

Mark Agostinelli 00:00:20 New podcast out. I'm excited to share with you the story of Chris Masters, which is currently evolving. Chris shares his story from being a paper boy when he was growing up, to the influence his dad had, and realizing his dream of playing hockey at Boston College down the road. But then the decision came after that of playing some pro hockey, or maybe going to Wall Street. And Chris took a different path with his brother. They've really drawn a big club hockey organization here, the Junior Bruins. But after that, Chris wasn't just content with that. He saw more. He really saw the need for developing student athletes, and particularly athletes that wanted to get focused in a particular area. So he tells us his journey, which has taken close to 6 or 7 years now of opening Master's Academy, which will open this September in the greater Boston area. It's a fascinating story. I think what really sticks out for me is the self-awareness Chris has of what he's good at him and his brother, but also the advice that they got from their late father throughout their journey and growing up, that's clearly been instilled with him throughout his journey.

Mark Agostinelli 00:01:31 So it's a fun listen. I hope you enjoy it, Chris, an inspiring guy and let us know what you think. Mr. Chris Masters, thanks for coming on. Beers and careers, my man.

Chris Masters 00:01:41 Happy to be here. I just learned so much about you. I, I wanted to have you on. We've known each other now for about 5 or 6 years. Maybe, but I wanted to have you on because, I think it's really cool that you that you got the hockey thing going locally. And then the timing of this is interesting with Masters Academy. And then I just learned your golf course. Panelists. Golf digest panel. Golf Digest panelist, and school committee member, school committee member. And Hopkinton got the most votes in the election. It's my first time running for public office. I think when you get the most votes, that's good. So no big deal. Yeah. Not not not bad at all. Saving the children. That's it. but before we dive into your story, a couple quick questions, rapid fire questions to let the guests know you, what was your first job? Paper boy, you were cool.

Chris Masters 00:02:30 Paper boy did. I had the Boston Herald and the globe. my brother was as well. And if you came out of our house in Lexington on Sanderson Road, I went left on my bike and went all the way to Emerson Gardens Apartments, which was great because there were apartments and fire and just do a ton of them. And my brother would go out of our driveway and he'd go, right? And he'd go, he was two years older. So he took the more dangerous street. He went down to Lowell Street, which was a real busy street in Lexington. So we were both paper boys. it was a great job. Learned a ton because I was responsible for billing, as you know, no one and 11 year old, so I'd have to. I had envelopes and I would put them in the doors or inside the papers, and I'd have to collect if people didn't pay. Now, normally they just, you know, you came in the envelope, they put the money in it and it's there the next day and it'd scoop it up and pretty cool, make the money.

Chris Masters 00:03:28 And it was. Yeah, it was, it was how.

Mark Agostinelli 00:03:31 How old are you when you're doing.

Chris Masters 00:03:32 This? It's like ten, 11 years old. Yeah, I did it for probably maybe nine, ten, 11. Did it for 3 or 4 years now on Sundays, because I must have had 100 plus customers. No Sunday papers. You know, kids they don't recognize. They were huge. So my mom would, open the the trunk of the, or car, and I would just sit in the back of the station wagon and we would just go down and. Yeah, because the. Those Sunday papers, you couldn't get to put those back in the baskets. Yeah. but yeah, it was a great job. Made a ton of money. Well, I thought I was making a ton of money. Yeah. And we would go to Ocean City, new Jersey every year on vacation. And I would spend every nickel I made at Sims Arcade on ninth Street and the boardwalk just at Galaga and Tempest.

Chris Masters 00:04:21 Yeah. And it was great having money. I had a gift. And so I also learned a lot of good lessons, money management. And I had to give 10% to the church every Sunday. at a put money away, my mom got my brother and I checking accounts when we were that same age because we had a deposit. It. We had to go bring it into the bank. And so a lot of good life lessons. Yeah, a lot of good life lessons. Yeah. do you have a favorite?

Mark Agostinelli 00:04:46 You don't have a favorite cocktail.

Chris Masters 00:04:47 But favorite drink? Yeah. No, I don't drink. I guess if I could have any drink, it'd be a vanilla milkshake. Oh.

Mark Agostinelli 00:04:55 All right. Can I ask you a can I ask you a wild question?

Chris Masters 00:04:57 Yes, because I know you have a love for the waffle House. Yeah. I have a weird love of.

Mark Agostinelli 00:05:03 McDonald's.

Chris Masters 00:05:04 Milkshakes. That's a pretty good milkshake. Okay. I was I was nervous to ask you.

Chris Masters 00:05:08 No, it's a pretty good milkshake. part of that's because the straw. They have a great straw. Good gauge? Yeah. Good gauge. Really? There's enough that comes through so you can really enjoy it. Johnny Rockets has a great milkshake. Have you ever had it, Johnny Rocks? Yeah. I don't mind a McDonald's burger shake. Well, as long as it's because they went back to real ice cream.

Mark Agostinelli 00:05:28 Cabot's in Newton has a good milkshake.

Chris Masters 00:05:31 I don't think I've ever had. Oh, I.

Mark Agostinelli 00:05:32 Didn't know.

Chris Masters 00:05:33 Because you. I also gave up sugar. Yeah. You did. So I don't have milkshakes. But if you were, that's my favorite drink. Yeah, if I had. It's wild. I was.

Mark Agostinelli 00:05:43 Afraid to ask you the McDonald's question after you told me that cannolis.

Chris Masters 00:05:46 Aren't that good. That was a. They're fine.

Mark Agostinelli 00:05:48 I was laying in bed at night.

Chris Masters 00:05:49 That night.

Mark Agostinelli 00:05:50 Being like, I can't.

Chris Masters 00:05:50 Believe Masters.

Mark Agostinelli 00:05:51 Told.

Chris Masters 00:05:52 Me. For everyone that obviously doesn't know.

Chris Masters 00:05:55 Mark and I know each other from the golf course and we got into a discussion about. My feeling is that America is the world champion of desserts like I love. I was just in Austin, Texas. Unbelievable food. Yeah, tons of Tex-Mex. And I love Mexican food. I love Chinese food, but their desserts are not great. They are pretty weak. They're not great. And then you and some of our I'm half Italian, some of our Italian friends were saying how great Italian desserts. And they they are good. They're good. But the cannoli I mean it's fine. Yeah. You made.

Mark Agostinelli 00:06:32 The argument that a tiramisu is a much more.

Chris Masters 00:06:36 I mean, it's fine. It's fine. A a brownie sundae, I get it destroys cannoli or a tiramisu or one of those cookies that they bake in a little skillet with ice cream on it. Like or. Yeah, I mean I.

Mark Agostinelli 00:06:51 We're going to agree to disagree.

Chris Masters 00:06:53 That's fine. It's fine. It's okay I'm right. You're wrong.

Chris Masters 00:06:55 But that's fine. I do have a favorite curse word. Oh yeah. I don't think I can say that.

Mark Agostinelli 00:07:01 You can say whatever you want, but you don't have to. Yeah. Is it start with f?

Chris Masters 00:07:04 No. Okay.

Mark Agostinelli 00:07:05 All right.

Chris Masters 00:07:06 Even better. Yeah.

Mark Agostinelli 00:07:08 how about are you into quotes at.

Chris Masters 00:07:09 All in.

Mark Agostinelli 00:07:12 Like, are you like a quote guy. Like, like some people. I asked that question. Some people go, no, not at all. And like, I am like, I remember in high school I was a really, really tiny high schooler. I was like 411 as a freshman. And that Archie Griffith quote of it's not the size of the dog, and the fight for the size of the fight and the dog was something I like, constantly thought about playing sports.

Chris Masters 00:07:32 Yeah, I'm not as high level as you. My quotes are more for movies or TV shows. Oh, those count too. Yeah, yeah. yeah.

Mark Agostinelli 00:07:41 Extra gloves this entire time.

Chris Masters 00:07:44 Yeah. Yeah. We're really doing it, Higher. Yeah. No. My. So. So I coach our brick team every spring, and I will. before each practice or home game, and basically, anytime we're at our rank and Marlborough, I have, I don't know, 80 to 100 quotes. I had one of our graphic designers, you know, kind of dress up nicely and I print them out, give them to each kid, we post them on the wall, and usually it's tied to the theme of that practice. Most of them are around teamwork. hard work. you know, whatever. Again, whatever the theme is that day or something that I think can help reinforce like, hey, don't blame anyone else. Take responsibility. We're here as a team. so if I look through some of those, there's some that I use every year because I think they're really impactful. And actually this year I had a few parents, you know, take pictures. They have them at their house and I give them to the kids.

