# LINCOLN LIFE

Spring 2022 - The Bridal Edition

Magazine



# Contents

- Language of Love
- **Latest Trends**
- 11 Guest Favors
- 12 Old, New, Borrowed, Blue
- 14 Bigger & Bolder
- 17 Registry Items
- **18** Fabulous Florals
- 21 The Perfect **Ending**

- **22** The Final Countdown
- 24 Calendar of **Events**
- **29 SPORT PERFORMANCE**
- 38 The Art of the Story
- 43 Life in the Kitchen

### **LINCOLN LIFE**

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### LINCOLN LIFE MAGAZINE

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- Unlikely Meeting Leads to True Romance -



Photos by CATHI COX-BONIOL

Cailee Fruge and Caleb Whitten's first date took place at The Depot during the pandemic shutdown. Because of COVID, their parents wouldn't allow them to go inside so they sat on the back porch and then in the parking lot on the hood of the car.

ometimes a mistaken identity isn't a bad thing. Just ask
Cailee Fruge and Caleb Whitten.
"Caleb came up behind me and went to punch me in the arm, thinking I was his first cousin,"
Fruge recalled. "Then I turned around and he found out I was not his cousin. I asked who he was

and proceeded to tell him that our relationship is now where if he punched me in the arm, I would punch back. That's where it all began."

That chance meeting in September of 2019 on the porch of Louisiana Tech University's Baptist Collegiate Ministry would blossom into a sweet friendship before launching into true love. While they wouldn't begin dating until April 2020, it didn't take long for the love bug to find them both.

"We had been dating for almost three months and I was telling my cousins about Caleb," Fruge explained. "I remember them

### Language of Love

asking me if I loved Caleb but I hid my face and asked them what that meant. After they explained to me what they viewed as love, I admitted what I already knew. I loved Caleb Ray Whitten."

Fruge said the words first. She will never forget the look of complete shock on his face when she said it and was relieved he said it back.

"One of the descriptions of love my cousin gave was, 'you cannot see life in the future without him,' 'you don't want to see life in the future without him,' or 'when you are with that person, you feel at home,' and all of that was true when thinking about Caleb Ray," Fruge admitted. "When I knew I loved him, I knew he was the boy I wanted to walk through life with forever."

Engaged since July 2021, the happy couple is set to wed this June. And Whitten made sure to start things off with an unforgettably romantic setting.

The couple was attending a wedding rehearsal where Whitten was slated to sing. Fruge detected a proposal might be in the air after Whitten spoke to her father. However, she anticipated it might come the day after the rehearsal was over.

"Caleb works at Common Goods in Ruston and we have gone on

countless dates there since they opened the doors in 2020," Fruge continued. "Before the rehearsal he said the owner had asked him to 'feed the bread starter' that night because she was out of town. I had no clue what that meant, so I just took him for his word."

When they pulled into the parking lot, Fruge saw a path of candles inside the doors. Initially, she thought someone else must be getting engaged but suddenly became very nervous and basically froze in the front seat of the car. Yet her beau remained calm and just said "well come on in" with a smile on his face.

"We walked in with a candle-lit walkway to the back of the coffee shop," Fruge reflected. "A friend came earlier and set up pictures of us all over the place. Caleb read me a sweet letter he had written then popped the question. Then after we had our moment, he called our families out of the kitchen to celebrate with us. It was all so surreal to me, and my heart couldn't contain the joy I felt."

Since that point, the couple has enjoyed preparing for their upcoming wedding scheduled for June in Amite City. Things seem to be right on track, beginning with the ring.

Fruge admits being all about simplicity. With the help of Ruston's National Jewelry, Whitten knocked it out of the park.

"Caleb chose the perfect ring," Fruge said. "A gold band with one oval diamond. I gave him some diamond stud earrings my grandmother had given me as a child and told him to use them as he wanted. He decided to put those small diamonds in a gold wedding band for me. And he wanted a gold band as well but more 'hipster' in style. So, we ended up getting him a band that has a squared edge and gold all around."

Rings would be just the beginning.

Thankfully, the bridal registry wasn't difficult and the couple managed to make it fun. They visited stores, scanning what they wanted onto their registry while settling on compromises along the way. The bridal showers and special events have also been stressfree since Fruge said "they're not picky if someone wants to throw a party."

The wedding colors and flowers were also surprisingly easy. Whitten's late mother's favorite flower was a lavender tulip and the magnolia flower is very significant in Fruge's family.



"

When I knew I loved him, I knew he was the boy I wanted to walk through life with forever.

- Cailee Fruge

"

Both Cailee and Caleb attend Temple Baptist Church where they share a heart for ministry and service.





Cailee and Caleb try on their rings designed by National Jewelry in Ruston.

6 | LINCOLN LIFE SPRING • 2022

### Language of Love

Therefore, the couple chose to use lavender, magnolia white and lots of green as the colors. The flower arrangements will include three lavender tulips for the Whitten siblings, magnolias, eucalyptus, and additional accents of green. There will also be gold accents throughout the wedding to match their cherished rings.

Then there was the dress. While details remain a secret because Whitten wants to be surprised, Fruge said the entire dress experience was perfect.

"Wedding dress shopping was beyond fun with my mom, Caleb's stepmom, Caleb's little sister, and my best friend," Fruge said. "That day was full of giggles, twirls, and me feeling like a little girl playing dress-up."

Her dreams continued to come true with the wedding venue. Admitting her eye had been on The Greenery forever, Fruge noted one of the couple's favorite experiences include going together to visit the beautiful venue following by food tasting afterward.

"That was one of our favorite days to soak in this special engagement season," Fruge effused. "It always seemed like a dream to get married in such a pretty place and now it's really happening."

The couple also reveled in asking friends to be part of the bridal party and experiencing their excitement as they prepared to be a part of the big day. Yet not everything would be so easy.

"One of the most challenging parts of wedding planning has been making a guest list with a limited number of guests," Fruge lamented. "Caleb and I both have bigger families as well as so many friends that we love. Creating a guest list within the standards of our budget and venue restrictions has been very difficult to do."

Thankfully, most parts of the planning have come easily for the young couple. Ruston's Clay Stone Photography will make sure everything about the wedding is memory perfect. Common Goods is taking care of the groom's cake and

### Language of Love

it will be Chantilly with no theme. And the bride's cake?

"Just like with my ring, I'm all about simplicity so the bride's cake will be simple as well," Fruge added. "White frosting with magnolia flowers and leaves on top and on one side of each tier, three tiers all one flavor. We'll decide the flavor later this spring."

While talking food, Fruge heads right down the comfort food column and said there's one thing for sure that will have to be on the reception menu — macaroni and cheese.

"Mac and cheese is Caleb's absolute favorite side dish to any entrée so that will definitely be on the menu," Fruge continued. "Plus one of our favorite meals to cook and eat together is chicken alfredo so that's also a must. It will be a buffet with fun foods like brisket bomb eggrolls, spinach and artichoke dip and some yummy mashed potatoes."

The honeymoon has also been planned and not only features a stay in Nashville, Tennessee, and a cabin in the mountains around Asheville, North Carolina, but also one of the couple's greatest passions — coffee.

"We absolutely love exploring and rating different coffee shops," Fruge said. "Since the beginning of our friendship, we have gone to coffee shops together and would read our Bibles, do schoolwork, or would just engage in conversation. Now when we go on trips, we always set aside time and money to visit a new coffee shop to rate their coffee, baked goods, and atmosphere.

"Our six-month date consisted of going to Baton Rouge and exploring three different coffee shops so why would the honeymoon be any different? We plan on visiting all the coffee shops and will probably go hiking but haven't really scheduled many outings," she said. "But we love to travel to new places and I'm sure we will just want to relax and be with each other."

With their faith in God guiding every step, ministry has been a tremendous part of the couple's lives since long before they met. They believe God placed two people with such opposite gifts together yet makes them work together so well. Whitten prays to be called by a church to lead worship while Fruge plans on a bi-vocational path, pairing a Physical Therapy Assistant job with ministry.

