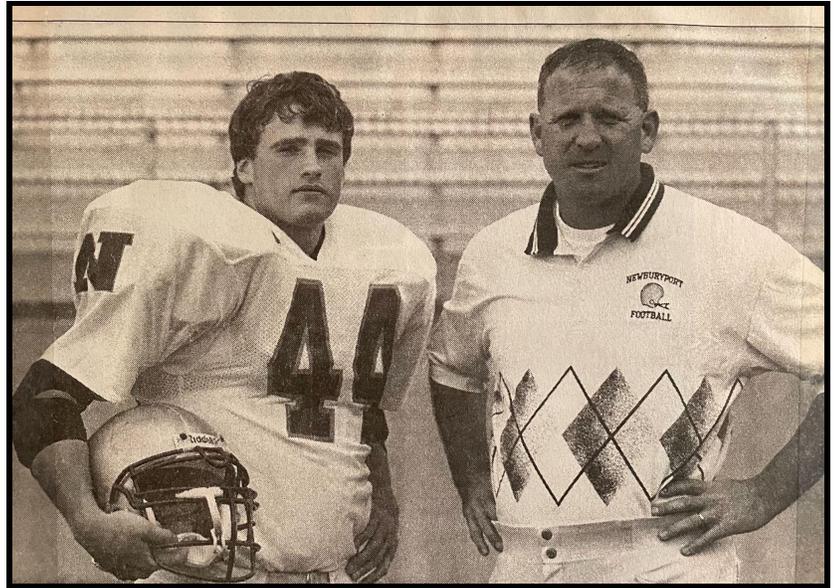


## NHS Football 2021 Team Dedication. #44 Captain Jeff Stone (NHS 99')

On August 4, 2021, the greater Newburyport community as well as countless others beyond, were devastated upon hearing of the untimely passing of Jeff Stone. Jeff was a true Newburyporter and one who cared deeply for his hometown and the sports programs it produced. While he cared for the success of all, hockey and football were in his blood and where he found his passion as a player, coach and booster.



While Stoney excelled at most everything he touched in life, it was on the gridiron where he set himself apart. He was a tenacious leader and master motivator during a stretch when Clipper football reigned supreme. He was the lynchpin of a record setting defense during the 1997 and 1998 campaigns, compiling over 300 career tackles, 21 wins, 2 Cape Ann League titles and one SuperBowl championship. During the 1998 season, Stoney would leave no doubt; an intimidating wrecking ball with a reputation for devastating league offenses; Stoney earned the league's Most Valuable Player award as well as Cape Ann, Agganis and Shriners All Star status.

In 2019, his first year of eligibility, Stoney was named a unanimous first ballot NHS Wall of Fame inductee. It is in a letter from former legendary head coach Ed Gaudiano that one can grasp the impact Stoney had on the field.

*“To write that “Stoney” was one of the most dominant athletes at the high school during the 1990’s would be an understatement. In fact, on the gridiron, he was by far the most dominant player in the Cape Ann League, in a decade that saw 4 Superbowl appearances by the Clippers. Only infrequently do players get such high recognition as a hall of fame for defensive prowess, and Jeff did exactly that. For 3 years he built a reputation as the most feared defender in the league. From a coaches’ standpoint, Clipper defensive football started and ended with Jeff Stone. Defensive preparation consisted of determining what an opponent did well on offense and how Stoney would stop it!”*

*–Ed Gaudiano (in a letter to the NHS WOF committee)*

His talents on the Gridiron transitioned with the seasons. As a leader and star on the ice, Jeff carried the same defensive intensity and made his impact known; helping the Clippers

advance to the State Championship Finals at the Boston Garden in 1997 and captaining the 98' team as an award winning All League Defenseman.

His achievements at NHS extended beyond the ice and Friday night lights; As a member of the National Honors Society and a high performing academic in the classroom; Jeff was recognized by the Boston Herald in 1998 as an All Scholastic Athlete and one as dedicated in the classroom as he was to his teams.

Stoney's combination of talents culminated in a division one scholarship to Colgate University where he played football for four seasons; helping the program capture two Patriot League Titles in the process, and more importantly, earning his degree in 2003.

Many people knew Jeff, however, many do not know just how important he was to generations of NHS student athletes. Jeff was an incredibly generous person, returning to coach for over a decade for both the football and hockey programs; never accepting payment, always donating his check back to the program. He was responsible for helping to organize both the Newburyport Gridiron Club and the Friends of Newburyport Hockey; two non-profit groups that raise funds to support these programs. He was a staple at every fundraiser and event, quietly helping, never seeking recognition or limelight, he simply wanted to give back.

Jeff personified what it is to be a Clipper; he was a man of quality, tradition, honor, integrity, loyalty and character... He made every person he met feel like a friend, he was there for anyone and cared for everyone, none more than his family and close friends. Those closest to, or impacted by the life of Jeff Stone now seek to fill a seemingly empty void left by his passing... All that we can say is, let us be a reflection of his spirit. Be there for others, be involved, work hard, be generous and laugh often. It is in this way that Stoney will be with us forever.

We will miss you Stoneman... this season is for you.

### Epilogue

In honor of Captain Jeff Stone, NHS Football will honor #44 as an honorary game captain each game and all players' helmets will carry the "Stone 44" decal this season. NHS Hockey will retire the #14 sweater and also carry "Stone 14" decals every time they take the ice. Colgate University has pulled #46 and will honor Stoney as they take the field this fall, competing in his honor. The Friends of Newburyport Hockey, The Newburyport Gridiron Club and the friends and family of Jeff Stone will continue to honor his legacy. The family asks that all thinking of Jeff, donate blood at a local drive and become an organ donor... once again, to support and help others in need.