Chris Masters 00:08:47 They bring them home. I would like you to read them every night. and again, just kind of reinforcing that over the course of our 2 or 3 month season. and I had some parents, you know, it's on a wall at their house. Another one. He keeps it right next to his bed, and they go over at night. They talked about it on the car ride home. And why do you think coach had that one? So that's cool. Yeah. So that I mean so you are. Yeah. Yeah yeah yeah.

Mark Agostinelli 00:09:11 You're a big quote.

Chris Masters 00:09:12 Yeah yeah yeah I guess I am.

Mark Agostinelli 00:09:13 A.

Chris Masters 00:09:13 Big quote guy.

Mark Agostinelli 00:09:14 Yeah, that's really cool. Yeah. Can't wait to get a copy of it. Yeah, yeah. Favorite book?

Chris Masters 00:09:23 Oh, boy.

Mark Agostinelli 00:09:27 Or or book that you just love. Doesn't have to be your favorite. Yeah. That's a that's a hard

question.

Chris Masters 00:09:32 Yeah. I guess. Favorite book? Jeez. I mean, I've read it a few times and I like reading it.

Chris Masters 00:09:46 Catcher in the Rye. But I don't know if it's my favorite book.

Mark Agostinelli 00:09:49 Okay.

Chris Masters 00:09:50 Yeah. I think I, I think it's funny. Yeah. Yeah. All right. I remember I read where the Red Fern grows when I was a kid, and I remember crying my eyes out at that. So that was that. That left an impression. books. Well, I said my favorite books I read. Now, maybe not a singular book, but the ones that I. Well, I don't read them anymore. I listen to them walking the dog or in the car. World history, US history and, yeah. Biographies about successful.

Mark Agostinelli 00:10:30 People.

Chris Masters 00:10:30 Yes. You know. You know, I listen to Phil Knight's recently, I think it was called Sneaker Head or something like that.

Mark Agostinelli 00:10:37 Someone just told me to, And I bought it. I haven't read it yet, but apparently the Rockefeller. Yeah.

Chris Masters 00:10:43 Yeah, I like it.

Mark Agostinelli 00:10:43 Yeah.

Chris Masters 00:10:44 Yeah, I like reading those. I also like the ones where they might have, you know, 15 people and they're a chapter each.

Chris Masters 00:10:51 Yeah. You know, I don't know that I need a 30 hour.

Mark Agostinelli 00:10:55 Right. Exactly.

Chris Masters 00:10:55 On Rockefeller that.

Mark Agostinelli 00:10:57 I. And I haven't done either. I'm listening to a podcast that just went through Rockefeller, and one of the things that came out of it from a from a current event, not from this podcast, was, I guess Rockefeller wrote letters to his son that have, like, all of his timeless lessons. So that's in my Amazon. Yeah. Shopping cart.

Chris Masters 00:11:13 Yeah, yeah. That's a yeah. Those to me are super interesting. you know, I know we'll talk about it at some point with Masters Academy, but, you know, a lot of these books you read or these stories you hear, you know, Jeff Bezos asked hundreds of people for investments, and everyone just kept saying no. And that's the experience we had. And you just keep going. Yeah. And then hopefully someone says, yes, they will invest and partner with resilience that. Resilience. And just you know one of you know my dad's passed but one of the one of the many lessons he kind of taught us.

Chris Masters 00:11:49 And now that, you know, as you get older, there's some wisdom and you look back at some of the stuff that your parents or mentors may have told you, you know, one of the things I remember my dad saying, he was a great salesman, great, great, great salesman. and he said, you know, selling starts when the customer says, no. And I don't know if that was his or not, but I just remember him saying that to us a lot. And, you know, a lot of times talk people into buying what you're selling. And it may be our hockey program, it may be our school, you know, whatever it is, it might be just selling ourselves. And, you know, it really translates across business. And it's like, you know, someone who just comes onto a car line like, I'm here to buy a car. Well, you don't really have to sell that guy. Like, right? They're coming to buy a car and maybe, maybe they're just kicking their tires and you do have to sell them,

or you have to sell them on.

Chris Masters 00:12:36 Hey, buy a Ford. Yeah. You know. Versus Saturn or whatever it is. But a lot of times. And we saw this with Masters Academy, like a lot of people told us no. And even, you know, those that want to invest with you will push back. And you just got to keep convincing them. And so a lot of those I like hearing about those stories. Like, again, the Phil Knight one is kind of top of mind because that one's one of the ones I read recently. And again, you know, you think like, oh, Phil Knight, Nike so successful. I'm sure it just happened. No problem. I mean, it's almost went bankrupt a million times and just fighting and credit lines and going broke. And so I don't begrudge a guy like Phil Knight and for how much money he has, because the risk he took the hard work and he's the one that risked everything like he risked it. So he should get the payoff. Yes. and he's also, again, you know, he's also done a ton of good with all that money he's made.

Chris Masters 00:13:31 But, I just look at it and you recognize how hard it is as an entrepreneur to like you. You risk everything. And if Nike didn't work, no one was going to be there like, oh, hey, we're going to give you all that money and all that sweat equity. Well, someone will pay you for that, right? You just would have been out, right?

Mark Agostinelli 00:13:50 That's that is that is true?

Chris Masters 00:13:51 I like those stories.

Mark Agostinelli 00:13:52 Have you, learned or heard the history of the Brooklyn Bridge? Have you? Have you done that?

Chris Masters 00:13:59 That guy who wrote that book on that, David, he's I don't know. I'm not going to remember his name. Oh. Started that book. He's he he's.

Mark Agostinelli 00:14:09 He's so I haven't read the book but on the on the this I'm I'll just tell people history that doesn't suck. It's a podcast that I'm, I'm probably like 120 hours into it for the last two and a half years, but they do like two episodes on the Brooklyn Bridge.

Mark Agostinelli 00:14:24 And it's three generations of a family that visualize it and make it happen. And when you like, hear the story of what they went through to build the bridge, a bridge that, like, we've both been over. Yeah. You go. Holy shit. This was not like. This was not like city approved funding. And go build the bridge in 2025. It was like people died.

Chris Masters 00:14:44 Yeah. People again. And there's millions of stories like that. Yeah. And again, that's it's one of the appreciations I have for small business owners and then small business owners who become big business owners and, you know, like, like Jeff Bezos, like. You look what the guy started with and or, another good one is, the Starbucks guy. Howard Schultz.

Mark Agostinelli 00:15:12 Yeah. You know, he came.

Chris Masters 00:15:15 From his story, and I think the famous story is basically what kind of kept the dream alive was Bill Gates's dad, who was maybe a judge or a businessman in Seattle and and got some funding and that kept the dream alive.

Chris Masters 00:15:32 And now look what Starbucks has become in the thousands, tens of thousands it employs and the revenue it creates and the taxes it creates and the money it creates and and, you know, again, the night's sleep lost. And again, it's something that we've my brother and I have just just went through it just, I love those stories. So again, kind of getting back to like, those types of stories and books and then kind of world and U.S. history.

Mark Agostinelli 00:16:00 And so one of the reasons I started this podcast was when I was selling all the time I was meeting people, mainly, I'd say in their 40s, 50s and 60s. I would say that's the demo I was selling to for the most part, VP's of ops, engineering, manufacturing. And I was meeting them and they loved what they did. And like you were one

of these guys. When I met at the golf club, I was like, this guy like genuinely enjoys getting up every day and going to work. Yeah, right.

Mark Agostinelli 00:16:25 And so but I also found that when you met those people, they had no idea when they were in high school or college that this was going to be their path, right? They had no freaking clue. I grew up with a father who was an engineer, and every time I got home from college, he was like, what are you going to be when you grow up? And I had a mom that was like, shut up, leave him alone. Yeah. And it was a great. Yeah, honestly, it was a great way to grow up. But I want to start the podcast to be like, look at these people. regardless of how successful they are, I'm talking about the Bezos of the world's success. but they leverage skill sets from parts of their life, and they built upon them. Yeah. And and they and they were they had that self-awareness of them. So like, let's start with like you get out of BC you college hockey at BC, which I'm sure at the you know, it's funny because getting to know you like that's an important part of your life, but like it's certainly not the thing you're the most proud of.

Mark Agostinelli 00:17:14 Yeah, yeah. Which is which is funny because there's a ton of people that when they were 16 or 17 years old, that's all that would have mattered in life.

Chris Masters 00:17:20 Yeah. So I was born in LA, moved to Lexington.

Mark Agostinelli 00:17:25 I didn't know that.

