

>> On the Coyote Sports Network. From Lear field. This is the YoteCast, the official podcast of the University of South Dakota Athletics, taking you inside the stories of Coyote athletes, coaches, administrators, and more. Now, here's your host, John Thayer.

>> Hey, what's up? How you doing? We're back for another addition to the YoteCast Podcast. Hopefully you're doing well and excited for the Summit League tournament. I know a lot of people get excited this time of year. If you're a basketball junkie, this is the time of year for you. Conference tournaments, NCAA tournament, all of that stuff, it's all coming up here over the next few weeks and so it's a great time for college basketball junkies. Had a chance this week to chat with a couple of student athletes at the University of South Dakota, including Max Burchill. He is a senior men's basketball player spent his whole career at USD. We honored six seniors on Senior Day for Med's basketball, and only one has been here his entire career, and that's Max Burchill. We talk to him about his journey through a coaching change, why USD in the first place, and how he's adapted to a role that doesn't always show up in the box score. But if you watch USD basketball and you're a fan, you've certainly noticed the work that Max Burchill does, even though it doesn't light up the box score, night in and night out. We had a chance to chat about that. Then I also had a chance to catch up with a tennis player, Sorcha Caves. She comes to us from Scotland and is coming off of a week in which she earned the player of the week in the Summit League. Tennis continues their efforts. They begin conference play this week. I had a chance to catch up with her, as well. Max Burchill, Sorcha Caves, our guests this week. Let's get it started with tennis and Sorcha Caves from Scotland. Sorcha, you're going through the season this year. You guys are coming off of a nice win over UConn in your last match, and now you get ready for a one conference match before you go to Florida for a few matches up ahead. When you look at this season, how have things gone for you and for the team so far this year?

>> It's been a good successful season so far. We've definitely been close in a lot of matches, pushing through. It's been an enjoyable season. The teams worked well together. Yeah, it's been pretty enjoyable so far and quite successful.

>> You came to USD. You're from Scotland. How did you end up in South Dakota to play tennis?

>> I remember I have a friend who goes to North Dakota, so I was speaking to her, and then I was also with an agency, and they reached out and spoke to Brett, and I really enjoyed speaking to Brett and the school and the location and then I found myself in Vermillion.

>> When did you start playing tennis? When did you think that it was a sport that could take you to college and who knows where else?

>> I started playing tennis when I was six or seven-years-old because my brother played tennis. I remember watching him, and I always thought it was quite an enjoyable sport. Then I played quite a few team sports, as well, but I saw that tennis had the most opportunities, and I loved

watching professional tennis. Then also seeing all the older generation of players above me going to college tennis really inspired me.

>> At what point did you realize this might be a ticket to college degree?

>> I think when I was 16 because quite a lot of people were going off to the states, and I realized that I could do it. Around 16-years-old.

>> Was it always your goal to come to the states to go to college and play tennis or how did that come to fruition?

>> I actually didn't really know states was an option when I was 15. When I got to about 16, my friends were going off and I saw that they all managed to do it. That's when I came into my vision, and then I saw it, and I fell in love with the idea of going and experience it.

>> What has been your experience so far in college tennis and just how different is it from coming from where you did?

>> The college town is definitely a bit more feisty. The girls can be a bit more on your face, but I love the team atmosphere. I've always loved team sports. Going and experiencing it's been a different culture, but it's been really enjoyable.

>> Is there a lot of trash talk that happens in tennis matches?

>> Sometimes. But not too much. There can be, especially through some close calls, but not too often, unless it's a tight match.

>> You're coming off of a good week, in fact, named the Player of the Week in the Summit League. What does that mean to you to be recognized by the conference?

>> I've never been recognized before. I think I just felt really proud of myself for doing it. I didn't think I would do it, so I was quite proud.

>> What is it like playing on this team? Obviously, there's a couple of American players, but a lot of foreign players from different areas. What is it like for different cultures to come together in this team setting?

