

# Jason Smith named Masters Academy International's first head basketball coach

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Brewster Academy's wins since 2000: 700.

Masters Academy International's wins: 0.

Jason Smith, who coached Brewster Academy (Wolfeboro, NH) to each of those victories this century, last week **announced** his departure from the institution to take the head coaching position at the \$82 million academy in Stow, Massachusetts, that's set to begin operations this fall.

"I don't think there's anything like Masters Academy International at the moment in this region," he said in an interview with [USA TODAY High School Sports](#). "It offered an opportunity to do something that I think is very unique."

Over his 26 years at Brewster, Smith led 13 seasons of 30 more wins, seven New England Class AAA Tournament Championships, 10 New England Preparatory School Athletic Council (NEPSAC) Class AAA Regular Season titles and competition in the Nike EYBL Scholastic conference. He coached more than 200 athletes who would become NCAA Div. I players and 25 who would make the NBA, including Donovan Mitchell, Matas Buzelis and T.J. Warren.

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"We were very fortunate to have had a lot of talented kids over the years, kids that took advantage of the platform that we were able to provide," Smith said. "Any time you have great players, surround yourself with outstanding coaches, you're going to have some level of success."

He's building out the coaching and roster behind him, but leadership at MAI is a group of New England forces. Peter and Chris Masters, the founders of the academy, are prominent figures in the region's youth hockey scene and played at

Boston College and a season of minor league hockey, respectively. Rich Odell, the architect behind IMG Academy (Bradenton, FL), is the academy director. And the director of basketball is John Carroll, who had 370 wins and coached more than 50 Ivy Leaguers at Northfield Mount Hermon (Gill, MA), developing a healthy rivalry with Smith along the way.

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"I don't think I would be making the move if it wasn't for Coach Carroll," Smith said. "I became a better coach myself from competing against John Carroll-coached teams."

The two will team up at a program constructed by the Masters that addresses what the brothers see as flaws in the existing prep system. Among these issues is the way many private schools struggle to maintain a balance between academics and athletics.

"Almost 30 years of being around these families, where kids were being forced to choose — is it academics, or is it athletics, is it development or opportunity? That kind of just never sat right with us," Chris said.

"We are marrying the two," Peter said. "That's kind of the impetus, the goal, of where this idea came from."

MAI school days are split into five hours of academics and four hours of athletics. The athletics period is broken down into on-court strength and conditioning, mental training, and nutrition, Odell said. Smith and the basketball program have year-round access to train with the team, a departure from many other academies that limit direct contact during the offseason. In NEPSAC, which Brewster is part of, some [rules](#) prohibit coaches from working with student-athletes outside the season.

The additional allowances for athletes at MAI were key to Smith agreeing to join. With his extra hours for coaching and the connections he has around the country,

the program sees opportunity for quick growth.

"The commitment to not be limited by how much time you can work with kids [is unique]," Smith said.

The academy plans to accept 300 students in its opening year and increase to as many as 600 in future years.