Chris Masters 00:17:25 Yeah, I moved to Lexington, Massachusetts when I was little. Yeah. And, hockey right away. My dad. So my the name I was born with is Master Cola. Yeah. my brother Peter, myself and my sister Christine, all master Colas. My dad changed our name. So my sister was born in 77. My youngest sister, Katie, on her birth certificate. It's a master's, so I think she was 80.

Mark Agostinelli 00:17:52 So your birth certificate is Master Cola?

Chris Masters 00:17:54 Birth certificate of Master Cola. Okay. so. And, my mom's from Philly. My dad is from. Grew up in Dorchester and Everett and a big Italian family. So I grew up on the Italian side of my family. My mom, again, fairly smaller, smaller families.

Chris Masters 00:18:12 But I spent all my time kind of with the Italian side of my dad's family. And, you know, my grandfather, came to the country when he was very little, and it was. Hey, you work? Yeah, That's what you do. Yeah. And was not an emphasis on sports. My dad really saw the value in sports. Love sports. Got us into sports when we were very young. odd that he chose hockey. Yeah. he, you know, wasn't really.

Mark Agostinelli 00:18:40 An.

Chris Masters 00:18:40 Idiot. Yeah, he wasn't really in his background. Right. so played hockey growing up, played baseball and and focused on hockey. And I wanted to play in the NHL. That was my dream. My dream was really to play hockey at BC. That was kind of like my dream school growing up. And then to play in the NHL and got to BC. Incredible. time of my life. played a year in the minors. Yeah, I recognize I was not good enough to make it and then pivoted out of that.

Chris Masters 00:19:08 So.

Mark Agostinelli 00:19:09 But that's what I want to hear about. Like, okay, how did you how did the the Junior Bruins start?

Chris Masters 00:19:14 So the Junior Bruins started. really the Genesis was my dad. They had been around for about a year. He took it over and really kept it alive for 4 or 5 years now. So, you know, Now keep in mind. So my brother graduated high school in 1991. We both went to Matawan, which is a Catholic school in Cambridge, just closed a couple of years ago. But, you know, kind of big hockey school, great high school. I had a blast in high school, and my brother needed a at least a post-graduate year between high school and trying to play college hockey somewhere. It was

going to go to the Lawrenceville School, went to the Chicago Showcase in Chicago. This guy named Cory Eades grabbed my parents and my brother talked to him about junior hockey. This is early 90s in the East. Almost no one knew about junior hockey.

Chris Masters 00:19:56 And I get my dad again, a ton of credit. Within a 30 minute meeting at a hotel in Chicago, he said, hey, junior hockey, 6570 games. This is the number, the percentage of players playing college hockey that come from junior hockey. You're a good player. You know, prep school is, you know, Lawrenceville. It's a 2530 game season. It's a three month season and blah, blah, blah. And so my my brother was going to Lawrenceville like that was decided Lawrence Academy. No. Lawrenceville down in, in new Jersey.

Mark Agostinelli 00:20:24 Oh, I don't know that.

Chris Masters 00:20:24 Okay. Lawrenceville in new Jersey. And in 30 minutes, my walk down. He's like, all right, well, you're not going to Lawrenceville. You're going to go play juniors. Wow. And it changed his life. Wow. And again, it was that, you know, seventh month season in the 70 games and the development, the kids you're playing against and the level of coaching and all that stuff.

Chris Masters 00:20:41 so my dad really saw the. And then he saw over the next two years my brother played there. He had offers, you know, go anywhere he wanted, chose BC. And then I went and did two years of juniors as well in, in Dubuque as well. And my dad saw how it changed our lives. And he said, all right, well, he loved hockey. Yeah. And he had his own computer business. And, not that he was transitioning out of that, but he said, all right, I love hockey. My kids are now at that age where who knows how much longer they're going to play. And, let me do this junior hockey thing. And this guy named Gary Dineen, who is in at the Springfield picks, it was really only junior team kind of in New England. And then my dad, you know, kind of really helped push that forward. Now there's tons of them. It's, you know, it's grown to what it is today. But he saw that value.

Chris Masters 00:21:27 So when we were in college or let me back up when we were growing up, we went to a camp up in Montreal called Fellowship of Christian Athletes. And it was a week long hockey camp, and we loved it. And then we were the kind of they had won at the I think it was at the Pingree School, and we were as BC hockey players, they would usually have an NHL player and then some college players as kind of like the counselors, the counselors or the on ice leaders. And my brother kind of liked it. We kind of liked running the practices and the drills and all that. And then we said, all right, why don't we start? We'll do our own hockey camp as a way to make money. And and we had a different idea because at, at the Fellowship of Christian Athletes camp, you'd have, I don't know, maybe 3 or 4 good players, a bunch kind of in the middle. And then again, like, yeah, I don't know, a bunch that weren't very good.

Chris Masters 00:22:17 And yeah, it was really kind of hard to put together a good practice or camp because that bell curve was there was such a disparity in the town level. So we said, let's try and do a camp of try and get like 25 really good players and we call it the Future Stars Camp. And we ran it at the Stoneham rink. We were at BC, so we got a bunch of our teammates and this mom, Mike. oh my God, what am I, the mom's name? daughters. Theresa. Oh my God, Mrs. Keane, I don't know why I'm drawing a blank on her name now. She helped round up, like, a bunch of kids, okay? And it was real successful. And again, the parents loved it because, like, hey, these are all really good players, right? Right. And so now we could do some high level drills and the scrimmages and all that stuff, and we got all the BC kids there. And so it was great.

Chris Masters 00:23:07 And we kind of like, oh, this is kind of fun. And Peter graduated in 97, did a year in the minors, then started coaching in the Junior Bruins. My dad kind of, you know, kind of gave it to him and said, why don't you kind of take the lead? I graduated from BC 99, did a year in the minors, not even a full year, about five months. And then I came on board and we had I kind of looked at Wall Street and, you know, I had a bunch of friends. So all my buddies were had spent kind of a year working, and a lot of them were kind, not miserable, but they were like the hours and they would just dine for like Friday and then on Sunday like, oh my God, go back to work. And now a lot of them are super successful. They have big piles of money. Like it all worked. But I was like, I don't know, I really like hockey.

Chris Masters 00:23:56 I like kind of growing a business or maybe, you know, being my own boss and kind of that entrepreneurial side of it. I said, let me try hockey and see if it works, and if it works great, and if it doesn't, I can go sell

insurance or try and do whatever. Go go find another job. So it was February of 2000. I was playing in Trenton for the Trenton Titans in the East Coast League. So the Double-A level and Butch Cassidy, the Bruins coach, is now the coach and was my coach. And a few weeks early I went in and said, I kind of knew him like, I'm going to play this year. And then I'm not I'm not going to play another year. And I was like, Trenton's not very warm. No. I want, you know, a bunch of buddies were down south playing in the Southern Division, and they're all playing golf every day. So I'm like, I went in and I said, hey, I'd like to get traded.

Chris Masters 00:24:47 I don't mean to be an asshole, but like, I want to go down south somewhere and finish the season and here's where I'll go. And if not, like, no big deal. Yeah. And, he didn't trade me. And so, it was the Beanpot. I figured it was the first or second Monday. I just we'd come back from a road trip, and I'm like, this is this isn't working. So I just went, I'm like, hey, thanks for the opportunity. I'm going to go home. And he's like, oh no, we'll trade you anywhere. I'm like, nah, don't worry about it. I've kind of had enough. And so I just went home and. And then started coaching. And at the time we had a junior team, a split season midget team. A full season midget team. And one tournament at the baby shootout. And my brother was coaching the top junior team. And so I came in and I coached our it was at the time we called it 18.

Chris Masters 00:25:40 You triple A then became the Empire Junior team, but it was really kind of a midget team all along. So I started coaching that and then we created a couple more camps and then we started, you know, seeing a bunch of other programs doing these spring and summer tournament teams. And we looked at and said, okay, well, we know when these kids are midget age, I don't know, 14, 15 or 16. We want relationships with these kids and these families. And what's a way to do that? Well, why don't we go try and find all the best kids. Eight, nine, ten, 11, 12 year olds. We'll bring them to a few tournaments. We'll establish a relationship with them. So we think it'll probably be easier to recruit them. Instead of me just cold calling them and saying hey family XYZ, I'm Chris with the Junior Bruins. We have this midget team. How'd you how'd you like to play with it? Well, now they know us. Yeah, right.

