

140. Kyle Schassburger: Voice of the Bulldogs

Gavin Kelly

Hey, everybody you're listening to beyond 1894 this is the official podcast of Louisiana Tech University. My name is Gavin Kelly from the Office of University Communications, and I think we're going to call this a crossover, a collab episode, maybe because our guest for this episode is Mr. Kyle Schassburger, joining us from Learfield, working with Louisiana Tech athletics. But kind of specifically for this episode, he is also the voice of the tech drive podcast, but maybe even larger than that, the voice of the Bulldogs pretty fresh here at Louisiana Tech as of this athletic season, but we're going to get into that also between the two of us. Nary a hair on ahead to be seen. But Kyle, thank you for making time for us in a busy season. We're here at the time of recording, kind of at the tail end of the regular season of football, basketball kicking off. It's, it is technically still crossover season. So again, thanks for making time for us, and thanks for being here, man, it's good

Kyle Schassburger

to see you. Yeah, absolutely. Gavin, a couple of bald heads. We're each wearing glasses today, so I understood the assignment. It's beautiful to be back in Wiley tower. My second visit here, Teddy gave me the rounds, I think, earlier when I got here over the summer. But a special place, good view out the window. I could see my office right over your left shoulder.

Gavin Kelly

Talk before we get into kind of your personal background and your your your history a little bit, talk to us about kind of where we're at. Sports wise for you, because you know your your your job is very demanding in the sense of that you're the voice of the Bulldogs. That means a lot of things. So talk to us about kind of what your schedule is like and what your your your job is like right now.

Kyle Schassburger

Sure, well, we've just made it through November, the crossover season, as you've already demonstrated, your knowledge of the hectic nature of what that month is. So, you know, balancing football and basketball and getting through that month and getting pulled in so many different directions, it's the beauty of the job. It's what you sign up for. It's part of the dream that I've had since a very young age, you know, when I pursued this, this profession, in this industry, and I am fulfilling a dream. And I know we'll talk more about that, but, you know, we're preparing right now for the independence ball. You know, Tech has one more football game here at months and right after Christmas, which will be great. You know, it's, it's close, it's right down the road in Shreveport. But, you know, should have a good fan contingency there, and that'll create, you know, some complications with scheduling. For me, again, kind of a re introduction to the crossover, because we play a basketball game open conference play on December 29 against UTEP. So I'll be calling that game and then getting on the road and heading to Shreveport right after. And then you have a football game on the 30th, on Tuesday, one o'clock 1130 our network coverage with our tech tailgate along the network and the late tech athletics app and New Year's Day. We'll be traveling to Middle Tennessee, state with with

basketball. So it'll be the first conference road swing where you're on the road for a couple of games at MTSU and then Western Kentucky on January 2 and January 4. But to this point, it's, it's been incredible. You know, football, you're, you're drinking out of a fire hose, whatever it is, yeah, whenever you're starting something new. And, you know, while I have, you know, worked my whole life to be here, still being the guy and trying to understand the beats, the rhythms, the processes, the everything that goes into a football, you know, preparation process, it's a research project. So just when you feel like you're more comfortable, as the month turned to October, before you know it, you're preparing for basketball, and then you don't have time to really understand what is going on, except being ready, understanding what sport you're calling and just preparing relentlessly for that moment. So we've made it through November. We've survived little sleep, plenty of caffeine. We're here today, and it's a little bit of a slower week. You and I talking here, so it's refreshing.

Gavin Kelly

Yeah, good. And then, you know, the holidays will be here, and then it won't be too long before it's spring crossover season, which is its home beast. And that's always because the thing about fall crossover, you know, you think about football, soccer, basketball, you know, those fall sports moving into the winter sports, but the spring sports, it's because there are so many of the basketball schedules, so many games, and then baseball and softball play a ton of games, so

Kyle Schassburger

and that's something we're working through now and figuring out that complex schedule. Yes, we call, you know, Kyle Roberts stepped in for a couple of basketball games for me in November, when we had road games for football at Delaware and at Washington State, which the that travel alone, you know, will will knock you senseless if you really think deeply about it, and then weaving in a trip to Reno, Nevada, you know, right before the trip to Delaware for basketball. But yeah, trying to map out that's kind of part of what December is for me, looking deeply at those schedules, seeing how maybe we can implement a SAM Newcomb, who's the voice of the lady textures, which was a big charge of mine since showing up on campus and identifying a new. Person to take over on the radio side for Brook stores crew, as Kyle transitioned to ESPN and the television production. So trying to map that out, because I might miss like 15 of the first 20 baseball games. Yeah, you know, based on, you know, you have four baseball games a week, and then, you know, basketball is priority. So that's part of what December will be.

Gavin Kelly

Well, you've alluded to having a passion for this or that. You got to love doing it, to do it, you know. And I think that goes for any job in college athletics. Obviously it goes for student athletes, but you think about the people behind the scenes that work to make seasons possible and to represent the brand and but to put on productions for the sports that our student athletes play. You have to have a passion for it. That's got to come from somewhere for you. So, so walk us back as far as you need to to kind of talk about how this life came about for you.