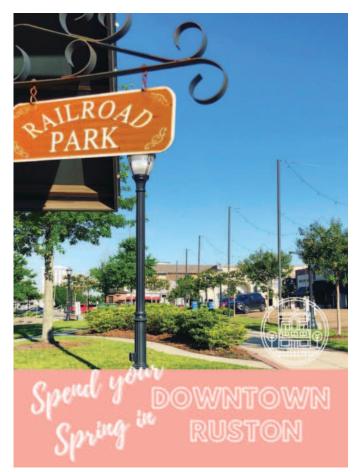
However, they see their individual ministries growing by being together. Confident in their journey just beginning, they have loved seeing God change things and make His plan known.

"It has always been my number one dream to be a husband," Whitten admitted. "So just the thought of being able to wake up and love the same person every single day is just really exciting."

Fruge said Whitten exceeds all the expectations she had as a little girl when dreaming about her "prince charming." She would just remind him of one important detail for their future together — not to forget drinking coffee together in the morning. After all, coffee seems to be an important part of their love language.









# Latest Trends

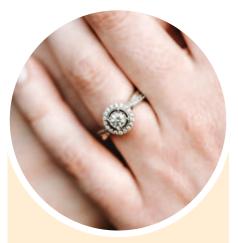
in engagement rings





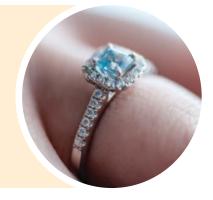
### Pure Pear

This year's hottest diamond shape is the pear. A pear diamond, the Gemological Institute of America says, consists of the head (the bottom), the shoulder (where it starts to move toward the point), the belly (the middle), the wing (as the diamond tapers) and the point. Gently rounded shoulders and wings makes for an elegant pear. Wings should form attractive arches so that the stone doesn't look too narrow or too short. Nevertheless, a pear shape represents uniqueness, making it the perfect choice for a one of a kind couple.



### Gem Dandy

More couples are ditching the traditional diamond for colored gemstones like sapphires, rubies and emeralds. Making the switch may get you a bigger stone for your money and speak to a couple that makes their own lane.

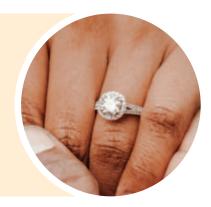


### Put a Halo on it

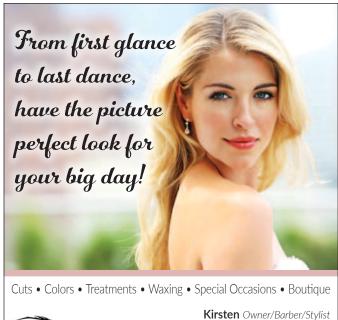
Halo effect rings have smaller diamonds ringing the center stone, often making it look larger than it is. Work with your jeweler to find the perfect diamond to accent this unique setting.

### Twice as Nice

If one giant diamond is good, two must be better. For the chicest of rocks, put two stones on one single band. Or, keep the single stone and choose a ring with a double band, lined in diamonds or not, your choice.









Maddie Barber/Stylist

Maddie Barber/Stylist

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Guest Favors

they'll continue to remember

edding favors let your guests know you care and provide them with a tangible memory of your big day.

Wedding website The Knot says the average cost of favors is about \$400, so it's not a small part of your budget, either. Here are some great ideas for showing your guests that they're your favorite on your wedding day.

### **#1** Tiny Tots

Find miniature bottles of liquor, wine or beer to give out to your guests. Look for a brand that comes from near the site of your wedding. You may even be able to order customized tags for your big day. Don't forget to offer a non-alcoholic option, too, for those who don't imbibe.

### #2 Drinkware

This category runs the gamut, but think along the lines of koozies if you live in a warmer area and have a list full of out outdoorsy guests. For more upscale venues and budgets, look for customizable shot glasses, mugs or julep cups. These are great ways to give a reusable gift that can remind your guests of your big day.

## #3 Customized Playing Cards

If you're friends and family never met a game they didn't like, customized playing cards may be an ace in the hole. You can get cards with pictures of you and your love through customization sites such as Shutterfly.

### #4 Live Plants

Setting an outdoor scene? Let your guests take some of the gorgeousness home with them in the form of live plants. That way, your love can grow in everyone's home. Look for succulents (trendy and easy to care for), seedling trees and more. Visit a local nursery for ideas on native plants that will do especially well in your climate.



Hitting the road for your I-dos is a lot of fun and gives you a great opportunity to select some amazing wedding favors.

You can choose to go the travel route and pick items like luggage tags, hand sanitizers or some travel snacks. Or you can choose items specific to your destination. Giving personalized jars of sunscreen out at a beach wedding or making bags filled with remedies for motion sickness like pain reliever or peppermints would be great for a cruise.

## Old, New, Borrowed, Blue

it's all about you

Tewelry is an integral part of your bridal ensemble, and not just your ring. There are several pieces to consider when shopping for your big day.

### Something New

If you were the kid who dreamt of becoming a princess on their big day, some of that dream can come true with a tiara. Pricing for tiaras have a rather large range, just like all other kinds of jewelry. They can be luxe or minimalist. This could be the perfect way to dress up a simple gown or take an extravagant gown to the next level. When choosing a tiara, keep your hairstyle and veil in mind. You may want to let your stylist know you're planning on wearing a tiara and have it on hand when you meet to do your hairstyle trials.

### Something Old

Whether you've decided to go with or without a tiara, you'll want your earrings to coordinate. This may be a great place to get your something old in.

Maybe a family member has a set of pearls, diamonds or other gems to match your ensemble. And, just like with the tiara, you'll want to coordinate your earrings with your hairdresser. This way you're able to show off those timeless, family studs or dangles.

### Something Borrowed

For your "something borrowed", make them the centerpiece of your jewelry ensemble to show your appreciation to the friend or family member who lent you them. It's perfectly acceptable to mix your metals and gemstones, so don't be afraid to make your look your own if you're worried your borrowed, new and old pieces won't match. If a piece is being given to you, not just loaned for the big day, maybe work with a jeweler to remake it into a piece you really love.

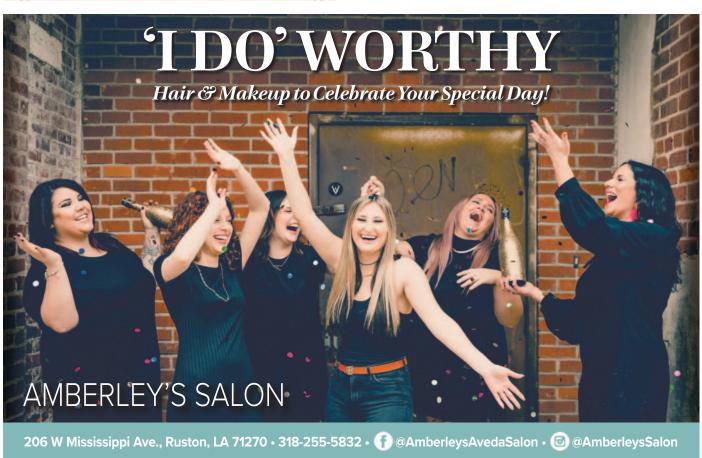
### Something Blue

Think about necklaces and bracelets when adding in your touch of blue. You'll want to match your jewelry length and style to the neckline or sleeves of your gown. Pendants work well with a V-neck, while chokers look best with strapless or sweetheart necklines. Dainty, individual bracelets fit best with full length sleeves, while chunky or multiple bracelets work better with little to no sleeve.













Try several different shapes when dress shopping, like this loose fitted sheath.

pring's biggest wedding trend is just that — big. Gone are the dainty, delicate touches of seasons past and in are big blooms, big bows and bold colors, says Harper's Bazaar.

There are a few ways to take your gown to the next level. One of the biggest ways is with a blooming dress. Designers are opting for big flowers, but not in the bouquet. Instead, look for posies as part of the gown itself. Rich embroideries, plush appliques and breathtaking accents were all spotted on designer runways. Remember though, if you've got a giant geranium on your hemline, maybe try to keep the flora toned down elsewhere. You want you and your gown to be the center of attention and giant florals in the bouquets, centerpieces or at the altar could detract some of focus.

Another way to make a statement is with color! Also spied on the catwalk were more bridal options than just ivory or stark white. Perennial favorite designer, Vera Wang, showcased gowns in nude, violet and even bright red. Brides magazine says other designers turned their palettes purple and sent out a variety of pale lavender pieces. Of course, if you want to keep your nuptials more traditional but feel like spicing it up just a touch, try a gown in vintage off-white or sand.