Chris Masters 00:26:32 it was also another way to to generate revenue and keep the business alive and going and grow it. So we started doing these spring and summer tournament teams, probably in 2000. We would have been the summer of 2001. And that's really grown into a big, big part of our business. And then after doing that, we said, okay, we started doing more tournaments. We created something called the Beantown Classic, which, you know, kind of ran for 20 years. That's still going. But, again, is kind of the hockey world changes, everything changes. And again, kind of some really strong advice my dad gave us at one point, you know, said, hey, think back to the restaurants or the businesses that were on Mass Ave and Lexington Center as we're growing up. Okay. When we were kids. Yeah. How many of them are still there? Right. And like, well, there's a lot of turnover. And he goes a lot of turnover. He goes, so you always have to keep adjusting.

Chris Masters 00:27:27 Changing. Figuring out what's working what's not working. And so we also wanted to make sure we kind of diversified and say hey we can't just be in the tournament business, can't just be in the junior team business. What if that changes? So we wanted to to make sure there was some diversity so that if one part of our business struggled or if the marketplace said, we don't want to do that anymore. Right. Or if we're not good at it. And one of the one of those areas was camps. We used to have a lot of camps, but we recognized there's some camp operators. That's all they do.

Mark Agostinelli 00:27:59 And they're good.

Chris Masters 00:28:00 At it and they're good at it. And so we only have a couple camps with the kind of narrow focus, because we just didn't do as good a job as some of those other people who are just camp focused and so.

Mark Agostinelli 00:28:12 Knowing who you are.

Chris Masters 00:28:13 Yeah, we got to know, you know, who we are and what we do. Well.

Mark Agostinelli 00:28:16 how big is your, Junior Bruins operation today?

Chris Masters 00:28:20 I would say from.

Chris Masters 00:28:21 So ours. It's a little bit tough kind of to say, because we don't have winter teams, right? So there's programs like the Minutemen. Flames are the Islanders hockey club who have, 70, 80, 90, 130 teams. Ours is different because we just have junior teams and midget teams in the. What I call the hockey season is September to March. Yeah, right. And then the spring and summer season, we have a big, much bigger program, probably about 400 kids, boys and girls that will play with us in the spring and summer. You know, as young as the boys side. This past spring, we had, the youngest team was 2000 eighteens. Up to, you know, kind of high school kids would do some teams and then the girls start at 22 years later. So 26 fifteens was our youngest girls team this past year. So next year it'll be the 2016 girls. 2019 boys. and even our, our junior and midget teams have changed like that. Like, we used to have three junior teams, a full season, 18 team, a full season, 16 team, and three split season midget teams.

Chris Masters 00:29:27 Now we're we have a full season junior, a full season, 18 new and split season because it's just changed. There's, there's more teams there, more there. They're more academies. So the player pool, which has continued to grow, more kids are playing hockey. And you look at USA hockey numbers, mass hockey registration, boys, girls, it's growing, but you just have more opportunities. Yes. And so again, we've shifted our our business a little bit and said, okay, that's really not working. And that's even going back eight years ago when we first had the vision of opening up an academy.

Mark Agostinelli 00:30:08 That was kind of where I was hoping you were going to go. Like what? Yeah. What precipitated that?

Chris Masters 00:30:12 Yeah. So so for so call it 2002 until, you know, 2015.

Mark Agostinelli 00:30:20 You don't have to tell people what Masters Academy.

Chris Masters 00:30:22 Yeah, yeah. So I'll get to that kind of in a second as we lead up to that. again, I personally saw the value in full season hockey development.

Chris Masters 00:30:32 Yeah. September to March. Right.

Mark Agostinelli 00:30:35 Like your father did.

Chris Masters 00:30:36 Like my father did in Chicago. And you recognize that? So the traditional high school season or prep school, which I did like in high school at Matina, it's a three month season. We have 20. We had 24 games. and then playoffs, state playoffs. And in the fall, there was almost no hockey at that at that time. Yeah, we played in we called it the, the Bill League on Sunday nights. And Bill recalled, we played with this sky. We called the monkey. He was like a it's like not a coach with Matt on. But he ran like this fall team and it was once a week and maybe you picked up another skate. And for four years I didn't really get a ton of ice time or development. Now, prior to that, up until my eighth grade year, where else? I played for the South Shore Kings, the Minuteman Flames. I would also play for Lexington Bedford.

Chris Masters 00:31:24 I was playing three and four games a weekend. We had to rank in our backyard. I was skating three. I was skating 7 or 8 times a week. And then you get to these critical stages of development. Call it high school years, right? 14 to.

Mark Agostinelli 00:31:35 18 when the testosterone is.

Chris Masters 00:31:36 Flowing. Flowing.

Mark Agostinelli 00:31:37 Yeah.

Chris Masters 00:31:37 And we way scaled back the ice time. And so I look now I.

Mark Agostinelli 00:31:43 Can draw that as a gap.

Chris Masters 00:31:44 I saw this huge huge gap. So okay so now there's junior hockey and an extension of that full season midget hockey. We were kind of one of the first ones in this area to offer full season midget. And again we saw the the value in it. And so as I'm recruiting families who all they kind of know is, okay, you get to ninth grade and you go, you know, Catholic school or private school, you know, days, you know, Belmont Hills or Saint Subs of the worlds or the boarding schools, you know, avons and those.

Chris Masters 00:32:14 And I was saying, okay, like you have that option, but we have this over here, which is 65 games and it's three practices a week and it's full season development. And so we saw the value and we won a lot of those battles. And most a lot of people hated us early on because they thought we were, you know, again, they were stealing players. And I my kind of stock answer is, you know, owning people. That was outlawed in 1865. Like you're not we don't own these players. Right. Okay. If we do a good job, they'll stay with us. And if we don't do a good job, they'll go find another place to play. Right. But the kind of narrative was, oh, yeah, these junior teams, they're stealing all our.

Mark Agostinelli 00:32:58 Players and the Lawrences and the Saints, says they can't pivot on a dime to a different offering. Yeah, in the league they're in.

Chris Masters 00:33:04 Yeah. It's just it's a.

Mark Agostinelli 00:33:05 Little bit of like, oh, I wish I had that, but I can't offer.

Chris Masters 00:33:08 It. Yeah. It's just it's just different.

Mark Agostinelli 00:33:10 Yeah it's different.

Chris Masters 00:33:10 It's just different. and we won a ton of those recruiting battles. I mean, if you don't think that Jack Eichel had every prep school, you know, begging him to come play for them, but but again, we won that battle. And there's other ones that we lost. Right. And there's other ones we lost. And so what we saw over what we saw over time is just that, that perception of matching really high level academics and really high level athletics and hockey, in our case, hockey. That's what the marketplace wants. That's what they want. And so this is going back 8 or 9 years ago. We started hearing about these hockey academies in Minnesota. And and and you'd have these kids who are, I'm just going to use triple A, double a single eight, because that's probably the easiest for everyone to understand in Minnesota. Let's use Edina, Minnesota as an example. Right. And on the squirt team or the peewee team, you'd have this double AA player, right? So a second level kid, and then he starts going to this hockey academy where he's skating two hours a day or an hour and a half a day, five days a week or four days a week for an entire school year.

Chris Masters 00:34:20 And the kid who was on the AA team and like an okay player, okay, the next year he's on the A team. I'm like, oh wow, kids really improved. He's on the 18 now. And then the next year, after two years of that heavy development and all those extra hours on the ice and reps, not only is on the A team, he's like one of the best kids on the A-Team. Okay. And so we started hearing about these academies and we looked and said we should do one. Yeah okay. You know we can kind of read the tea leaves a little bit. if we can match full season hockey development, but also offer a really high level of education. It kind of kind of matching what these traditional New England private schools, Catholic or prep schools can do. I think we we have something that maybe isn't offered. And at the time there weren't really any academies in New England. Yeah. there were some that were like they'd call them academies, but it's like ten, ten kids that go to school in a rank and skate, you know, an hour.

Mark Agostinelli 00:35:29 And the only thing I had ever heard of until Masters, to be honest with you, was ski academies. Yeah, that was all I had heard of.

Chris Masters 00:35:34 Yeah. Now, we knew about when we started kind of going down. So we knew about IMG, which was down in Bradenton, Florida. and so we said, okay, they have 1200 students.

Mark Agostinelli 00:35:47 And that's correct me if I'm wrong, but like soccer, football is what they crush at or.

Chris Masters 00:35:52 No no no They. It's everything they have. Yeah. So it started as Netball Ataris tennis Academy.

Mark Agostinelli 00:35:59 Okay.