Kyle Schassburger

Yeah, it's, it's an obsession. It's sometimes unhealthy. But hey, that's, that's what makes you who you are. And if you're going to climb that mountain top, which this has become that for me, Louisiana, tech,

you never knew what the end destination would be, or or how you would fulfill your dream job, but, but it starts at a very young age and and for me, it was just, you know, being consumed as an athlete as a kid, and playing sports and and doing all of all the things necessary athletically to try and carve out what I thought would be a major league baseball career. Okay? And then you learn by the time you're a sophomore in high school, 15 or so, that that's not a realistic thing for yourself. So it was a humbling experience. As you kind of look around, you see more athletically gifted people. Where was high school? High school was Marion Catholic High School, Chicago High School. So I'm from the south suburbs of Chicago. I attended Western Illinois University, but, you know, it was a moment. It was an inflection point of kind of pivoting and knowing that, hey, I'm a guy that loves watching sports. I grew up idolizing, not knowing necessarily that it would lead me down this career path, but watching guys like Dan Patrick on SportsCenter and listening to certain announcers a professional sports scene in Chicagoland more than anything you know, with the bulls and the Blackhawks and the bears. And I'm a Cubs guy, even though I'm from the south side, not necessarily indicative of your your fan affiliation, but listening to those you know pro play by play, guys from Pat Hughes with the Cubs. And I grew up more with Chuck swerski, where I can really understand him calling bulls games throughout high school and into college, and kind of love grew, you know, there was no social media, there was only newspapers. So like when you would go to a game in person as a kid, you would love to get in front of that TV set and watch baseball tonight and watch SportsCenter and ESPN. You know, before what ESPN has become today, where it's, you know, less highlights and less analysis, and it's more, you know, conjecture and conversation that I'm not really as interested in anymore. But hey, there's a lot of different mediums out there for you, but you understand and realize, like, Hey, I love doing like, what do I need to do to maybe be one of these people? And in high school, you took a couple communication courses or mass media type things that kind of give you some background and introduction into it, and I didn't really do anything like hands on in high school. We didn't offer anything from a broadcast standpoint. Looking back, I wish I had thought of that, because, you know, maybe I could have implemented something, you know, with football and basketball, but I was also playing, you know, baseball and I played volleyball for a year, and I played football my freshman year. Tried again junior year, but I quit. It's one of my biggest regrets in life, we can come back to that at another time. I was soft, right? It's, it's a, it's a great example of what a lot of kids, I think, in high school, you know, they kind of, they don't realize what they have, and they think practice is too hard, but it's helping to mold you for life after and you got to be tough and you got to be hard. And I think, I think, in a way, me even quitting football as an athlete in high school and going all in on baseball, but knowing there was nothing beyond high school, unless maybe I chose a small a small school, I almost feel like I've tried to overcompensate in my life for not allowing myself to quit or give up on something that's too hard. And I'm workshopping this in real time, but it makes perfect sense, like over the course of my life, when I decided to go to Western Illinois University and pursue broadcasting, because I was jazzed up that they had a program, they had opportunities for students, you know, student radio, student TV, and there could even be a chance down the line where I could go on the road and call some games. And I didn't know what exactly that entailed, but that's what ended up happening, you know, from being a flagship play by play guy for men's basketball, and being on the road my junior and senior season, and developing those relationships with the team and the coaches and telling those stories. And that's where I knew over my junior and senior year in school, that this is what I want to do. I want to be the voice of an institution, of a university, to be the mouthpiece, to be on the front porch. And it took a long, winding road, you know, since then, since graduation in 2011 I worked as a news anchor reporter for a

year, and then took a flyer on moving out to North Carolina and working for img college at the time, which merged with Learfield, who I'm employed by now. So I've been a part of the. Company since, since 2012 and took 13 years, you know, to get here, to get to the pinnacle, yeah, if you will, of where I am today.

Gavin Kelly

So to be the voice of somewhere, you have to have a voice, right? So being able to have a, I guess, kind of a distinct way of speaking, and a distinct tone and a clear, and, you know, a voice that can be loud when it needs to be, be calm when it needs to be. What I'm getting at is, have you, did you know early on that you would align with this career path because you have a voice that can, that can follow into this this realm? Or have you worked over the years to kind of hone in what your voice sounds like on radio and on broadcasting?

