

Comet Alumni Spotlight

James Hedges

St. Thomas Class of 1999



Educational Background: We moved around a lot as a family early in my life, and initially moved to Peoria where I was first enrolled at STS in 4th grade. After another brief stint back in the suburbs of Chicago, we came back to Peoria where I was once again a proud Comet from 6th - 8th grade. After my time at STS, I spent 4 great years at PND from 1999-2003. Upon graduation from PND, I didn't venture too far from home, and went on to be a student-athlete at Bradley University where I majored in Risk Management and competed in soccer for the Braves.

Family: My wife Jenny and I have been married since 2015 and have been blessed with 2 amazing little boys, Jackson (4) and Charlie (18 months). After spending the last 15 years away from Peoria, we moved our family back to "P-town" in the summer of 2022 to start the next chapter and raise our family. We couldn't be more thrilled to be back, and so proud to now have Jackson as a member of the STS family in Mrs. Tamburro's Pre-3 class. Full circle!

Recent Achievements: 2022 marked my 15th work anniversary with Stryker. I feel fortunate to have spent my entire professional career with a company that is driven to make a positive impact on healthcare and improve the lives of patients all over the world with life changing technology.

Favorite experience as a St. Thomas Comet: While my time at STS was somewhat short, I developed so many lasting friendships during my years there that I still carry with me to this day. My favorite experience though was playing in the parochial soccer championship under the lights at PND. Those teams and early years of playing soccer taught me the importance of teamwork and commitment, and further instilled a love for the game that would become an integral part of my life and that I still play to this day.

St. Thomas teacher who made an impact on you: Shout out to all the great teachers at STS, but I've got to give it up to my 8th grade teacher, Mrs. Crawmer. Having grown up and being great friends with her son, Wes, it was truly special (and fun!) to be able to have her as a teacher. She always got the best out of us and made sure we were prepared for the next chapter.

Piece of advice for current Comets: A few things I've learned along the way that I'd share:

- There's a lot out of your control, but you can control your effort and your attitude. You'll be surprised how far that can take you.
- Don't sweat the small stuff!
- Take your responsibilities seriously, but don't take yourself too seriously.
- Take chances and get outside your comfort zone!
- Be proud of where you're from!
- Be nice to your parents!