

Dear Robbie,

I understand that we are connected through your association with a special lacrosse stick once held by Jack Turnbull. My connection to Jack is that I was fortunate to receive the Award named after him three times while I was playing at Salisbury University. Great to “meet” you!

Lacrosse was one of the greatest things to come into my life. Before 8th grade, I didn’t even know what the sport was. But I found out at Carthage High School (where I still coach) it was a game that combined “goal scoring” from so many other sports with the contact of football. It was perfect for me. Lacrosse has allowed me to go compete at the college level, be a part of two national championship teams, get several individual accolades, travel all over the country doing clinics and camps, and helped me become who I am today.

Receiving the award was a great honor. Receiving it the second and then third time was even more special. I believe I received the award because I played on great teams and was fortunate enough to lead them in points. Jack’s is a truly inspirational story. He was a complete student and unbelievable athlete and a great leader and American who was dedicated to his country.

If I could pass along a little advice, I would say that it doesn’t matter what your shape or size is. If you work harder than the other guy, you have a chance. If you take a chance you never know where you might end up. Anything is possible if you believe it is.

Make sure you play every minute as if it is your last. You never know when your playing days may come to an end. Make sure you tell the people you love most that you love them EVERY chance you can. When they are gone you will probably wish you could tell them every day.

I can’t thank my coaches enough. My high school coach, Kirk Ventiquattro, taught us to work hard to learn the game. He really made you want to work to be the best. My college coach, Jim Berkman, refined my skills and pushed me to dominate. He made me realize that if you worked on your skills and put yourself in a position to be great you were cheating yourself if you didn’t play great. He made me be the best every day.

I have several memories, but the moments I remember best are (1) my first day of fall practice in college my freshman year. I got the ball knocked away from me and beaten up every time I touched the ball. It motivated me to get better FAST! (2) First day of practice in 8th grade. NO IDEA what was going on or what to expect. (3) 1994 National Championship–Salisbury’s first. (4) 1995 road trips with the team. We were a complete team and we all got along great. We played–and won–as a TEAM.

When I was a freshman in college I was 5’8 and 215 pounds. I was not very fast either. People always looked at me like I couldn’t do “it.” I was too small and slow to get any job done on the field. I had to prove myself every step of the way.

Looking back, lacrosse has meant so much to me. To receive an Award named after someone who was such a complete student, athlete and American is quite an honor indeed. I hope you’ll enjoy your relationship with Jack Turnbull and the game as much as I have.

A book I would recommend is *Bleachers* by John Grisham.

Good luck with the stick and your playing career.

All the Best,

Jason Coffman

Carthage High School 1992
Salisbury University 1995
Turnbull Award 1993, 1994, 1995