.

I entered high school with wide-eyed innocence combined with adolescent whimsy. For the most part, my pre-teen interests changed with the tides, and I would look for other distractions when things became too difficult. The idea of commitment had not yet taken hold in my thoughts.

Freshman year began and without much conviction I decided to try out for soccer. That first practice taught me that there were many places, in my body where I could be sore...places I had not even felt before. My initial reaction was to quit, but my friends intended to keep playing, so to save face, I remained on the team. Over the course of that season and those that followed, other players at my skill level realized the best way to help the team was to quit. I, however, did not come to that realization, and I kept playing.

Hockey had similar results. I joined the team with aspirations to be the best. In time, though, I noticed my teammates were getting more time on the ice. Instead of quitting, though the thought had crossed my mind more than once, I worked at a new intensity during practice. The improvements were noticeable, but slight, and my friends continued to clock more playing time.

After soccer and hockey, one might think I'd lick my wounds and take a season off. But I didn't. I decided to punish myself further and join lacrosse. I think the term is "a glutton for punishment," but there I was day after day taking a beating. Along with hockey and soccer, at practice I worked at an intense pace, trying my very best to gain playing time. Although I played much more in lacrosse, than the other two sports, I still felt that I had much more to prove, not only on the field, but personally as well.

By sticking with soccer, hockey and lacrosse over the past four years, I have had the pleasure of being a part of some great things here at KHS, whether it be hosting a playoff game in soccer for the first time, or an always improving record for hockey, and reaching the state championship for lacrosse. Being a part of all these events reminds me that all my hard work in practice and in games was worth the pleasure of knowing I helped contribute to each of those teams, if only in some small way.

Although KHS has not groomed me, or many of us, into professional-athletes, it has taught me, and probably many of you, lessons that will help each and every one of us grow. The lessons I have learned are varied, whether it be the essence of commitment, \_\_\_\_\_ waking up at five AM for hockey practice, \_\_\_\_\_ Or learning the true definition of determination, \_\_\_\_\_ finishing that last lap on all those field ladders for soccer.

We, as athletes, have learned much from the sports we play in high school, including commitment, determination, and perseverance. But most of all, the one thing we as athletes can take away from high school is the love each of us share, the love for sports.