

HIGH SCHOOLS

# Danvers slugger Jason Walters clobbers competition to win A Shot for Life Home Run Derby

By **Julianna Schwindt** Globe Correspondent, Updated September 7, 2025, 8:45 p.m.



Danvers senior shortstop Jason Walters showed off his trophy bat after winning the A Shot of Life Home Run Derby at Monan Park. JULIANNA SCHWINDT

Jason Walters can't wait to walk into Danvers High Monday morning with a trophy in hand.

The senior shortstop won A Shot For Life's sixth annual home run derby on Sunday night at BC High with 14 home runs in the final round.

"I came in confident," Walters said. "I know there's a bunch of guys that are just as talented, and I knew it was gonna be something to work for ... but, yeah, I had a feeling I had a chance."

Walters spent the past month preparing with his dad and his coach, working on hitting and improving his launch angle.

The event raises money for cancer research as part of the ASFL organization. Mike Slonina started the organization in 2010 after his mother was diagnosed with a brain tumor.

The first year of the baseball event in Massachusetts raised \$30,000. Slonina says this year they've raised around \$90,000.

"I really wanted to make a difference. I'm really competitive. For our first event, I set a basketball world record," Slonina said. "We did only basketball until COVID, and then in COVID basically basketball was outlawed, and so we said let's try a home run derby. It worked and then we kept pushing the envelope."

The competitors each raise money for the cause in the months before the derby. Walters' aunt was diagnosed with cancer last year.

"It's just huge to come out for her and show my family that I care," Walters said. "One of the kids I know from my town won it last year [Danny Flynn, a Worcester Academy grad now at Northeastern], and that's how I found out about it. Then I got lucky enough to get chosen for it, and it's an honor."

Walters was so excited he was up at 6 a.m. on Sunday morning. He was nervous the whole three-round competition, but made the final round with St. Sebastian's Brett Gallo, Austin Prep's Nick Ranaldi, and Belmont's Jack Tarbox.

During the final round, he took a time out with six home runs. The number to beat was nine, set by Gallo.

“I was just being a little cocky and saying, ‘I know I can win, I know I got this, I know I can hit the ball better than these kids,’ ” Walters said. “And that was really all I needed to tell myself, and I was just like, ‘Let’s go.’ ”

He stepped up to the plate, blasted eight more home runs to win the title.

Before the home run derby, there was a pitching competition that was won by Wahconah Regional’s James Rabuse.

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