

REBEL 5IVE



Episode #20 – Michael Wantz

Gary: 00:02 You're listening to Rebel 5ive an interactive interview podcast with alumni, past and current parents and friends of Roncalli high school. I'm your host, Gary Armbruster, Director of Alumni and Corporate Relations at Roncalli . And each week I will ask our guests five questions regarding how their lives have evolved and how key connections of experience, opportunity and alumni networking have propelled them to where they are today. We'll talk challenges, how to overcome challenges and what they've learned along the way. Stay tuned.

Gary: 00:33 This week's guest on the Rebel 5ive podcast comes to us from Union City, Indiana. He played tennis, basketball, and baseball at union City for the Indians. He went off Ball State, became a student manager for the basketball program. Uh, was a volunteer assistant at UIndy, assistant coach at Wilberforce University and a graduate assistant at UIndy, Michael Wantz . Welcome to the Rebel 5ive podcast.

Michael: 00:58 Thanks Gary. Honor to be here.

Gary: 00:59 So you've got a Union City and I'd be honest with you, I had to look it up there. They were the Indians, Ball State. U Indy, Wilberforce. None of those are direct connections to Roncalli . So how in the world did you get to Roncalli ?

Michael: 01:14 That's a good question. So after, uh, I actually had two different stints at UIndy as a volunteer and then back as the ga in oh one oh two. And just knew having not played and the quickest way to be a head coach was probably in the high school, um, game versus the college game. So, uh, just sent out a lot of resumes to a lot of different places, Roncalli being one of them and, um, really thought I would maybe go to Ben Davis or Warren or speedway as, uh, an assistant, something like that. But, uh, got the call and um, got an interview and, and uh, ended up working out thankfully. Who'd you interview with? Yeah, I still remember it in a Chuck's old conference room. It was, it was chuck, it was Dave and Angie Toner and uh, Jeff Kirkoff. And uh, I still talk about this during our interview portion in my entrepreneurship class. Um, Angie toner, as you can imagine, made me feel so welcome and just, I was nervous. 27 year

old kid. Not that the other three didn't, but, uh, Angie was very motherly, um, laughed at all my jokes, smiled at everything. And I still talk about that in my class about how if you are the interviewer to maybe do some things to help the interviewee be a little bit more comfortable

Gary: 02:34 Being from Union City and going to ball state. Now obviously we have a lot of kids that go to ball state, but w when were you introduced to Roncalli ? Where did that come from?

Michael: 02:43 Yeah, there were some, uh, I had quite a few, um, kids that I knew of for whatever reason. Um, ironically Jimmy Decamp and Tom Utnage were on my dorm floor. I knew Phil Agresta, I knew Tommy Mascarl yet at, at ball state Jeff Mader. Um, there was a Schoettle house that I wouldn't even begin to know how many Schoettle's lived in there or who they were, but I didn't. Right. You knew of the Schoettle House. So I knew of Roncalli . Uh, and then being at UIndy I believe I had, um, maybe at least at one point may be applied to sub here. My memory of, uh, a Was coming in Lasalle was like the windows. Like you can just kind of see the windows up this little hill. So, um, didn't have much of a, of a, of a knowledge. I remember dropping off my resume to, to Dave Toner and then getting a call. Um, they actually offered the job to somebody else that was a little more experienced that couldn't quite make it work. And, uh, you know, I've been number two before and I'm okay with it.

Gary: 03:41 17 years as our head coach. Going into your 18th season, I've asked this to a lot of our guests. Um, did you ever think that you'd still be here after 17 years?

Michael: 03:51 No. No. You don't. You have these, uh, dreams of, of grander and everything. Not that this isn't, you know, I don't mean it to sound that way, but after, you know, thought you'd get your feet wet at a great place like Roncalli and try to go onto those places as a kid that you heard about, whether it'd be Richmond, Kokomo, Ben Davis, anything like that. But, um, you know, there's been nothing that has, um, ever even come close to making me, you know, quite want to want to leave here yet. So it's just been a great fit. And uh, uh, you know, just a, just a great fit and a great 17 years. Hard to believe.

Gary: 04:27 I believe you're probably have, have the longest tenure on our whole athletic coaching staff. Is that, that's probably right.

Michael: 04:36 Uh, I w I would, I would think so. Yeah. So, so we go to funny story about that. We'd go to those Marion County coaches meetings, right? If you just list the coach at his own school and now granted, Mark James has done it longer than I am, but he's bounced around. But I'm pretty sure it's Jack Kiefer at Lawrence north since 1976. And then myself being the longest, once Doug Mitchell retired from north central. Um, that's really weird cause you still think of yourself as a young guy, young guy, 30 year old guy. And it's not, not quite that way anymore.

