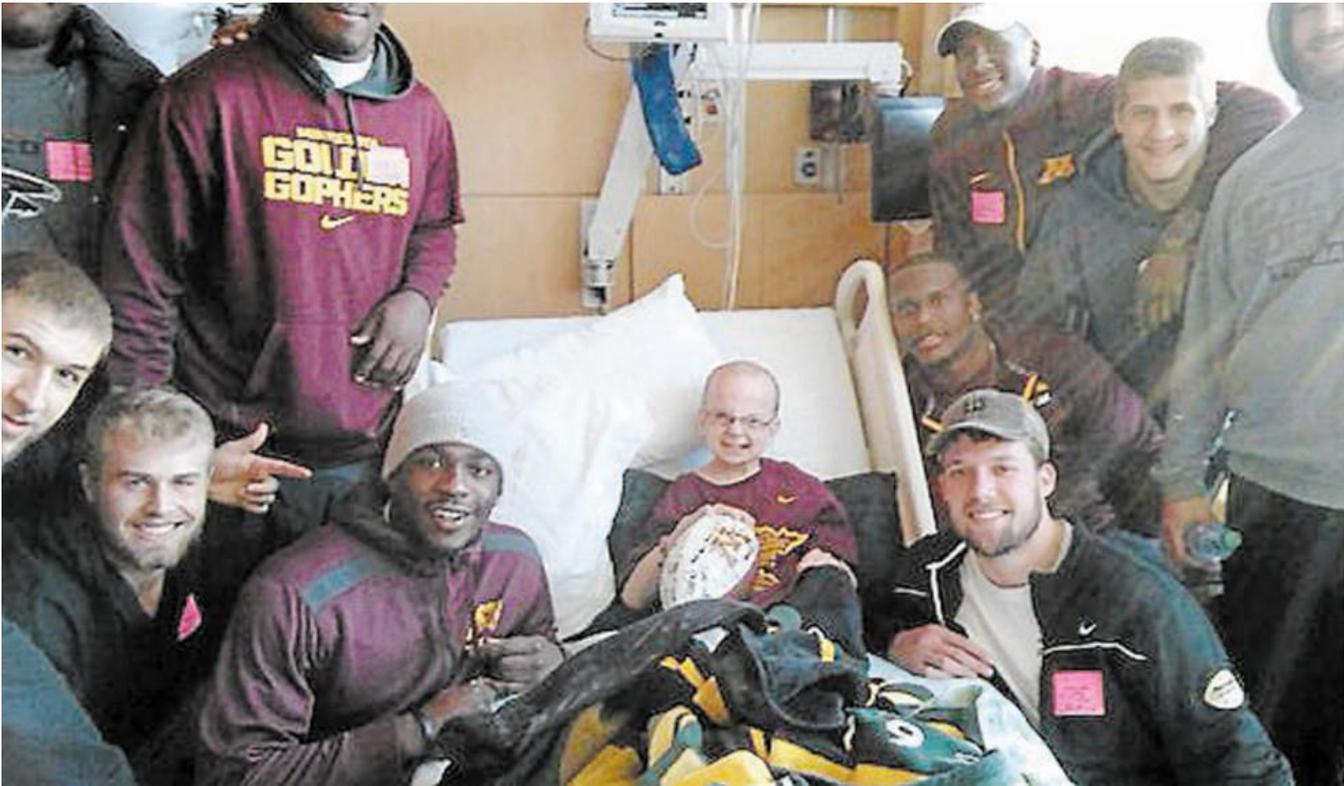


# Eastview's Michael Sheridan has a big fanbase



Michael Sheridan is surrounded in his hospital bed by Gophers football players who came to visit him in April when he was getting ready to have a benign brain tumor removed. Sheridan has been befriended by Minnesota quarterback Mitch Leidner. (Photo courtesy of Matt Percival) and other players he has met through the teams Hope Days events.

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## SIGN UP FOR NEWSLETTERS AND ALERTS

Kevin Sheridan and Kathy Roush-Sheridan knew their son Michael was connected throughout the community.

As did Eastview athletic director Matt Percival, who, like many around the Apple Valley high school, refers to Michael as the “Mayor of Eastview.”

But no one knew the true extent of Sheridan’s following.

Not until last month.

Michael Sheridan, 23, works at Eastview High School, assisting in the physical education department during the day and serving as the manager of the Lightning girls basketball team during the winter — a position he’s held for eight years.



Michael Sheridan has become an institution at Eastview High School. He has been manager of the girls basketball team for the past eight years and has worked in the school's physical education department since he graduated from Eastview in 2012. He was visited by the girls team when he was hospitalized for the removal of a brain tumor in April. (Photo courtesy of Matt Percival)

In early April, teachers noticed that Sheridan wasn't quite himself. One side of Sheridan's face slightly drooped and his speech was a little off.

"The people here knew him so well," Kevin Sheridan said. "They recognized that something was a little bit different."

So Kevin took Michael to the University of Minnesota Masonic Children's Hospital. There, doctors discovered Michael had a benign brain tumor, which likely stemmed from radiation and chemotherapy he received as a baby for the bone marrow transplants used to treat his genetic disorder, Hurler syndrome.

