

122. Malcolm Butler: It's the People

Gavin Kelly

Hey, everybody you're listening to Beyond 1894, this is the official podcast of Louisiana Tech University. I am Gavin Kelly with the Office of University Communications, and our guest for this episode is Malcolm Butler. He is the current voice of the Bulldogs here at Louisiana Tech, and he's got quite a history with Louisiana Tech athletics, with Louisiana Tech in general, and that's kind of the reason I had him on the podcast, I asked him to come and talk about his tech story. Malcolm, I would say, I guess, in terms of my career here at Louisiana Tech, we do go way back. I think when I started in athletics, you were there in athletics. But I think to say we go way back is not fair, because I think you and Tech go way back. So I appreciate you being here today, and we're going to get into your story. But first of all, thanks for being here.

Malcolm Butler

Well, thanks for having for having me. It's a real pleasure. And anytime I can talk about Louisiana Tech, you know, I love it.

Gavin Kelly

Yeah. And again, that's one of the reasons I think that it makes sense to have you on. Let's start from the start. I think you could probably talk all day about your affinity for Louisiana Tech, and that's a good thing. So take us back to the beginning, and we're going to kind of walk up through your sort of personal and professional history here and start from the beginning and let us know.

Malcolm Butler

Yeah, you know, I have to think back to what the beginning was to be honest. You know, my dad taught math here for almost 40 years. My grandfather was the head of the zoology department in the 70s. So I grew up on Louisiana Tech. I can remember as a seven, eight year old in the summertime, my dad bringing me up to his office over at GTM, and I would be roller skating through the hallway and roller skating out in the quad. And so, you know, that's probably my earliest memory of the campus. You know, my my love for the athletic side of things started probably late 70s, listening to Dave Nitz on radio. I don't know why I got hooked, but I got hooked. I loved athletics. Went to my first Louisiana Tech sporting event. It was a homecoming football game in 1979 over at Joe I stadium, and for some reason, my dad decided it would be a good idea to sit on the student side, and by the time I got home, I'm running around the house chanting, go to hell. USL, go to hell. USL, my mom wasn't overly pleased about that, but I was hooked from that point forward. And you know, I was probably the only 11 year old 12, I guess would have been 1212, year old in Ruston, Louisiana, that asked for season tickets for the lady textures and the Bulldogs basketball when the Thomas assembly center opened and I got them. So again, you know, I've got so many great memories, but you know, I was a die hard when it came to listen to Dave nets. It didn't matter whether it was football, men's or women's basketball, baseball, when he was on a klpi way back when, if the Bulldogs were playing and I couldn't go, I was listening on the radio,

Gavin Kelly

So did that kind of cement in your mind that you were going to be a part of the quote, unquote, Tech family one day. Or did that sort of just the pieces fall into place for you as you, as you went along.

Malcolm Butler

You know, I think I don't know when it cemented it, but I can tell you that when I was in high school, there was no doubt two things, I was going to go to college, education was a priority in my family, and there was no doubt I was going to go to Louisiana Tech, and it wasn't because my family asked me to. I was I was just I was in love with the university and the athletic side of things, and so I remember fill out the A C T, you had to fill out three schools where you wanted your A C T school scores to go to. And I only wanted to put Louisiana Tech, but they forced me to put two others. I can't remember. It might have been like Ole Miss and USC. I just picked two random schools, but I knew all along that I was going to be a Bulldog.

Gavin Kelly

Did you know right away what you were going to study? Or was that something?