The glitz and glam are expected to be turned up this wedding season. New gowns offered up lots of dazzle in edgy metallic silhouettes. Also trending are cascades of feathers, roaring ruffles and oversized bows. Again, to avoid looking too over the top, remember to keep the rest of your ensemble simple.



These are both lovely ways to add a pop of 3-D glam to your bridal gown.

For the bride, this could mean simple stud pearls or diamonds for your earrings, a singular dainty bracelet and a pair of timeless heels. For the wedding party, this could mean muted or pastel colors and a simple, soft silhouette.

Wedding dresses aren't just waist-cinchers anymore, there are a wide variety of shapes to choose from. Try on a shape you haven't yet considered like a flowy trapeze, an empire waist, or a boho sheath. These dresses are often easier to wear for longer hours, warmer weather conditions and are great for dancing the night away! They also tend to require fewer layers than your more traditional gown, meaningthat alterations will be less expensive. Ask your bridal shop to point you to a unique waist and length to flatter your beautifully, unique shape.







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# Registry Items

you have to have





### **Smart Appliances**

Coffee pots, vacuums and even the lowly toaster all have high-tech brains nowadays. Couples are registering for appliances that may not have been on your mom's registry. There are barista level espresso machines, autonomous vacuums, electronic pressure cookers, immersion blenders and air fryers that can fry, grill, bake and roast all in one compact appliance.

### Luggage

As more places open up post-pandemic, more couples are hitting the road. A set of luggage is a great, traditional gift for the adventurous couple. Make sure you choose a set that fits your lifestyle. If you spend a lot of time camping, choose duffel bags instead of those hard-sided bags with a built-in charger. If you're more into plane travel, invest in carry-on rolling bags.





### **Electronics**

Today's houses are high-tech, as we know from the smart appliance category, so it's not uncommon for other household equipment to be as well. Think of things such as bluetooth soundbars for your TV, air purifiers and motion sensored doorbells with security cameras hooked up to your smart phone. Electronics are getting better and better and are part of daily life in this time.



Fabulous Florals

for your special day

Pellow is having a moment this year. One of Pantone's colors of the year is named Illuminating, a bright yellow that's spirited, energetic and fills you with joy. If you've picked sunny tones for your wedding palette, the good news is that there are plenty of blossoms that will give a pop to your bouquets, boutonnières and more.

### ROSES

Yellow roses are classic additions to wedding bouquets. There are hundreds of yellow rose varieties. Each has their own shading, fragrance and bloom shape. The National Gardening Association says there are several forms of rose blooms, including the spherical cupped shape, high-centered blooms, flat blooms, quartered blooms, rosettes, pompons and globular blooms. With so many shapes to choose from, it's easy to find the right rose for your look.

### **HELLEBORES**

Looking for a bloom of a different color? Hellebores have pointed, leathery leaves with textured centers that range in color from white to purple, including a variety of shades of green. Some yellow hellebores can even have edging or centers in other colors, including a stunning deep purple.

### **LILIES**

Showy, trumpet-shaped lilies are stunning stars of any bridal bouquet. Many varieties also have a pleasant fragrance that festoons many a spring wedding. You can get classic, star-shaped Asiatic lilies, Golden splendor trumpet lilies, dramatic Caucasian lilies and the classic, vase-shaped calla lily.

### **TULIPS**

Tulips are spring classics. They come in almost every color of the rainbow and their simple cup shape and long stems make them perfect for elegant bridal bouquets. Tulips come in many shades from a creamy, buttery tone all the way to neon yellow. Looking for more drama? Ask your florist for ruffled or double tulips.

### **DAISIES**

If you're going rustic for your nuptials, consider a bouquet of daisies. Gerbera daisies have big blooms that can get up to five inches in diameter and are more budget friendly than other flowers. Also look for black-eyed Susans. Their brown centers give your bouquet texture and depth, especially when paired with plenty of greenery.

### **YARROW**

These flat-topped bunches of tiny golden blooms are perfect to accent larger blooms in your bouquet. Yarrow can be arranged dried or fresh. Yarrow also has fern-like leaves that can be used in your arrangements.

### **SUNFLOWERS**

There may not be a more vellow flower than sunflowers. They can get up to dinnerplate sized and make great cut flowers. With their dark centers and showy, sunny petals, these flowers make for beautiful bouquet centerpieces and lovely table arrangements because they are able to add such a prominent focal point. Sunflowers are also able to be used in the spring or fall, making them very versatile.











# The Perfect Ending to the most perfect day

ossing rice or other grains at the newlyweds is a tradition as old as the hills. Rice symbolizes fertility and prosperity for the new couple. Tossing the rice means you're blessing them with wishes of fruitfulness and wealth.

The ancient Celts threw rice and other grains to appease their gods and ask for blessings on the newlyweds. Ancient Romans tossed wheat, while in Morocco they toss dried dates or figs and in India, flower petals.

In more recent years, tossing rice has met with objections that the leftover grains can harm wildlife. The state of Connecticut even introduced a bill in 1985 to ban throwing rice to save birds. Rice can also be a slip hazard for you and your guests.

Luckily, couples in recent years have gotten more creative with their send-off. Some eco-friendly alternatives can include bird seed, dried flower petals, herbs, biodegradable confetti, hand-held ribbons or bells, bubbles and sparklers.

Before your ceremony, have a basket filled with your send-off materials ready for your guests. They can be distributed by your ushers, tied to your programs, or left on chairs.

After your reception, have individual send-off materials placed at each seat, at the guest book table or have someone tasked with passing them out when you and your honey get ready to leave.

There are lots of options

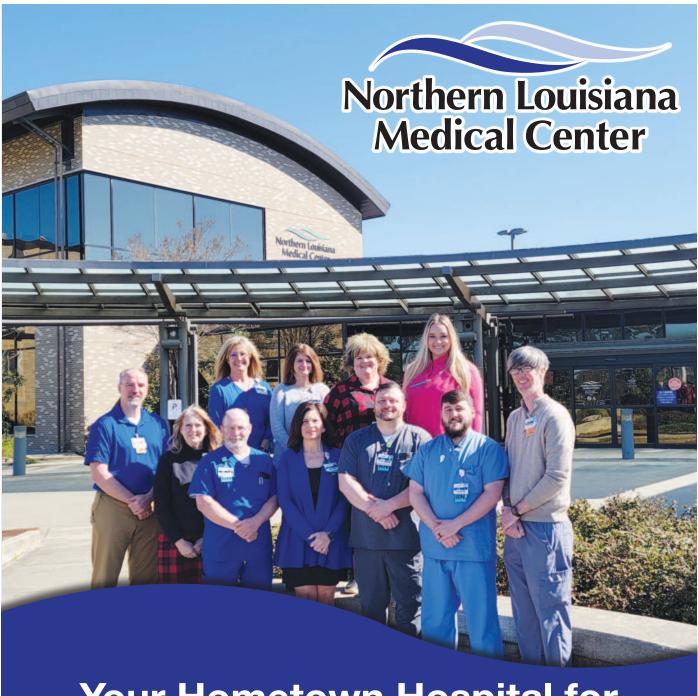
that can match your wedding theme, venue and personality. Get creative, just make sure you pick up after yourselves and have a safe celebration.



**SPRING • 2022** 

## THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

	Three Days to Go				
	Prepare tips for officiant & other vendors.				
	Practice walking in shoes.				
A. Ch. Leven	Check weather forecasts for rehearsal & wedding day.				
1000	Pack bag for wedding day & night. Include emergency kit & comfy dancing shoes.				
	Get final steaming for wedding day attire. Polish all jewelry & accessories.				
	Two Days to Go				
	Get manicure, pedicure & facial; if not already done.				
	Have programs, seating charts, place cards, guest book, toasting glasses & any other reception or ceremonial materials ready for distribution.				
	Assign responsible people to distribute materials listed above.				
	Reconfirm pickup times & addresses with transportation company.				
	One Day to Go				
	Practice speeches & vows.				
	Make sure wedding party has their outfits cleaned & put together.				
1 6 0	Give appreciation gifts to members of your wedding party.				
- M	<ul> <li>Rehearse ceremony with officiant, wedding party &amp; others who will have a special entrance or specific job.</li> </ul>				
	Enjoy the rehearsal dinner.				
	Wedding Day				
	Onn't forget to take regular medications.				
	Eat & drink plenty of water.				
	Relax and enjoy the day!				
	Day (or Two) After				
	Enjoy the day-after brunch.				
	Start writing thank-you notes to wedding party, gift givers & vendors.				
	Return any rentals, including attire or ceremony & reception materials.				
	Deposit monetary wedding gifts or put them in safekeeping.				
	Freeze top layer of cake; if applicable.				