In the days after Michael was admitted, hundreds of visitors started to pour in — literally. On his first day, Kevin said about 100 people came. The next day there were about 80.

"It blew us away," Kevin said. "I probably had tears running down, because I was so grateful, and it just really warmed my heart."

Those stopping by included many past and present Eastview students and staff members.

Minnesota quarterback Mitch Leidner (Pioneer Press: John Autey)

Then Percival received an unexpected call. Gophers quarterback Mitch Leidner was on the other end of the line, wanting to know how he could see Sheridan.

Leidner met Sheridan at a South Suburban Conference leadership conference a couple years ago, where the two struck up a conversation.

"Next thing you know, they're playing catch on the stage," Percival said.

Leidner found out about Sheridan's situation when his brother, Gophers lineman Matt Leidner, saw the news on Twitter. Sheridan is a Gophers fan who attends games and practices, and Mitch Leidner said players have gotten to know him at the team's Hope Days.

“Once we found out what was going on, guys wanted to go see him in a heartbeat,” Leidner said. “We knew how much he cared about the guys on the team and the program and just how big of a fan he is. So we thought it’d be fun to go see him.”

Two vanloads of Gophers football players visited Sheridan that day, as did Joey King from the basketball team, and Leidner said Sheridan lit up.

“He loves having us around and loves showing off his arm strength,” Leidner said.

Sheridan told Leidner he had to have the nurse put the IV in his left arm, instead of his right.

“It couldn’t go into his cannon,” Leidner said, “because he still had to throw the football.”



Michael Sheridan is a loyal Green Bay Packers fan. (Photo courtesy of Matt Percival)

Football is Sheridan’s favorite sport, quarterback is his position and the Packers are his favorite team. So, naturally, Aaron Rodgers is Sheridan’s favorite player.

But Rodgers has some competition after Packers receiver Jordy Nelson reached out to Sheridan during his hospital stay.

“I was shocked,” Michael said.

Nelson spoke with Sheridan via a FaceTime video conference for a few minutes, showing Sheridan the Packers locker room and discussing a possible meeting between the two at Packers training camp this summer.

“(Michael) was grinning from ear to ear,” Kevin said.

HUGE thanks to [@JordyRNelson](#) of [@packers](#) for face timing with Michael Sheridan and making his day!  
[pic.twitter.com/W5IO9pJx2](http://pic.twitter.com/W5IO9pJx2)

— Eastview Athletics (@EVHSAthletics) [April 11, 2016](#)

Michael talking with [@JordyRNelson](#) of [@packers](#) telling him about his "cannon arm" and arranging a training camp date! [pic.twitter.com/P96kIhTVPz](http://pic.twitter.com/P96kIhTVPz)

— Eastview Athletics (@EVHSAthletics) [April 11, 2016](#)

Michael's reaction after hanging up with [@JordyRNelson](#) of [@packers](#) is priceless! Day is made to say the least! [pic.twitter.com/pbM9cbiKzL](http://pic.twitter.com/pbM9cbiKzL)

— Eastview Athletics (@EVHSAthletics) [April 11, 2016](#)

Sheridan is now about a month removed from his hospital exit. During his final few days there, he had two wishes.

The first: “I want to go home.”

The second: “I’ve got to get back to work.”

Just two days after Sheridan was released from the hospital, he was back working at Eastview for a couple hours a day.

“It’s just a really comfortable place for him,” Kevin said. “He feels very comfortable, very welcome here.”

Michael knew what he wanted to do after graduating from Eastview in 2012 — he wanted to work at the high school. So his parents directed him to talk to Percival.

Percival jumped on the idea.

“Without even batting an eye, the (physical education teachers) were like, ‘Absolutely,’ ” Percival said.



Michael Sheridan (Photo courtesy of Kathy Roush-Sheridan)

Like any new hire, Percival had Sheridan go through the interview process. Ground rules like shaving once a week and not wearing Packers attire every day were created. Also, in a separate interview with the principal, Sheridan went on and on about what Eastview means to him.

“He had his shoes ready to go, he had his clip-on tie ready to go and came in and was just like, ‘This is what I want to do,’ ” Percival said. “To hear it in his words, it’s unbelievable. It was pretty cool.”

Sheridan has been working at Eastview for two years. He delivers coffee some mornings, helps with physical education classes and assists with event setups. Percival said Sheridan truly shines while working

with the adaptive physical education classes. Kevin said that other than for medical issues, Michael has yet to miss a day.

Sheridan is small-statured and looks different from other people, so Kevin Sheridan always feared he might be teased growing up.

To his knowledge, that's never happened at Eastview.

"Instead, people just hug him," Kevin said. "It's like he's part of their family. He's part of the Eastview family, but he's got so many friends that I think look at him like another brother. They just love him."

Because he's always lightening the mood with his constant banter and cracking of jokes. Percival described Sheridan's personality as "infectious." Eastview senior Emma Sinn, a guard on the basketball team, said there was a noticeable difference at school during Sheridan's recent absence.

"I won't see him in the halls, and it just feels like an average school day," Sinn said. "When he's here, it's a better day."

Percival said as long as he's at Eastview, Sheridan will have a job if he wants one.

"He's my constant reminder," Percival said, "of how you want to live and what you want to do."

- Tags:
- High school basketball