Malcolm Butler

No, no, no. I went through a few different things. I started out in chemical engineering. Did that my freshman year. Did fine in the classes, but I was like, you know, I don't think this is what I want to do. And so I moved to math education. My dad was a math teacher. My mom was a high school math teacher. I did that for a couple of quarters, and then thought, you know, this is not really what I wanted to do either, and I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. And my dad, that's when my dad suggested that I go over and meet Wiley Hilbert. I didn't know Wiley. He was really good friends with my dad, but I went over and I met him. Of course, anybody who knows Wiley knows what a interesting character that man was. And you know, so I made the decision to go into journalism. Wiley then sent me over to meet Keith Prince, over in athletics. I didn't even know what sports information was. I didn't know it existed. But when I went over and I talked to Keith and I was like, You gotta be kidding me. There's a job where you get paid to do what you do. So I started working as a student worker for Keith Prince over in the SID office in the early 90s, and I did that for. For two or three years while I was also on the tech talk. And just the kind of the combination of those things kind of taught me what was out there. I got to experience it. And, you know, I was already passionate about Louisiana Tech I was already passionate about athletics. And so it came in, kind of gave me an idea. Got my degree in journalism. I was the sports editor the tech talk for a couple of quarters. My last quarter, I was the editor of The Tech Talk, and so yeah, now I didn't go directly into Sid work. When I graduated, I worked for over at Barksdale Air Force Base for a year. I moved to Dallas for a year. That was only time I didn't live in Ruston, Louisiana, and then I moved back. Coached high school basketball for a couple of years, and just couldn't figure out what it was I wanted to do. Gavin, I think a lot of people, when they graduate, that happens to them. And I remember one day I picked up the phone and I called gene Moore, who was the administrative assistant over the SID department when I was a student worker. This was five, six years later, this was 90 this was 99 and I said, Hey, Gene, I just want to get my foot back in the door, and y'all have GA intern. I don't care. I just want to get back in. And the timing was perfect. Both the head and the assistant at the time had both taken jobs elsewhere. And so I got my resume together,

and I went over and I gave it to Jim Oakes. I didn't know Jim very well at the time. I knew his name because he was the ad at Louisiana Tech. And Jim made some phone calls to Dr Renaud and to Wiley Hobart and people who did know me, and he basically hired to be me, to be the assistant. He was going to find somebody with more experience to be the head, which, again, I just wanted my foot in the door. I was thrilled. This was in July of 99 Well, the 99 football season was timber taste senior year. You know, we went to Alabama and beat Alabama. That was my fourth game to ever be an Sid. I was down in the end zone when, you know, Stallworth found canalosi, and we got basically all through that football season, got ranked in the top 25 in the country, and it was basically me, and I had an intern that was helping me, and by November, Jim called me in and said, You know what, you've proven that you can handle this. I'm going to promote you and let you be the head of the department. We'll find you an assistant. And the rest is kind of history

Gavin Kelly

It was. It sounds like you kind of made me always knew it was you were going to find your way. I mean, you said, you know, like going to Dallas, trying other things, but knowing that you wanted to get back to tech, it seems like you were willing to do whatever it takes. I thinking about kind of the time that you've had here, and this is maybe a little early for a retrospective question like this, but thinking about what you've seen here and the teams that you've been a part of, and then the players you've gotten to watch. I get this a little bit too in terms of, on a much smaller scale, I think, you know, I'm a Tech graduate, and then I've worked in athletics for just a one full year, and here and there since then. But, you know, multiply that by whatever factor, and in terms of being personally attached to tech athletics and having your own personal feelings, because, you know, athletics is very up and down. It doesn't matter what year it is, who's playing, what season it is, it's very up and down. And if you're personally invested, there's a part of you that's always personally invested, even when it's your professional duty to treat it with some sort of professionalism and to be there through ups and downs. So I guess my question is, what has it been like balancing that over multiple decades to take your love and your passion for tech even when you know it's a roller coaster of things?

