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What is Masters Academy's plan for lacrosse program?



By Jason Cooke (https://www.laxjournal.com/author/jasoncooke/)
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Masters Academy's girls lacrosse team has already begun training for its inaugural season. (Masters Academy International)

For **Abbey Capobianco** (Framingham, Mass.), it's about the why.

When the Framingham High Hall of Famer concluded her successful 10-year stint as the head coach at the Assumption University women's lacrosse team, she dipped into the prep world, assisting the Dexter Southfield program for three seasons.

She was viewing lacrosse through a different lens.

"Why are these public school players going off to these prep schools? Capobianco asked herself. "And I think the biggest why was because they're getting challenged at a much higher level to prepare them for that next level."

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So when her storied journey through the sport presented another opportunity — one to lead the program at the newly minted Masters Academy International — Capobianco found herself pondering the same question.

“Why are they coming here? And I had to really ask myself that before taking on the role,” Capobianco said.

Masters — the state-of-the-art athletic academy perched on an 82-acre campus in Stow, Mass. — officially opened its doors in September. While boys lacrosse isn’t offered, the girls program has begun training and has finalized its 21-player roster.

And it didn’t take long for Capobianco to answer that question when the vision for the lacrosse program started to take shape a year ago.

“The biggest thing is that they’re able to do it all here and have a really nice balance,” Capobianco said.

First of its kind

Masters is breaking new ground with its introduction of the academy model for lacrosse. Hockey, for instance, is a familiar force in the academy space. Hockey programs like Mount St. Charles and Seacost Performance Academy, among others, offer a different way of approaching academics with athletics.

All-intensive training and full-season competition are aspects that these models offer that differ from the traditional experience at prep or public schools. Masters is also introducing a hockey program, which is one of eight sports offered at the institution.

But the lacrosse landscape hasn’t seen an academy at this level, at least not in New England. The Florida-based IMG Academy is the best-known example of an academy offering lacrosse.

After starring at Central Connecticut State University and UMass, Capobianco embarked on a collegiate coaching career and is the program’s winningest coach at Assumption. She is also a director at Laxachusetts and has had a hand in just about every corner of the lacrosse world from development to recruiting at all levels.

She has made one observation that is a roadblock for many players: Burnout.

“One thing I’ve noticed within the last five years is our student-athletes are just getting stretched so thin,” Capobianco said.

Between a full day of classes, after-school activities and traveling to and from club practices, she has seen players struggling to find time to seek the academic and athletic development they desire to keep up with their peers.

“The majority of them are at a place where athletics isn’t taken as a priority for them,” Capobianco said. “And then they might be going to (other commitments), whether they’re playing another sport, or an extracurricular activity, whatever it may be…And then they’re going to some extra training for lacrosse, or lift or conditioning. Next thing you know, they’re not home until 10 at night.”

Day in the life

Masters has attempted to fix that problem with a schedule that Capobianco said balances athletics and academics.

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And all of this happens on campus, with an eight-hour day essentially being cut down the middle for athletics and academics.

“We’ve taken out the travel logistics piece,” said assistant coach **James Rippey**, a former coach at UMass Lowell and Framingham State. “We’ve taken out all the car rides, and we’ve kind of moved everything into one spot. And because of that, it’s just so much more conducive to having that balance in terms of schedule.”

Capobianco said the program is certainly open to dual-sport athletes, too. The roster currently features soccer and hockey players, for instance, who will play both at Masters.

Building the roster

Capobianco said the recruiting process began last October and culminated in the final player committing to the school over the summer. Perhaps the program’s biggest pickups were Penn commits and Greenland, N.H., natives **Emery Lawton** and **Raegan Lawton**.

The Lawton sisters have led Portsmouth to three consecutive NHIAA titles and are two of the top ‘27s in the region.

Masters is open to recruiting players at a variety of entry points, from freshmen to post-graduates. In the Lawtons’ case, Capobianco said this year will serve as a de facto gap year before they embark on the next level.

“We want a year, kind of like junior hockey,” Capobianco said, alluding to the Lawton sisters. “We want a year to get ready for the next level. We’re excited at the opportunity to talk to those student-athletes because they’re going to make our team better not just on the field but off the field.”

The finalized roster includes an eighth grader, four freshmen, seven sophomores, five juniors, three seniors and a post-graduate.

Masters girls lacrosse roster for 2026-27

First Name	Last Name	Grade	City	State	High School

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Lucille	Ward	11	Camden	ME	Camden(ME)
Addison	Beauregard	9	Concord	NH	GSE
Cora	Bruns	9	Scottsdale	AZ	Scottsdale (AZ)
Giuliana	Meadows	9	Longmeadow	MA	Longmeadow (MA)
Sydney	Moniz	9	Marblehead	MA	Marblehead (MA)
Caroline	Cavanaugh	PG	South Windsor	CT	South Windsor (CT)
Emery	Lawton	12	Portsmouth	NH	Portsmouth (NH)
Raegan	Lawton	12	Portsmouth	NH	Portsmouth (NH)
Addison	Citro	10	Sterling	MA	Saint Marks
Brigid	Staunton	10	Northborough	MA	Algonquin (MA)
Stella	McLaughlin	10	Worcester	MA	Worcester Academy
Jesse	Cargiuolo	11	Bedford	MA	Bedford (MA)
Jane	Whitesides	11	Bedford	MA	Bedford (MA)
Riley	LeBlanc	11	Boylston	MA	Tahanto Regional (MA)
Talia	Redmond	12	Acton	MA	Acton Boxboro (MA)
Makenzie	Roberts	8	Lunenburg	MA	Lunenburg (MA)
Abby	Waldner	10	Norfolk	MA	King Phillip (MA)
Zoe	Dix	11	Sandusky	OH	Sandusky (OH)

The roster also includes college commits **Caroline Cavanaugh** (South Windsor, Conn.; Colby) and **Jesse Cargiuolo** (Bedford, Mass.; Holy Cross).

“When we were building the roster, the main focus for me was making sure it felt like a high school team,” Capobianco said. “I was really focused on making sure we had freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors. So when they got to campus, it wasn’t a bunch of freshmen, and it wasn’t a bunch of seniors.”

While the schedule isn’t finalized, Capobianco said it will resemble a prep schedule in the spring and will also feature tournaments throughout the fall and winter. The team will travel to Tampa, Fla., to compete in Club Nationals on Dec. 5-6. Players will also compete on their respective club teams on the weekends in the fall.

Rippey said a player’s development will only benefit from the year-round competition throughout their career at Masters.

“That’s something that I always think is going to be attractive from the college coaches’ perspective,” Rippey said. “Somebody who is getting quality coaching and quality work and competition on a daily basis. Someone is going to grow a lot during that junior and senior year and certainly throughout their high school experience.”

"Why do you want to come here?" Capobianco said. "Ultimately, it's that greatness without compromise. You want to be the best you can be. Excel in the classroom, and you want to be the best teammate and the best lacrosse player you can be.

"If you can combine those two things, and that is what you are passionate about and what you care most about and what you dream about at night, then this is where you belong."

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