Kyle Schassburger

I think it just kind of naturally or instinctively happened. I haven't. It's not like I took, you know, some rigorous inventory of how I sound. There's ways in the way I've listened back to things. And certainly, if you were to find some college tapes of me, I'd be like, dang, I really sound like that. It just, it's a maturation process, and it comes with reps. It comes with your comfort level and the confidence that you have within yourself, you know, to be able to perform the job. So, you know, articulating certain things and having the confidence to demonstrate a certain knowledge of whatever the content material is, of the sport of the players, of the knowledge, all of that helps you, in a way, to sit down and call a game. As you know, each and every game that I call is my Super Bowl. That's the fun part. Yes, Teddy Allen reminds me, you get paid for everything else. The games are for free. And he couldn't be more accurate in that, especially as I'm in month number six here on this job, and it's been a whirlwind, and it's been beautiful, but there's so many other things that go into the director of broadcasting, part of it, but to be the voice, and to have this responsibility to be able to provide stories and to speak in a way where you're bringing things to life, which is the beauty of radio and audio. You know, for me, it's the theater of mind. For me, it was never to answer the question. It was never really how I sounded. It was more so okay. How can I describe things differently? What is my word economy? What is my pacing? You know, am I going too fast? I can guarantee you that debut that I had against southeastern on August 30, I was talking way too fast because I was jazzed up just to be there. Yeah, it was, it was an illuminating moment, a flashpoint in my life. And over the last couple of months, you've developed that comfort that you know, you've had, because I've called plenty of games before as a fill in or doing national radio for the SEC and ACC and you know, but football was one kind of thing that was absent on my resume, games that mattered on a Saturday, that people are listening to. So I had to go out and work on the craft, you know, and set up mock broadcasts and get a spare booth, if possible, or be on a camera well, in Chapel Hill, you know, doing a North Carolina, Georgia Tech game that nobody's listening to, but it's for my own edification and for me to go back and listen and see how I sound, and hopefully be able to carve out a stretch that can be used when ever the moment came, I was ready, you know, to lay down some tape for someone that they can hear. The unique thing about all of this is every broadcaster has such a unique sound. And while I don't put a lot of stock into how I sound, I know it is my identity, but what I lean more into than anything is just energy, enthusiasm, passion, preparation, and I know the rest of it will take care of itself. 30 years from now, we might look back and be like, okay, he sounded pretty good, you know, like he did have a distinctive sound. I'm still so young

in my career, at 37 in year one here, like it's the least of my concerns. I just want to make sure I'm trying to get better every single broadcast and every single day, and be grateful and be where my feet are.

Gavin Kelly

Very nice, very nice. Yeah, talking to you about anything, about your job right now, it's easy to see that you've bought in to Louisiana Tech. And I love on this podcast, being able to talk to people who are Louisiana Tech lifers, who grew up in Ruston, who have 123, degrees from Louisiana Tech, who are able to talk about their last 2030, years here. But I'm also interested to talk to people who, quote, unquote, are outsiders that come in and then discover a passion for this place and for the people. And so my question is, what has it been like integrating yourself into Louisiana Tech, into Ruston? What about the culture here. What about the athletics here? Has you fired up like you could talk to you now, look at you. Now you're always repping the brand. How'd that happen for you, and why is that important for you to do? Why was that something you felt the need to do coming in? Because you know you could just as easily. You might be the home caller, right? You might be the voice of the Bulldogs, but you you don't have to buy in. To it as hard as you have. So why have you

Kyle Schassburger

done that? Well, I think it's the person and the people that I'm following and the history of this position, you know, Dave Netz being here for 50 years, and then Malcolm Butler coming in and keeping, you know, tabs on that position in a exemplary way for for a few seasons. So it's helped pave the way for me to get this opportunity in a place where radio is valued and the sound and the person who is calling these games is incredibly respected. And knowing Dave Nitz and what he has meant to this university, I may not fully ever understand the scope of of his footing in this community, and that's what it is. It's more than a university, it's a community, yeah, but to try and respect the past and what he did and who he was, and knowing, look, nobody's ever going to be another. Dave Netz, there's no shoes that can be filled but to come in and be my own guy. Respect him, respect the people that you know certainly think so highly of him. He's been the one defining, you know, voice for so long, for generations. And knowing that, and coming in and taking this position, I just felt like I had to work incredibly hard to gain a certain level of acceptance or loyalty, show a certain level of loyalty, not that I need personally that sort of affirmation. I mean, look, I'm from Chicago, like, I really don't care what people think about me. I put on my blinders, and I control what I can control, and I try to be the best version of myself every single day that I wake up. But I think it speaks to the seriousness of what this job and everything I've worked for to get to this position, to know a guy like Dave Nitz was here, and I want to pull all the right levers in the community, not just in calling games and providing content, but I want to be visible. I want to be front facing, you know, I want to be somebody that can immerse himself in every bit of what rust and Louisiana and northern Louisiana is. So, yeah, I've attacked it from that angle. And hopefully, you know, people have, it's been good reviews to this point. Like, I appreciate all the people that have reached out and the nice messages and notes and social media things and emails and things in person. I mean, it has been overwhelming at times, but still, like, you can't get complacent. Like that doesn't make that shouldn't make me feel comfortable. You know, with where I'm at. This is month number six for me, of what I hope will be, you know, a long journey in being here and helping to grow the brand and being the mouthpiece on the front porch of the athletics department, the university, in many ways, as athlete, athletics is so, yeah, with that said, the people have been, have been incredible.