Gary: 05:09 So what does that mean to you? I mean you've been here, uh, for a long time. Second in Marion county that's gotta have some kind of significance to you.

Michael: 05:17 Yeah, it's, I'm proud of it. And in this day and age where, um, and, and I think the biggest testament is probably to the administration that has had confidence in me and, uh, been very supportive of me, especially, you know, I didn't really know what I was doing at 27 and was a little volatile maybe out there on the court and practice or in games and just, uh, always felt so supported by, um, Dr Hollowell, Chuck, Dave Toner at the time. And Angie, obviously now David and everybody. So it's just been a great fit and, uh, excited to keep trudging forward.

Gary: 05:52 So your first year is oh, two oh three. Correct. Um, we had just, won, I dunno [inaudible] maybe our sixth state football championship. Obviously Roncalli has been as a football school for a long, long time. Did you have any apprehensions of, of dealing with that or how did that go?

Michael: 06:09 No, not, not really. And um, you know, Bruce from day one was great. He himself was a three sport athlete I believe in high school and played basketball and ran track as well. And um, if anything, I think we just needed to convince the guys that basketball is a sport you have to put at least as much if not maybe even a little more time into as we are in the weight room and seven on seven. We've had baseball players over the years. So certainly, um,

you know, if you look at any of our teams and especially our really good teams, lots of multiple sports athletes we've always worked well with, but, but basketball is a highly skilled sport. You just gotta you know, put in the, put in the time with that sport as well,

Gary: 06:47 which brings me to this point. Um, you start 02, 03 and you look at the overall all time boys record at that time it was 301-364. So we're 63 games under 500. Not that we didn't have good teams or not that we didn't have good coaches, but in your 17 years, you're 112 games over 500. You and I've talked about this over the years. Um, that's really, really significant because if you take all the coaches before you, the 33 years before you, none of them had a re a career record over 500. So talk a little bit about that. You kinda just mentioned a little bit about working in the weight room and, and uh, doing the extra effort. Why have you had that much success?

Michael: 07:35 Well, first of all, anytime you hear me talk about this, you will hear me say we and not I because it's so much more in, and I actually would at some point, um, maybe even like to list everybody that's been assistant over the years. Maybe there at the end or something. But, uh, uh, you know, I, I think I came in at a great time. I think that, um, the school was ready, um, to maybe take the next step with, with basketball. I came in with great talent, um, mean, you know, I, I try stay away from listing guys and listing teams, but you know, I walked in the door my first day, Jeff Manley's as good as anybody that's ever played here. Um, had Justin Agresta as well. And then my recollection of the first few open gyms where like you start noticing these sophomores a little bit too, that kind of ended up being the group that wins the first, uh, sectional in 05 Werner, Kuntz Sergi, Peterman, Donnell, Kyle Neu that that's seven.

Michael: 08:31 I think that's seven. So it's just been a good mesh. We, we've had tremendous size. I mean, I get good hearted ribs from coach Opel coach Wirty coach Weisenbach all the time. Like right. I mean, I, I mean, if you list the tallest guys to ever play basketball, Roncalli down to the shortest, the top 10 of the top 12 or you know, this better than I do, but most of them would be ones that have played for me. And that doesn't mean anything in and of itself, but it doesn't hurt. Right. Um, we've had a good mix of, again, the multi-sport athletes, but we've also had a mix of guys that have said basketball is one of my number one, I want to play it and I'm not the biggest AAU guy, but you need to have that mix. Um, so we've had some heavy AAU guys guys that go to camps, guys that have played college basketball. So, um, it's been a great fit. Uh, the parents have been great. The parents have, let me, let us coach them, have let us hold them accountable. And um, you know, we've had some great memories and some great times.

Gary: 09:27 You mentioned the 05 team, you broke the ice. I played a long, long time ago. Um, my senior year we made it to the sectional final. We lost by four and that was as close as we got to a sectional, a sectional win probably until 05. You are obviously aware that we'd never want a sectional before. Talk a little bit about that and how it developed over that season.

