

Flyin' Ryan Foundation Adventure Scholarship Team,

Three months ago Jack Lacey reached out to me with a tremendous honor; he was applying for a Flyin' Ryan Scholarship and requested that I write him a Letter of recommendation. Over the past seven years I have gotten to know Jack on the ski hill, on the sidelines of soccer or lacrosse games, or social functions. Not to mention the countless Little League and Babe Ruth baseball games that I was fortunate enough to coach alongside Jack's Father, John Lacey. It was truly an honor to be asked for this request, and I admit that I dropped the ball for him. This is my attempt to make it right. Jack, I sincerely apologize for the delay!

The first time I met Jack we immediately connected through skiing. It was his first day in a new school and he was struggling to overcome the uncertainty of meeting his new classmates and a new routine. I dropped off my son's lunch in the office next door to his classroom. In the room, my wife Katie, who was the school counselor, was sitting with Jack. I walked into the office and apologized for the intrusion and introduced myself, "Hey there, I'm David Babic, It's nice to meet you." Jack looked up at me with a curious twinkle in his eye.. He said, "Did you ski in a Warren Miller film?.." I was blown away that he recognized me.. I was truly caught me off guard. I would later learn that his family would drive up from Boston every weekend to ski at Sugarbush. Jack and his twin brother, Ryan were already avid skiers, even at the age of (9), and they loved watching ski films on the drive up from Boston to get pumped up for the ski weekend. As it turned out one of the films was 'Storm', by Warren Miller, and I had performed in the film some years before. Jack had memorized the film, and I was instantly impressed by his youthful passion for skiing right from the start.

I have had the opportunity to work together with Jack many times over the years and I have always been impressed by his thoughtful, strategic processing of events. He brings a game-time IQ to whatever activity he is pursuing. He doesn't just want to play the game, he likes to break it down, dissect it, identify ways to make it better, and continually improve his performance. Off the slopes, Jack is an emerging baseball pitching prospect. He works on his pitch location and the brake in his curveball. He is a student of the game, and watches how professional pitchers adjust their pitch sequences and location to keep the batters guessing. Jack puts what he learns into practice and executes to give his team the advantage. Jack is always striving for more data and loves to analyze how he can improve.

When I think of Jack, I believe one of his core values is the pursuit of excellence. He is constantly striving to be his best. Often times he nails it, but sometimes he falls short.

Recently Jack's character was on full display at the Ryan Hawks Mad River IFSA 3* event. Jack was one of the top seeded competitors and was one of the last to ski. The fresh snow had been scrapped away, the landings were slick, and the moguls were treacherous. Jack took off on his qualifying run and dove straight down the headwall with tremendous speed. After making his initial turn back towards the next air, a series of rumblestrip bumps rattled his skis off their edges. In an instant he was rolling and sliding on his back. Thankfully, he was uninjured and made his way safely to the bottom. Frustrated as I'm sure he was, Jack dusted himself off and began to cheer on his brother and other fellow competitors. A moment later, his brother Ryan, too, was tumbling down the venue in virtually the same spot. Jack recognized that the venue had changed and the aggressive line that many of the top competitors were taking was creating havoc. Jack took the initiative to call up to the start to warn his fellow competitors of the dangers and to suggest a more conservative approach. While he may not have been recognized as a hero, he certainly took the actions of one.

The following day, Jack showed up. Instead of moping around in sorrow after burning his final opportunity to qualify for the Jr National Championships, he showed up to cheer on his teammates and support the other competitors. Jack's resilience in the face of adversity is one of the qualities that truly makes him special. His ability to rise from the ashes like a phoenix is something to behold. Jack may have missed his opportunity to compete at this year's Junior National Championships, and I know he really wants to go. I do believe that there is value to be gained from the experience. I also believe it is worth it for him to go and learn, dissect, and analyze how he can improve in the future. Jack, as with Flyin' Ryan will 'Never stop exploring life'. Jack exemplifies 'Looking out for others' and 'Being the best friend he can be'. I believe he has an opportunity to gain from traveling to Juniors, and If it is still possible I would request that you thoughtfully consider Jack for a Flyin' Ryan Scholarship.

Thank you for your consideration,

~David Babic

US Ski Team