Malcolm Butler

Yeah, no, roller coaster is what athletics is, right? There's no doubt about it. And you know, I had opportunities during my first, you know, 15 years here to go other places, probably make more money, probably have less stress. You know, I had an opportunity to go to Georgia. I had an opportunity to go to Texas, A and M, and honestly, never really seriously considered it, because I knew that those would be jobs where this is more of a passion for me. You know, there was not. There were. There are plenty of tough days. I mean, we had plenty of times where, you know, there may be a period wasn't just wasn't fun, and maybe it wasn't because we weren't winning. Maybe something happened, right? We've had student athletes who've passed away, different things like that, but it was always, I never woke up and didn't want to go into the office. And the great thing about what I did is no one day was ever the same. It's, you know, athletics is probably the best reality TV show out there, and so I got to live that for, you know, 23 years as the SID, and now another three on top of that, doing what I do now. So, you know, it's always been, it's it's it never dulled. You know, when I decided three years ago that it was time to quote, unquote, give part of that up, I had always told myself that I was never going to get to the point that I stayed. Be too long, yeah. And, you know, things changed. Gavin all the time, right? When I started, there was no such thing as social media, right? There was no tweeting, there was no

Facebook, there was no Instagram, all these things that are so big a part of athletics now in our society, weren't around. And, you know, when I decided a few years ago, and I may be jumping the gun here, but to give it up, it was just, you know, the time was right for me, and I knew I wasn't going to completely splinter from athletics. You know, Dr Wood, Eric wood, was kind enough to think a little bit outside the box when Dave Nitz retired, and I kind of approached him about my desire and what I wanted to do. And so, you know, I've been very fortunate. I've had a lot of people in my you know, that have supported me and have been willing to kind of think outside the box. Ryan Ivy's the same way, and I could go on and on and people I want to thank, but yeah, I knew it was I knew it was time, but I also knew I wasn't going cold turkey, sure that I was going to be still involved enough that I still would have a part in tech athletics.

Gavin Kelly

And I think you bring up an interesting point about just the athletics, collegiate athletics as an industry. You know, you mentioned some words like stressful, and alluded to pay and things like that. And that's not just a problem. Here. It's, I mean, it's nationwide, and I think every year that goes by, there's been more and more transparency with that sort of thing. And it's a it is a stressful and sort of unique environment to work in. And I think you risks, kind of like the quote, unquote youth coming up into the industry, getting burnt out quickly and becoming jaded and kind of losing, like a passion and a love for athletics. And so when you risk doing that, you kind of risk having people who love sports working in sports. So that's again, one reason why I wanted to talk to you about it is because you managed to keep up your love for tech athletics even through, you know, the trials and tribulations of a job, of a career. But like you said, you didn't quit cold turkey. Talk to me about the idea behind transitioning from sports information and an administrative career in the athletics department to a to a broadcasting side of things.

Malcolm Butler

Sure. Well, you know, when my first year back in 99 I handled Women's Basketball was one of my sports and Leon bar Moore was the head coach, that program was still top five in the country, competing for national championships. And my first year, a guy named Lanny James, who people who have lived around here a long time are probably familiar with. He used to do sports over at canoe for for decades. Lanny was doing the radio broadcast my first year, and my first game was at Tennessee against against the Lady Vols, and Lanny asked us, me to sit by him and help him keep some stats and so forth. And about halfway through the game, he puts a headset on me, just so I can listen. And next game, he asked me to sit by him. And probably by the third game, he starts asking me questions on the air. And so, you know, over the course of the season, I turned into basically his color animal, right into which was a lot of fun for me, and, you know, really pretty easy, to be honest, because I'd grown up playing basketball. I loved basketball. I knew the program I had coached high school basketball, so I felt like I knew the game. And, you know, the players in and out, because you're sitting there, you know, I know him firsthand, and so, you know, it was kind of kind of a perfect little role for me in game. And again, in game, I'm not having a tweet, I'm not having to do all these other things, you know, cut highlights and post them on Facebook and all that, because that didn't exist. Going about a week before the next year started, would have been my second year. I remember Jim Oakes called me into his office, and he said, Hey, it's not going to work out with Lanny this year. So you're going to do the play by play for the lady textures. And I'm sure my my face had to been, I mean, you got to be kidding