Michael: 09:49 Well, first of all, let's don't joke. We understand that we were winning them in class basketball in three A not that it's any less, but we also weren't, maybe Warren, maybe you were playing some warrens and some good Marshall teams and some good franklin Central teams. So we understand that. But uh, you know, that team, um, that team was, um, a little slow to get started just cause they'd won the third championship in a row and I'm a little bit slow to get started, then hit our stride and then had, uh, one weekend where, um, at the time thought it was kind of a bad loss, um, at Ritter. And then, um, went to Richmond the next night and people asked me who's the best player that we've played against. And obviously we've seen some Zellers and um, you know, Dylan Windler just got drafted in the NBA, but Dominic James from Richmond who went up, went on to play at Marquette, was as good as anybody and he hits a last second fall away, three going out of bounds.

Michael: 10:45 So like, not all for moral victories, but going over there to Richmond and, and knowing that we could play with one of the best teams in the state in a great facility. By the way, that's where we grew up going to play sectionals over in the Tiernan Center. And then after that we just got rolling and it didn't seem like it. But after the season you start looking at the scores and like nobody was even close to us, especially in the, in the, in the sectional. Um, and, and was able to beat Chatart there in the championship. And um, just keep playing a little bit there. It was good year.

Gary: 11:14 You come back the second, next year. Oh six have some similar success. Talk about that a little bit.

Michael: 11:20 Yeah. You know, I think in both football and um, basketball with that group, we didn't really know what we all had on the second teams of our teams because that 05 group was so deep and so good and all those sports and um, you know, the 06 group, um, you know, you think of Brandon Axum and Billy Perry and Justin Wernke. And then we had um, some young guys, um, on that team as juniors, the Paul Corsaros and the Joe Britners. And then Tyler Peterman was a, was a sophomore, so, um, were able to win it again and, and back to, um, new castle again and still feel like we're owed some free throws. Not that, how deep are we into this? And I brought up the free throws at new castle less than 10 minutes.

Gary: 12:06 A lot of those guys have come back and have been a your assistant coaches. So talk a little bit about what that means to you.

Michael: 12:13 Well, it means I'm old because my whole staff is almost played for me. Um, you know, just to, for them to have gone through it. I think it gives them credibility with the players. One and two. They know what I expect. Um, you know, Justin Agresta, a Justin Wernke, uh, John Hasty right now, Christopher Fey are all former players and really I didn't coach Jamin Wernke I missed him by one year, but he's been around for so long. He kind of knows, knows what we're looking for. So, you know, we would want the best coach available. So if it's somebody that applies that didn't play here, we would go that way. But, um, that brings a lot of, a lot of credibility and it's, it's, it's neat for the to, to have some alum on your bench.

Gary: 12:59 Cole Toner was one of our, uh, our guests a few weeks back and talking about one of your big guys [inaudible] um, and he talks about the 2011, 2012 team his senior year. And, uh, we had just gone up the 4A and, uh, Cole was pretty adamant that had, we stayed in 3A, I think we went up to 4A. We were the smallest school and 4A by two students, I think. Um, and we had to play a big school, uh, post season. Uh, but he talked about, you know, have we stayed in 3A we probably would have been favored to win a state championship. We've never won a state championship in basketball. So talk a little bit about that because winning a sectional for us and 4A is a pretty big deal. We've never done that in boys basketball. So measure that against, uh, maybe that team that really had a really good shot.

Michael: 13:50 Yeah. So Guerin won it that year. Exactly. We weren't playing Guerin at that time. Um, so, but I have joked with Pete Smith and Tommy Mascari that they have our, have our rings, but you never know. It's so hard. It's so hard to win and you almost feel like, uh, we were, we were given, not given the win against Cathedral, but like that makes it, when you're thinking back about it, that makes it tolerable, right. To won and really to have a chance to win the second night at Lawrence Central, would we have won three a, I don't know. I would've liked to have given it a shot, cause I know they went, uh, you know, Guerin I think their regional that year was maybe at Greencastle with some more Western schools and I'd have to look, but, uh, I would've loved to give it a shot. But, uh, you know, when you talk about special nights and special special things and, you know, just listen to the podcasts, a lot of people have brought in, brought up that game. There there at tech and that, and that was, that was a special night. Cole himself Kinda set the tone a little bit. I think Angie told the story. She got a little bit wrong. Uh, but she had the jest, um, cathedral ran these cuts that they're called Iverson cuts where you have the two posts, guys at both elbows and the guard kind of cuts off at will Cole just kinda snuck out from behind his guy and leveled the guy in. It would not have been in an area that an official would've even really needed to be looking, but we kind of had that drawn up, uh, right away. So we were actually on defense. It wasn't a screen, but, uh, Cole put, um, an Irish man on his, uh, behind and I think kinda set the, set the tone for the rest of the rest of the game that night.