Chris Masters 00:36:00 So Sardis tennis. Yeah. And then they had a golf. Yeah. And then, and at the time those kids to me is a really interesting story. So those kids that went to IMG Academy either went to I maybe I get this from Bradenton High School and I think there was a Catholic school or private school, right. So IMG Academy would not deliver the academy. Just the sports. Just the sports. Okay.

Chris Masters 00:36:23 Right now again, it's 3 or 4 hours a day of tennis or golf training and then trying to match that with the the public school or the Catholic school. It's a little tough because they're they're athletes, you know, they're go on the road. It's it's it's hard. And so this guy named Rich Odell, who is running a school in Michigan called Interlochen, a fine art school, goes down to IMG. And he's looking around and he says to Mark McCormick, who, you know, famously starred at IMG. He was Arnold Palmer's agent. And that famous handshake deal. No contracts. You know, he's the founder of IMG. And Rich said he goes, you know, you guys should really have your own school. And he says, well, we don't want to be in the school business. So, Richard, well, how would I start the school? And you guys go ahead. So Rich starts the school at IMG and obviously goes from zero students. And again, maybe I get this a little wrong, but I know I'm close zero students to I don't know, 12 or 15 students here, one in a condo and right outside of campus to 48 students to 100 to 200.

Chris Masters 00:37:26 And it grows. And then Mark McCormack comes to him and says, hey, guess what, Rich? We want to be in the school business. And Rich is okay. So Rich sold them the school business and then Rich took over growing IMG. Now I'll call it academy but school and sports. And he grew to 1200 students. Wow. And he left I think in 2015 but oversaw their \$165 \$65 million build out, and the place is unbelievably impressive. If you haven't been there or you've never been down there, it's very impressive. And they have soccer, golf, tennis, football, baseball, lacrosse I'm sure. I'm sure there's a bunch of sports I'm leaving out and in again. It's probably 20 1819. IMG sold for \$1.3 billion. It's a private high school. Wow. Sold for over \$1 billion. but again, parents, I think, saw the value in, all that additional training. Yeah. And and it's not, I think not just the training, but also it's also there's the educational side of it.

Chris Masters 00:38:32 Right, right. And my, my kids are going to go there. They're great dorms. It's safe. It's structured. They can it's a one. It's a one stop shop.

Mark Agostinelli 00:38:40 Before that, if your kid was an excellent athlete. School had to take a backseat because to your point, you couldn't Logistically schedule it with it. Yeah. Leaving for tournaments?

Chris Masters 00:38:52 Yeah. Yeah. I mean, that part's hard. If you're at private school x, y z. Yeah. Again, let's take hockey as an example. Okay. If your kids at private school XYZ in the fall, he probably has to play another sport. So we'll play for a split season midget team. Now I'm not speaking out of school because we have these and without them forever, they're a good fall option. But it's not it's not great development because again, you split season teams. You have kids at this high school for at this high school for that. And so and they all have different rules. This you know close campus.

Chris Masters 00:39:29 These are boarders. These are De students. Guys we'd like to get together on a Wednesday night for practice. And again I've been there. I was on the ice with them like there'd be ten kids one one Wednesday night there's 12, the next there's eight.

Mark Agostinelli 00:39:39 It's not.

Chris Masters 00:39:40 It's hard. And I used to joke like you could have a our split season teams are called the Little Bruins. and you could ask a kid on the bench wearing a little Bruins jersey and say, hey, who do you play for? And he'd be like, oh, Belmont Hill. Yeah, right. Right, right. It's just who they associate. So even the fall option to me isn't great. Right. So you're now down to a three month season and you're just not getting the ice time. And these are very these kids. These are kids. They want to be college hockey players or pros. Like like they're really driven. That's where their

passion is. So again, it's getting back to why at these critical, you know, ages and levels and stages of development, are we knocking back the development from, you know, full season to split season.

Chris Masters 00:40:24 Now again, you look at all around the rest of the hockey playing world and even USA hockey does this big study and their ADM, the American development model, you know, they lay out here's what you should do at MIT's or its pee wee. And at high school it's midget and junior. It's full. It's full season. And so that's what we are doing. But but again, getting back to your point. Like you, these families want to be able to have a great academic component and really strong sports or hockey development. Right? And that's what IMG can deliver. And now there's now. So again eight years ago we say okay let's start going down this road. if we had known it would be eight years. And A million people telling us no and stops and starts and, like, literally sleepless nights. Yeah. a financial commitment and risk that both my brother and I took. And then as we started to get some pre-development investors and then the pressure of making sure that their money is safe, you know, and all that pre-development money, it's all at risk.

Chris Masters 00:41:38 Now, again, these are all sophisticated investors who understand that if the academy doesn't happen like that, money's just gone. But that's a lot of pressure because a lot of that money is from friends, some of whom we play golf with. Right. And then some other people that we've gotten to know over the years, and it's significant amounts of money being put into this, this dream. Right. And so, we figured, okay, my Peter and I, we don't know how to run a school, right? So we say, all right, well IMG that's what we'd like. Yeah. So we found my brother, found Rich O'Dell. Wow. And then Rich Odell introduced Ted McMurray, who helped build the, the tennis. He was one of his first instructors. And and then Ted helped run kind of the academy side of IMG, which was the, the academic side. And, I said, okay, so we got a school and academy kind of consultants Sultans. Now, you know, there are consultants at this point, and they're expensive.

Chris Masters 00:42:44 They're the leaders and what they do. And we said, yeah, well, we don't have any money, right? So we don't have any money for you. But if you want to work at risk, if we get funded, you'll get paid. Yeah. Just keep track. And, we all thought, you know, a year or 18 months we'll get funded. And and eight years later, when that happened, so rich, rich Odell probably came on board a year or 2 or 3 into it. Wow. So we worked for 4 or 5 years at risk, and we found, an owner's project manager, Enzo Sclera, with his company. And so he worked at risk, and we had architects working at risk construction companies, GCS working at risk. luckily, my brother's wife, Amy, is a CPA. She works for Harber Vest. She's super bright, and she helped with our model. Yeah, and just Hundreds of hours because we had to constantly redo the model, because during these eight years, we were going to put it next to the New England Sports Center.

Chris Masters 00:43:49 We tried to buy the international golf course when it went into bankruptcy and put the academy there. We were going to partner with another private school in Marlborough. We were looking at there were some colleges going out of business and maybe trying to buy their property. So it had a lot of there was a lot of different locations and iterations. And during this whole time we had some very smart people say, you're kind of thinking too big, like, just do a hockey academy. Like just build a little building next to the sports center. Have two teams prove the concept, then add the other sports. And I don't know, maybe stupidly, we said, our vision is much grander. Like, yeah, like we really want to go for it. And what we want to be able to do is offer kind of in New England or located in New England, but obviously would take, you know, kids from all over the US, Canada and internationally. We want to offer high level academics at least matching serve with traditional prep schools, but also with the athletic and the development side that an IMG offers.

Chris Masters 00:45:00 So at Masters Academy, much like IMG, you get four hours a day of athletic training. Now, it's not always on the ice or the court, but it's weightlifting or it's, you know, skill development, leadership training. But but there's a lot of it's 720 hours per school year.

Mark Agostinelli 00:45:20 Okay.

Chris Masters 00:45:21 Okay. Of additional of of sport specific training within the school day okay. Now that doesn't include your games. Right? Right. So for our academy teams that number is even higher. Now when you look at again ice hockey. Most of the, you know, top youth teams have a couple practices a week and maybe a skill session, right. So it's maybe three. Let's just say let's say these teams have hour and 20 minute practices, which most don't. But let's just

say they do. Okay. Let's give them an hour and a half. So that's three hours of practice a week plus a skill session. There's four hours a couple games on the weekend. That's six hours. Yep.

Chris Masters 00:45:57 Okay. So six hours times whatever. You know the season, right? It doesn't compare to what our kids will get at at Masters.

Mark Agostinelli 00:46:06 Not even.

Chris Masters 00:46:06 Close. Not even close now. Like compounding interest. And how effective that is. Now let's do that. Okay. Let's do 2 or 3 years of it. Right. Let's do four years of it. Okay. Now you're talking over your high school career. It's like 2800 hours, right? How much better are you going to get? I think back, if I had gotten 2800 extra hours of development in high school. Now, I went to BC. It's my dream school. I guess I can say, hey, it worked out for you, but maybe it would have worked out better, right? Maybe I would have been a better player, or maybe I would have developed to the point that maybe I could have made it further as a pro.

Mark Agostinelli 00:46:42 I mean, there's no there's no anyone who played any sort of moderately high level athletics knows.

Mark Agostinelli 00:46:48 Yeah. Nothing replaces the reps. Yeah. You just can't. You can never and you can never do enough.