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Front Row (Left to Right): David Scheaffer, Physical Therapy Director; Pam Sampognaro, Chief Quality Officer; Davis Welch, ICU Director; Kathy Hall, CEO; Sherwon Williamson, PCU & Med Surg Director; Justin Wyatt, Cardiology Director; Todd Whitlock, Pharmacy Director

Back Row (Left to Right): Tami Davis, Marketing Director; Sonya Taylor, HR Director; Jennifer Carpenter, Chief Nursing Officer; Baylee Gray, ER Director

# SPRING 2022

### **APRIL**

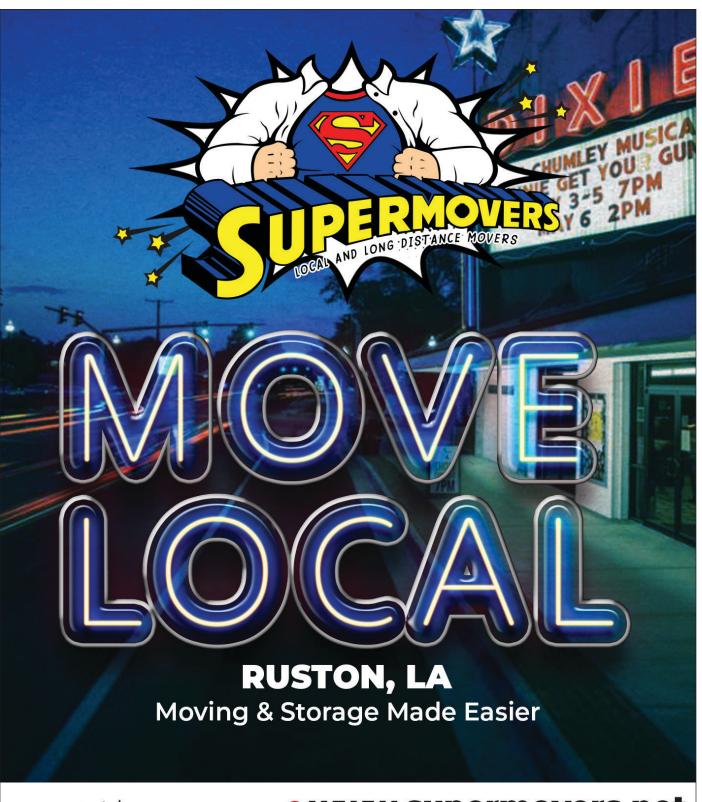
24	Healthy Kids Running Series 3 p.m Lincoln Parish Park, Ruston	7	Hats & Horses 3:30 p.m 6:30 p.m Delta Community College, Monroe
24	Ballet Under the Stars Kiroli Park, Monroe	7	Sounds of Broadway Pops Concert 7 p.m 9 p.m Bayou Pointe Events Center, West Monroe
24	BMX Cajun Nationals Monroe Civic Center, Monroe	8	MOTHER'S DAY
<b>27</b>	One Night of Queen 8 p.m Strand Theatre, Shreveport	11	Little Gardeners 9 a.m 10:30 a.m Children's Coalition for NELA, Monroe
28	Blooms & Bites 11:30 a.m Bayou Pointe Events Center, West Monroe	12	Downtown Rundown 6 p.m 7 p.m Flying Tiger Brewery, Monroe
28	<b>Pub Run</b> 6 p.m 7 p.m Flying Heart Brewing & Pub, West Monroe	13	Downtown Spring Art Crawl 5 p.m 9 p.m Ruston
29	Ouachita Live 6 p.m 9 p.m Alley Park, West Monroe	14	Children's Funday 10 a.m Noon - Biedenharn Museum & Gardens, Monroe
30	Shedfest Makers Market 9 a.m 4 p.m Ruston Community Men's Shed, Ruston	14	Dragon Boat Festival 11 a.m 5 p.m Monroe
30	Easter Eggstravaganza Pageant 11 a.m 2 p.m West Monroe Convention Center,	14	2 <sup>nd</sup> Annual Sneaker Ball 9 p.m 1 a.m Eleven Events, Shreveport
30	West Monroe Taco Wars	19	NCLAC Indie Film Series:
30	Noon - 8 p.m Municipal Auditorium, Shreveport First Baptist Presents: Michael W. Smith	10.00	<b>Louisiana Film Prize Shorts</b> 7 p.m 10 p.m Railroad Park, Ruston
	5 p.m First Baptist Church, Ruston	19-22	<b>Descendants: The Musical</b> Marjorie Lyons Playhouse, Shreveport
30-1	Louisiana BASS Nation Youth State Championship	<b>26</b>	<b>Pub Run</b> 6 p.m 7 p.m Flying Heart Brewing & Pub, West Monroe
	Forsythe Park, Monroe	26-30	Cottonland Cluster Dog Show Monroe Civic Center, Monroe
	MAY	27	<b>Friday Night Lights at Black Bayou</b> 5:30 p.m 9:30 p.m Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Monroe
1		<b>27</b>	Ouachita Live 6 p.m 9 p.m Alley Park, West Monroe
1	<b>Healthy Kids Running Series</b> 3 p.m Lincoln Parish Park, Ruston	27-29	Crawfish Craze Barrel Run
5	CINCO DE MAYO	20	Ike Hamilton Expo, West Monroe
6	NCLAC hosts Terrance Simien 7 p.m Dixie Center for the Arts, Ruston	30	MEMORIAL DAY
6	Waitress: The Broadway Musical 8 p.m The Strand Theatre, Shreveport		HINE
7	Superheroes for Autism 5k 10 a.m 1 p.m Ike Hamilton Expo, West Monroe		JUNE
7	Mother's Day Market 11 a.m 3 p.m Alley Park, West Monroe	2	<b>Downtown Gallery Crawl</b> 5 p.m 9 p.m Art Alley, Monroe
7	Kegs & Corks Craft Beer, Wine & Music Festival	3	Piney Hills Kids Triathlon Noon - Ruston
7	1 p.m 9:30 p.m East Bank District & Plaza, Shreveport	4	72 <sup>nd</sup> Annual Louisiana Peach Festival 9 a.m 3 p.m Railroad Park, Ruston
7	<b>Healthy Kids Running Series</b> 3 p.m Lincoln Parish Park, Ruston	9	Downtown Rundown 6 p.m 7 p.m Flying Tiger Brewery, Monroe



11	Children's Funday 10 a.m Noon - Biedenharn Museum & Gardens, Monroe	19	JUNETEENTH
11	Cirque du ARTini 7 p.m 11 p.m Civic Center, Bossier City	19-26	Master Jubilee Encounter Library Events Center, Ruston
14	FLAG DAY	23	<b>Pub Run</b> 6 p.m 7 p.m Flying Heart Brewing & Pub, West Monroe
16-18	Miss Louisiana Monroe Civic Center, Monroe	24	LA Peach Festival 5k Noon - Ruston
17-18	Red, White & Blue Airshow Monroe Airport, Monroe	24	Ouachita Live 6 p.m 9 p.m Alley Park, West Monroe
18	American Military Pride Pageant Louisiana Army National Guard Unit, Ruston	24-25	CenterPoint Energy Red River Balloon Rally
18	31st Annual Cross Lake Floatilla 11 a.m American Legion Post 14, Shreveport		5 p.m 11 p.m Brookshire Grocery Arena, Bossier City
19	FATHER'S DAY	30-2	Wing Ding Motorcycle Trade Show & Rally 9 a.m Shreveport Convention Center, Shreveport

