

THOM'S STORY

The NBA may have a future star in 12-year-old Thomas. He is passionate about basketball and his favourite team is Melbourne United.

Until earlier this year, you'd find Thom pounding the basketball courts twice a week. Sadly, his passion came to a sudden halt when he was diagnosed with Burkitt's Lymphoma.

In that moment, every aspect of life changed. "The diagnosis turned our world on its head. Thom was admitted to hospital and stayed for the next three months," Mum Kirsty said.

It was heartbreaking for the close-knit family of five as they tried to adjust to their new life. Thom endured gruelling rounds of treatment and missed his friends and his beloved sport.

While Thom battled his illness, he received the exciting news that he had been granted a Starlight Wish.

It marked a turning point after the pain and anguish of the long months in hospital.

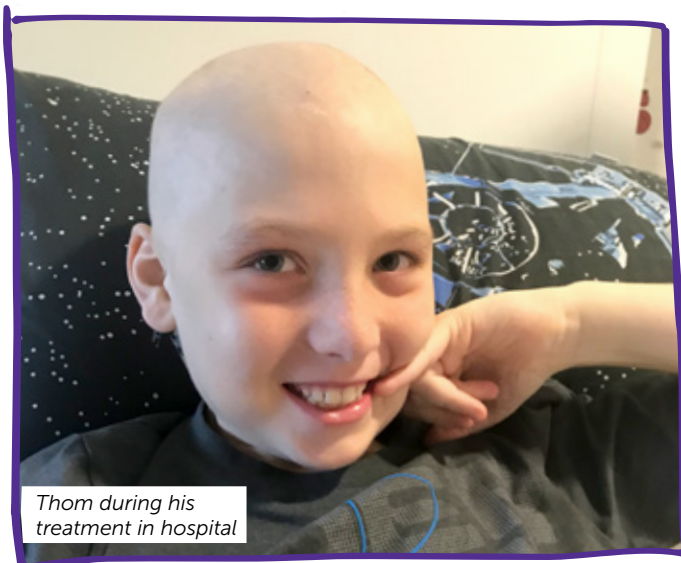
"During the second round of chemo, Thom was at a pretty low point and in a lot of pain. The anticipation and planning of his Starlight Wish gave him something positive to focus on," Kirsty said.

Unsurprisingly, Thom's Starlight Wish was all about basketball!

In the lead up to his wish, Thom was busy preparing and even got back into training. His mum said it's helped him move forward from his illness.



Thom with his idol Chris Goulding on his Starlight Wish



Thom during his treatment in hospital

Thom's Starlight Wish started with a special behind the scenes training session with Melbourne United complete with his very own team kit. He was over the moon to meet the players, especially his all-time hero Chris Goulding.

Chris took him through his paces and was kept on his toes as Thom won the sprint challenge!

On game day, Thom and his family had VIP court-side seats as Melbourne United took on the Cairns Taipans. He also enjoyed a rare back-of-house tour and the opportunity to listen in on the half-time talk from the coach.

Ahead of the game, Thom signed Chris' basketball shoes, which clearly brought the team luck as they won 87-80 in a nail-biting final minute!

You couldn't wipe the smile off Thom's face as Chris gave him the winning shoes at the end of the game.

Thom's dad Dean said it's hard to put into words what his wish means.

“Basketball is Thom's life so his Starlight Wish to meet his basketball heroes has been fantastic. It was such a highlight after all he's been through over so many months.” –Dean, Thom's dad

And Thom had the final words with a very big court-side shout out: "Thank you Starlight!"

For more information visit starlight.org.au or call 1300 727 827