Gary: 15:24 Three years ago we joined the conference [inaudible] and uh, we're in the Circle City Conference. We've never been in a conference before. Talk a little bit about that because, um, you know, w winning a, a boy's basketball sectional for us is going to be a, a tough mountain to climb and uh, playing in 4A and playing big schools, you know, we're one of the small schools there can only be one first champion and we're the first champion of that conference. So talk a little bit about that,.

Michael: 15:51 Right. Um, for, we've been trying to get into some conference, maybe not as aggressively as always, but really I can remember as early as oh four oh five meeting at different places. The coaching staff, the mid-state was always talked about conference Indiana was always talked about and I was obviously for it, but I also was like, Hey, we've survived 40 years or whatever it was at the time without a conference. It's not that big a deal, but now all of a sudden you're in one. It's like, wow, it is. Yeah, it is a big deal. Um, you know, it's just every game was important, but four or five more games, six games, however many games are a little bit more important each year. Anytime you have a chance to play for a championship, it's a good thing. And really anytime you can get your kids more recognition, you know, union city or Richmond or Kokomo or whatever, these kids for a hundred years, I've been able to get all conference accolades. Roncalli has not been able to until now. So, uh, that makes it neat. That makes it, I think we're, I think it's a nice conference. I think that it's a good fit for the schools that are in it. And, um, yeah, it was, you know, anytime you can win a win a championship and that night here against Brebeuf, that was was great.

Gary: 17:04 All right, we're going to go to a break real quick here. Listen to a message from our sponsor. We'll be back with Michael Wantz.

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Gary: 17:42 We're back with Michael Wantz here on the Rebel Five podcast. Michael, thank you for being here today. You've got three children. Uh, Eli is going to be eight in August. He's going to be in second grade. That seems impossible. Zoe and Piper are pre k five and three. You are known for your, um, let's say fiery. Passionate. Passionate. Okay. I like that. Eli's getting older. He's going to notice that. Does that come into play at all or do you even think about that as far as being maybe a little mellower than when you started?

Michael: 18:19 Yeah, I think so. I, I think, um, you know, the more eyes or eyes are on you and I do think that, uh, just age mellows you a little bit, um, as well. But um, yeah. Yeah, I do think that that, uh, that, that mellows you a little bit and I hope, I hope that people, although people just remember the, maybe the big outbursts, they don't look at the totality of it. Maybe that maybe those outburst of maybe gone down a little bit over the years, but uh, but yeah. Yeah. And you realize, uh, as you know, uh, things become what were your top priority at one point? Yes. Do not remain always your top priority.

Gary: 18:56 I think I've asked most of our guests on the Rebel Five podcast, what their first job was. What was your first job?

Michael: 19:02 Well, everybody my age back then mowed, so you know, mowed a few yards and neighborhood, but really a, the first one. And it was kind of a coveted job in my hometown, was a, a little league umpire, you know, them out there. And, uh, I had a buddy, Joel Miller that grew up right. You know, there was this one house in between, I don't know, in union city, we would call that two doors down. I don't know if that was around here, they would call it, but Joel was two doors down from me and we had some fun of it. We took it seriously. But, you know, uh, get sports illustrated back in the day and a cassette tape, a video tape would come with it and there would be a pitcher. He wouldn't be mimicking all the, the empires of the time, John McSherry or big Eric, Greg. And so we would work those in a little bit, but we took it very seriously. But we had some fun. We'd appeal ball strikes and check swings and, uh, we had some fun with it. But, uh, yeah, little league empire would be, would be the first job and not making very much money.

Gary: 19:52 Any, uh, of course now it was the love of the game, right? Any lessons you learned from, uh, those days that maybe you remember or you used today?

Michael: 20:02 Well, looking back, you'd think maybe I would've got some empathy for officials. That's kind of where I was going back quite that quite happened. But a, you just doing your best and working hard and uh, you know, selling yourself, whether you're selling your call or whatever, but uh, uh, you know, that was, uh, that was a good time then and, and you know, we're making five, six bucks a game or something, something. Now these kids work by

themselves. I think a lot of these little league games with, they're getting like 35, 40 bucks. I tell it was like, you need to mow yards, you need to umpire little league games because those pay seems like to me a lot of money these days.

Gary: 20:36 When you have a s uh, a kid on your team, when you see that they can be better than they are and, but they don't see it, how do you, how do you deal with that?