Chris Masters 00:46:52 Yeah. And you can never do enough. And so, so, so as we're kind of going through this, the my story is, is again, it's because I'm involved in it and I've seen it close up. And my brother was the lead on this. And I've said to people he was an unrelenting, unstoppable force in making this happen. It's it's kind of amazing. Again, I'm kind of tooting our own horn here. And Peter's in particular that, you know, we convinced a bank in our partners in London to, to think enough of the idea and the team that we put together to invest \$83 million.

Mark Agostinelli 00:47:34 Yeah.

Chris Masters 00:47:34 It's impressive. And, and so we're going to open in September of 2026. Okay. September 15th will be our first day of school, and we'll have middle school and high school and post grads, and we're going to have 7 or 8 sports to start.

Chris Masters 00:47:49 and what's kind of got me most excited. The athletic side to me is the easy part for people who are interested in our school to understand. Yeah. To me, the exciting part is the academic side. Our curriculum and the delivery, I think is going to blow parents away. I met with our head of school, our kind of school leadership team, about ten days ago, and they kind of showed my brother and I our playbook. Rich Odell. Yeah. Okay. Who again has been key in all this? He's going to be our academy director. So he's hiring all of our teachers. He hired our head of school admissions curriculum director. And in everything that goes on, on the school side of it, he's he's the leader there. And so they showed us the playbook, which they've been working on for a few months. And I just looked at Peter and I go, I, I'm blown away by it. I think parents, when they see the academic, not just the curriculum but the delivery and the methodology is going to be something that, maybe one of one in the country.

Chris Masters 00:48:54 So, and, you know, we're kind of spreads fast. We were just in Austin for my buddy Andy's 50th birthday birthday celebration this past weekend. And coincidentally, the largest private school admissions conference was in Austin. And somehow someone got someone knew about it at the conference and got connected with Peter and my brother left, were at the Fairmont at the at the pool for the day, and he left to go meet, somewhere from an existing private school who wants to come over and join us.

Mark Agostinelli 00:49:31 Yeah, I gotta think that. I gotta think not. I love Florida, but I got to think that master's academy. I'm in the business of hiring people. Yeah, you got a pretty good talent pool trying to start an academic side in Massachusetts.

Chris Masters 00:49:48 Yeah, I think, again, we don't really look at IMG as our competitive competitor.

Mark Agostinelli 00:49:53 I agree.

Chris Masters 00:49:54 Yeah. You know I think what.

Mark Agostinelli 00:49:56 We prove the model.

Chris Masters 00:49:57 Yeah. And what we look at as our competition you know are all the New England prep schools more than IMG.

Mark Agostinelli 00:50:04 That checks out though.

Chris Masters 00:50:05 Yeah. And I think that you know what we have. Let's just use IMG as a comparison. I think what we have on IMG is location right. We're in you know we're in Stowe Massachusetts. It's 40 miles from Boston. Direct flights from everywhere in Europe in the US, the Middle East, Asia. Right. you know, you have.

Mark Agostinelli 00:50:28 The greatest.

Chris Masters 00:50:29 Harvard. You know, you have all the greatest schools within an hour's drive. Right. you have a kind of player pool or a teacher pool of talent.

Mark Agostinelli 00:50:42 That.

Chris Masters 00:50:43 That's already living here. again, we've it's been really encouraging as we made the kind of formal announcement that. Yeah, that we're opening the the interest that we've had. Yeah.

Mark Agostinelli 00:50:56 I still haven't got my discount code in the mail yet, but. Yeah. Yeah.

Chris Masters 00:50:59 Yeah. Keep looking.

Mark Agostinelli 00:51:00 For it. I bet.

Chris Masters 00:51:01 We have 33.

Mark Agostinelli 00:51:03 People that pay back. Yeah, we have \$83 million.

Chris Masters 00:51:07 to to pay back. So,

Mark Agostinelli 00:51:09 And Boston, although we're biased and I'm certainly biased because I love living here.

Mark Agostinelli 00:51:13 But Boston also helps because you get a major city that's not overwhelming.

Chris Masters 00:51:17 Yeah, yeah.

Mark Agostinelli 00:51:17 It's again Boston coming from afar.

Chris Masters 00:51:19 Yeah. To me, Boston's a small, big city. It is. I found out this weekend that Austin and Boston, one of those two probably will be Austin will be the 11th city to reach a million people. next, there's ten in the US that have a million. A population of more than a million. Now, I know Greater Boston, I think than a 3 million.

Mark Agostinelli 00:51:40 We don't. Right. We have 600. Is it more?

Chris Masters 00:51:42 No, no, I think it's somewhere in the 900.

Mark Agostinelli 00:51:44 Out.

Chris Masters 00:51:44 There, like Boston, the city of Boston. Austin's like 970 or something like that. So, interesting. But I still think it's it's tiny. It's a small, big city. Oh, yeah. But I think that intimacy is great. You know, we've had, a handful of the top. We also have all the top hospitals over here, and we've had a handful of those hospitals reach out to us to put, a location on site.

Chris Masters 00:52:11 Right. you know, IMG has John Hopkins on site. Now, again, a parent, you're sending your kid away to school. Wouldn't it be nice if you had? I won't name any of the hospitals because we haven't decided on a partner. But if you have a big time Boston Hospital on campus where your kid, you know, if he gets injured or you're just sick. Right. Just you don't have to go get him to the closest hospital or send him to the the nurse's office. Right. We have some of the some of the best hospitals and doctors in the world that that we think will end up on campus. we're in discussions with some top companies. We're going to offer, I think, a robotics program. So there's a lot of tech companies that we also plan to have non-playing majors. So at Masters Academy, we'll call all of our sports majors. So it's hockey, baseball, basketball. But we also may have non-playing majors. So you may be a kid who really wants to go into sports lore or sports broadcasting.

Chris Masters 00:53:08 and so probably not in year one, but it's kind of in our plans to offer non-playing majors. Okay. Again, who's passion?

Mark Agostinelli 00:53:17 Yeah.

Chris Masters 00:53:18 His passion may be Maybe baseball, but he realizes I'm just not good enough. But I like to play it. And he could play at Masters Academy. But, maybe his real passion is I want to be a broadcaster or I want to work on the production side. So we'll be able to, I think, offer those, non-playing majors and, you know, like our middle school kids, we're going to be club friendly. So if you have a middle school aged kid and maybe their passion is soccer, okay. And you play for FC stars or any FC, and you go to Hopkinton Middle School, you may say, hey, I, I'm kind of interested in my because I want now our middle school kids won't do four hours a day based on their age, but it might be two, 2.5 hours. So again, now you're looking at 10 to 12 hours of sports specific training per week.

Chris Masters 00:54:09 And, but we won't have academy teams for middle school kids. So our middle school kids, they'll come to May, they'll get educated. They'll get their sport specific training within the school, and then end of the school day, they'll go.

Mark Agostinelli 00:54:23 Play their normal.

Chris Masters 00:54:24 They'll go play for their clubs. So the the club teams we think will will be supportive of that. And as we're talking to a lot of these club teams that they are very supportive of it. Is that okay. So.

Mark Agostinelli 00:54:34 Well their talent is going to get back.

Chris Masters 00:54:36 Their talent is going to get better. Right. So and and we are we are fully supportive of making sure those kids go back to their club teams. And you know, obviously at high school we will have academy teams, but that's no different than the current model.

Mark Agostinelli 00:54:49 Yeah.

Chris Masters 00:54:49 Going on. Yeah. Going to whether you play for your Hopkinton High School or private school XYZ or going off to an academy. Right. You know, you know, maybe going to IMG, but so we're going to be very supportive of all the, the club programs because the Junior Bruins our club program.

Chris Masters 00:55:04 So we recognize, you know, the importance of these club programs and working with them and with their coaches and with their directors.

Mark Agostinelli 00:55:12 Now that makes sense. And I know I could talk to you for hours about this, but I am interested on the academic side. One question I wanted to ask you was how has your or has at all your experience of participating in our Towns School Committee like change your perspective on like the educational academic offering at the academy?

Chris Masters 00:55:32 Yeah, it's yeah, I think it's interesting. I mean, obviously two very different models. Right.

Mark Agostinelli 00:55:38 So different.

Chris Masters 00:55:39 In for profit private school sports academy versus, you know, the public.

Mark Agostinelli 00:55:44 Funded.

Chris Masters 00:55:44 Public funded and and all that goes into, the district plans, the bureaucracy. Yeah. The bureaucracy. Again, I've learned a lot. And where, you know, first of all, the public school system in Massachusetts is among the highest rated in the country. And then even a narrower focus or spotlight on Hopkinton, it's, you know, second ranked or first ranked.

