

Taryn Petrelli Remarks

Like many of the athletes who first come to Middlebury, I didn't know very much about Peter Kohn before I got here. I was aware that the field I was playing on during field hockey preseason was named after him and I was also pretty sure I could do a relatively good impersonation of Pete after hearing my teammates give their best renditions of his speeches. And although I didn't personally know Pete yet, I was aware of his fame that had spread beyond the Middlebury campus in recent years. By the time I got to Middlebury, Peter already had a documentary made about him and his name in the National Lacrosse Hall of Fame. He had definitely already become a figure for Middlebury athletics, particularly lacrosse, over the many years that he had been here. Well if we all knew that, Peter didn't recognize it. My experiences on teams that Peter was a part of led me to discover that Peter's role was much closer to that of a great teammate and a friend than the icon he had become.

Peter was a great teammate not only because of the thousands of balls he dodged and then picked up during practice, or the water bottles he snuck sips out of while lining them up on the benches, and not just because of his unforgettable pregame speeches he dished out before games. Peter was a great teammate because of the selfless devotion he committed for our benefit year after year. Pete genuinely wanted to be there, experiencing the bad and good and the wins and the losses with all of us as we went through them.

One of my last moments with Peter as a Middlebury lacrosse player was this past Spring before NCAA regional games. Peter gave the women's team his pregame speech the day before we left since he wouldn't be traveling with us and staying home with the men instead. His speech was one for the record books. I had never heard Peter Kohn growl before, but as he told us to walk out on the field to face our competition like lions, tigers, panthers and any other feline he could come up with, he began to **grrrr** repeatedly. The next morning at 7am, we loaded the bus and left Kenyon for our trip to Maine. As we turned up the Middlebury traffic circle near the Middlebury Inn, there was Peter, waiting in the grassy area between the roads, waving us down. Our bus driver Gary, better known as "The Force", slowed down and pulled over right there in the traffic circle to let Peter on the bus. Peter had gotten up that morning just to wish us good luck again and see us off one more time. We asked Peter to growl again before he got off, and he thought we asked to hear a prayer. Considering we were blocking traffic there wasn't time for a prayer that morning, so instead Peter growled, got off the bus and we were on our way. We won the game the next day and to be honest I don't think I remember the score but I remember Peter. No one here can think about Middlebury and Middlebury lacrosse without remembering our friend and our teammate Peter Kohn, which is why the memory of Peter will never leave Middlebury, we carry him with us wherever we go and will remember him always.