Speaker 1 ([00:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=xg4f8HQiVsgtA91PVVflLVkCehINVflUEfqsQzvYvY2Men16kja1mnzmEm7Iw9CIGai8iqYrEfesnKoSKhL2DC2UYD4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1.65)):

Shot, scores, and the Tigers roar to victory in overtime over Maryland, four to three. Snapping a four game losing streak against the Terps in the fifth consecutive overtime game in this series. What a thriller.

John Mack (guest) ([00:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6SztPxWrNruQxVlNs1nM7eLM49teSB45vSawNyq5w5syKhLbzh3Iustin2F_pO5IYqWQPFMbKdnh_iYimxZQkA4VkoM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=21.99)):

I think it's first and foremost having a group of coaches and student athletes who wholeheartedly believed in the combined academic, athletic mission. This is a place where I think more now than at any other time in our history, every door athletically and every door academically is open to you. You can come to Princeton, get the best education in the country, and also be an NFL caliber student athlete, to be an Olympic caliber athlete. When you look at this past Olympics in 2021, we had two current student athletes and roughly 20 former student athletes who competed in the Olympics. I think that speaks volumes, in terms of what the athletic ceiling is here at Princeton.

Vivian (host) ([01:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=K0dBQovLZEZ9rTImZVX9BQ7zZvY-3QpJSkoIkLeWrjzoA24kZHr-wpy0e7BIGY_g1Itmvkp0SbQ7L0TSC56o_BDfxOU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=76.62)):

Hello everyone. Welcome to Meet Princeton, a podcast to introduce prospective students and their families to Princeton University, brought to you from the Office of Admission at Princeton. My name is Vivian Slee and I'm a senior assistant dean in the Office of Admission. I'm so happy that you tuned in to join us to hear from current student voices and others about our community and about what it's like to be a student at Princeton just now.

([01:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=efP5qziLcg1ta4egWWERaohN5yTweWPd055DXO-GUZl7ErNg6D2DoYJXQfTsVyn9fHqdg3nkywsLiNDhgmDhO8uC5OQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=107.73)):

So glad you could join us on today's episode where we will be talking about athletics and all things sports at Princeton, which some of you may already know is a division one school. We have 38 varsity teams for men and women and have one more Ivy League championships than any other school during the last two decades. Woo-hoo. Go Tigers. Are you a student athlete? Are you curious about the athletics program at Princeton? If so, I think we may be able to answer some of your questions.

([02:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=mLnILhO_KHtBrKzgXxEVonYTrfRpiMygWrbPW5_Lkrkk9cTngfrh5unmW2t2WeOhBd_DElSD3iuuSF666yiPGXSYkGg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=139.59)):

In today's episode, which is the first of two parts. Listen, as my wonderful co-host Bryant Blunt talks to Ford Family Director of Athletics, John Mack, from the class of 2000. Director Mack was an award-winning captain of the men's track and field team when he was a student here and he's had a really interesting path back to Princeton. Among other things, he practiced law for a decade and is also an ordained minister. Let's listen to their conversation and how he hopes to engage with our coaches and student athletes setting a foundation for long-term success.

Bryant (co-host) ([03:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=U8AfVQPZh4Q5TOtlL8jw2zl0D-yOlm2PUANej3ZrF9bhDg3gWJDuGecxj-82pQLOprIoQc7ARPyBbFihKcUTm4XheSo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=181.47)):

John Mack, class of 2000 is the Princeton University Ford Family Director of Athletics and just returned home to Princeton. John, welcome to the podcast.

John Mack (guest) ([03:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Ys0ourpwNCJ4lg2OJLcbpop1gl6mGVoCwX6eUyc2dXdSF25crwgHn-gwJhuixqGLrIySnscKWt5V0kYvQ1iPizRKhG8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=192.6)):

Thank you so much for having me. It's great to be here. Great to be back on campus.

Bryant (co-host) ([03:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=zvvSFfU_aAvg28xQrZVc9G2I2Frl0haRZBSMbXt7NqmZlpjCn4LJMYwLRCkioL9dgMLeH9rrnTtA6QfkkeWI-lCQvdg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=198.3)):

From our perspective, I'd love to hear from you, again a Princeton alum, Princeton student athlete, and now leading Princeton Athletics, could you tell everyone who's listening a little bit about your journey back to Princeton?