Michael: 20:46 That's good question. First and foremost, I think before you can do anything with students or players, anything, there has to be a relationship and a trusting relationship. And, um, even here at Roncalli, we never know what is going on outside of school for them. And we've had some guys before that, um, they seem standoffish right away. You find out later on that maybe there's been something at home that doesn't get them to trust authorities right away. But I think just continued to, um, give them confidence and show them maybe what they can do. And I think if there is there, there's an end goal in mind, like, what's the end goal here? Like, can we get, can we get into the start and can we get what, what can we get and where can we get to with this young man? And um, you know, at the end of the day they have to want it as well. And if you can't pull that out, you know, it's, it's going to be a tenuous situation. But usually a lot of times it's a confidence thing. They have no idea. It's not that they don't want it. It's like they're, whether they're junior and they don't wanna step on senior toes, whether they, they don't want to look silly something. Um, but I think you just gotta let 'em know success is okay.

Gary: 21:56 The kind of goes along with the next question. Having a, a, a, a setback overcome. You have an example of that or maybe a disappointment that you had to deal with with us, with a kid that, uh, you know, they, they fought through and came through. Yeah. Wow. Kellen Schreiber right. I mean, he's a kid that, uh, never made an A team in grade school and w you know, he had a great career at Roncalli and now he's playing of Wabash.

Michael: 22:21 yeah. My two examples of that, and I've had to switch to Kellen because kids know who Kellen, but my story, uh, years ago, and I think it's some relation to was Michael Mizlin. Michael Michelin was like that as well. He didn't make those A teams growing up, but kept at it. He played college basketball. Now, these kids don't quite remember Michael, but they know Kellen Schreiber yet. Kellen Kellen never played on that and he can now, he, I tell him to like there are some things he grew, he got bigger and stronger, but he kept his head down. He kept working, he was hearing the right things at home from mom and dad, which is important. And he just kept working, kept working and kept, you know, and just kept passing guys. And you know, now he's playing college basketball.

Gary: 22:59 Well, and let's be honest, he had some pretty good genes. He did. Okay. Switching gears. So you drive down Lasalle Avenue right now, Lasalle South Street, and uh, on the right hand side before you get to school. There's a big old building there and we're building a new gym. Um, we played in the same gym for almost 60 years. Talk a little bit about the new gym. I know you've been out there and, uh, it's getting pretty exciting.

Michael: 23:24 Yeah, just getting exciting. You, you kind of caution yourself with like, oh, we may not be ready, but every time I see Jason Sims, it's like, Hey, Dr Hollowell, okay-ed, this or this or the scores table or the, or the seats or whatever. And we had a meeting about maybe when, what game it might be open for and it's like, wow, this is, this is getting real and it's exciting. Um, maybe some mixed emotions because, um, you know, you spend a lot of time in the woodshed. Um, really even when, you know, if you, if you've talked to a retired coach and what are they going to miss? A lot of times they talk about the practices more than the games and like, we just spent, you know, for every game the public has ever seen in there, the team has probably had five practices in there to get ready for that four or five or three or so.

Michael: 24:08 Right. You know, you're practicing there three or four times, uh, for every game. So, um, but excited for the kids. Um, buckets are up, you know, walls are painted. I'm just really excited to, uh, to get it opened up whenever, whenever we can.

Gary: 24:25 What will it mean to the kids, do you think?

Michael: 24:27 You know, I think kids like shiny things, you know, uh, you know, you certainly, I hope we can keep our, our closeness, you know, you don't want to lose that. Um, the, the, and that all depends on if kids come or not,

which I know they will early. But, uh, I think just the, it'll probably be like, we didn't realize what we didn't have. You know, it's like, uh, you know, the the, woodshed's great, um, but then all of a sudden it's like, wow, okay. Um, whatever we call it the Vinny or the W [inaudible] Armbruster court, whatever.

Michael: 24:58 Uh, but, uh, no s excited. I did joke though, I to Stan Benge like, I hope we at least get a practice in there a time or two before we play. Or there'll be like a row will be open up this new gym. It's like, it'll be a road game cause we haven't practiced in there.

Gary: 25:10 Speaking of the woodshed favorite woodshed moment?

Michael: 25:13 Yeah. I know a lot of them went with a, the cathedral game and oh seven when, when Paul, um, kind of went off and that was, that was tremendous. That was a great game and ended up beating them again and 09, Kevin Aaron Evans, Matt Herbertz, that group, uh, one that's probably a little bit under the radar that people may not realize. When I got here, the gold standard was Chatard. They won state my first year. Um, and, and we were three A.

