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Prescott Is The Man In The Hub

By Mike DiMauro

Published on 4/29/2008

Andy Prescott once had a job over which most twentysomething men - thirtysomething, fortysomething and fiftysomething, too - would salivate: marketing manager for Anheuser Busch.

"I would go into bars with \$10,000 of the company's money and buy everybody a beer," Prescott said.

(Yes, it's a real job.)

(Yes, he gave it up.)

("Why?" you shriek.)

(Read on.)

Prescott decided to forego a life of beer not long ago to, well, ride bicycles around Boston, the place where most motorists are meaner than senior citizens who have to wait in line.

Prescott, Waterford High Class of 1994, doesn't work for The Man anymore. He is The Man. He owns his own company, Urban Adventours, an eco-friendly bicycle tour company that zips around Boston every day, including daily tours to Fenway Park.

How's he doing?

"It's great. Absolutely great," Prescott was saying by phone recently. "It's not providing a whole hell of a lot of sleep, but this is my baby."

Prescott, who played football for Dave Sousa at Waterford, graduated from Wesleyan in 1998. On his way to running his new business, he moved to Raleigh "and had a lot of fun when UConn won the national championship."

Moved to Boston in 2000 and was importing designer Italian furniture. Then he was an accountant for an urban clothing company. Then he did some marketing work for Cointreau (a liqueur) and Napster. Then came the Anheuser Busch job.

"We had an open tab every time we walked in somewhere," Prescott said. "I was 28. I quit for health reasons. I mean, do you know what that's like, every night? Then getting up the next day to give bike tours? Do you know what it's like managing 15 people whose job it is to schmooze at bars?"

Between the accounting, importing and marketing, Prescott's passion for cycling swelled. It began earnestly in 2004 when Prescott's \$140 tax return was enough to start the company. Now he gives two tours every day and has a staff of guides who live in the city. You want Bunker Hill, the Old North Church and Faneuil Hall? You call Andy.

”When I was working for major companies, it was right about the time of Enron,” Prescott said. “It just got me to thinking. I thought there was a place for Urban Adventours because I lived in Copenhagen once where the bikes are more common than cars.”

But Boston?

”The more cars the better. The more people who see us become aware of it,” Prescott said. “We’re busier than ever. Plus, we’re eco-friendly. Bikes are good in a major city.” Prescott remembers his days at Waterford fondly, even though he experienced some personal tumult. Andy Dousis, who later won a state championship at East Lyme, coached Prescott on the Waterford freshman team. The two have remained friends.

”I like stories about kids who struggled and have made turnarounds,” Dousis said. “I told him once to take a lap with the team. He refused and then told me to do something that was physically impossible. I told him to turn in his uniform.

”Then Monday,” Dousis said, “he’s back. Why did I let him back? Because he’s a kid. I saw a lot of me in him. We’re friends to this day.”

Funny, too, how one of Prescott’s foundations for his business was his time on the football field. Maybe all these people who think athletics are overvalued or superfluous should quit parking diagonally in a parallel universe.

”Coach Dousis inspired me to keep pushing. Not a lot of other people ever did that,” Prescott said. “I miss those days. Fighting the fight with the guys. I loved coach Sousa. Coach (Rik) Little. They weren’t just good coaches. They were good teachers. If it wasn’t for them, I wouldn’t have gone to Wesleyan.”

Prescott’s dream is to establish a “bike station” in the city: a place to ride your bike into Boston, park it, shower, go to work and then ride home.

”Having no places to park or shower is mainly why people don’t commute with their bikes,” he said.

Meantime, you can learn more about Prescott’s business at urbanadventours.com or at 800-979-3370. Andy Prescott says there’s no better way to go to Fenway or see the city.

He’s had every other job in it.

He’d know.

This is the opinion of Day sports columnist Mike DiMauro. He may be reached at m.dimauro@theday.com or 701-4391.