me, I'm going to do what? Yeah. And I remember Wiley Hilburn when I told him, saying, you realize what a huge opportunity this is for you. I mean, this is so good for your career. And I didn't realize it at the time, and I would love to have a copy of my first broadcast that I did by myself, gavid, because I'm sure it was hideous. I remember being so stressed out. Yeah, how do you not have nerves about well, and the stressful part was not the end game. I felt like when the game was being played, that was the easy part. It was filling a 30 minute pre game show. It's still in 15 minutes. You don't want to there, right? And now it's easy, right? It's like riding a bike. I've done it so many times, most of the time I don't have enough time on my pre game show, but back then, trying to fill that was was pretty demanding and stressful. And so anyhow, you know, we went up to West Lafayette, Indiana, and we were playing in the preseason W and I T and we were playing, gosh, who did we play Virginia in our in our semifinal game? Well, we were the second game, and Purdue was playing, I think it was, might have been Texas in the game right before ours. And I have a 30 minute pre game show, and they're going to put 30 minutes on the clock in between the two games. So I've got to time it up, right? So I'm talking to the engineer back at the studio, and with about 30 seconds left in that game, I said, right, let's go. Let's go. So they rolled the intro and I start the pre game. Sure enough, that thing goes double overtime in front of me. And so all sudden, that 30 minute pre game that I'm already stressed about trying to fill becomes an hour because as all these time outs are calling in the overtimes, I'm grabbing anybody I can to come on the air with me and talk. But the game was an unbelievable game. Amber obazi Hit the game weather winner with about 20 seconds to play. And I remember going back to the hotel, and back then the lady textures had a tremendous following on the road. You know, people would travel with us. And I remember Miss Kim Tanner catching me as I was walking through the hallway, and she said, Everybody's talking about you. And I said, Oh my gosh. What did I do? Miss Kim? She said, No, you did such an unbelievable job. I'm getting all these phone calls. And coach barmore caught me and told me how Miss Rachel loved listening to me, and that really just kind of solidified that, you know what, I can do this. And so anyhow, I got to do the women for 20 some odd years before I transitioned over when Dave decided to step away from football and men's basketball.

Gavin Kelly

And I'm guessing that's not something you had to ask to do every year. I mean, like you didn't have to, because, again, you're balancing that with eventually full time Sid duties and then administrative, you know, associate, senior, associate, ad type roles, and then on top of that, broadcasting. And it's not as simple as go to the games and do the calls you're traveling, you're doing all this stuff. So was, I mean, I'm guessing, to you, it wasn't just another thing to have to balance. You were doing it because you enjoyed it. But what was it like trying to, again, balance that on top of the rest of your full time job?

Malcolm Butler

Sure, it got it got more demanding again, as all of a sudden, Twitter and all that came into reality and there's more to do. It was definitely a passion. It was one of the more fun parts of my job. And you're right, I didn't you know it was when Jim Oakes was the ad, it was just understood. And then, you know, Derek Dooley was the ad, and it was understood. Now, when Derek was here, it was a little bit more demanding, because, you know, Derek was demanding, but, and then you got in, and it just was part of it and evolved. And there was never a question about it. And so, but yes, it definitely became, I mean, towards the tail end of my, you know, career, when I was the SID, doing that part, I'd be sitting there broadcasting, I had my laptop open, I'd be tweeting updates and so forth during my 62nd commercial

breaks. You know, I'm trying to take photos with my phone. And, I mean, there was a lot going on, and I learned how to multitask while I was calling the ball games. Now, I was not nearly as good on the social media part, because there's only so much I could do. But yeah, it became more more and more demanding the more that the profession evolved.