Michael: 25:38 So Cathedral didn't have a ton of juice, at least to me. I wasn't from here. And you know, we played cathedral in February. If we lost by double digits, we just got ready for our 3A sectional, so it maybe didn't have as much juice as as it does now. But, um, senior night in 04 was the first time we were able to beat Chatard and, uh, and I call it senior night magic when the seniors are able to play well. And Steven Schott was always in the rotation and did great. Um, Matt Taylor Colts announcer, Matt Taylor, um, wasn't maybe necessary. He was, he was in the rotation, but he had a great game on his senior night and we were just able to beat them in front of a great crowd and then lost to them a week later, um, after leading three quarters to almost win that first sectional in 04.

Speaker 3: 26:28 But a couple others just that jump off the Michael Clements it up and you know, against it against park tudor and, and um, my wife always gave me a hard time anytime Yogi was playing on t v and I knew I had to tell somebody and sometimes it was just her that his record against Roncalli was just, was just two wins and three losses. Well, one game IU and Purdue were playing and Yogi Ferrell was the IU starting point guard and PJ Thompson from Brebeuf was the Purdue starting point guard. And between him, between those two, their record against Roncalli was three wins and seven losses. That's pretty impressive. That's pretty, that's pretty something. I think that's pretty cool. I think that's pretty cool. So, um, and then when in the championship and even the, the Center Grove game a couple of years ago, kind of pop off with Coach Painter here. We're, we're pretty cool. Pretty cool times.

Gary: 27:18 Will you miss the Woodshed?

Michael: 27:20 Yes, yes. You know, we're already like, you know, you get something new and are like, hey, we can, we have a throwback game. It's like we haven't even opened the new gym yet, but uh, yeah, I mean the, there's a ton of memories in there and a certainly a bunch of people that accepted a 27 year old kid that didn't quite know what he was doing. So, uh, we'll certainly miss the woodshed, but it sounds like at least for the time being, it's going to stay as is. So they'll still be freshman games in there and some different things, so on. It's just a few steps away from the new one.

Gary: 27:48 Well, and so you've been the coach of it for 17 of the 50 years and those have been some really, really good years. And, uh, uh, only two losing seasons in that 17 year span. So, um, unprecedented in our history. And, uh, Kudos to you for, for leading the program. Uh, we're going to take another break and we'll be back with Michael Wantz.

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Gary: 28:42 We're back with Michael Wantz here on the Rebel Five podcast. Beach Grove has always been a, uh, obviously a close neighbor of ours. Um, we've always respected them. They've always respected us. Um, this past

spring, uh, they lost their head coach Matt English and I know he's a friend of yours. Uh, talk a little bit about that rivalry, uh, what, what kind of Guy Matt was and, and your friendship.

Michael: 29:06 Yeah, well, early on Matt and I just just hit it off and um, you know, could, could kind of separate the, the on the court and off the court stuff and whether it's trading film or talking about other teams that we both played. And I just had never seen a guy who was better for a school and for community than Matt English was for, for Beach Grove. And I'm certainly not anything disparaging against it's against beech grove I think is a great place. But there were some kids over there that probably needed a strong male figure, like a big Matt English, you know, and uh, and he, uh, he would be honest with you and tell them, uh, the way it was and he was fiery. Um, something I didn't really know until kind of the end of, of his life with his wife, uh, sharing as is how big the Roncalli game was, was to him and how big the a of a, of a rivalry he saw that.

Michael: 29:59 And one kind of funny story. It was, it was here, so I could probably figure out the year but with, without, with the looking. But um, we both had the ear of an official at about half court and we were, you know, poor official can't win. Both coaches are yelling at him. And I don't know who stuck their hand out first, but the official kind of just got away left to, to leave us alone and one of us just put their hands out. We gave each other a high five. So I think the crowd that was watching kind of like that. So it's a big loss. I just feel terrible for Angela. But uh, you know, Matt is a, was a good friend and a, a great coach and somebody that, uh, I know I'll remember a fondly

Gary: 30:36 Well. We also had another big loss in the spring. And, uh, I know my, my own relationship with my dad was very, very important to me. Uh, he's been gone for nine, almost nine years and I always looked up to him and he meant a lot to me. We Lost Your Dad. So talk a little bit about Mel.