## **LOCAL COLLEGE SPORTS**

Louisiana Tech University Baseball		5/7	VS Southern Miss 2 p.m Ruston
4/24	VS Middle Tennessee 1 p.m Ruston	5/8	VS Southern Miss 1 p.m Ruston
5/3	VS ULM 6 p.m Ruston	Graml	bing State University Baseball
5/6	VS Florida Atlantic 6 p.m Ruston	4/24	VS Alcorn State
5/7	VS Florida Atlantic 2 p.m Ruston	4/26	TBA - Grambling VS Northwestern State
5/8	VS Florida Atlantic 1 p.m Ruston	4/29	6 p.m Grambling VS Southern
5/13	VS WKU 6 p.m Ruston	4/30	6 p.m Grambling  VS Southern
5/14	VS WKU 2 p.m Ruston	5/1	3 p.m Grambling  VS Southern
5/15	VS WKU 1 p.m Ruston	5/3	1 p.m Grambling  VS Jackson State
Louisiana Tech University Softball		5/13	6 p.m Grambling  VS Texas Southern 6 p.m Grambling
4/24	VS UAB 1 p.m Ruston	5/14	VS Texas Southern 3 p.m Grambling
5/3	VS ULM 6 p.m Ruston	5/15	VS Texas Southern 1 p.m Grambling
5/6	VS Southern Miss 6 p.m Ruston		r p.m. Granibinis





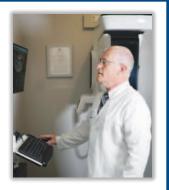
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### For Dr. Kenny Cox, the die was cast early for his professional journey.

Born to a physician and nurse, Dr. Cox's love for the medical field was practically a reflex action. He recalls the typical conversation around the dinner table running the gamut of everything from gall bladders to hernias. In fact, medicine was such a prominent part of their lives that his older brother became a physician like their father while his sister followed in her mother's footsteps as a nurse.

However, Dr. Cox was determined to make his own mark. Tagged as the "rebellious" one, he had no desire to go to medical school. Yet he would find his way into the world of dentistry thanks to an unsuspecting mentor.

Dr. Jerry Johnston was Dr. Cox's dentist. Over the years, he grew to admire Johnston as well as his profession. He noticed Johnston's passion for his work and the attention he paid to detail. Dr. Cox soon found himself talking to Johnston about pursuing dentistry and during his senior year made the decision to go to dental school.

#### He never looked back.

In 1987, Dr. Cox began his dental career by joining Dr. James Florence as an associate. A year later, he bought into the practice under the name of Drs. Florence and Cox. When Florence retired in 1997, Dr. Cox became the sole owner of Cox Family Dentistry.

As a dentist, Dr. Cox has always desired to provide the best treatment for patients but to also develop and grow in relationships. In addition, he had maintained a love for learning new treatment methods and continuing his education in dentistry. Yet at the end of the day, what's been most important is who he has been able to help.

Dr. Cox has a deep love for his profession because through dentistry he can relieve and prevent pain as well as make people feel better about their smile. Equally gratifying are the relationships he's made with the people he works with. He finds one of the greatest compliments to hear is when an employee makes the comment "we are like a family."

Of course family has always been important to Dr. Cox. He and his wife Denise, a local piano teacher who has taught for 44 years, will celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary this year. They have been blessed with three children: Bethany (a massage therapist) who lives in Ruston; Mallory (a math teacher) married to Collin Ross (a construction engineer) who lives in Mandeville with their two children (Joshua, 3 and Canaan 6 months); and their youngest Lane (employed at Irrigation Mart as an Agricultural Sales Representative) who lives in Ruston.

The Coxes have been active members at Temple Baptist Church since 1987 where his wife has been the Handbell Director since they joined and Dr. Cox began teaching in the college department in 1988. The college ministry has been a big part of his life for 33 years and his love for college kids and teaching the Word of God has only grown through the vears.

After a great deal of prayer and preparation, Dr. Cox decided to merge his practice with Johnston Dental Care. That means today he now works alongside Dr. Lamar Johnston, the son of the man who guided him toward dentistry all those years ago. It's one of those special turns in life that he never expected yet relishes as they work in tandem to provide comprehensive dental services to the community along with care and compassion to their patients.

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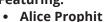
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# S Pulled III

How Louisiana Tech is utilizing technology to help win baseball games

By Brian Trahan

In the fictitious world of the 1988 blockbuster movie, "Bull Durham," baseball is simple.

"You throw the ball, you catch the ball, you hit the ball. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose, sometimes it rains."

In 2022, there's a little more to baseball than meets the eye.

You throw the ball, after you measure arm angle internal and external rotation and spin rate. You catch the ball after maximizing your jumping ability and lowering your body fat while maintaining your body water levels. You hit the ball after analyzing your swing with 3-D Motion Capture technology to gain full exit velocity and launch angle.

You still win some and lose some. And it still rains.

Three years ago Mike Silva was an assistant head coach under Louisiana Tech

> head baseball coach Lane Burroughs. Silva was the pitching coach and was referred by a mutual acquaintance at the University of Miami.

At the same time, there was a graduate student at Tech, Alexa Garcia, who arrived on campus from Florida Atlantic University. She came to Tech to study sport performance, one of the under university's master's degree concentrations, under Dr. David Szymanski.

Garcia wanted to focus on baseball, not only with the team, but with research. Szymanski had been doing baseball performance research for a number of years, previously under former head coach Wade Simoneaux. Under Greg Goff, technology wasn't utilized as much, but Silva approached Burroughs about talking to Szymanski.

Thus was born the perfect combination of science and baseball for an emerging college baseball program.

Garcia also mentioned to the baseball staff that they needed to visit Scotty Robertson Memorial Gym and look at the labs because there's cutting edge equipment in the labs that can be utilized for baseball.

"Our initial meeting we talked about three hours," Szymanski said about his discussion with Silva. "All the things he was interested in doing was the things I told him we could do."

Szymanski gave Silva a tour of the labs — Applied Physiology Lab and Sport and Movement Science

Photo by CLOEY ASHWORTH

Kurt Dillon throws a pitch during a lab bullpen session in the Sport and Movement Science Lab in Scotty Robertson Memorial Gym while the 3D motion capture system records his pitching motion and the force plates under his back (drive leg) foot and eventual front (stride) foot when it lands on the turf calculate peak power and ground reaction forces. He is also wearing a CosMed K5 metabolic unit on his back with a facemask that collects his expired oxygen and carbon dioxide while pitching. This device allows Dr. David Szymanski to understand how intense the act of pitching is compared to the pitcher's VO2max test in performance and provides information about what fuel source, carbohydrates or fats, is predominantly being used while pitching. This type of information allows the athlete to know what they should eat that is best for them while pitching.

Lab, all part of the Tech Kinesiology Department.

There are many reasons for the success that Burroughs has reached with Tech during his six seasons at the helm of the program. During the first five seasons, Tech has won 162 games and lost 90 for a winning percentage of .643. Five straight winning seasons, including a national breakout season in 2021 in which Tech not only won the Conference USA West Division, but also gained an NCAA berth and hosted an NCAA Regional at J.C. Love Field for the first time in school history.

Burroughs recognized early on that technology could play a role in helping the Bulldogs achieve success on the field. Szymanski became Tech's Director of Baseball Performance in addition to his duties with the university away from the baseball team.

### INTRODUCING TECHNOLOGY TO BASEBALL

In the Applied Physiology Lab, there is a treadmill that can be utilized for a VO2 Max Test. This allows the department to test an athlete's cardiovascular fitness level. There is also access to a Biodex machine, which allows Szymanski to have "a pitcher, for example, do their internal and external rotation at 90 degrees to test how strong, or how weak, they are for that movement," he said. He elaborated that the test is done at three different speeds — slow. moderate and fast. The slow speed tests strength while the fast speed tests the peak power generated in a pitcher's motion.

The InBody 770 device measures body composition. It can collect data on body weight, lean muscle mass, body fat and body water to test if an athlete is dehydrated or not.

Silva reacted with excitement on his tour of the lab and asked if these tests could be done with Tech's pitching staff. Szymanski subsequently took Silva downstairs to the Sport and Movement Science Lab, or what would be considered a biomechanics lab.

"This is where we can do the motion capture of a human being," Szymanki explained. "In this case we could have a pitcher on a mound, put reflective markers on their joint segments and with these high-speed cameras we can measure what their body does as they go though the pitching motion."

