

Tom Welter

Executive Director

Oregon School Activities Association

Mike Hughes, Athletic Director, Jesuit High School

June 3, 2016

Dear Mr. Welter and the OSAA,

First, I would like to say that we are very grateful to be living in Oregon. It is a wonderful place with wonderful people. We have two children in High School, and we are very happy to be here.

I write this letter to request that my son Samuel B. Mueller, be given 5<sup>th</sup> year hardship status, so that he can play sports during the 2016-2017 school year (pursuant to section 8.2.4. of the OSAA 2015-2016 Handbook).

Due to circumstances beyond the control of Samuel B. Mueller, and us (his parents, Michael and Cecilia Mueller), Sam missed the entire 2014-2015 school year (see note from Principal of Crystal River High School dated November 30, 2015).

In the Spring of 2015, Samuel B. Mueller suffered a serious injury to his spine, whereby one of his Lumbar Vertebra was fractured in 2 places. The injury was so severe, that he was told that he might not ever be able to participate in sports again. We were told that if the injury was not allowed to heal appropriately, Sam would have been at risk for long term back issues, and/or disability. As such, a treatment plan was implemented to allow the spinal fracture to heal.

To allow the spinal fracture to heal, Samuel was placed in a back brace that went from below the waist to high up under his arms (axilla). The back brace was rigid, and designed to limit any spinal motion. Sam had to wear the brace every day for about 8-10 months. During that time, Sam was not allowed to participate in any activity, other than walking. He could not bend, twist, lift, strain, sit for long periods, or do anything that might compromise his body's ability to heal.

As such, Sam could not attend school. He was limited on his ability to go anywhere, as there was always a risk for something to happen that could further injure his spine. Because of those risks, Sam had to sit in a recliner, doing nothing, for about 8 months (to allow his spinal fracture to heal). Because of this, he could not attend school.

Once the back was stable, and the fracture healed (that took about 10 months), Sam then had to attend several months of physical therapy. As you can imagine, wearing a back brace for such a long duration, weakened the muscles that support the spine. Sam's other muscles also became weakened from the prolonged sitting and inactivity. Due to the extreme muscle loss and weakness, Sam had to undergo extensive physical therapy.

As parents, it was difficult to watch a son who was so active and happy, undergo such a long and arduous healing process. Imagine missing a whole year of high school due to such an unexpected and debilitating injury. Despite the difficult road, Sam stayed positive and kept a wonderful attitude.

In the Spring of 2015, Sam finished his physical therapy and he was given a clean bill of health. The follow up MRI done nearly one year after the injury, showed that the spine had healed. Sam had beat the odds, and he was able to return to a normal life.

Sam returned to school in the Fall of 2015 to start his junior year (2015-2016). He attended Crystal River High School in Florida until December of 2015 (he finished the fall semester). In January of 2016, due to a job transfer, we moved our family to Portland, Oregon. Now, Sam and his sister both attend Jesuit High School in Beaverton, Oregon. Because of the missed school year, Sam is behind academically. As such, he is even having to take classes this summer to graduate on time in 2017 (with his class at Jesuit).

We respectfully request that Sam be allowed to participate in sports at Jesuit High School. Sam has always participated in sports, and we feel that involvement in athletics is an important part of a person's social and spiritual development. That is why we want to give Sam the chance to be a member of a team, and his community, by participating in sports at Jesuit HS.

Please know that we are very grateful for your assistance on this matter.

Have a great day,

Michael B. Mueller

Cecilia M. Mueller