>> I think it's really nice. Everyone brings their own thing to the team, and just the way we all communicate and we all have different backgrounds. It's really nice when it all comes together and creates a really nice environment.

>> You're from Scotland. Somebody who doesn't know anything about Scotland, who's never been. How would you describe where you came from?

>> A lot of rain and really cold. It's really pretty. Scotland is really pretty, but a lot of rain. But people are really friendly and nice and definitely a culture change when I came to America.

>> Can you compare Vermillion, South Dakota and Glasgow, Scotland?

>> They're quite similar in some sorts of ways, but there's a lot. I don't know how to phrase this. The people in Vermillion are really nice which is a similar attribute compared to Glasgow. I think it's really hard to compare, to be honest. It's two separate places, but I really enjoy both places. I really like coming to Vermillion and people meeting them.

>> Basically, the similarities are there's people, there's buildings, and there's cars.

>> Very much. The weather's a lot better here.

>> A lot of people when they think about Scotland, they think golf. It's got of the Hoba Golf. Was that ever a part of you growing up in golf and being in that area?

>> My dad played golf, but I never got into it. My dad was like a golfer about I had a friend actually in high school, whose dad was a professional golfer, but other than that, no. But coming here, my friends are on the golf team, so I've definitely heard a lot about golf and the background of it in Scotland.

>> Has it always been tennis for you or did you play other sports and ever think about where your careers could go with those?

>> I actually think I played almost every sport. When I grew up, my parents took in about every sport, team sports, individual sports, and it's definitely taught me a lot of lessons, but it wasn't always tennis. I think when I got to 15, it narrowed it down to two sports, and then from there, it was just tennis.

>> You've played a lot this year, I think at the number three spot, maybe number four, and played a little bit at number two as well, all over the board. Is that hard to adjust or is it the same thing, and you just play whoever you play?

>> No, I think you just have to put it in your head that like you play that spot and you go from there. I really just block out what spot I'm playing and I play the person in front of me.

>> Do you have a preference on doubles, singles?

>> I really enjoy playing doubles. I also really enjoy playing singles. I like both, but doubles definitely can be enjoyable. I play with Amanda this semester, and it's been really enjoyable playing with one of my best friends.

>> When you look at your game in tennis, what would you describe as your strength of the game and what's an area that you're always trying to get better at?

>> I like to play an aggressive style of play so I like to progress forward on the court. I'd say my backhands has always been one of my strengths. My forehand, I can definitely look to improve and using that as a weapon. I get quite a lot of power on the ball, but I'm working on controlling that forehand a bit.

>> I know we don't have the greatest weather during the tennis season, so you guys do a lot of work indoors. You play a lot of matches indoors. Is it a challenge to shift from practicing a lot indoors to playing outdoor matches?

>> No, I actually don't think it really is. Once we get out training indoors, it's a bit different playing indoors, but I think I adjusted and made the changes in freshman year and now coming in my sophomore year, it's got better experience in that area.

>> What is the training like for college tennis? What do you have to do to continue to elevate your game?

>> Obviously going to practice in the morning definitely helps. We do lots of different drills, and working on different aspects of the game. I think a key factor is your teammates always showing up together. We always show up and put the motivation in together, and that really helps.

>> I know we talked about the team being from all over in different places. Do you try to give the team a taste of your culture a little bit, or is it just everybody does their thing?

>> I think we all bring a bit of our own culture, whether it's on our behaviors or things we bring. But yeah, there's definitely been a few culture talks, talking about foods and things like that.

>> What has been the biggest adjustment for you from moving from Scotland to South Dakota?

>> I think the weather. It doesn't rain as much. >> I think the people as well. Learning the different culture here to different ways at home, how you behave with interactive people is the biggest change, I think.

>> Do you know there's a town in South Dakota called Scotland, only about an hour away? Have you ever been?

>> No, but I remember in one of my first classes, I said, I was from Scotland and I got asked if I was from Scotland, South Dakota, and I was like, no. That was when I found out. I did know it was a thing.