I mean, it's been everything I thought it would be, and so much more. I mean, you never could have, y'all have a TJ Maxx and an Old Navy. I mean, that speaks to, like, I didn't understand how much actually was here, just in terms of, like, storefronts and businesses. But that feeds into a bigger picture and narrative about the quality of people and individuals that I feel like many people outside this region just write off. They're like, Oh, that's Rustin, you know. Like, yeah, there's nothing there. And believe me, I had plenty of people telling me that as I went through this three month job process, I didn't care, like, if that was true, which I didn't believe it to be true. It was a matter of, hey, I'm gonna come here and I'm gonna be a part of something special, a majestic place, a university and a community tethered together, and I'm gonna do what I can to, you know, transition in, and the folks here have just pulled on my heartstrings in every way, and I've loved every second of it. Yeah.

Gavin Kelly

I mean, there are plenty of ways that it could be a culture shock. I mean, you've been around the country a little bit, but coming from a metro area, you know, Chicago to a place like Rustin. It's probably night and day in a lot of ways, but you can choose to, I guess, be a victim of that, or you can choose to buy in. And so that's why I ask, because it's easy to see that you've bought in. Makes me think too. Do you enjoy more of a sort of national, neutral type of broadcast, where you have to kind of call the game more neutral. Or do you like being a homer a little bit more?

Kyle Schassburger

Definitely being a homer. Yeah, it makes it easier to on, on the prep in terms of, like, for example, an opponent in basketball like UL Lafayette, right. Okay. Do you think I need to really prepare all this nitty gritty background on every single person on their team. Do I need to know their team the way that I know my own team? Do I need to know Coastal Carolina and the independence bowl the way that I know Louisiana Tech? Absolutely not so like, selfishly, it's kind of a little bit easier from that regard, not that I'm looking for the easy way out, but that allows me more time and bandwidth to pour into our teams, into our university, into our storylines, and to help, you know, weave and spin those, those webs of stories, you know, for each and every one of our individuals and student athletes and coaches so but it allows me, I think, too, to for that energy and enthusiasm and that passion you know, to really come through you. In a multitude of different ways. Whereas, I guess in a national, and I've done plenty of them, like I said, sec ACC, National Tournament stuff, type stuff and Hoover, with baseball, women's basketball and things both for the SEC and the ACC. But you might have opportunities to get up for both sides, so you might have more, I guess, boisterous calls or high energy type moments, especially if it's, you know, a slug fest where haymakers are getting exchanged back and forth, and it's it's down to the wire. But I also appreciate, while I want tech to win every single game, yeah, if things do not go our way, I actually enjoy and relish, in a weird way, being able to capture kind of that, that sorrow or that disdain for what just

Gavin Kelly

happened, it makes you relatable to the listener, yes, yeah, yes, yeah.

Kyle Schassburger

So for me, like my big thing is, if we're getting blown out, heaven forbid, I shouldn't be mailing it in, though, because I'm doing all of our listeners, consumers, of our product a disservice, right? And I'm

also disrespecting the profession that I've worked so hard, and all these other voices that have helped influence me and mentored me to get to this point like I would never mail it in. I'm also trying to sell it in a way of like being conversational, or the stories Teddy and I, you know, can tell during a football game, where maybe the score might get a little lopsided, or finding unique ways of how do we slide in this, this piece of information, even in a closely contested game. So like, there's always a creative challenge that you can bring upon yourself, especially if, if a game isn't going the way you would like. So but yeah, capturing that moment, good or bad, in a way that is relatable, that people can wear on their sleeves, and they know who you represent, and they knew, they know whose games you're calling. And I think that just comes again the incubation chamber that was a part of at Learfield, formerly img College in Winston, Salem where, you know, I manage six different networks I'm surrounded by, you know, 4045, different school broadcasts on a Saturday for football. You know, I have all these different touch points with all these different broadcasters all throughout the country, schools that are coming in our building, and we're bouncing it up to satellites. And, you know, I'm doing pre game, halftime, post game for Duke or a national college football broadcast, or filling in on broadcast, acts like I've I've been a part of probably 30 different school broadcasts over the last 12 years. In some way, I may be at the game, but I've produced. I've done on air, and just hearing all these different voices and the passion, that enthusiasm and that Homer, part of it is just what hooked me so much, and do I have more national things in my future? I don't know. I can't. I don't even know what I'm eating for dinner tonight, course. So, you know, we'll see. That would be cool at some point down the road. Maybe balance, you know, or half, but yeah, the local part of it, man enough. Nothing beats that, yeah.