There are four major time points in extracting this information: peak knee height, foot plant as their front stride foot hits the ground, maximum external rotation of the shoulder (layback) and then ball release. The information can then be compared to the Major League Baseball average to show Tech pitchers where they measure.

### DELVING INTO THE DATA

The lab also has a custom-made simulated pitcher's mound that has force plates embedded. "The force plates allow us to see peak ground reaction forces or peak power that someone can produce from their back foot, which is their drive leg, and their front foot, which is their stride leg," Szymanski continued.

Part of the pitcher's mound testing process also includes measuring an athlete's vertical jump with two feet or one foot to compare the jumping ability to the power they produce when they pitch off the mound. "What we have found is that the baseball pitchers who anecdotally thought they would jump higher off of their drive leg, or back leg, wasn't the case," Szymanski said. "They actually jumped higher off of their stride leg, or their front foot."

Scientific explanation: pitchers have to overcome linear acceleration, the momentum going toward home plate, slow down their body mass against gravity and then extend their lead leg and rotate their hips and torso to produce torque to throw a ball as fast as they can. "It's really fantastic information," Szymanski said.

### GRAB YOUR GLOVE, SMARTPHONE & TABLET

The sport performance team has also worked with an app called Pitch AI, developed by a company called ProPlayAI, Inc. that is available to download for most smartphones.

"This is artificial intelligence that produces biomechanics with a cell phone," Szymanski said. "You don't need \$80,000 of motion capture equipment. You can use a cell phone at a 90-degree angle to the pitching rubber and you can receive the same metrics as highly-expensive equipment. A pitcher on his cell phone, iPad or computer can see his numbers immediately. The pitching coach can see it, the researcher can see it, the graduate student can see it — everyone has access and can utilize it in practice.

"Hey, here is what you did on the previous pitch. Maybe let's try a little bit greater stride length, for example, to see if it gives you more velocity," he continued, while also pointing out that any high school coach or parent can access the same data.

Rapsodo is a camera device that is placed 15.5 feet in front of home plate and records the pitch coming toward the catcher. This gives pitch velocity or other metrics such as spin rate on a breaking pitch, along with vertical break and horizontal break. It also supplies a release point.

Szymanski said this information can be immediately accessed on an iPad in the dugout during intrasquad games in live action. It can't be used during regular season games, however. In conjunction with Rapsodo, the lab can utilize cameras called Insight, furnished by a company in Washington called Driveline.

As a third-party service, Driveline can become rather expensive to provide data from the Insight cameras to anyone who hires the company.

A college program like Tech can provide access to the Insight



Photo by EMERALD MCINTYRE

Kyle Crigger runs a VO2max (maximal stress) test on a treadmill in the Applied Physiology Lab in Scotty Robertson Memorial Gym, which determines his maximal cardiovascular fitness level. The mask he is wearing collects expired oxygen and carbon dioxide concentrations and volumes. All pitchers completed this test.

camera information at no cost to the athlete. Current pitching coach Cooper Fouts is utilizing all of this information for his pitching staff. The result is helping the Bulldogs make adjustments to enhance spin rate on a particular pitch.

It could be as technical as putting more pressure on a finger or turning a wrist a quarter of a turn more to obtain a more effective spin rate.

"Instead of the pitching coach asking the pitcher, 'Hey, can you feel the difference?' now the technology allows you to ask, 'Can you see the difference?'" Szymanski said.

With the Rapsodo, you can also aim the camera toward a hitter and obtain similar swing metrics — such as launch angle and exit velocity.

### ARMCARE.COM ENTERS THE PICTURE

Another company Tech has been working with is ArmCare, which has its own website ArmCare. com. The Biodex equipment in the Human Performance Lab measures internal and external rotation.

It's also state-of-the-art equipment available to Tech's athletes that is not cost-effective for the average high school or little league baseball player.

Biodex is used to measure isotonic strength, or the loading and unloading phase of a pitcher's motion. With the ArmCare unit — which attaches simply to an athlete's wrist — measures the pressure that you push into a wall while laying on your back, Szymanski explained.

The performance lab compared the data they obtained with the ArmCare equipment to that gathered through the Biodex equipment. Myles Fish, who is now working as the Assistant Minor League Athletic Trainer for the Milwaukee Brewers organization, utilized all of this data for the Tech pitching staff and presented this for a Directed Research Project while a graduate student at Tech.

Similarly, graduate student Pablo Ortiz, who works with the lab and with the pitching staff with Fouts and Tech Assistant Pitching Coach Matt Miller, is looking at how the biomechanics data and joint segments relate to Pitch AI. "

Instead of the pitching coach asking the pitcher, 'Hey, can you FEEL the difference?' now the technology allows you to ask, 'Can you SEE the difference?'

- Dr. David Syzmanski

"

"What we want to know ... is the Pitch AI from the cell phone valid and reliable compared to the gold standard 3-D Motion Capture?" Szymanki presented as a question. "If it is, then we're going to say to coaches, parents, baseball enthusiasts, 'Hey, buy the app, because it's really reliable,'" he continued.

At this point an athlete won't have to visit a lab to obtain all of these metrics. They will have access through a smartphone and be able to dissect the video at home.

### APPLYING SCIENCE TO THE GAME

Crunching the data that Tech has gathered under Burroughs and Szymanski makes sense for a mid-major program on the rise. They get high tech results and data through a cost-effective process that makes it easier to digest information that can enhance performance between the white lines.

When Tech started this process three years ago, it helped Szymanski determine if Bulldog



Photo by CLOEY ASHWORTH

Tanner Knight is standing on the custom-made pitching mound in the Sport and Movement Science Lab in Scotty Robertson Memorial Gym with 46 reflective markers attached to various joints on the front and back of his body while the 3D motion capture system identifies the markers and creates a human model of his body. This information will allow the computer software to calculate forces on the shoulder and elbow joint for example.



The PitchAl app recorded with a cell phone creates a biomechanical model on Ryan Jennings' body while he throws a bullpen session at J.C. Love Field at Pat Patterson Park. The information, such as peak knee height (PK), foot plant, maximal external rotation of the throwing shoulder, throwing arm speed, and ball release, is all calculated from the app. This provides the pitcher, pitching coach (Cooper Fouts), and Dr. David Szymanski with immediate information about what he did during that specific pitch. The data is compared to the average MLB pitcher's data PitchAl has in its database and to the data from the 3D motion capture system.

pitchers were strong or weak with their arms as far as motion is concerned. To apply the data, Szymanski — who is also the strength coach — is able to assign exercises to certain athletes that will enhance their performance.

"I can lead a horse to water but I can't make him drink," he said.
"I'm going to ask you to do these exercises when you're with me, but I may ask them to do this on their own," he said.

Burroughs echoed that sentiment. "Technology plays a big role. Our coaches do a great job with it. Our players do a phenomenal job with it," Burroughs said. "And really, it's to each his own. We don't push it on anybody, but it's there for you. You have to adjust with the times. Our pitchers have access to all that technology at Memorial (Gym) with Dr. Szymanski. Technology is huge in today's game, no question."

Tech's veteran pitching staff has been able to work with the performance technology and get better. For example, senior right hander Ryan Jennings had Tommy John surgery on his elbow three years ago. The COVID-19 season of 2020 set them back as far as metrics are concerned, but during the 2021 breakout NCAA season, Szymanski's team was able to utilize the data to enhance performance. It allowed Jennings to pinpoint where he needed to work specifically in his return to the field.

Dr. Mike Sonne who works with the Toronto Blue Jays collects all of the data from people who buy the ProPlayAI equipment.

Louisiana Tech has also worked with the company to expand their database for college pitchers, who in general are going to record different metrics than professionals. "College pitchers are going to be different than high school pitchers," Szymanski said. "The best high school pitchers become college pitchers. The best college pitchers become drafted players. And then the best of the

best become Major League Baseball pitchers."

If you want to become more like a major league player, then those metrics can be given out.

How is that applied to Tech's pitching staff?

Friday night ace Jonathan Fincher has been in the program and is a veteran on the mound at J.C. Love Field. There are times when Fincher will throw his four-seam fastball 92-93 mph. There are also other times when he throws the four seam 86-87 mph.

"Before we used this technology, we didn't have an idea as to why there was inconsistency," Szymanski said. "When you want someone to be a highly-draftable player you want them to be more consistent with their mechanics so that they're consistent with their velocity."