Chris Masters 00:56:11 You know, I say if it's let's just say worst case, it's a top five district, right. You know worst case or. Top ten. So we have we have a really incredible school district. And one of the things that I've learned is that, and that again, working in the private sector world that I look at is that return on investment. And the thing that I think one of the things Hopkinton, the school system and the district should be most proud of is the per student, the cost per student, I think it's like 16,000 and change, which is an incredible return on investment. When you look at there's, I don't know, 10 or 12 other towns that we compare ourselves to socioeconomically, geographically and we're the lowest. Yeah. And some towns I think Wayland is like 26, 27,000 per student. I mean, it's a huge delta between 26 and 16. And at one of the school committee meetings, I'm like this incredible. Like everyone take a bow like superintendent, the teachers, the administration school committee that was there before me like this is incredible.

Chris Masters 00:57:16 And I think it's something we should really be proud of as, as a town. And it's one of the things that I think being on the school committee, I like to say, okay, you know, obviously just spending money does not translate into good results, right? Right. It's spending money smartly. So we're obviously spending money very smartly. We're putting the emphasis. And again, I like making sure the dollars are kind of student facing. Yes. And so as that relates to the academy, as we're figuring out again, budgeting and teachers and classroom sizes, there's some things I've learned from the school committee and that I've been able to speak to with a little more authority in talking to Rick O'Dell, who's been in the, you know, the academic world his whole career. And he's the, you know, leader in the in the country at what he does. And now, as I'm getting to meet our head of school and some of the other academic leadership team and saying, okay, well what about X, Y or Z? What about these things? Because I know from the school committee and getting a much kind of broader look, you know, because I think most parents in any town, it's like, hey, it's my kid.

Chris Masters 00:58:22 Yeah. What's my, you know, the teacher or the classroom that my kid or kids are in. That's where that focus is. And which that would be mine. It's mine as a parent as well. But now when you can look a little more broadly and say, okay, we have high performing students, we have, you know, middle of the road students, and then we have some students that have some special challenges or developmental issues. And we need a service. Everyone. Yeah, we need a service everyone. So at my you know, like any even private school, there's going to be even within a private school, which is pretty selective of who they accept based on their admissions and test scores and, you know, recommendations where there's still.

Mark Agostinelli 00:59:04 There's a degree.

Chris Masters 00:59:05 A degree of like, okay, we have some super high performing kids, right? And then there's some kids who are, you know, doing a great job. And then even at some private school, there's probably some kids who struggle a little bit.

Chris Masters 00:59:14 And. All right. We need to make sure we're taking care of all of those kids. And, I think one of the things that's talked quite a bit about at school committee meetings is, is really educating and figuring a way to take care of the whole person. And there's a life skills component at Masters Academy that I think is going to be one of the things that elevates us and differentiates us between a lot of other schools, public and private.

Mark Agostinelli 00:59:44 The thing that's missing the most from our educational system.

Chris Masters 00:59:47 And I think, again, Hopkinton does a really good job at recognizing that. Yeah. but again, within a public school system, there's you are handcuffed a bit. Yeah. Just based on, you know, budget, school size. And if you have 2,501st graders that live in the town, well, you have to find a spot for all 2500 kids. Now. That's right. That's an exaggerated number, but that's a challenge. But it's a real challenge. And that's something different that we won't face at at my which is, you know, it's we're not going to be able to take every kid that wants to come.

Chris Masters 01:00:22 And even if we did, we would have kind of the space. But at some point we just don't have. We don't have.

Mark Agostinelli 01:00:28 Enough.

Chris Masters 01:00:28 Room. We don't have enough room. There's only, you know, we're going to open with 197 beds so we can take 197 boarders. and that's in phase one. And again, May is kind of the. We bought the former a former Bose campus and Stowe and it's 320,000 square foot building. It's, you know, East wing, West wing. And we're developing the west wing for opening of school. And then we're, kind of going to mothball the east wing until we scale and grow, and then we'll renovate that and then can scale up to a larger number of students we can take. but there's a lot. I think the timing was a little serendipity in that when I ran for the Hopkinton School Committee, that was let's see, this is 25, so 24. So that would have been kind of late. 23 I decided to run and the election was May of 24.

Chris Masters 01:01:28 so in late 23, we hadn't even found.

Mark Agostinelli 01:01:33 A.

Chris Masters 01:01:33 Place. Well, yeah, we hadn't found well, we sort of had a place because we had we had. Yeah. No, in 2021, we had signed a purchase and sale with bows to buy the property. and then it's a very long story. It can't tell here, but, it's just too long. But we walked from it. Yeah. Variety of reasons. And, and then four years or three years later, we came back and bought it, So while we knew about bows in 2021, and when I remember my brother got a call from our, our broker and said, hey, why don't you come over and take a look at this Bose campus? They're probably going to shut it down and they want to sell it. Peter got on campus. Perfect. He goes, this is exactly what we want. This is the this this will be perfect. And then how we ended up getting it. It's kind of a crazy story when it came back on the market.

Chris Masters 01:02:30 it was a guy named Cliff Shaw who's a fascinating guy. If you're podcast listeners want to read about a really fascinating guy, Cliff Shaw. He owns a bunch of dominoes. He's one of the leading, art aficionados in the country, I think. He owns the largest private art gallery, maybe in the world. He's a liquidator. Peter, madam in 2021 originally. And then he helped invest in buying the property along with a couple other, you know, key investors in. So that would have been just them getting all these dates a little. I think there was a spring of 24 we closed on the property.

Mark Agostinelli 01:03:17 I'm getting that and these. But hold on. So these initial renovations will be done for September.

Chris Masters 01:03:21 Well done. Done for.

Mark Agostinelli 01:03:22 September. When do you plan on like like yeah.

Chris Masters 01:03:25 The East Wing I mean I guess it depends on enrollment. Yeah. How. Well of course we can. We can we can continue to scale up based on just the West Wing, that renovation.

Chris Masters 01:03:35 So, you know, there's we're renovating all the fields, you know, turf fields. We're building a basketball pavilion.

Mark Agostinelli 01:03:43 will you build a rink?

Chris Masters 01:03:45 we'd love to. Yeah. When I think when the when the when the time is right, there's space on the property to to build the two sheet ring. But right now, it feels like.

Mark Agostinelli 01:03:54 It feels like there should be a rink. Yeah, yeah.

Chris Masters 01:03:57 Yeah, rinks are expensive. And what's what's great about the New England Sports Centre is that it's a, you know, probably 12 to 15 minute ride from campus to the rink.

Mark Agostinelli 01:04:07 Not used during the.

Chris Masters 01:04:08 Day, not used during the day. So, the sports centre is perfect. It's right down the street.

Chris Masters 01:04:30 It's big. It's beautiful. That's where our Junior Bruins offices are. And again, it's a it's a 10 to 12 minute bus ride. So our, That's perfect. Just about all of our sports, all of our students will train on campus except hockey. the basketball pavilion may not be ready for the opening of day one of school. Might be, you know, December, January. So maybe our basketball players may have to be off site for a few months. But you know, that's not a big deal. And, you know, it's as again, it's a long eight years to get to opening. Very cool. and during that time when we signed, when we found Cognita. Okay. Who's a London based company, they have over 100 schools worldwide. They educate over 100. I think it's over 110,000 students a day. They're an incredible company, incredible group of people. There are, you know, kind of lead investors and partners. And again, as all of this has happened and, you know, a couple other times we thought we had some investment investors lined up and all this, this would be a great group.

Chris Masters 01:05:38 And as everything's kind of twisted and turned landing at HBOs, not doing it next to the rink or at the international or a couple of the other sites, prior, investors and prior potential partners who may have may have been great. Like we just landed at the perfect location with the perfect partners, the best leadership group. And then, USA fencing is moving their national headquarters and training to our campus.

Mark Agostinelli 01:06:07 So we're not so interested in the article in the globe.

Chris Masters 01:06:09 Yeah, we'll be the only high school, I think, in the world. But I'm told with certainty in the US and Canada that has the Olympic rings on campus and an Olympic governing body and their training facility on campus. So I'm learning a lot about fencing and, you know, so we'll, you know, again, we originally weren't going to offer fencing as one of our sports or majors, but we'll now offer fencing. So, day one, hopefully my brother will be upset if I get this wrong. So hockey, baseball, basketball, lacrosse, golf, fencing.

Chris Masters 01:06:48 Did I say soccer? iGaming. So esports. I'm missing one.