Gavin Kelly

And you know, you think about game, ops, marketing, production, broadcasting, all the stuff that goes on, off the field, the court, off the playing surface. We talked about how people kind of don't realize a lot of times what goes into that. It takes a village all that stuff. And you can plan and prep and prepare as hard as a student athlete does for the game, but inevitably, the game is going to go differently than what you you plan on, whether a timeout comes at a time you don't expect it, or you're expected to improve or feel dead air, because dead air is a sin, right? So I guess over time, as you get used to filling in the gaps, the improv you have someone like Teddy Allen to your side is that can give you kind of something to play off of. What about those moments do you relish when you have an opportunity to kind of riff a little bit, go maybe off script, even though there's no script, you know what I mean, like, what about those moments where you're expected to sort of feel dead air? Do you enjoy that it

Kyle Schassburger

reveals personality and it humanizes you? Yeah, and to use the term you used about being relatable in the moment, or as it pertains to an outcome of a game, I think, being able to show personality and be able to chop it up organically with somebody over a certain topic or something that had happened, you know, that morning on the way to the stadium, or at night at when we're on the road, you know, before the big game. Elton Taylor, my engineer, has been an awesome, you know, co pilot as well, and Teddy and even Jerry Byrne, Benny Thorne were all part of the broadcast in the booth. Like all, all of those individuals have incredible stories themselves, and we have great interactions and some funny moments, you know, together that I think are worth breaking down a third wall at times, yeah, and kind of revealing, you know, how the sausage is made, or that we are human beings, and we're there to call a game, but it's inner it's entertainment. So how can we how can somebody who's maybe driving down

the road and is flipping through, you know, the radio dial and they hear our broadcast, not everybody is a sports fan, so how can I hook the non sports fan? You know, the somebody that isn't the typical, you know demographic of who is going to normally seek out our games or consume it. What can I do to grab you? And sometimes it's things away from the game like you don't know, like I would like to think my play by play and descriptions and pre formational stuff, and the way Teddy comes in, and the things that I obsess over, right on how to call the game and being on top of the moment are good enough and crisp enough, you know, for people to be locked in. But not everybody's a sports fan. So I think those moments are really good. And I try to go into every football game. And I think this started at LSU, definitely not week one. There was too many other things going on. Of course. It started at LSU, where I started, like a little, a little tab of just, just bullet pointed type things, kind of stream of consciousness, that stuff that is non football related, or could be but away from the game, right? And you just reference that, or you look at that in a break, and it's like, okay, I would love to get this in or this would be funny to talk about, but you have it kind of fresh in your mind, where, if you find the runway, if you find the off ramp at any point. Gotta be natural. Yeah? It naturally comes across. It's not force fed. And some people listening to this might, who listen to our broadcast a lot, they might say, Okay, you force fed some things at some point. I'm like, Yeah, in the fourth quarter, like we wanted to talk about. So maybe the game was over, yeah, at that point. So sometimes it is what it is. You can't avoid it. But I think that, again, just speaks to the comedic nature of Teddy Allen and whom he loves. It. It becomes a game like, what, what additional things can we get in and, you know, everybody on the cruise has been a lot of fun and and, yeah, it could be day to day stuff throughout the week, just relatable things and the fulfillment side. And I don't know if this is where you're going next, but you mentioned everything that goes into a broadcast. I mean, Learfield, my company, we're fulfillment company, right? Like we're, we're activating all of these assets, and we're trying to fulfill our partners who are so, you know, incredible and integral in what we do and certainly be being employed. So there are certain sponsor activations for things that I'm having to get through during the game, like live reads and things like that and and how can we make that kind of a part of the conversation where it's it's not just me reading off a card. That's something that we will continue to get better at each and every year. But, you know, at Missouri State, our last football game, I looked at Teddy and I'm like, All right, you know what time it is. So I read, I read a couple lines, and then I handed him the card, and he finished the live read. So it was like a little back and back, and we picked up on that. So another interesting element of, again, the creature that I am, when it comes to broadcast, I subjected Elton, Teddy, June Lee on our creative side, and drew parsley out of sports information. We took a 15 seat passenger van up to Springfield, Missouri. Okay, that's a great story in and of itself, right? Like just five, 615, seater, and we drive, we turn a six and a half hour drive into, like 745, I mean, we took three stops. We took our time, but I subjected those dudes to one hour of Chicago Bears pre game coverage on the radio, and the entire game against Philadelphia Eagles on Black Friday, and we listened to that whole thing. So Teddy, I'm I'm subjecting and forcing him to consume a pro broadcast of how things are done, right, and I'm taking all my mental notes. And Teddy heard how they did a live read, and he's like, we should do that. We should tag team a live read. I'm like, Teddy, that's beautiful, man. Thank you, thank you for contributing. Yeah, because I haven't asked No, I'm kidding, I haven't asked him to do much. Ongoing joke is, you know, he says to me, you're making me work too hard, like I'm doing too much here in this pre game show, because developing structure and content and discipline and all of those things has been part of my vision. And for pre game Teddy's like, you're making me work too hard. But he's speaking tongue in cheek,

because really, I've made things so easy for this man every step of the way because I wanted to be along. I wanted to be my partner for many years to come. Yeah, yeah, Teddy.

