

51-year-old amputee playing baseball at Mass. community college after accident ended trucking career

By Mike Sullivan

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WORCESTER - Quinsigamond Community College (QCC) has a new designated hitter on their baseball team. He just happens 51-years-old and playing with a prosthetic foot.

"If you ask my wife, baseball was my life before, during, and after the injury," says Paul Landry Jr., the newest QCC Wyvern.

Landry has been coaching baseball for the last 25 years. He previously never played in college or in high school. In 2019, a heavy trailer accident crushed his foot. He was scheduled to get surgery, but then COVID hit.

"Ended up breaking many bones and dislocating several. I don't remember a lot to be honest with you," said Landry.

Surgery delayed by COVID

As the surgery got delayed from COVID, the broken bones in his foot began to fuse into a ball.

"It eventually became unfixable," said Landry of his eventual amputation. "Just so happened, one of the things I did before was I was a truck driver, so that's how I ended up in school."

Since he could no longer be a truck driver, he enrolled at QCC in the hopes of learning a new career. During his studies, he helped QCC baseball Assistant Coach Kyle Paganelli find a practice facility for the team.

"I joked and said I have two years of eligibility, and I'm a full-time student. We all chuckled about it, but Kyle took that and ran," said Landry.

Paul Landry, baseball player at Quinsigamond Community College CBS BOSTON

"It took three months of convincing, and kind of pestering him," said Paganelli of his pursuit of Landry. "He is great with the guys. He is a mentor to these guys."

"Like a spark plug for us"

Landry recently got his first at bat in a game. With two men on, he faked a bunt. It sparked a steal and a play at the plate. The runner scored to give his team the lead. He struck out a few pitches later.

"We had everyone up on the fence cheering. It's the loudest I have ever heard this place," said Cameron Marks, a player who used to be coached by Landry, but now calls him a QCC teammate. "He is almost like a spark plug for us. He shows everyone that you can do whatever you put your mind to."

"They were all yelling 'Landry!' I think after that foul ball, we all thought he was going to get a hit," smiled Paganelli.

"To feel the support from the younger guys, when someone like me is getting an opportunity, is exceptional," said Landry. "I consider all of it just icing."