

No athlete is truly tested until they've stared an injury in the face and come out on the other side stronger than ever.

Injuries are no joke. They end careers all the time and cripple even the most mentally strong. Therefore, those who fight through those difficult times patiently working their way through the rehab and never quitting deserve a lot of credit. After tearing his ACL last year in football, Mike Valicenti has valiantly worked hard thru his injury to get back to the baseball diamond this fall. Michael truly deserves the October Athlete of the Month Award.

Michael Valicenti's name was well-known growing up. Coaches at Braintree High were excited about his future even at a young age seeing him on the Little League Diamond. As a freshman and sophomore he played with Junior Varsity and Varsity and the plan for his junior year was a chance to play every day in the starting lineup, but the chance never came. In the fall of 2017, Michael tore his ACL in football and did not play a single inning his junior year. However, Michael spent a lot of the offseason with the team working out and patiently waiting for his clearance. That day came just as fall baseball began and Michael did a tremendous job getting back into the game. Jamie Walsh, his fall baseball coach, stated,

many of the athletes that we coach have been blessed with an abundance of talent and fly through their youth enjoying their success. One of the biggest challenges in the development and maturity of these boys is in facing adversity for the first time and realizing that life is full of challenges and obstacles. Michael faced a huge obstacle after his injury. For the first time in his athletic career his body stopped him from playing and competing. A week into fall season he was trying to play third base , trying to hit, trying to run, all while not knowing how his knee would react. He had that fear in the back of his mind that he would injure the knee again. He is a competitor and very hard on himself and it was very frustrating to him to have these physical and mental hurdles. However, he improved each week as his confidence grew and his performance level followed suit. His teammates and myself watched with respect as the old Val came back to the field by the end of the Fall. Val's story is a great lesson for all players in the program.

Congrats Val and good luck with everything in the future.

Coach Joyce