

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Max Williams.

I play with the Purple Hearts because I have a disability called Autism and an intellectual delay.

I have been invited to say a few words.

I commenced playing football for Purple Hearts in February 2016. I was very worried about playing football because 1) I had never played football before 2) I didn't know how to play and 3) I didn't like football.

For the first practice, my Father was given the job of taking me to training. This was a disaster when my Father and I got lost and couldn't find the right place and the kickoff was closed.

Finally we found the right place and I was able to train for 5 minutes. The next training was much better but I still didn't enjoy it. Fortunately, I had the best coach in the world; Ben Folino! He is awesome because he is gentle, encouraging, nurturing, compassionate and generous.

Soon after this, Ben invited the Purple Hearts to a Gala Day at Centennial Parklands. It was fun because I met a lot of people and I earned the name Mighty Max.

I still didn't know how to play the game but the other men nurtured me. This helped me to learn some skills and encouraged me to finally kick the ball.

Part of being Autistic means I am unable to make friends and social connections.

Becoming a member of Purple Hearts has transformed my life and enabled me to be a member of a sports team and community.

This has widened my participation in society.

I know that this will stay throughout my life by meeting people, exercising and playing in a sports team are just some of the wonderful benefits Purple Hearts has given me.

Thank you so much!

Max Williams