

(Good photo here)

<http://www.recordonline.com/article/20150418/COLLEGEVARSITY/150419319/101124/SPORTS>

Video of his 2 touchdown runs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ib5a4gnfBBQ>

Headline: West Point football team made the late Sean Callahan's dream come true
By Michael J. Lewis

The video is 105 seconds of pure, unadulterated joy.

It's from April 18 of this year, and it was shot at the Army football team's spring game. Every major college football program has one; it's essentially an intrasquad scrimmage that means very little in the grand scheme of things.

Except this year, it meant so much.

On the first play of the game, Black Knights coach Jeff Monken called a special play, one not in the playbook: A handoff to Sean Callahan, an incredibly brave 12-year-old boy from Mahopac, N.Y., who the team adopted through Friends of Jaclyn in the summer of 2014.

Sean takes the handoff and runs right, slipping past one defender. He then scoots past another, and then the defense gives up all pretense of trying to tackle him.

"Yeah, our tackling technique wasn't so great on that play," said cornerback Chris Carnegie with a laugh.

Sean races 73 yards, all the way to the end zone for a touchdown, before being swallowed up by a sea of humanity in black and white jerseys.

When they finally put him down after hoisting him in the air, the best part of the glorious video happens: Sean Callahan does an end-zone dance. A little shimmy to the left, a little shake to the right, and we all get to see a person at their absolute happiest.

At the end of the game, Sean scores another touchdown, this one from 74 yards out. It was, without a doubt, a moment of glory for a boy who has suffered through four surgeries since being diagnosed with a brain tumor.

"No words could accurately describe what that felt like, to see him do that," said Army Executive Athletic Director Bob Berretta, who spearheaded Sean's adoption. "To see him get to be with his Army brothers, and see how happy he was that day, is something none of us will ever forget."

Tragically, Sean won't get to attend another Army game, and see his adopted brothers and sisters again.

After a long and heroic fight, Sean earned his Angel wings and passed away on Aug. 22, 2015.

But the Army players and coaches all seem to have been moved by their involvement with Sean, and will certainly never forget him.

Carnegie gushed about what he's learned about bravery and dignity from Sean, starting from the first day they met.

"He came into our locker room after the adoption, and he was a little shy at first, with all these big football players around," Carnegie said. "But then we started talking to him, and he was so full of life, and how happy he was to be around us, and it was really heart-changing for me. It was fantastic, seeing his courage."

Colby Energren, an offensive lineman for Army, said he remembers that first meeting as emotional for him.

"We heard Sean's story from the coaches and we were pretty shaken up, learning about how hard his life has been and what he goes through every day," Energren said. "And Sean walks in and is totally unfazed, and acts natural with us, and makes us feel better. It was really something."

After meeting the team Sean became a regular at practices, playing Nerf football in the locker room with his new pals, and getting to see them at games, and of course he's always encouraged them to beat Navy, which is the primary goal every year.

"What really stuck with me was something Denis Murphy said at the adoption," Berretta said. "That if we can take Sean's mind off his disease for just an hour, it's incredible therapy. I think our players took that to heart, and saw that the hours we spend with Sean have a long-term benefit."

During one of Sean's hospital stays Carnegie and some teammates visited Sean, a gesture Sean's parents greatly appreciated. Berretta said Sean's family has been filled with gratitude for what the players have done, and mom Janine Callahan has told friends that Army has "made Sean's life."

When the Black Knights held their end of season banquet last winter, Sean was front and center on stage, decked out in his black suit and gold tie, shaking hands with each player as they received their awards.

"It was," Berretta said, "a very moving moment for all of us."

As the team goes through the 2015 season, they're keeping Sean in mind constantly.

"I'm just ecstatic that we're in this program and got to know Sean," Energren said. "This is a kid who represented all seven Army values so well."