>> Did you change your accent or did they just think that was a South Dakota accent?

>> No, and it was actually my second week here. I had a really thick Scottish accent. I don't understand.

>> Well, you learned about Scotland, South Dakota, and they learned that apparently there's not the same way of talking from Scotland, South Dakota. Look at this season, and you look ahead. Obviously, you've got a spring break trip coming up to Florida, and then you'll be deep into conference matches. What's the focus on this team of trying to get out there and win as many as you can, and obviously, the ultimate goal is to win a conference championship.

>> For sure. Our team this year is very strong. We're definitely there. We're really hoping we can beat Denver this year. We've been close, but I do think we have the chance this year. Looking forward to progressing with the team and building close connections with the girls to keep it on court.

>> What do you like about this group as a whole that gives it a chance to just continue to gel together and be a really good team?

>> We all have the same motivation. We all really want to go for it and win this conference. I think that really brings us together. Honestly, the different cultures really helps us blend together, and we all have the same understanding of what it's like being away from home and coming here.

>> I know you're deep into what you're doing here, but have you thought much about the future and what you might do? Have you thought about staying in the United States, going home to Scotland, exploring somewhere else in the world?

>> I really like traveling, but I've really enjoyed being in America, and so I'm not so sure I'm enjoying my time while I'm here, seeing where it goes, but maybe staying in America is a possibility.

>> If anybody plans a trip to Scotland, what are a couple of must-do things, must-see things that you're proud of in your home country?

>> I think you definitely have to go to the Capital. You have to go to Edinburgh. There's also this Meer 500 thing, I think it's called, and it's where you go and it's a really scenic route through people tend to go in camper vans, and it's really nice, especially if you get the good weather, it's so pretty. I would recommend doing that.

>> We'll put that on the list. Sorcha thanks for the time. Really appreciate it. Good luck this season.

>> Thank you very much.

>> That is Sorcha Caves. She is a tennis player for the University of South Dakota, had a big match against UConn and really has played well. She's played anywhere up and down the list. Played at Number 2, Number 3, Number 4 singles throughout the course of this year. She's played all throughout the lineup, and they'll continue to try to chase down that Summit League championship for tennis. They're excited about the season they could have this year for women's tennis. Let's get it going with Max Burchill. I had a chance to catch up with him, a senior who spent his entire career at South Dakota. Max, it feels like in the blink of an eye, the season has just gone by this year, and I'm sure you feel like that for your career, which has been spent entirely at USD. You get to this moment of the career, is it hard starting to think about that in time you're getting old as far as basketball is concerned, but do you think about that? The end is near?

>> Definitely think about it. Having to start thinking about getting a job, that's real-world stuff, not just, oh, I got summer workouts, stuff like that. But it went by really quick. I think the first couple of years, you're like, dang how do people do it for five, even six years sometimes, and then you get to this point and you're like, wow, that went by so fast. It's crazy.

>> Think back to coming out of high school, and obviously, you were looking at continuing to play. You chose USD. What made this the right fit for you at that time?

>> I think, I grew up a USD basketball fan and sports fan. Both my parents went here. I think it was a really special opportunity that honestly, I didn't know was available until Casey Kasperbauer hit me up and had talked about the opportunity being a chance and then officially offered it to me, and I knew right away that that was something I wanted to do.

>> He came in, had to really earn spots on the floor, minutes on the floor, things like that. Describe the first couple of years as you're trying to transition to Division 1 basketball and really find a spot for you, a role for you?

>> I think, I didn't play AU basketball in high school. I played baseball, so loved basketball, though. It's a transition like you said. The speed of play is a lot different. The athleticism is a lot different in Division 1 versus high school basketball and even lower levels. I think having no pressure on me to play right away helped me because I needed a little bit more time than some other kids that come in and play as a freshman or sophomore. I spent a lot of time on the sidelines being injured or just in practice just understanding the game, getting better IQ-wise, and I think that's something that I rely on right now to help me find minutes on the floor.