Gavin Kelly

Teddy's. Teddy's a beautiful guy you've named dropped so many people who have had episodes of this podcast before. So shameless plug. If you're listening, go back and look for guys like Teddy Elton, even who've been on this podcast and have shared their story. We've talked about the kind of the improv, unplanned side of it. You think about broadcasting. You think about people who love sports and who have calls in their head that they can think back to you personally. So a big catch that runs for a touchdown, a deep three pointer in the fourth quarter to take your first lead of the game, a walk off home run, like the calls that represent the pinnacle of those sports. What's your favorite type of call to make?

Kyle Schassburger

Well off the heels of football season, still with one game remaining and having a 12 game sample size, you know, nothing beats nothing beats a touchdown call. Now, did I put any thought into what that would become before the job started? Maybe, like five minutes? Sure, I didn't think too deeply, because you want this stuff to happen or. Organically, but you also pull and steal, if you will, or borrow things from all these other broadcasters, right? That's how we all operate in all of our lives. You're trying to take the best of who you interact with and consume things and learn from, and teachers, professors, co workers, whomever and you want to make it your own, though, right? So the whole Touchdown, touchdown tech, which has become something that I think I've leaned into more than anything on a touchdown call, was something that I had come up with going into Week One. I'm like, All right, I spent five minutes on this. I like this. Like this rolls off the tongue. It's quick, it's succinct, but it's also different. It's not what Dave Nitz did, it's not what Malcolm Butler did, is that a defining trademark type thing? I don't know. Only time will tell. I've also incorporated a ring the bell, you know, for the fire bell in Ruston. So you're trying to pay homage to, you know, certain characteristics of the community and the city. But you know, sometimes you just go off the beaten path, and it can be focused more on the player, like, there can be variants to it, and there should be, I don't want every call to sound the same, because no play is ever going to be the same. And like you talked about earlier, you know, going off script and a game can, you know, take a turn. That's the beauty of things, and being able to adapt and tell your story like no game is is the same at all. So you know your inflection point and your emotion, and you know the the moment of the game. You know how critical of a score was that at whatever stage of the game it is? I think back to the to the senior day win against against Liberty, yeah. 28 seven, yeah. I mean, I'd be lying if I, if I said Teddy and I didn't think we were in big trouble, yep. And then what happened? It turned and we had a 27 point come back, and we went in overtime. We had four interceptions in the second half. We rushed for 320, yards, whatever it was. I mean, Trey cuck, Andrew Burnett, they went off combined for five rushing scores on the day. I mean, it was, it was incredible. So, like, you had all these opportunities late in the second half, where, if you were to listen back like every single one of them sounded different. You know, I think now the biggest thing for me is like the change of possession that can happen, and when you force 20 plus turnovers, we did this year, seven defensive scores for a touchdown, it's being able to control your emotion in a way where you don't short circuit and just start screaming, okay, so there is an art to that. And like, Western Kentucky for me, if I'm being honest, on a Tuesday night, there was a moment or two where, like, I lost my cool because it was

like, holy moly. Like, what is going on? So it's like, when I do tape review and listen back, it's like, okay, this is how I need to do it, right? This is how I can kind of pull back and build up to that moment. But you don't want to have, you know, some sort of jarring reaction, right? Like, there's such an art to it. So like every game, every process, every opportunity where I turn on the mic, like it's it's an opportunity to get better. And there's a lot of self scouting involved with basketball. We're still, like, I've called a lot of basketball, you know, I'm still, I haven't implemented bang yet, right? Bang is my favorite three point. Yeah, Mike Breen, for that shout out, Mike Green, so, you know, I've stolen that, but you don't want to use all your bullets, you know, just because you can, yeah, you know, you've got to pick and gotta mean something. It's got to mean something. So I'm waiting for that moment. But I love to get in, like, a little whammy or kapow and stuff like, you know, downtown threes, you know, the dunk calls you want to get up for, in a way. But sometimes in a 40 point blowout, is it necessary to get up for, you know, dunk calls. I think of my good mentor, David. Chu made at Duke. Shout out to David. He's one of my biggest, you know, mentors, influences in life. Worked with him for so long, Director of broadcasting at Duke. We poke fun at him sometimes because it's Duke basketball. So like you are getting up, but like you're getting up for it constantly in a 60 point blowout, and it's like, all right, all right, you Yeah, he's not gonna listen to this, but I might share, actually snip this and share it to them. But that's great. So I'm trying to find the middle, the middle point, and then home runs. Like, we'll see. I got a couple ideas, you know, I've called enough baseball. So, like, it's not trying to be you don't want to try and be somebody you're not, you know, like, just, just trust who you are. I don't think it's any earth shattering stuff what I do. But, you know, there's one call I got to ask this on my interview, which I don't know if we have time talk about the part the interview process. Interview process, that was a that was a car wash of epic proportions when I came on campus at the end of May. But, you know, I didn't think of it in the moment, but I was asked, I think Kay McGuire asked me, What's, what's your favorite call that you've had to this point? And I gave him some like, ACC Women's Championship like Final call. But in all reality, it was calling Arkansas baseball as the second ranked team in the country at Auburn couple years ago, and they hit a home run the top of the ninth inning. Rider, hell Frick. Their their catcher, pulled it inside the line. And I said some of the effect of, you know, hell Frick likes his taters. Mash. Watched and it was just, it was amazing. It was awesome. So it's cool when you can own those moments. You don't want to make it about yourself. You want it to come organically. It's not like I had that scripted by any means, but I do plenty of word exercises and economy stuff to at least try to keep things kind of front of mind.