John Mack (guest) ([03:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Gc1_GFJwz0OOoWMEcPe0fzVKYaTzbUehNUrwfxW1B_tF1hZLA8ARltS3cIwT3pzriZCyV3VfixWZmnRqMdY99T08WKU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=212.07)):

Sure. It's been a little bit of interesting path. I graduated in 2000, had no idea what I wanted to do, and just by happenstance happened to run into Gary Walters, who was then the AD and asked me what I was doing. I started working at General Motors back home near Detroit. He asked if I'd ever thought about getting in college athletics and I said, "Sure, I would love your job one day."

([03:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=GhryULDQ4erBEI_7v0oeC1PV1_Ba2e8NlrWnck9KqwyXEf71ZewmWAcl-jgG6Y5XGp3_dPqzy-CRyAOlu1hVYSEkeFM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=234.24)):

So this was a summer of 2000, and three months later, an internship opportunity became available and Gary called me. Thus began a 10 or 12 year career in college athletics administration. I worked here at Princeton for about three and a half years and got a chance to really see the inner workings of the department. I worked in the Big 10 Conference headquarters in Chicago for a couple of years and then had a great experience there, really learned a lot. Then spent five years working at Northwestern University overseeing external operations, media and marketing, sponsorships, community relations at a very like-minded academic institution that obviously competes in power five level.

([04:38](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Av33GwS9HcTAuFWYIVBuprAVTEpCHQEn8gik8Mu74m_cKqIGw0efJYq-ROqvYack8yFMaUh9OhpD4x5WeGWK-fTKGVI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=278.4)):

I transitioned into a legal career. Going to law school was always something that I've had in the back of my mind and I jokingly tell people that my wife, Alita, who's class of 99, I went to law school because she told me to. She said, "Either go to law school or stop talking about wanting to go to law school." So I went and I practiced law up until August of last year when this opportunity became available. I can honestly say that I've never been happier.

Bryant (co-host) ([05:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vTR7q7KVNBeuzrtkkP04d0oWVvuaPpcQ6WC5lQh1CRSq0IBrwkIac7ZrZ_6GfZy2YGnTMhH1OXokTvRTfTyXyMFo14Q&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=309.78)):

Well, we're very happy to have you back as well. Again for folks who may feel it was glossed over, you yourself we're an incredible student athlete here at Princeton, member of the men's track and field team, a captain. Can you talk a little bit about what that experience was like for you as a student and athlete?

John Mack (guest) ([05:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=C-WGNZ4KgExPQr6NVwXq_2v0s2WEw2EqPUs0vLwlQTPm-Y7Zu5Yjmw0f3uBcsSPeQcImZ-N1uxNReOVx37MuccJ6oWI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=327.18)):

For me, being a student athlete at Princeton, it was transformative and it really shaped my life. One from a standpoint, I'd never really thought about a school like Princeton. I was always a really good school student. School came easy. I was a good athlete in high school and my plan had been to go to the University of Michigan on a track scholarship. It was close to home and it seemed like the perfect fit.

([05:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=xe5K-xNTDb2C_nEbBxOLY4AJj5kCINoFqIApilTAImFBfwtAuXGdMYyEmxWHY4BG1E0SXLu5upv2JnqquwIKq3yCHTE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=352.17)):

Then my family and I came to visit Princeton and fell in love with the place, and really the people. Over the course of my four years, getting a chance to meet some of the best people in the world, to have a lot of success athletically, our teams were really fantastic and we won a lot of championships. I think most importantly for me, it was being at a place that really, really challenged me, sometimes in ways that I wasn't comfortable being challenged, but it ultimately made me a better person. I think that's what the college experience should do.