>> You went through a coaching change. Did you have to get to know the coaches? Did you ever think about maybe looking elsewhere when there was a coaching change or did it help that you mentioned Casey reached out to you and gave you that offer? Did it help that he stayed on staff?

>> I definitely think Casey staying helped me. Never really looked elsewhere because of the coaching change. Had just thought to myself like, well, if I never get a chance here, I might have to transfer to a lower level, because at the end of the day, everyone wants to play. Put in so much work and time to it that you want to be there on the court. No, not really with the coaching change. PB came in and said, everyone's got a chance to play. You got a chance just as much as everyone else. I don't care if you're a walk-on or a scholarship guy. I had a really special group returning that are some of my best friends; Cruz, Damani, Mason, Tasos. I think that helped as well with the transition. A lot of experienced guys that had played a lot of minutes in this league.

>> You look at basketball in today's world and everybody wants the ball in their hands. Everybody wants to score, and fans when they look at a box score, your eyes gravitate towards points. You do a lot of things in a role that don't always show up on the box score. Maybe some could say they're underappreciated or undervalued on some of the efforts that you do. How have you adopted that role and just made that your way of getting on the floor and making an impact?

>> I don't think if I wanted to get minutes here, it was ever going to be because of my scoring or scoring one-on-one. Basketball game is a long game. There's a lot of different factors that go into it, whether that's gaining possessions, rebounds, playing good defense, try to just control what I can control. I know the ball is always not going to be in my hands. I'm ready, if it gets past me and I'm hoping to shoot it. But just try to impact the game, gain extra possessions any way I can.

>> There's always a couple of games a year where your shooting is there and you go off for double-digit points, and it's usually in a game that really need those points and really helps. When you go into games, do you know when you might have opportunities to score or is it get into the flow of the game and start to feel the rhythm, and then it makes you want the ball more?

>> I think, obviously, there's some game plan stuff, but you never know how a team is going to come out and play specific defense on your team. But I think rhythm-wise, if I get a few shots up in the first half or first couple minutes of the game and it's feeling good, one goes in, two goes in, then I know that I'm going to stay aggressive all night.

>> Coach PB this year made the decision that this press defense was going to be the identity of this team, and you guys really had to buy in. You go to Italy, start to learn it a little bit and some of that stuff. For a guy like you, a veteran player, you've been playing a few years. How challenging was the press defense or is the press defense something that you're not accustomed to, and had to really find a way to adapt to this year?

>> I think it was definitely different for a lot of us on the team, like Paul Bruns as well, just because we have similar situations, how we played defense previously. I think this summer was

big for us having that foreign tour trip to really go see it in action. Because you practice it over and over, and you're like, well, every team knows how to be depressed, but as we've seen this year, a lot of teams have had difficulty with it and how we do that, and transition into half-court defense. I think as an older guy on the team, it was definitely harder to get conditioned and stuff like that. But as the season goes on, we all know how to do it. Every game is a little bit different. Every situation is a little bit different in the press. It's just making reads, just like basketball.

>> This is a team that has plenty of players who have played a lot of minutes at South Dakota. Some of them were new this year. There's some young players, things like that. How have you used your experience here to maybe help this team through the season? Obviously, it was up and down. There were some tough losses in there and some of that. But this team's found a way to be in the top five in the league. How have you been able to help mentor or be a leader on this group?

>> Been through the Summer League before, I think each coach has their tendencies too. Understanding how each team is going to play, whether that's slow down, run sets or if they're going to try to attack the press, take what's there in the press. >> I think mentorship is big. I had mentorship in my younger years, Stanley Umude, Damani Hayes. I think, Isaac Shay, if they mess up a lead or something, I try to just coach them a little bit and see what I see from my point of view. Just be a leader. We have a couple transfers that weren't here last year, so obviously playing for a new team is different, so just try to get them acclimated as best as possible.