Gavin Kelly

Yeah, you are. You're clearly someone who cares about their craft, that much is very obvious talking to you here today, and you mentioned it earlier on, but not just someone who cares about their craft, but a student of the game, so to speak. And I'm asking you about favorite calls that you've made now, but I'd also like to know your favorite calls from somebody else, so that probably is something from your childhood, but doesn't have to be. So give me specifically great calls that have stuck with you your life, your whole life.

Kyle Schassburger

Well, I think Pat Hughes with Chicago Cubs, cubs have won the World Series. It's certainly one of the the greatest things that I'll always remember. And his home home run call is pretty it's pretty memorable. It's it's the same all the time for the most part, but it's got a chance gone, and just the way that Pat and his voice doesn't change, that's the thing. It's not like he's yelling and screaming. It's a it's

a crescendo, right? So, like that home run call always resonates with me, as far as you know, other big time calls, man, a lot of it. I don't know if it's so much moments, but it's just like we were talking about specific calls to touchdowns or moments of the game. Like, I think of Jeff Joniak, the play by play, Voice of the bears and and just he does like as part of his final call, like a Fade to black. And it's like a theatrical type thing, you know, when the bears get to I haven't used it at any point. That's actually one that, like, I feel like it's so distinctive that I need to wait a little bit, or I might incorporate such a thing. And maybe I have, and just don't recall. But no, I mean, of my, of my big, of the professional sports that I that I follow and fantasize over, you know, my Chicago teams that I've that I've rattled off already. I was too young to really appreciate what the bulls were. You know, I really was. I mean, in 90 in 98 that last title of the six with MJ and company, I would have been 10 years old, you know. So, like, I had a little bit more understanding at the time. But I also love the Charlotte Hornets because they had a cool logo. And a cool logo and cool colors, you know, as is often the case with kids, you know, college, you know, with college boards, I was connected to the Duke broadcast for eight years, yeah. So I was a part of some pretty, some pretty high level broadcasts for eight seasons, doing pre game, halftime, post game, producing and providing on air, you know, halftime stuff and scoring summaries and pregame stuff and just helping to fill in the gaps right? And Duke beat North Carolina on a tip in shot. And David shoemaid, who I've mentioned already, this was, I think this was right before covid happened. It would have been the 2020, season. So in like February, and shoe mates call, and he'll love this. I'll definitely send it to him. Something about the tip in and it was Wendell Moore, and he said he followed it up. It's a Duke Blue kind of night in Chapel Hill, you know, because it was at the Dean Dome. So, you know, stuff like that, the punctuation marks for a final call are always really good. I was part of a Vanderbilt national championship for baseball in 2019 I ran the board and did on air stuff for them out of Winston Salem. Vandy coming through the Winston Salem offices and being a part of that run Kumar rocker had sort of no hitter. I think it was 19 strikeouts against Duke in the Super Regional. So, you know, being a part of that, and listening to Joe Fisher at the time, the voice of the Commodores, you know, call that, and just, you know, throw a no hitter himself, you know, as a broadcaster like, that's, that's really cool. That's awesome. And to be a part of that title in a small way is certainly memorable. I have not. I have had a one hitter that I've called, it was a combined one hitter. Sometimes you don't even realize that that's going on. There's like, four or five pitchers that are out there, so he goes to do capital action State game for baseball. So I've covered, I've called a variety of different of teams and games and sports. I mean, I've even done this is getting away from your question. Now, I'm deflecting. You're good. I'm deflecting. But, uh, you know, this whole journey I've, I've had to do field hockey for Duke, lacrosse, for East Carolina, volleyball for East Carolina, baseball for ECU women's basketball, Duke women's soccer, field hockey, lacrosse. I mean, it's been a variety of different things, some high school football, you know, a time or two. But, and I've been a part of a lot, you never want to say, No, yeah, I want to say you're an opportunity. You never know what door that might open. Or you don't want to give somebody a reason to not come back and ask, you know, also for you to fill in and step in. And certainly, this company, Learfield, has provided me. Some, some tremendous opportunities throughout the year, and I'm just, I'm happy that I was able to make the most of them, and it's helped pave the path, you know, for me to be here, be here today. The best trip was the Bahamas, for obvious reasons. So I went with Arkan, Arkansas was one of my six, seven schools that I managed over the last handful years, and I did the battle for Atlantis tournament for them in men's basketball would have been 23 I think Eric musselman's final year and Yeah, three games at the Atlantis resort. It was incredible. I didn't know what to do with myself, other than just sit in my hotel room honestly and prepare relentlessly for

those three games. But I made it out to the water one time. It was after after the third game against North Carolina, you're playing in a ballroom, but, yeah, more work, not a lot of play on those type of trips. But that was still pretty cool to to get that opportunity. Lovely.