Michael: 30:55 Yeah, thanks. Just a, you know, just unwavering support. He was so, so proud and he loved, uh, um, you know, I would come out after the games and, and mom would be in the, in the bleachers and where's dad? Why he's out there somewhere. Like, you know, he was not a Roncalli guy, but he had no problem getting into the crowd and talking to people and, and um, you know, I had lunch, a breakfast with Jason Werner the other day 05. And he's like, man, talk about a guy that maybe you didn't see for 10 years. And he goes, if I would see him today, after 10 years, not seem, I know we would talk. I know it would give him a hug and, and you know, and, and my mom too, you know, that first that Rob Brown, uh, ruined it, not ruined it, but made it easier for them to stay at home as they got older.

Michael: 31:40 But early on before that, you know, they were coming two hours, one way, multiple times a week and, uh, you know, dad driving maybe, but mom was the one that was still working. So mom was the one that would have to get up in the morning. So, uh, but just between both mom and dad, just a unwavering support and a know, they would be there for anything. So, yeah. I appreciate you bringing that up. That is a, a big loss for us. But, uh, we have the memories and uh, you know, we're holding onto those for sure.

Gary: 32:07 Well, my, my memory of your dad is just simply just his smile. I mean, he just, uh, was always smiling. I know. He's very proud of you. So thank you. Rebel. Five questions. We ask everybody who's on the Rebel 5ive these questions and I'm going to start with in another life, what would you want to be or do?

Michael: 32:23 Well, I'll have a non-realistic one and a realistic one, you know, is as much of a, obviously as a basketball person I've become in my adult life, first and foremost, I was a baseball kid, which most of us become. So if you could just say anything, it'd be a 20 year career as a shortstop for the Cincinnati Reds. Just, you know, grew up having those on my grandpa's radio at the lake and Salina to having them in our garage. And so just a struggling, a struggling reds fan for, for all my life. But something that would be neat. I grew up also, you know, wanting to be a fireman. My uncle, so my dad's oldest brother who I was very close to was the fire chief in my little hometown. So as to a kid, that's pretty cool. You know, we'd get in trouble for following the sirens to go see where uncle Dick was and, and all that. But, but yeah, either the shortstop or a or a or a firefighter for sure.

Gary: 33:16 Those are good ones. Yeah. Davey conception with skipping across. Yeah. I actually ended up Barry Larkin, a little bay area. Absolutely. Yeah. Yeah.

Michael: 33:24 What is the funniest thing that has happened to you recently? I knew this was coming and I was kind of trying to think of something with the kids, but, and I'll try and condense this a little bit with my son Eli, who will be eight in August. We're dipping our toe in the all star baseball a little bit. So we play at Franklin township. Rookie League in our first tournament was at Edgewood where I believe you've probably spent quite a few time and yeah, nervous is the wrong word for the first tournament. I was anxious so we'd be bopping along and somebody had said parking's not great coaching.

Michael: 33:54 I was coaching, I help coach, I help coach. So we're, we're pulling into edge what somebody had already told me parking wasn't great over there. So uh, but I'm like, oh there's a great spot right there. Well what I didn't realize in the middle of the parking lot is an exit lane to get out. And I parked my car and went to the game and coached the game and played fishers or something. Came back coming up to the car. I'm like, why are these cars just inching around my car? I realized I was parked in the middle. Do you know what lane I'm talking about? I was parked cause it, if you don't know it's like I was parked in the middle. Well I've got my last name on my coaching shirt so I wanted to not even go. I just wanted to keep walking by the van but I was like, he like quick come on.

Michael: 34:42 So we bumped in, pull out of there. Well it's not done yet. I call Scott Marsh on the way home. Cause I know he spends a lot of time over there and I kind of explained it. He goes, that was you. He goes, I just dropped my daughter off there to work the concession stand. And you got cursed by about three or four people that were trying to get around. So I just, I don't know. That's my own expense I guess. But I just parked right in the middle of the exit lane and they had to Kinda let, yeah, that's the one reason I don't have one of those like Roncalli basketball coach Wantz, cause who knows I'm gonna do something silly like that.

Gary: 35:10 favorite time or place when you've run into a Roncalli person.

Michael: 35:13 Yeah, there hasn't been a time we ran into a family in Chicago over spring break were probably the biggest one is we're a couple summers ago were in Destin, Florida sitting on the beach and here walks, I'm Dr La Rosa and his, all his beautiful daughters there.

Michael: 35:25 And they had, we stopped and talked and they'd been coming to that same beach for 28 years or something like that, that same week. So kind of interesting to be a, you know, that far away and run into a great Roncalli family. Yeah.

Gary: 35:37 What do you wish you could tell your younger self.