>> We were talking about your role. Oftentimes, defensively, you get caught in the mismatch. You have to oftentimes defend somebody that's a little bit bigger than you. How do you try to stand your ground and hold that spot, knowing you're the undersized guy, but still very athletic?

>> Every match-up is a little bit different, try to just send them to their weakness, whether that's their offhand or try to get them to shoot something that might not be the best shot for their team and live with the results of it. Basketball, it's a long game, like I said, you got to play the percentages at some points. I think, also, showing that you won't back down will also give you an edge in that regard.

>> I think people have seen you like to show you're not going to back down, and oftentimes when there's a tie-up and held ball, you're involved in that. Usually the whistle blows and you want to make sure that you end up with the ball in your hands. That is what led to some aggressive battles for the ball. Is that a mindset? Is that something just you've always tried to do?

>> Not really, but if the guy just drops it, then it's fine, drops the ball, I'll release it, but if someone's willing to fight for it, I don't care. I think it's funny looking back on it to wrestle for the ball a little bit. It hasn't hurt us yet, so hopefully that doesn't happen.

>> Just got to keep sending that message. That's what it's about. Last regular season game, obviously, was Senior Day, and you look at the seniors and you're the only one that has spent your entire career at the University of South Dakota. That's not to take away from those other seniors. A lot of them have given three years or at least two, whatever. But that means something to a lot of our fans seeing that you've spent your entire career here and the work that you've put in describe Senior Day, and going out and you get the framed picture and all of that and try to settle emotions for a game. How special was that?

>> It was super special. I had some family that was in town, my brother and his wife and my nephew, that weren't able to make a game this year just because he's coaching basketball. They were able to come. As we get older, it's rare that we get to spend time together, just especially with my basketball schedule, no Thanksgiving, a couple days for Christmas, and that's been the last time I saw him. For him to be able to watch me play and for his family to come out and watch me play was super special. I had a lot of friends too. Senior Day is special. You never really know what it's going to feel like looking at other people's senior days like Damani and Cruz, or last year, Lahats. You never know what it feels like till you're in that moment, but it was really special.

>> It's different when you walk out onto that floor. Especially with your dad, and I don't know how many people know this, but he puts a lot of miles on. He goes to a lot of games. I don't know. You could probably count on one or two hands how many games he's missed over the last couple of years. How special is that seeing him just everywhere, all over the country, no matter where we go, he's there to support you?

>> My dad's special. Growing up, he was always like that, would try to make all of my brother's sporting events on one weekend if he could, which was just insane. Doesn't care about driving. Drove to Denver, which is a long haul, 10 hours, but he'll do anything for us and my brothers, especially sports-related. He loves watching sports. He calls me after every game, every day almost, just asking about practice and stuff like that. It was really cool for him to be able to watch my career. He would even travel to some away games when I wasn't playing just to be there to support. Really special for him.

>> What's he going to do when you're done? Your nephew's better get it in gear.

>> He's not old enough yet, but probably play a lot of golf together.

>> That'll be good. No doubt. Max, you look back at your career. How would you describe your career? People look back and think about Max Burchill five, 10 years down the road. What do you hope they think about when they think about Max Burchill playing at the University of South Dakota?

>> I'm not going to score 20 points a game or anything like that, but someone that's willing to fight for the team holds a lot of pride with USD and the basketball team, of course, and just

making the most of your opportunity. I wasn't guaranteed anything when I came here and tried to make the most of it. Just a lot of pride in what you do.

>> We're to the point of the season where it's winter season pretty much comes to an end. It's one of those things where you go through all season and you lose a game, you just pick it up and know there's another opportunity. How does the mindset change at this point of the season as you get to the conference tournament?

>> We have a six seniors, do or die, for a lot of us in our careers, especially me and Paul. This Friday could be our last collegiate basketball game ever. I think having that, but also, we're the five seed. We're playing the four seeds. Really, we're not picked to win that game. Play free, shouldn't be any pressure and just play our game, and hopefully, we can live with the result.

>> What do you really like about this team that gives it a chance to go three wins in three days and do something really special?