What Szymanski's team noticed through the Pitch AI, when Fincher was throwing 92 mph, he had greater arm speed than when he was throwing at a lower velocity. Pitch AI showed Fincher, Fouts and the staff how he could maximize his velocity on a regular basis through tweaking his mechanics as it pertains to stride length, uncoiling and external rotation. The app provides the pitchers immediate feedback.

In addition to his maturation as a pitcher physically, the performance lab has helped Jennings reach peak performance during his return from injury. Szymanski said that Jennings is routinely throwing 92-95 mph.

Going back to his data, he is the most powerful player on the team in regard to his ability to create power jumping — similar to how NFL players are measure with vertical jump at the NFL Combine. The team measures from the force plates built into the simulated mound in the lab. That allows them to measure peak power in force used to generate jumping ability.

At 187 pounds, Jennings is able

to generate the most power on the team. That translates to how much power he's able to create pushing off the mound while pitching to generate a 95 mph fastball.

The performance data has allowed the program to correlate that players who are generally able to jump the highest, also generate the highest velocity on their fastballs.

Again, this data can be utilized by teams that don't have access to the equipment and labs. If you don't have access, you can still use the data obtained from vertical jump to estimate the power generated by a pitcher. Szymanski explained that it makes sense on a biomechanics level. Those who are jumping the highest have fast-twitch muscle fiber athletes who also possess coordination, timing and good mechanics. "If they have all of this working for them, they have the ability to throw harder," he said.

## MAINTAINING PEAK PERFORMANCE

How does all of this scientific data translate to Louisiana Tech being able to beat teams like LSU on the field twice this season? The data gathered through all of these mechanisms on a weekly basis allows Szymanski and his team determine if Tech's players are performing to their greatest ability consistently. It's something the team can control.

As a grinding season wears on, from the cold nights in February to the hot and steamy weekends in May, players can get the most out of their performance. As Szymanski said, the metric of body water becomes more important at this time when the weather heats up so that Tech players avoid dehydration while competing for a conference title, an NCAA berth and as they did in 2021, receive the NCAA regional at the Love Shack.

For example, players are monitored during competition so

that they remain hydrated during a game and then the team has recovery protocols in place postgame that allows starting pitchers like Fincher, Cade Gibson and Jarret Whorff the ability to recover fully to get ready to pitch the following weekend.

Incidentally, Szymanski explained that hydration doesn't only pertain to water intake. For instance, too much water will cause an athlete to lose sodium levels. Keeping sodium in the body allows an athlete to retain his or her water volume. This is where sports drinks enter the picture. Consuming sports drinks in between innings will give athletes sugar for energy, maintain blood glucose levels and maintain sodium to keep water in the body.

"Now, they are fueled properly so they can continued pitching," Szymanski said. "As long as they have good command of their fastball or breaking pitches they can continue performing at a high level.

"To me, that is a controllable factor," he continued. "If we don't control it, then maybe that's why someone isn't pitching well. I don't want that to be the case. We want to monitor them."

### YEAR-ROUND TECHNOLOGY

What happens after the season is over? All of the data collected from the beginning of workouts until the end of the season also allows the staff to determine if a player worked the hardest he could to reach optimum performance.

It can determine how much a player can advance from season to season such as increased muscle mass and less body fat or just the opposite.

When the players return in the fall the staff can now assess where they are compared to the previous season and make adjustments.

"I tell our players that they are a Lamborghini or a Ferrari. You are a multi-million dollar piece of

machinery like a high-performance vehicle," Szymanski said. "I want you to put in 91 octane (healthy food) and not 87 — which may be a McDonald's hamburger, fries and a shake which may taste good but may not be the best food to fuel your body to be the best baseball player, in our case, the best pitcher."

The analogy to a highperformance car is appropriate in this case. If the muscles are good, your heart is good your body fat is appropriate, your lean body mass is good and water levels are good, you should be able to perform consistently well.

### **MAKING A MARK**

Students who have come through Szymanski's lab at Tech are also taking the knowledge gained locally to establish their own careers. Garcia used her own research into how pitchers grip a baseball and that effect on spin rate to further her career. She spent time with the Baltimore Orioles organization before moving on to work with Barry University in Miami.

Jeff Albert is now the Major League Hitting Coach with the St. Louis Cardinals organization. He went through Tech's graduate program during Simoneaux's coaching stint with the Bulldogs.

Other MLB organizations are also paying attention to what Tech is doing with sport performance.

Chicago Cubs Assistant General Manager Ehsan Bokhari was in town in January after he noticed the information Szymanski was posting regarding the Tech performance lab.

Szymanski was in touch with the Cubs and visited his hometown of Chicago over the Christmas holidays in December 2021 to tour the Cubs' facilities. Subsequently, Bokhari flew to Ruston in January from Arizona to spend the day with Szymanski to tour the Tech facilities.

This interaction with MLB teams has given validation of sorts to what Tech has built in its performance lab.

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

Other MLB organizations have reached out to Szymanski and mentioned that the Cubs now have one of the best performance labs based on what they learned from Tech and applied to the development of their own performance lab.

"It's pretty cool that major league teams are reaching out to us to ask us about what we're doing at Tech," Szymanski said. "It also shows the coaches and players that we're doing innovative things to help."

Burroughs is a believer. "These days we don't really exchange scouting reports anymore like the old days," he said. "When a guy is struggling you can call him in, for instance, call up Cole McConnell's

doubles, or Cole McConnell's strikeouts and do a side-by-side look at what you're doing when you're going good and maybe find something when you're not doing so well."

## SOMETIMES YOU WIN, SOMETIMES YOU LOSE

Ultimately, the players still have to pitch. They still have to catch the baseball. They still have to hit. What Tech is doing behind the scenes technology-wise is making a difference in what fans are seeing at J.C. Love Field.

Tech keeps building its baseball program under Burroughs.
Recruiting classes are getting better. The roster is performing at a high level and once again the team is competing for a conference title and eyeing an NCAA bid. What happens across the railroad track at Memorial Gym during the offseason is definitely helping what happens on the field in the spring.

In Tech's case, how the team manipulates the 108 stitches during 9 innings of a baseball game, may have been derived from spending 108 hours in the sports performance lab.

Burroughs calls it synergy — the best of science and athletics coming together.

Come NCAA Tournament time, it's called success.

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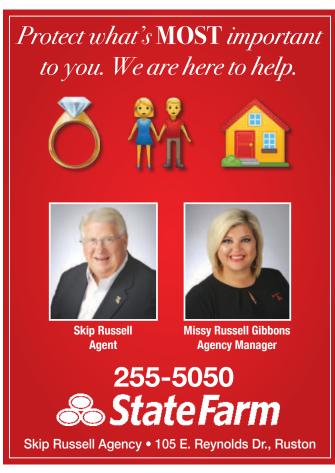
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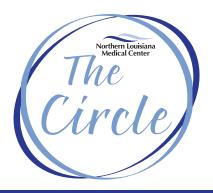
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## The Art of the Story

Carroll looks to highlight all parts of Tech athletics through video

#### By Caleb Daniel

f you ask Carter Carroll about his ties to Louisiana Tech athletics, he'll tell you a story. He'll tell you how in the late '30s his grandfather, Guy Carroll, became the last student-athlete in Tech history to letter in four different sports: football, baseball, track and field and boxing.

"He only ever lost one boxing match at Tech," he might tell you with pride.

This is the first story that connects Carroll to Tech sports, but it's not the last.

In fact, as the university's new assistant athletic director of broadcasting, telling stories about Tech's student-athletes is now Carroll's mission every day. And that's fine with him.

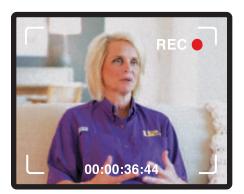
"I think a storyteller is at the core of who I am," Carroll said.

"At any given time, we have between 300 and 400 student-athletes. We have thousands of former student-athletes, hundreds of former coaches and staff members. And each one of those is its own story."

Through two videography internships at Tech, followed by a full-time job in the new videographer position for University Communications, Carroll has been able to highlight unique aspects of the Tech experience through the camera in a variety of ways before coming back to athletics full time.