([06:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=wbeb0b5_WGgtU_C9457Lat-fSG9xilqVxSayAMxJd6ZvEXQm0ayg3cH4h7YPgwoVhw8Fyqpjf3_ro8h4RnLS1oBGpHM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=387.75)):

I tell student athletes, perspective student athletes, Princeton is designed to make you the best, most well-rounded version of yourself over the course of four years. I think that's, for me, what Princeton did, and I know for many others. So being able to, not just be on a team that was successful, but to lead, to have leadership responsibilities, I think it is one of the most impactful experiences that I've ever had. Being able to pull a group of individuals together for a common goal and talk about expectations and setting standards and really to learn leadership in a way that very few people get to do outside of the world of sports, was a really, really special thing for me.

Bryant (co-host) ([07:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=FJ6tLSX9nX-iEbkgHhrf9xCnd33GvusaQESas_GOlZvdHbrdFcrOsEec8l5zaHoLJwDiPh7igABUDFnBWvNP_AhcVLk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=431.76)):

You talk about impact, you're exactly right. The impact that Princeton has is even multiplied it seems in that athletic experience. Now that you yourself are in a position to more broadly impact the experience of well over a thousand students each year, what are the ways in which you see yourself being able to help advance that mission, that goal?

John Mack (guest) ([07:34](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=H6u9QgHpYKW0oNg9hJ7-uKzLKjayBnLcPWO-3aoTV87hCUNbRQrllFivaBCsVwsf4fs6Sc138ts9qcm3coVcqSKzlDE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=454.74)):

It's interesting. I've tried to spend a lot of time this year listening, student athletes to our coaches to alums. I spent the first two months, I think I met with every coach we have on staff to hear their perspective, hear about where things are, especially as we were coming off of a year of not competing. To me, I think the most important piece is trying to set the foundation and structure to maintain the long term success.

([08:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=pQtb0pjPllJ0BAWHa7TghRrmaiz8RW-pxL8fHqRkc4aID10X9m_H54SPfX0xee2Aq-d03y0qIuxYplVRz8ldzHvSDVo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=481.95)):

That's first and foremost, investing in our coaches and making sure that we are attracting and hiring the right kind of people to lead our programs, because at the end of the day, our coaches are on the front line. They are our first line of defense for the student athlete experience and coaches attract student athletes who are like them, in terms of character and perspective.

([08:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=TQwFW6IrTz92nQC7EjvF8stNohb3w6Dm-oY9ATWcBU9JVXLFYckmtUvO37p8r0ToJ1_aP3jJ0Kdr3lSoM1BhgiYO5aE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=506.91)):

Then it's really listening and trying to develop ways to give student athletes a voice into their experience. One of the things that I was hoping to do this past year that I didn't to do as much of is just having student athlete round tables, to give them a chance to come and sit and talk to me to share their experience, good, bad, and in between. I really feel like I owe that to them.

([08:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Tv6Ni0tb8Qi_Q6aUDHZ0gJFjORbAa-HEaPwf8TWirBPF14I17E8XvUnLwVxcKTk3EBN3oTqz1Pte0OCQSSLMiSPjSXQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=532.74)):

Then the last piece I think is really creating opportunities for student athletes to engage with our alumni. To me, the thing that sets us apart as an athletic department from other institutions in the country is we have, what I believe is, the most passionate, most supportive alumni base in the country.

([09:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=w8C7l8T4vMwYSgHAX5f97Hb0qzBr9e2cOOlUc7kQWml3yhfm-ZIrZm-7Ko1UEEoGQZPco-lDxc7r6UfYEZS4DTa0AdA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=556.02)):

When you can plug student athletes, and students at large ,into the larger Princeton community, beyond their team, beyond their dorm, beyond their acapella group, but when they can understand the full scope of what Princeton offers, the alumni network, the people who have been there before and will open doors for you and we'll answer phone calls, it gives you such a different sense of belonging at the place, that you fit into this broader network.

([09:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=dPi2qCyFKV1N44JOCqlyv9T7N5fi4gdi9esonYy8GiIQ85yqEIPwX3R_vbwizeYIwVd5Xy9aV4yFa6849ujNaPqT8o8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=583.14)):

So when I can give student athletes the opportunity to develop those kinds of relationships, I think it has just such a profound impact, on not just their four year Princeton experience, but they're lifelong Princeton experience as well.

