

BRACKET-OLGY

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Where Are They Now?

We catch up with former Crimson star Brent Lawson, who reflects on a fairytale basketball career.

BRENT LAWSON EXPERIENCED HIS FIRST NCAA MEN'S BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT as a little kid in the Metrodome stands. He watched in awe, studying some of the top collegiate teams in the nation and dreaming he'd one day play for one.

His dream came true in March 2005, when the former Maple Grove Crimson star capped off his unlikely collegiate journey from a sophomore walk-on to a senior captain and led the Minnesota Gophers to their first NCAA Tournament since the 1999 academic fraud scandal.

As a senior all-state selection in 2000, Lawson led the underdog Crimson team to the program's first state tournament run, which ended one game shy of a championship. "When you get a little taste of success and winning, it becomes something you want to strive for all the time," says Lawson, one of two Crimson basketball players to ever play in an NCAA tournament. (The other is 1999 graduate Ryan Pederson, who played for the University of Montana.)

The Gophers lost in the first round to Iowa State in 2005, but that did little to sour Lawson's fairytale. "For the rest of your life you'll always look back on plays that you wish you would have made differently," says Lawson, who is now a commodities trader in Chicago. "But I have nothing but the fondest memories, and I'm just really thankful and blessed to get the opportunity to play at all the levels I played at. It was a dream come true." —Bobby Hart