>> I think we have the experience on our team, especially going to Sioux Falls. I think we have a lot of guys that just love playing basketball. They don't want the season to end yet. We talked in the locker room like, dang, we're just waiting for the season to get here in the fall, and now it's almost over and it's crazy. I think a lot of guys that want to keep playing.

>> You mentioned at the start of this, you're getting to the point where you got to find a real job. You got to start doing some of that. What is the plan for you next? What are you hoping to do, and are you sticking around in the area? What's your vision for the future of Max Burchill?

>> I want to, hopefully, find something in Sioux Falls, just stay close to family. My dad and my brother live there. That'd be ideal. I'm still young, so I could go live somewhere, hopefully, in the Midwest, a bigger city or something just to find something new. But I want to get into wealth management or sales of some sort. Start really looking into that after the season but want to keep the main thing the main thing.

>> A future season ticket holder of Coyote basketball?

>> Might be. Me and my dad might have to come down here quite a bit.

>> No doubt. Max, great stuff. Really appreciate the time as always. Good luck this weekend, we're excited for it, I know a lot of people are, and appreciate everything you've done for USD and your career here. It's been awesome to watch you grow up in Coyote basketball and watch your career develop the way that it has. Really appreciate it. Good luck this weekend.

>> Thank you, John.

>> That is Max Burchill. He is a senior men's basketball player, hoping that he has a handful of

games left in his Coyote career. Obviously, not hoping for just one. We're hoping for minimum three or minimum four, I guess, it would be. Minimum three means you get to the championship. Minimum four means you win the Summit League title and go to the NCAA tournament. We'll see how things play out for Coyote basketball this weekend in the Denny Sanford Premier Center in Sioux Falls. Big thanks to Max Burchill for joining the show, also Sorcha Caves for being a guest on the podcast this week. Great interviews, and they were just fun to talk to. I sat around with both of those athletes for quite some time after the interview got done, and just continued to talk about their time at USD. Really appreciate the time that they give us as always. Let's take a look at what is going on in Coyote Athletics. Of course, the Summit League basketball tournament is going on. Women's basketball playing on a Thursday afternoon match-up, men's basketball will play Friday night against North Dakota State. We'll keep an eye on how things go there. Semi-finals are on Saturday. The championships are on Sunday. All games are televised on the Summit League Network and Midco Sports, through the quarter finals of the men and through the semi-finals of the women. The women's championship, the men's semi-finals, and the men's championship are all on CBS Sports Network. Make note of that. If you're not in Sioux Falls and you're looking for the games, please make note of that because, obviously, changing between networks can get a little bit confusing. Keep an eye on that, and you can hear all of the Coyote games all weekend long on the Coyote Sports Network as well. Women's tennis will play on Friday. They're at Omaha to begin Summit League play. Softball continues its run. They've won nine in a row. They'll try to keep it going on Friday when they play at Coastal Carolina in Conway, South Carolina. Those two are also scheduled to play games on Saturday and Sunday, and softball will continue its spring break trip out in South Carolina. They'll play at Presbyterian, USC Upstate, and Watford all before coming back home to start classes for the next semester. The men's golf team is in action Monday and Tuesday. They are at the Donald Ross Intercollegiate at Southern Pines, North Carolina. Women's tennis, after they play in Omaha, they'll head down to Orlando, Florida. They're scheduled to take on Fairfield, Hampton, and Lamar over the course of three days next week in Orlando, Florida. We'll keep an eye on those results as well. Lots of things going on for Coyote Athletics right now. Keep up to date at goyotes.com. Schedules, results, changes, stories, all of it at goyotes.com. That's it for me this week. Thanks so much for tuning in to another episode of the YoteCast Podcast. I'm John Thayer. Have yourself a tremendous weekend. As always, stay safe and go Yotes.

>> Thanks for listening to YoteCast, the official podcast of the University of South Dakota Athletics.

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>> The preceding has been a leer field presentation on the Coyote Sports Network.