Gavin Kelly

Yeah, the social media part became its own full time thing. You got to dedicate time and effort to it, or people can see it. It's not, doesn't have time and effort behind it, and it's unfair to ask anybody to have to essentially manage a game, do a broadcast, keep stats or whatever, and also do social. It's tough. It's tough. I also so it the lady texters having a soft spot for the lady textures basketball team makes sense. That's kind of your origin story on the broadcast side. I know you've also grown close to the softball program here at Louisiana Tech. Talk about that, and kind of how you became attached to that

Malcolm Butler

Sure. I started working with the softball program probably my third or fourth year, just as the SID right. And in 2008 the conference tournament was out in Honolulu, Hawaii. We were in the whack Hawaii was in our league, and so I talked to Jim Oakes before we went out. There, we were the four seed. Nothing was expected. The top three seeds were all ranked in the top 25 in the country, and we had not fared well against them in the regular season. But I said, Hey, what do I go out there and do? It's a brought radio broadcast. And so we talked to Gary McKinney at the radio station and and kind of got the air time, and we went out there, and that team proceeded to win four games by one run over those top 25 teams in four straight days, and when the in the window wack title. And so, you know, I was that pretty much sold me. Went to Texas, Texas A and M College Station for the regional beat Auburn, a couple of talk times, eventually lost to am, who was the national runner up. But that's when, really, when my, my love for that program, really intensified. And, you know, I would travel with them when I could. And do may not be on the radio, but I would do an audio broadcast where people could go online and listen to it, and it just kind of evolved. And, you know, at the at the end of the day, Gavin, it's always, it's always been about the people. Yeah, right. I mean, you can talk about the teams and you can talk about tech, but what is tech? Tech? It's the people, right? It's the Gavin Kelly's of the world. It's the Leon Barmores of the world. It's all those student athletes that I dealt with, and that's who, that's who you really developed the relationship with, and that's when I think back about some of my favorite memories, regardless of what sport, it always goes to the student athletes and the coaches and those people that you got to deal with.

Gavin Kelly

And most of the time it's probably. Stuff that as not on the court or the field or whatever. Again, in my limited experience, though, I think back to 2019 I think back to 2018 19, the tornado season. I think about softball. I think about us having to go to U, L, M and use their field to play those games, and then pulling through and winning those last few and then coming through in the commerce tournament. And I just think about, like, that's the kind of stuff you don't plan for. Obviously, you don't think about how you would handle that situation. And then it takes a village to pull through when it comes when it comes time. So also, sort of thinking about the evolution of athletics during your career, you've mentioned things like social media, changing the game, sort of for sports information. But then also, I think even just in the last few years, broadcasting has changed. I think you look at ESPN, sort of gunning for every

game everywhere is always somewhere, streaming somewhere. Streaming has changed everything. So kind of, I guess, looking towards the future and looking at the idea, knowing that the goal is to have essentially every tech sport with broadcasted games broadcasted everywhere, all the time. What does that sort of do for you in terms of thinking about your career as a broadcaster and your ties to Louisiana Tech?