Mark Agostinelli 01:06:55 He said basketball.

Chris Masters 01:06:56 Basketball? Maybe I'm missing.

Mark Agostinelli 01:07:00 Yeah. That's right.

Chris Masters 01:07:01 Yeah, yeah, you can post.

Mark Agostinelli 01:07:02 Peter, don't.

Chris Masters 01:07:03 Yeah, don't we'll add that. We'll add we'll add that in post or whoever our director is in that sport like hey.

Mark Agostinelli 01:07:09 I mean, I obviously I met you, into the journey because I believe my brother for 6 or 6 years. Yeah. But, incredible stuff. Yeah. Congrats. Yeah, I know it's wild for you because, like, the work is actually just starting.

Chris Masters 01:07:20 Yeah, yeah.

Mark Agostinelli 01:07:20 Yeah, we just did eight years.

Chris Masters 01:07:22 Of it. Yeah. Someone asked is, oh, is this the exciting part now or is this like, oh my God, now you have to actually go deliver it and build it. And the last not the whole eight years, you know, from the but I'd say the last probably since 20, 20, 21 and then really accelerated the last two years.

Chris Masters 01:07:42 It's kind of been horrible.

Mark Agostinelli 01:07:44 Yeah.

Chris Masters 01:07:44 Yeah. And again, my brother felt the stress way more, you know, than I did. incredibly stressful. I mean, nights waking up and again, you have, you know, in some cases tens of thousands, in other cases hundreds of thousands of your friends. Money at risk. my brother and I had a significant investment that if this didn't happen, we would have owed people hundreds of thousands of lawyers and just just a huge amount of money that we would have owed and, money we didn't have, and we where we would have got that. But, you know, again, getting back to my dad and some of those lessons that we learned from him was like, hey, you got to just bet on yourself. Right, right. Just bet on yourself. Take the risk. And, you know, that's kind of I get we get that kind of entrepreneurial spirit from the old man. And again, he didn't have much of a formal education, incredibly hard worker, you know, great street smarts, incredible salesmen and a lot of that, you know, he either instilled in us or it's in our wiring and at 1.4 or 5 years ago, my brother and I just said, fuck it, let's.

Chris Masters 01:08:56 We're going to do it.

Mark Agostinelli 01:08:57 Yeah. All the chips.

Chris Masters 01:08:58 We're going to do it. And we had a lot of people, again, very smart and other people very close to us. What are you doing? Why are you doing this? You have a successful business, right? Which? Which we do that. You know, we I said I can kind of do what I'm doing for the next 20 years and, you know, be comfortable. And I like it. There's certain things I love about it. Some things, like any job I don't like about it, but I genuinely love what I do. It's, you know, not digging ditches. And, but we just had this grand vision and said, let's do it. Let's let's do it. And we had, So my brother had, some people out to the school can't kind of say who it is, but, some very successful people in one of the sports that, may have a relationship with us in one of the sports.

Chris Masters 01:09:54 And this guy was on the board of company Ex, and he's a real successful car dealer out in the West Coast. And, he's looking at the whole thing, the building and the plan and the plans and all the boards, and he's going through the whole story. And he said to my brother, he's Jesus Christ, the fucking balls on you.

Mark Agostinelli 01:10:13 Right?

Chris Masters 01:10:14 That's true. Yeah. And it was kind of a good like again I give again Peter, you know, most of the credit. But we just said, hey, you know, let's just go for it. Let's let's just go for it. And if we strike out, we strike out. We should try and give it a shot. And and,

Mark Agostinelli 01:10:30 I feel like though the way it happened over the last eight years, like, and I know you've shared, some of the ups and downs the last 24 to 36 months, which have been more grueling than the previous. But like, I also feel like it's kind of good to go through that fire to get it launched, because then the details seem.

Chris Masters 01:10:47 Yeah, well. The satisfaction. Oh. So sorry. Let me get back. So? So the satisfaction, I think is heightened. Yes. And now to me, this is incredibly exciting. So someone had asked, oh, is this, you know, are you more nervous now? Is there more stress now? This is.

Mark Agostinelli 01:11:03 No this is the fun part to me.

Chris Masters 01:11:04 This is the fun part. Now there's there's a certain level of pressure, like we need to get 250 students on campus, you know, next fall. But to me, this incredibly exciting hockey gave me everything, right? Gave me so much. And the experience like, you know, high school is great, College was great. And post-college. And those relationships and the lessons you learn and and everything that hockey gave me again, I look at what I think we're going to be able to do at MIT and the opportunities that we're going to give these kids. Right. And these athletes who are in a lot of cases, singularly focused when they get to kind of middle school and high school.

Chris Masters 01:11:46 I always played baseball, and again, it was a pretty good baseball player and made the varsity as a freshman at my high school and was the backup catcher. And halfway through that spring season, it just hit me like, I, I want to go all in on hockey. Yeah. And I know I need to do some extras and try and find more to do. And so I stopped playing baseball. And again, that singular focus, and I think in a for a lot of the kids that will come to Masters Academy and maybe not the middle school. And again, we kids can do multiple sports like someone maybe, you know, my brother's kids, the two boys, you know, hockey, football, hockey, lacrosse and you may want to do. All right. I want to do four months of hockey, in three months of lacrosse, or two days a week of lacrosse and three days a week of hockey. And, you know, kids, it's not just for kids that play a singular sport, but I think these kids are so singularly focused on being the best lacrosse player soccer player, and when you now surround them with.

Mark Agostinelli 01:12:54 An environment.

Chris Masters 01:12:54 And environment of a whole school that has that kind of singular focus. I can only imagine how that will push each other, not just kids on your team. Because again, like like, you know, in high school, I went to Matt. I don't know, it's kind of a hockey school. And these kids all were were pretty focused on it. But some kids didn't have the drive that me and a few other kids had. Right? They they liked it and they played it. And I know that I've heard from other families that have kids at prep school like this. It might be 4 or 5, six kids on their hockey team that they're lacrosse players. Right, right. And that's where their focus is. But now if you have at Masters Academy, you have kids who are so singularly focused and kind of, you know, iron sharpening iron. And then you also collectively have a school. Yeah. Where you have that mentality of, hey, we're here. We're here for business.

Mark Agostinelli 01:13:46 Which previously really wasn't an opportunity for kids until you got to college. Yeah, yeah. Is it college? Then you get it, right? Yeah. And when you play college sports, you realize that, like, oh, I'm getting value in my athletics when I'm not on the field, but I'm still with my teammates. And now you're going to get that in high school.

Chris Masters 01:14:01 Now you're going to get the high school and even middle school.

Mark Agostinelli 01:14:03 And even.

Chris Masters 01:14:04 Middle school. So yeah. So it's been,

Mark Agostinelli 01:14:07 Dude, congrats.

Chris Masters 01:14:07 Yeah. Thanks.

Mark Agostinelli 01:14:08 Congrats. You're going to have to come on in a little while and give an update of how. Yeah.

Chris Masters 01:14:12 Oh, yeah, I'd be happy to do it. It's been, It's awesome. Yeah. It's been it's been an incredible journey. The hockey part and the junior Bruins part. And, you know, we created a bunch of other businesses, within hockey. and it's all kind of led to the next chapter, and we're still going to keep all the hockey stuff going, and the Junior Bruins will remain.

Chris Masters 01:14:34 But, now we have this this other.

Mark Agostinelli 01:14:36 New.

Chris Masters 01:14:36 Focus. Yeah, new focus that we're pretty excited about.

Mark Agostinelli 01:14:39 Yeah. Well, hey, thanks again for coming on, man. And, where can people find Masters Academy? Other than the news? I've seen it.

Chris Masters 01:14:45 Yeah, yeah. Masters academy international. yeah. And then it's got links to all our social media, and, you'll see a lot getting ramped up. Admissions opens October 1st, and you'll see stuff really start to get accelerated as we start to announce our coaches and directors. Some of them we can't announce because they're at other jobs right now. But as we get into the fall, yeah, we'll start to announce and the some of them will will roll out. You know, they are public, but, yeah. Exciting stuff. The Masters Academy mavericks. Let's do it.

Mark Agostinelli 01:15:17 Mavericks.

Chris Masters 01:15:18 I'd love.

Mark Agostinelli 01:15:19 To. I've. I love to help you spread the word.

Chris Masters 01:15:22 Yeah. No, I appreciate you, bringing me on.

Chris Masters 01:15:24 This is. This has been great. A lot of fun.

Mark Agostinelli 01:15:26 100%. Thanks a lot. Cool, man. See you soon. All right. Peace.