Michael: 35:40 be where your feet are being engaged, you know, with all the distractions we have in this world right now, if you can be, you know, distracted, like, you know, everybody's at these ball games but they're looking at their phone or something like that. It's like, just be engaged because you're going to wake up one day and not that I have regrets. We going gonna wake up one day, 44 and three kids and it's like, what did I miss? What did I miss? Was I on my phone? Was I thinking about something else? Like, and you never want, you know, you never want to miss anything with your kids. So it's like be engaged. Be where your feet are is what I would tell. Tell somebody. Yeah.

Gary: 36:12 That might kind of dovetail into those last question. Life Advice. Yeah. Um, do you have any life advice?

Michael: 36:19 Just, you know, go for it. And you know, and don't ever have any regrets that you didn't try and go for some career or ask that girl out or something or you know, if you wouldn't have done that, we wouldn't have been sitting here with, uh, with Darla, you know, so. So just go for it. I would say.

Gary: 36:34 All right, we're going to take our last break and we'll be back with Michael. One

Speaker 4: 36:40 The Rebel Five is sponsored by Steve's flowers and gifts for the best and freshest flowers in Indianapolis and surrounding areas Steve's flowers and gifts. Have exactly what you're looking for for your next special occasion called Steve's flowers at 800-742-9359.

Gary: 37:12 We're back with Michael wants on the Rebel Five podcast again, thanks for being here today. Mike. We haven't really talked about teaching. I know, uh, that's, uh, obviously half of your job is teaching. So, um, talk a little bit about what that's meant to you being in the classroom. Um, because you've got 12 guys on your basketball team, but you've got a whole group of kids. And so what's that mean to you? It'd be an a teacher.

Michael: 37:38 yeah, it's, it's great. It's, it's kind of, um, you get a taste, a little bit of both. Like you said, you, you, you get in the, in the coaching part, you get to meet and get a know really well, a smaller number of kids. But then, um, in the classroom you get to know a little bit, a huge number. And I, I like that I have a lot of freshman and sophomore, so, um, I probably know as many students in the building as a lot, maybe the PE teachers who have all the seniors, but I just remember, um, you know, one of my favorite coworkers all the time, Elaine, Jerrell talking about, you know, sometimes she didn't get them until the second semester of their senior year. So she might only know half the senior class at one time because she hasn't had them yet.

Michael: 38:23 So I really like with this college and career class, uh, that we have seen a lot of the young, and it's the, you know, it's, it's similar. I know it sounds Cliche, but you know, you've kind of feel like the woodshed your classroom too, and you have a, you have a lesson plan just like you would in the classroom and goals and, and all that. So, so they're very similar. But uh, you know, um, we're all teachers at heart. Every coach is a, is a teacher. And so, um, the classroom part of it, I've done a lot of different things over the years, but it's a, it's a big part of it. And, um, you know, a very rewarding part

Gary: 38:54 just about every guest that we've had on the rebel five podcast. I've given them the opportunity for final word.

Michael: 38:59 Any final words? Were good. Well, first of all, thank you guys for having me. I'm honored with the, uh, some of the names that have been through here for me to somehow make that list. I appreciate it and I'm honored. And, you know, I said something earlier about always like to say we couldn't have done it with any of the, all the assistance we've had over the years and just want to thank 'em guys, you know, early on first getting the job, um, from the, from day one. You know, Pat Crosley's been a great friend, had been there, Jeff Strange was there early. Doug Wyciskalla, Mike Quinlan, Joe Cantu, the late Great Royce Waltman. Then we've had Joe Adams, Tyler Peterman, Jamin Warnke, Justin Warnke, Jim Warnke, Justin Agresta to Ian Brown, John Hasty, Jimmy Baker, the late Roger Thomas Christopher Fey. If I've missed somebody, I apologize, but, uh, what a great place Roncalli is. What a great fit it's been for me personally. And just looking forward to many more great years of teaching and basketball teams and working with great people like yourself

Gary: 39:56 Again. Uh, thank you for 17 great years of Roncalli boys basketball. We hope you're around for a lot longer and a break that new gym in this year with a great, uh, opportunity to, to, uh, represent Roncalli as well as you have all these years. And so we just want to thank you and, uh, take care and Lets Go rebels.

Michael: 40:16 All right, thanks.

Gary: 40:19 I'm Gary Armbruster and thanks for joining us today for this episode of the Rebel Five podcast. To find out more information about the podcast, please visit 50.Roncalli.org/podcast.php. Again, thanks so much for joining us today and until next time, We'll fight ahead.