Malcolm Butler

Sure, yeah, you know, I can remember when we started late Tech TV, it was kind of an in house video stream where they would, you know, pipe in the radio broadcast, and we do it for home games. And it was, it was, it was better than nothing at the time, right? And there was a lot of work to try to make sure it worked. But it was, it was so basic, and we've come a long way with that. You know, we had LATech TV, and then we had us ATV once we got onto the conference, and now we've moved on to ESPN plus and so, yeah, you know, you know, I've made the decision, and starting next year, I'm going to move over to the ESPN plus side. I knew they wanted to bring that stuff in house. They've been kind of outsourcing it with a third party. They've been bringing in some great announcers like Linda Rollins and Chris mykoski and some different people to do these games. But, you know, Ryan Ivey and Kyle Kavanaugh and the administration over there wanted to bring all this in house, and so they've hired the appropriate people when it comes to being able to produce these. And so back in the fall, you know, I approached Kyle Kavanaugh first and said, Hey, before you guys make some definitive decisions on who going to do these I'd like to have a conversation about me possibly transitioning from radio over to ESPN. Plus, I've gotten to travel for 26 years, and it's been an unbelievable I've gotten to see some unbelievable things, go to unbelievable places, with some unbelievable people. But, you know, both my parents are 85 years old, and me getting off the road is probably the best thing for me right now. And so anyhow, talked to Kyle. Ryan Ivey brought me in and said, hey, you know, I want to talk to you about this. I know, Kyle, you've expressed this to Kyle, I want to ask you, what do you want to do? Do you want to stay with radio? Do you want to do this? And so they gave me a little bit of time to think about it, which I did. And so I made the decision that it was just time for me to move over the ESPN plus side, and I'm looking forward to it. I've been doing softball on ESPN plus did my first two basketball games with the women's nit with Teddy here recently, and it's a transition. Yeah, that's what the people don't under people, most people don't understand, because Gavin, when you're on the radio, you have to tell them every pass that's made, right and every shot that goes up, yeah, they're not seeing it right? You are their eyes. But when you're the the announcers on a television broadcast, they're seeing it. So you don't have to tell them every pass that's made or every pitch that's thrown or whatever. So trying to find that fine line, and doing it with baseball and softball has been pretty easy. It was, it was a real challenge when I did those two basketball games, and I've watched a lot of college basketball games on TV and ESPN plus. And you know, the different announcers are all over the place. Some of them do a lot of play by play. Some of them hardly do any. I want to fall right in that middle area, and I still got to get comfortable with that. I felt like game two of the W n, it was a lot better than game one for me, because I had one under my belt. But it is a transition, and it's going to it's going to take me a while to kind of get my rhythm, but I'm looking forward to it again. I continue my connection with Louisiana Tech and and it does get me off the road.

Gavin Kelly

And I think a credit, it's a credit to you too, or an indication of, you know, the administration's faith in you, that they asked you what you want to do. I think you've earned, you know, this, you've been here for whatever, many years. You've earned the right to decide at these kinds of crossroads where you want to take your career. Also, it's interesting hearing you talk about, kind of trying to find the right way to go about a visual broadcast, a visual stream, because you think about, you know, commentators every you know, teams got their own at every level of a sport, collegiate, professional, there's home commentators, and you know, some of them are. They sound a certain way or have a certain personality, and some of them are really robotic and straightforward. And, you know, it's, it's, there's no right answer, you know, and you got to do what feels comfortable and what kind of fits the brand. So it's interesting to hear you talk about kind of finding that fit

Malcolm Butler

well. And the other, the other part is, you know, when I'm, I'm Louisiana Tech's, a radio announcer, you're gonna know, you're gonna know who I'm pulling for, right? There's no doubt, you know, I'm a 9010 guy when it comes to the radio, but on ESPN plus, and I've had this conversation with Ryan and Kyle over there to say, okay, you know, what is yours desire? Because you've got to be a little bit more. It doesn't mean you have to be 5050, down, down the middle. And you're not going to be I understand, you know, who my alma mater is. I understand who's paying me all those things. But instead of it being 9010 you want to find more of that 6040, split. And so trying to do that as well will be a little bit of a transition.

Gavin Kelly

But I mean, as with anything else, it kind of just is something you've experienced in your career. You've had to deal with a lot of transitions and a lot of evolutions that, I guess, that happens over a long career no matter what. But I think in an industry like this that's prone to sort of really fast and sometimes maybe a little scary shifts in its evolution, it's, it's a, again, a testament to kind of you being able to stick with it over so much time. I'm going to ask you maybe a loaded question here at the end, but maybe you've been asked this before, and I've had time to think about it. Maybe I should have told you to think about it before we got started, but you've been a part of Louisiana Tech athletics for a long time. We know, we know that talking to you today, but if I asked you about moments, you know special moments may be the most impactful to you personally, maybe not the most known. It's up to you how you decide to break these down. And maybe it's your number one moment. If you have one, maybe it's a top three. And you don't have to put them in any order. I don't want to make this at least a doable question for you, but tell me about some moments you've seen over your time here at Louisiana Tech that have stuck with you to this day.