Gavin Kelly

Love here. Love hearing stories. Man. It's like I said, someone who's been to a lot of places and done a lot of things and is now calling Louisiana Tech home and has, like I said, bought in to being a bulldog, being the voice of the Bulldogs. I appreciate you sharing that story. We call this a collab and a crossover episode with tech drive. So real quick before we let you go do a quick plug for the tech drive podcast. You've had a couple pretty stellar guests on there recently. So talk to us a little bit about that, how you can listen how you can listen, how frequently it comes out,

Kyle Schassburger

that sort of thing. Yeah, every Wednesday we've been dropping this thing in video form on the late tech athletics YouTube channel, so you can find that there and then, whenever, wherever you get your audio podcast, Apple Spotify the like you'll see tech drive there also. So a couple of our most recent guests include Terry Bradshaw. Yeah, about an hour conversation with Terry, that was incredible. And then we've had Kate Gibson on recently, also Luke McCown and Lindsay McCaskill, our academic advisor, you know, lead one who runs point on making sure everybody gets academically straight and understands the assignment, if you will. She's one of our recent guests, and we'll have one. We'll have another new drop before Christmas with Brandon dooby, who is our equipment manager, and then we'll take a couple of weeks off. We'll repopulate the feed with some best of type content. The cool thing about tech drive, part of my vision, and coming in and being around about so many tremendous broadcasters, and being a DOB and helping implement structure, was we needed to resurrect the podcast feed, and we need to get more than just conversations on it. What are the content can we put on there? So Jerry bird, our sideline reporter, has contributed a interview with the tech, you know, Bulldog legend on the football side each and every week, for every game that goes up there, all of our coaches shows get archived up there, inside tech, basketball, most, most recently, with the football shows in the rear view mirror, so, and maybe some highlight recaps, you know, here, there. So there's a lot of opportunity with the podcast feed. You could find a variety of different things. And, yeah, I mean many thanks to, you know, I've name dropped a lot of folks, but you know, Brad Pete's and Sadie Patton and Paul Devlin my team at Louisiana Tech sports properties, they've, they've been an incredible family to me and talking about the community, and then welcoming in me in and and really just given me helping to give me, with Ryan Ivy, Director of Athletics, and everybody athletic at athletics, give me a blank canvas of sorts to kind of, you know, weave and paint my own picture. And do do this, this position, this university justice from a content standpoint. And you know, I will, I will stop at nothing and continuing to do that. And it's, it's been a real joy every step of the way to this point. Beautiful.

Gavin Kelly

Well, again, thanks for that. Thanks for not only sharing your story, but again, proving how committed you are to being a part of the Tech family. I know that you probably heard that phrase tossed around before you were even official here, but we talked about how I say it's, you know, it's, it has its uses in marketing. It's a marketing term, but people who exist within the Tech family know that it's more than

that, too. So again, thanks for that. Thanks for spending some time with us here in a rare moment of the year where you can catch your breath a little bit between all the athletic events.

Kyle Schassburger

Thank you for having the patience and sure and waiting me out when my schedule I completely understand. I do want to add when you reached out to me. This was back on Halloween. It was homecoming. I had my daughter in town. This speaks to how beautiful this community is she had the most amazing time. I mean, and my ex wife was down her mother, they couldn't believe the people of Rustin and Louisiana Tech. So I don't think there's, there's a better, there's a better way to to really communicate just how impactful this, this university, this community, has been to me to this point than the way you know my family felt when they came down for the first time and experienced Louisiana Tech. So for everyone consuming this podcast, thank you for that. That included the Terry Bradshaw podcast and kicks Brooks being in my booth for an entire third quarter calling a game against Sam Houston. But everything that went. On over those few days. It was just truly incredible. And I'm forever in debt to everybody here at this university and in this community for making them feel so much at home, lovely.

Gavin Kelly

It's a special place, and the people here know that. And then I'm sure you knew that before you got here, but now you really know that, and that's why it's good to have people like you who have a voice, who have the voice, and are out singing our praises on the radio, everyone you get the chance, but also doing the job, like I said, honing the craft, being a student of the game, that much is obvious. So I'm sure you've got lots of preparation, like you said, ready for the bowl game coming up. By the time this comes out, the bowl game will be in the rear view. Hopefully we've got a win to celebrate, but we'll see. So good luck with that. Eek, us out a win, if you can, please, shass, but thanks again for joining us on Beyond 1894 Thanks, Kyle, thank You.

Gavin Kelly

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