

# Winchester, Woburn honor Sachems' Gill

This one's for Patrick



Photo by: Patrick Whittemore

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**TOUGH LOSS:** Winchester High players take a knee for a solemn moment of silence to honor their late teammate, Patrick Gill, after their loss to Woburn yesterday in Winchester.

Sunday, September 28, 2014

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By: [Kat Hasenauer Cornetta](#)

WINCHESTER — An hour before yesterday's Winchester-Woburn football game kicked off, Kendrick West and Joshua Lee stood quietly on a hill at Knowlton Stadium, tightly holding a red "W" flag. West had recruited Lee, a friend from Burlington, to come help him hold the flag to pay tribute to Patrick Gill, the Winchester captain who died in a single car accident a week ago.

"I brought the flag out because it motivates our team, it motivates our town, and our town is our family," said West, a Winchester freshman. "Pat put a huge imprint on our lives. He'll definitely be missed. He was like an older brother to all of us."

West was far from alone with that sentiment. Thousands from Winchester, Woburn and surrounding communities packed the stadium and many paid their own tributes to Gill.

Sachems cheerleaders wore Gill's No. 11 on their bright red hair bows. Children and high school students sported Gill's football, hockey and lacrosse jerseys, while fans wore T-shirts with Gill's number and name affixed.

Usually a bitter rival, Woburn fans wore shirts emblazoned with, "Two Teams; One Family" and Gill's No. 11 on the back.

The Woburn shirts were the brainchild of Tanners junior Rachel Scribner, who found herself touched by Gill's passing though they had never met. She designed the shirt Monday, quickly gained approval and sold them at the high school Friday.

"We sold 280 shirts in 20 minutes at school," said Scribner.

Clad in various remembrances of Gill, the standing room only crowd cheered wildly as Winchester, wearing Gill's initials on helmet decals, was led onto the field by his younger brother, Brendan, who was sporting a white No. 11 jersey.

"It was surreal," said Winchester senior lineman Jim Crowther. "We've played in front of crowds like that, obviously on Thanksgiving because it is such a big rivalry, but to see all the 11, 45, and 18 shirts (numbers in the three sports), it gets to you."

Brendan, who is a middle school student, walked to midfield with the team's captains for the coin toss, and spent most of the game helping out on the sidelines, like he had for much of his older brother's career.

"We got him smiling," said Sachems coach Wally Dembowski. "We've got to support that guy. He knows that he has 75 big brothers."

After a moment of silence in Gill's memory, Winchester held Woburn to a field goal on the opening drive. Six plays later, Tim O'Brien broke free for a 20-yard touchdown dash to give the Sachems an early 7-3 lead. Teammates embraced O'Brien in the end zone as the crowd jumped to its feet.

Running back Barker Carey found the moment extremely emotional.

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running back Parker Carey found the moment extremely emotional.

"It was usually Gilly scoring touchdowns. (We knew) he is watching over us."

Winchester held tight with Woburn through the third quarter, entering the final frame leading 14-13. But as the heat and emotional weight of the day took its toll, the Tanners broke away, scoring three fourth-quarter touchdowns to earn a 34-14 win.

Despite the disappointment, an admittedly "exhausted" Dembowski was proud of how his team handled a heavy week.

"It has been an unbelievable week, full of ups and downs," said Dembowski. "From last Saturday morning when I got the phone call, right through to yesterday afternoon when we had the funeral. Every day there was a new high and a new low. One moment you're smiling, the next moment you're crying. It's just . . . I don't know how the kids handled it. The fact that they came out for three quarters and battled their rear ends off . . . fantastic."

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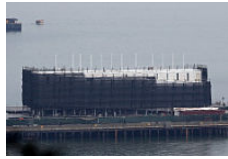
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