Malcolm Butler

Sure, and you know, I have been asked that, and I thought through that. And, man, you know, if I really sat down and thought I could probably give you a top 100, I just been so many of them, right that have been unbelievable. And, you know, the top ones are things like, you know, beating Alabama, right stall worth the cansal, UC, I mean, and again, that was my, you know, first four months on the job, I got to witness that that was an Alabama team that went on to win the SEC that year. So, you know, that one stands out, you know, I think about, you know, I had the opportunity to call some elite eight games with the women's basketball team, right? And I had some unbelievable wins, you know, Amber obazi hitting

a 40 footer to beat Penn State and snapped their 20 something game home winning streak way back when, been a lot of conference championship games that I got to experience with that program. You know, you mentioned 19 with the softball team. I mean, I already mentioned oh eight and what that team did out in Hawaii, that 19 season. I mean, it's, it's up there because of, again, what, what we all went through, right? I mean, that was such a surreal, surreal day. And you know, one thing a lot of people don't know is I was, I was literally the first one to the athletic facility after that tornado hit. I had woken up that that night, my phone woke me up because it was giving me alert. I heard the sirens. I usually ignore all that stuff. I didn't that day, that that night, and I got on my phone, on Facebook, see, and somebody said, Hey, there's a tree down over on the Tech campus. And I was awake, so I put my border collie in my jeep. I started this way. I live on the north side of I 20. And as I got to the chevron at the top of tech drive, you know, lights were off and everything. And I came over the hill by the alumni stadium. There's this huge mass of concrete in the road, and I'm like, What is this? Course, electricity is also it's hard to see anything from there. And so I slowly go around it, and I get down here to the intersection, and that's when I first could start to make some stuff out and see that the damage that was done. And I pulled into the softball parking lot, I immediately called Adam McGirt, who was the head of facilities at the time, and I tried to explain to him on the phone what I was seeing. He was and I said, I think we need to call Tommy. Said, Well, why don't we wait till the morning? I said, Adam, I'm not doing a very good job of explaining what I'm seeing. I said, Let me send you, let me send you some photos. And so I sent him some photos. He called me right back. He said, I just called Tommy. Blah Blah. Blah, blah. And, you know, within 3045, minutes, students had come out. There were people everywhere, but, but that, what that 19 team? Did you know that was three days before, two days before senior weekend? You mentioned we went over to Monroe. We were taking on Western Kentucky, who was in first place at the time. You know, swept them in three games. I remember Mark Montgomery telling the media afterwards, he said, I still get emotional about it. It's crazy. He said, You know, we could have beaten Oklahoma today. Yeah. You know, that's how much passion those kids played with. And that team has a special place in the heart, as you can tell. But just those are the type of moments. There's things. I can still that I think about, when I start talking about, I tear up about, because, again, it's been my life and all these people that have been a part of it, you know, I've got all these wonderful memories. And so, again, it's hard to point out one. There's a few of them right there. Gavin, if I really thought about it, I could come up with a ton of them. But, yeah, there's been some special times, yeah.

Gavin Kelly

And I think you know you still got, clearly, some career left, and there's probably special moments ahead. But I think asking anybody who's been here, as long as you have to kind of look back and reflect, is always insightful. And I appreciate you sharing those memories with us. I appreciate you coming on the podcast today and talking about your career. I always enjoy getting a chance to talk with you, and I'm glad that, you know, for my, my first job, real job out of college was in the athletics department here. And, you know, personnel come and go. That's just the nature of college athletics. But I am glad that I was a part of a team that had you on it at the time. And, yeah, Malcolm, just appreciate your time today.

Malcolm Butler

Well, I appreciate it again. I'm a crier, unfortunately, sometimes, but no, there's been, again, there's been a lot of special people. I mean, Mary Kay hungates, been there the whole time, you know, Ed

Jackson, people like that. I got to Gary Stanley was there for so long. There's just been so many people that have been a part of it, and so many people you know that I'm thankful for Coach barmore and so forth that really helped shape my career.

Gavin Kelly

Well, thank you. And hey, go dogs.

Malcolm Butler

Go Dogs.

Gavin Kelly

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