But probably the greatest story Carroll has been able to tell thus far has been that of Leon Barmore, the legendary women's basketball coach who led the Lady





Courtesy of Louisiana Tech University

Pictured are screenshots of Carter Carroll's interviews with Leon Barmore (top) and Kim Mulkey (above) for the documentary film "Coach: The Leon Barmore Story." Carroll was able to sit down with both legendary coaches to get insight into Barmore's career and lasting impact on the players and coaches around him.







Submitted Photos

Carter Carroll is the new assistant athletic director of broadcasting for Louisiana Tech athletics. In addition to overseeing live broadcasts of Tech sporting events, Carroll hopes to bring more documentary-style videos and other content to help connect the Tech family to their student-athletes on a personal level.

Techsters to a national championship and nine Final Fours on his way to the highest winning percentage in the sport.

An idea to produce some type of feature on Barmore to roll out alongside a statue in his honor snowballed into an 85-minute documentary on the coach's historic career and legacy.

"Coach: The Leon Barmore Story" was directed, produced, shot and edited by Carroll, not to mention it was also his idea.

The documentary combines archival footage with exclusive new interviews with Barmore and well-known coaches and players whom he impacted during his legendary tenure.

Chief among those was Kim Mulkey, the highly successful women's basketball coach currently at the helm at LSU.

Mulkey played under Barmore as an All-American point guard before coaching under him for 15 years at Tech. She went on to win three championships as head coach at Baylor before heading to LSU in 2021.

"We did not think (the Mulkey interview) was going to happen," Carroll said. "She was very fresh to being back in Baton Rouge. We were there the day somebody was bringing her clothes to Baton Rouge from Waco.

"But she welcomed us into her home on a Saturday afternoon, and she really stole the show."

Beyond a love for Tech athletics, Carroll and Barmore have something else in common: Barmore did his student teaching under Guy Carroll, Carter's multi-sport grandfather.

Carroll never would have imagined that at 25 he'd be interviewing legends like Barmore and Mulkey and

entrusted to spread one of the university's most epic tales.

"To be able to have that story run full circle where I'm getting to sit down with him and former players and coaches to tell this legendary story is something I will never take for granted," he said.

Another aspect of putting together the documentary was the process of digitizing old tapes of Louisiana Tech game footage, something Carroll believes will pay dividends for his department well beyond that one project.

"I had a VCR and a laptop pulled up at one desk while editing on another desk," he said. "Any time I was in my office, I had a game being recorded.

"I would like to get to a place where all of our archives are digitized and viewable online. Our history is extremely important."

Now that he's got a taste for it, long-form video content is something Carroll particularly wants to push while at the broadcasting helm with Tech athletics.

"I didn't know how much I would love making documentaries," he said. "It's become something I'm very passionate about and realizing that's what I'm meant to do. I'm meant to tell bigger stories."

In a market where "content is king," Carroll said he's hoping for "an unprecedented level of access to student-athletes" in order to show sides of their experiences that Tech fans haven't been able to see thus far.

"We can see them on the court, on the field, and see part of what they're doing," he said. "But what is it really like to be a student-athlete at Louisiana Tech? I really believe stories are what connects each of us. Getting to share their stories is what's going to connect the Tech family."

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42 | LINCOLN LIFE **SPRING • 2022** 

### Cinco de Mayo

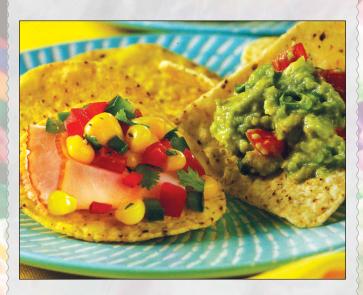
has become a day of celebration for people who do not trace their ancestry to Mexico, much like St. Patrick's Day. The day commemorates a symbolic win by a heavily outnumbered Mexican army over French forces sent by Napoleon III to establish an empire on Mexican land.

In the United States, Cinco de Mayo has become a day to commemorate Mexican culture including its much-loved cuisine.

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### FIERY CORN SALSA



#### **INGREDIENTS**

#### **MAKES 2 CUPS**

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 3 tbsp freshly squeezed
- Lime juice
- 2 tsp minced fresh cilantro
- 3 tomatoes, seeded & diced
- 11/2 cups corn kernels
- 2 to 3 jalapeno peppers, seeded & diced
- Salt & freshly ground black pepper

#### **DIRECTIONS**

1. In large bowl combine oil, lime, & cilantro. Add tomatoes, corn & jalapeno to taste. Mix well until corn is well coated.

2. Season with salt & pepper to taste. Transfer to an airtight container & refrigerate, stirring occasionally, for 1 hour or up to 2 days.

TIP: In place of the corn kernels you can use canned corn, drained; frozen corn, thawed; or corn from the cob, cooked on the stove top. For a smoky flavor, grill your corn on the barbeque.

### MEXICAN ELOTE



#### **INGREDIENTS**

#### **MAKES 6 SERVINGS**

- 6 ears corn, unhusked
- 6 tbsp salted butter
- 2 tsp chili powder
- 1/4 cup cotija cheese, grated
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup freshly chopped cilantro
- Juice of 2 limes
- Cayenne pepper (optional)

#### **DIRECTIONS**

- 1. Preheat outdoor grill on medium-high heat.
- 2. Grill corn until lightly charred, about 10 minutes.
- 3. Roll the ears with melted butter and spread evenly with mayonnaise. Sprinkle cotija cheese, chili powder, cilantro and lime juice.
- 4. Serve immediately, sprinkled with cayenne to taste.

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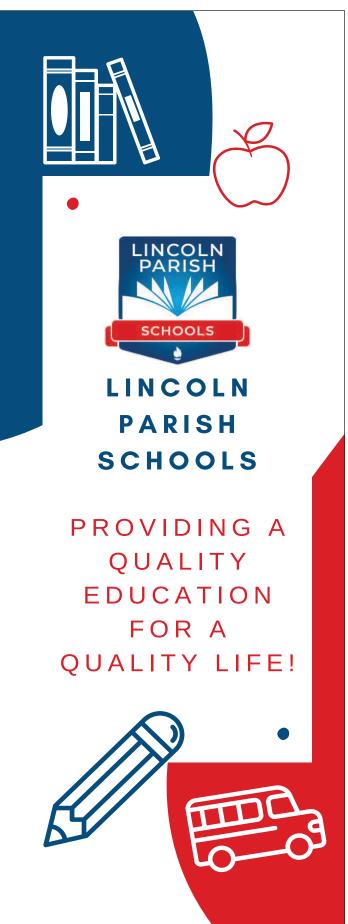
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Increase access to health care services through school-based health care programs and other initiatives that provide medical, dental and mental health services to residents of Lincoln Parish. Initiatives funded:

- Mental Health Counseling Services (Health Hut & Selected Grantees)
- Lincoln Parish Health Unit (Funding of Clerical Staff)
- Elisha Ministries (Medical/Mental/Dental Services for Homeless)
- City of Ruston (Economic Development Counsel) Rock Island Greenway
- Lincoln Parish Schools (School Health Programs and School Nurses)
- The Health Hut Medical Mobile and Healthcare Clinic





#### **Healthier Beginnings Initiatives**

Improve infant mortality rates, low birth weights and early childhood development in Lincoln Parish through outreach programs and other educational activities. Initiatives

- Life Choices of North Central Louisiana (Mentoring of MOMs and DADs Program) (Growing Great Kids™ Program)
- Louisiana Tech Human Ecology Dept. (WISE Nutrition Education) (Bulldog Book Club Preschool Education Program)



#### **Healthier Living Initiatives**

Promoting healthier living by providing programs that increase teacher and student knowledge of the benefits of proper nutrition and physical activity, encourage healthy food alternatives in Lincoln Parish Schools, and reduce the occurrence of teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. Initiatives funded:

- Boys & Girls Club of North Louisiana (Nutrition, Health & Summer Feeding Programs)
- Lincoln Parish Schools Back Pack Hunger Initiative
- Ruston Farmer's Market (Nutrition Incentives Program)
- Seeker Springs Adolescent Counseling Program in Lincoln Parish Schools
- Teach One to Lead One (Adolescent Development Program in Lincoln Parish Schools)

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48 | LINCOLN LIFE **SPRING • 2022**