NEWS RELEASE

Teammate Jim Pesci’s Legacy Honored by Adidas Cleats and House of Sport Dedication

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Our beloved and one-of-a-kind teammate is being remembered in numerous ways
Jim Pesci was so many things to so many people.

Somehow, he easily pulled off being a no-nonsense guy who was also the life of every party. At his core, he was a kind person who, although he appeared intimidating, was far more teddy than bear.

After battling cancer and ultimately passing away last year, Jim’s legacy as one of the most respected buyers in the industry, as well as his drive, compassion and genuine care for others are now quite literally on display.

In the past few weeks, two activations have prominently featured Jim. The House of Cleats at our all-new House of Sports location in Victor, N.Y., was dedicated in his honor, and a plaque was installed directly at the House of Cleats as a monument to all that he accomplished.

Jim’s final project, the adizero 11.0 comics football cleats, include a special Sports Matter sock liner complete with a ribbon featuring Jim’s initials. Both adidas and DICK’S will make a donation of at least $25,000 apiece to The DICK’S Sporting Goods Foundation to support diamond sports.

"Jim and I are very much cut from the same cloth, and we hit it off and formed a relationship 13 years ago after our first meeting," said DSG’s adidas key account manager Zach Hanson. "For everything that he has done and what he meant to me personally, it's the least we can do to honor him."

The tributes provide the perfect representation of Jim. The straight shooter, who could border on gruff, had an enormous soft spot for kids and especially young athletes. In his role as a cleats buyer, he was always on the lookout for the latest and greatest, but what made him so remarkable was the understanding he had for the sports community as a whole. He had no problem saying so when he saw product he didn't like. He also pushed for cleats that could be sold at a lower cost to make sure that families of all economic backgrounds could afford them.

"He worked hard and did things the right way," said Jim's wife Diane, who had three children with Jim. "He was like that at home as well. He worked hard to take care of his family."

The Best Of The Best

Among the community of vendors, Jim had a reputation of being "the guy". During this 25-year career, his work decorated the walls of the shoe deck with the latest selection and styles that make DICK'S the first stop when any season comes around.

"He wasn't just the expert in the building, he was the expert in the cleat community," said DSG's Brad Wagner, who worked hand-in-hand with Jim for several years as a planner. "We would go into meetings, and there would be people from the biggest companies in the world asking, 'Jim, what are you looking for in a cleat?'"

The respect and admiration from the sports community stretched all the way to the field. When he heard that Jim was ill, baseball's Bryce Harper, one of the biggest stars in all of sports, sent Jim a message wishing him well and thanking him for his efforts getting Harper's Under Armour cleats in stores.

"His passion for the company was born from youth sports," said Brad. "He really took that to heart and that was his thought process. Lots of families can't afford expensive cleats for kids. He was always thinking, 'What can I put out there for these kids? How can I make it better for all athletes?'"

As for that tough exterior, it quickly faded as soon as you realized what motivated Jim.

"For people that didn't work with him but heard him being talked about, he probably sounded intimidating," said Brad. "But then when you work with him, you realize he's this big teddy bear."

Good Times

What does pizza, playlists, Nerf darts and singing telegrams have in common? They were all part of the experience of being on Jim's team.

On Friday's he would cue up his famous playlists, which included everything from John Denver to Snoop Dogg. During the winter months, it was holiday music. Jim's team once turned the tables on him by hiring a singing

telegram to perform at a meeting, which received either a look of disbelief or a laugh from Jim, depending on who you ask.

Jim was also known to fire off a Nerf dart or two in the office. And who could forget the time his teammates showed up to work in Jim's trademark outfit of khaki's and a button-up shirt, complete with cardboard cutouts of his face?

He pushed for excellence within his department, but Jim worked just as hard to ensure that his teammates were enjoying their time and each other. He was quick to win over anyone who entered his orbit, especially Brad.

"How often does a 33-year-old immediately become best friends with a 55-year-old?" said Brad. "But that's how it was with him and me."

A Heart Of Gold

Jim's support of youth sports went far beyond the world of cleats. As an athlete who played football through high school and college, Jim knew exactly how sports can shape a young person while instilling discipline and work ethic.

"When he passed away, he wanted all donations to go to Sports Matter," said Diane. "He was insistent. It was really important to him."

During the holidays, Jim and his team adopted families and showered them with gifts. What began as a small endeavor for one family grew into an operation that supported eight families and required multiple trips to deliver presents.

Diane recalled a time when a teammate delivered her baby prematurely and Jim was so concerned, he had to make a phone call to be certain all were OK.

Brad, who is a big fan of Notre Dame, once walked in and found a game-worn football helmet on his desk from Jim.

Jim was indeed many things, but he was authentically himself. For that, he was beloved.

"He was so matter-of-fact, and he told you what he thought and didn't care," said Diane. "You would never know until you met him just how soft and caring he was underneath."

Like everyone who was fortunate enough to know Jim, we are both humbled and honored to carry on his memory and legacy.