Bryant (co-host) ([09:56](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=yskhZwY6pIqh58QZo9UutbIi2AAxZVyssXOnTjblJN9zK2DutIb7xawAr65d36YqFsRSOH1DL4dScs3JOkKT-zbbN8I&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=596.25)):

So you said something there I think is really important and special about Princeton. You mentioned yourself the University of Michigan, Princeton is not in the ways people think of it, a "athletic powerhouse". Yet, the success of the programs, and I think like you said, the engagement around it, what would you say is special about athletics that is in some ways even more infused in the Princeton community than in other places, the Floridas, the Texases, those types of big flagship institutions?

John Mack (guest) ([10:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=zQ0to0k3Txb49yGiiHJJB2MbuGC1esvjiQsid_VwtaNddc0HJHwXdf6SQ_Z7PZrZDOl6CY4VKZTPdddUSzbzk1X-eJs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=624.39)):

I think more and more students across the country are looking at places that really offer a well-rounded student experience in the ways that we do here at Princeton. So it's athletically, it's academically, it's socially. Our student athletes aren't segmented to an athlete's dorm or segmented to an athlete's training table. Your athletics experience is a sub part of your overall undergraduate experience. I think that is one of the key things that sets us apart. When you can look at the four year experience and then see the alums who have gone on to have incredible success in every career field, it just speaks volumes about the opportunities that being a student athlete at Princeton presents.

Bryant (co-host) ([11:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=qtUCgmVa68F_jykxLHWlT1tGUhFS3rWbDabg4uKcL17jco-YJKpCj95iuGtYSlIf-X_PxSEH8o4Vf5GdVXln2Jvw_E4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=669.42)):

Thank you. If people are hearing this and are, again, hopefully also thinking about the opportunities that to compete here or to be a student here, what would you say is the simplest or first step to exploring that interest?

John Mack (guest) ([11:22](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=LXJaL2q5-4mudVg0sZj5K3sOrzN3ctLmcwJ-FAOZXSZjT_puDHWNtYFcn_BaXCUY8ckbJHwSt68Npf2S2dSOjJge078&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=682.92)):

I think reaching out to the coaches depending upon what sport you have an interest in. Go to our website, goprincetontigers.com, and email our coaches or follow any of our teams on social media and reach out. Let them know who you are, where you are. Our coaches could give the best advice in terms of what the process looks like, in terms of what they're looking for in student athletes. Then each team and each coach has a different set of priorities and guidelines that they follow.

([11:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=DIKod7T8djlLhPuhqIlvNM3mQMZD2MED4OSKWe7rWY2N87F7IGaeRnXwEm76wbE7Fy_z7VcJPmkPQZi7GI6lpEHwb90&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=717.6)):

All of them, first and foremost are going to be looking at the student and then the person. Who you are as an athlete is at best the third most important part of the equation. You have to be someone who can not only get in academically, but who our coaches and the admissions office believe can thrive academically. Also personally, you have to fit within our team's cultures and philosophies and values. So reaching out to the coaches and the programs directly is the best way to start that process.

Bryant (co-host) ([12:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=iCpZFRDuydSxEq1efUyYdyr19BtR0_oRP7F979QSJIs1joyBtPiJGPEQ1wD5YKy3ZPRXiFh8CMMNgdPA294wSs9Uk1g&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=753.69)):

Maybe one last thing, a little more personal. As you said your wife, a Princetonian, and I know you have a family. What are you looking forward to of bringing them to this year? What sort of events would you like to attend as a family?

John Mack (guest) ([12:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=u7gq7HZUSCo01Kin8upWhZZfYhipSwFXGx2K2ec0PNd8rxuO5tythe2wTuQGGy7iXIDX2lEnZvsKpojxfPcprfL_iQQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=765.96)):

I'm looking forward to more of the non-athletic engagement this year. My kids, my wife, they jumped in with both feet in terms of the athletic engagement, softball, football, soccer, all the outdoor sports especially. What I'm looking forward to is some of the more traditional Princeton experiences, Triangle Show or different student group events on campus.

