



Coach Jim Johnson’s mantra, “dreams really do come true,” came to life Feb. 15, 2006, as the bleachers of Greece Athena High School exploded into cheers after Johnson called in number 52, Jason McElwain, to the final game of the season. Jason — A.K.A., J-Mac — was a student at Greece Athena High School who had a burning passion for basketball, but because of his autism, he had never been able to play.

Throughout Jason’s high school career, he tried out for multiple sports teams but never made the cut. But things started to change for Jason when he met Coach Johnson. A coach of numerous high school teams for more than 28 years, Johnson saw Jason’s passion but was unable to land him a spot on his team. Instead, he appointed Jason team manager, a role he gladly accepted. Johnson knew this would be Jason’s best chance to be a part of the sport he loved so much.

With Johnson as a mentor, Jason became an integral part of the team for several seasons. But Johnson knew there was one goal Jason wanted most to achieve — the chance to play in a varsity game. Seeing Jason’s persistence and dedication to his sport and to the Greece Athena team, Johnson couldn’t let Jason’s goals be crushed again in the midst of his senior year. The decision Johnson had to make was a tough one; there could be objections from parents and possible ridicule if things went badly. But one thing loomed most in Johnson’s eyes: to get Jason into the last game of his senior year.

The game was against Spencerport, a bitter rival, and with four minutes left in the last period, Johnson stood up and pointed at Jason to sub in. The entire crowd erupted in jubilant cries as Jason stepped onto the court. And, to everyone’s surprise, Jason scored 20 points, eighteen of which were from three-pointer baskets, leading Greece Athena to the division title. The fans proceeded to rush from the bleachers onto the court, lifting Jason up in celebration. Johnson could only stand and watch in awe as Jason embraced his moment of glory, realizing his dream had finally come true.

Today, Coach Johnson is a sought-after keynote and workshop speaker who shares not only the amazing story and his remarkable journey with Jason but he shares valuable leadership lessons with audiences all over the country. He is also the author of the book “A Coach and a Miracle: Life Lessons from a Man Who Believed in an Autistic Boy.” Until Coach’s retirement this year, he and Jason continued to work together as coach and as manager-partners, working to make the lives of everyone they meet a true miracle. Now, in addition to Coach’s speaking career, he and J-Mac combine their efforts on behalf of AutismUp, a local non-profit in the Rochester, NY area.

[www.coachjimjohnson.com](http://www.coachjimjohnson.com)

## JASON MCELWAIN BIO

After scoring 20 points, including 6 three pointers, in his only varsity basketball game on February 15, 2006, J-Mac continues to do great things.

For the last 10 years he has been a loyal employee of Wegmans Grocery chain.

9 years ago he came back to be an assistant basketball coach at his alma mater Greece Athena. Working with Coach Johnson he has helped the Trojans win four Section V Championships, six Division Championships, a winning record every season and 9 straight Section V semi-finals or better.

J-Mac has run in a number of Marathons, including 3 Boston Marathons, the most recent being 2016.

Just recently, J-Mac suited up with the Rochester RazorSharks, the Rochester, NY area minor league pro basketball team. He entered their game with just under 4 minutes to go and kept his magical touch by scoring 10 points including 2 three pointers.

J-Mac is 27 years old and lives in the Rochester, NY area.