

# Special match will keep alive memory of fun-loving teen

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Reporter

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A FUN-LOVING teenager who died of cancer less than a year after coming down with a "typical" cold will be remembered at a special Principality Stadium match.

Jack Griffiths, from Cardiff, was diagnosed with laryngeal cancer in November 2016.

He underwent surgery and treatment at the Children's Hospital at University Hospital Wales but he died on April 30, 2017, aged just 15.

Now, 18 months on, a charity football match will next week be held in his honour.

His older sister Lucy O'Keeffe, aged 29, said the final year of Jack's life was a "whirlwind".

"It was in the summer of 2016, we thought he had the typical run-down cold and chest infection," she said.

After being taken to the doctors, he was given steroid pumps and inhalers to help, but nothing worked.

An out-of-hours doctor referred him to the Princess of Wales Hospital in Bridgend, and from there he was taken to the Noah's Ark Children's Hospital for Wales.

After a series of scans, his family were given the devastating news he had cancer, which was growing and making his airways restrict.

Around a week later, he underwent life-changing surgery, then was placed on chemotherapy and then 30 days of radiotherapy around Christmas time.

"It was really hard but he did it all with a smile," Lucy said.

On Valentine's Day 2017, he was told the cancer was back and was spreading.

"We were hit with the news that no family should hear," Lucy said. "We had to take each minute as it came."

After going on trips Jack had always wanted to do, such as attending an Arsenal game and spending a weekend in London, Jack suddenly became very ill and was rushed to hospital with sepsis.

Although he overcame the blood infection, he suddenly died at the end of April.

But his family want to remember him as the "cheeky" boy he was.

"I think everyone will remember him as the fun-loving, caring lad that he was," Lucy said.

"He was always there for his friends, he was always by my mum's side."

Now a football match is being organised in his honour to raise money for charities Latch and Noah's Ark - which helped Jack and his family before and after his death.

His mum Clare Sobey said: "When we lost Jack we walked out the hospital with no support and the only support we did have was from Latch.

"The charity supports siblings, teenagers and young adults, who have lost their friends and siblings.

"I can't imagine anyone going through what we've been through."



PICTURES: CLARE SOBEY



Jack Griffiths being treated in the Children's Hospital at University Hospital Wales

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Jack's sister, Lucy O'Keeffe

Admiral Law is hosting the invitational football match at the Principality Stadium, which kicks off at 6pm on November 27,

Football Association of Wales match officials will be at the game, with a penalty shoot out at half-time, where spectators will have a chance to have a shot at goal on the famous turf.

Former Premier League goalkeeper and current Northern Ireland goalkeeping coach Maik Taylor will be in goal for the shootout and will also play a half for each team.

There are also raffle prizes up for grabs and an Oasis tribute band will be performing.

Jack's family will also be present at the match and a trophy will be named after him, which his family will then present to the winning team.

Lucy said: "It's lovely. It's such a tribute to him and who he was.

"It just fills us with warmth. It's lovely to know people want to do it and care for us as a family and about Jack and keeping his memory alive. "That means the world. We don't want anybody to forget who he was."

■ Tickets cost £5. For more information, contact Sandeep Gill at [sgill@admirallaw.co.uk](mailto:sgill@admirallaw.co.uk).

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