([13:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=35rWz6VrF1LsB-y6qh4FQtMXBQh0f7ZSjTpJSii0HkGWX35Uv8HMhnnMoMJs0WszXCIVfVGNDMm3vyf0EmyapMUG3jg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=796.08)):

One of the things that I try to remind people is that my job is not just overseeing varsity athletics, but it's recreation club sports, intramurals. So trying to engage all of our undergraduate students in meaningful ways. Wanting to go and take my family to dinner in the dining hall every so often to just get a chance to meet a lot of our non-varsity student athletes is something that I hope to be able to do during the upcoming year.

Bryant (co-host) ([13:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ivkE6KIq-zbYOhdB1rishAGUrKSiEltewbxzPBUnRy_Jtc4qDwJr9BDBcF2BhEVs-0pTCFE3_ltTnW1DOz31UwRTLIY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=823.65)):

Well, that's great, john. As you said, again, you're in a position to lead and the way that you're leading is I think the way that you envision Princeton Athletics. Again, its students and it's coaches engaging in this great community as it has since you were a student athlete, but even more so going forward. So thank you so much for joining us on the podcast and sharing your vision, your values, and obviously your time. So terrific as always, and we'll talk soon.

John Mack (guest) ([14:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=sAqI6sd5Hz6E9VlaMcsIfMh-kkgS1Jrich1V_IkbtFmaZyvamsUd52kSmqJkUEoLyYj3zPtEm50Wo9DbqbVAazfQpOQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=848.64)):

My pleasure. Thanks so much, Bryant.

Vivian (host) ([14:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=nH_2WFfZkcnThkoOGjXo2V9nQx5oqmkctMsIdiRcbuCNj4zIAjXiHbGLf186aBgpS-ORV5U1sO8j6olT8N_8tyIbvTc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=860.31)):

Well, I hope you enjoyed Bryant and Director Mack's conversation and learned a bit about athletics at Princeton. If you'd like to learn more, you can tune in to part two of athletics in our next episode, where we meet with a student athlete and learn what it's like to play a sport and be a student at Princeton all at the same time and everything in between. For a lot more information about sports at Princeton, check out our athletics website, goprincetontigers.com. That's all one word, goprincetontigers.com.

([14:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=DO5CUYZ2SHWh_EzzUHYc514BUmWHnxF2CgjWkA6bj7trLZRosWg-8q2REynYBWKodyMzBMma8vq28_y-N7ygSjHcxsA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=894.72)):

Meet Princeton's audio engineer is Nick Donnoli of Orangebox Pictures. Mary Buckley and I, Vivian Slee, are executive producers. Bryant Blunt is our co-host and consultant. Original music was composed by Molly Truman from the class of 2024. A big thank you especially to our listeners for tuning in. We hope you'll join us next time on Meet Princeton.

Speaker 5 ([15:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=8Jw6CTeDlClK33ywWMAzX-L20edhi7OedXOiYYoTwYxMW-IpZYtgwYfRo_GWap1FhBqXLWia3j2DTtbaFABxolSIRvQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=916.92)):

It's angled up the ice and out to center. Could be a two on one the other way, brought along by Ian Murphy. Shoots, save, and rebound score. It's Liam Gorman again and it's two, nothing, Princeton. A shorty.

Speaker 1 ([15:31](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Bd18MXl5QzzI0U14rkjPkuAcNdtgursGMCS8fuHVksHLzTcIaChpAdkh45__h0ZuHpsfdPn-1VXdgNgNw76R9iqPcno&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=931.29)):

Unbelievable, with just counter attack there. It seemed Harvard was on their heels when they were at the point as it got turned around. Here on the two on one, smart play, getting a net, and getting it in the pads.

Speaker 6 ([15:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=2BzRy0ZEfdHdC6gVKVz1XUkB0gYyLT1NKmlkxX4CkYW2SReFeoDyfk5nDRT4itzmKqNUqiY9HK51DQub3z7E2rNTX58&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=942.03)):

Evbuomwan gets to the lane. Allocco, three. That's good. Matt Allocco drops the three and it's 44-42, Tigers out in front by a pair.