

November 9, 2023

## Voice of Winthrop basketball takes sports passion to Spartanburg and Southern Conference

Lamaur Stancil  
The Post and Courier

ROCK HILL— He's been the voice of Winthrop men's basketball for 17 years.

Next up, he'll be the voice — and face — of a variety of college sports programs within the Southern Conference.

Dave Friedman announced he's picking up his sideline microphone and leaving the Fighting Eagles program, where his voice was heard on [WRHI-AM and FM](#) broadcasts of the games.

Now, he'll be [Associate Commissioner for Brand Strategy and Broadcast](#) for the Southern Conference, headquartered in Spartanburg. The 10-member conference features South Carolina schools [Wofford College](#) and [The Citadel](#).

"I'm a play-by-play guy, and I'm going to continue to do play-by-play for basketball, football, baseball and some softball games for the conference on TV," Friedman said. "Additionally, we're going to go to the member schools, learn everything that's going on in the athletic departments, and we'll help tell that story to the fans, the alumni and hopefully to a lot of people who don't know or follow the league. Think of the Olympics and NBC's coverage and how they do vignettes of the athletes."

NBC, notably the home of respected broadcasters such as Bob Costas and Dick Enberg, was one of the sources of inspiration for Friedman, who was as young as 6 years old when he decided he wanted to get into sports play-by-play.

A northern California native, he also enjoyed listening to Major League Baseball play-by-play on the radio for the San Francisco Giants and the Oakland Athletics.

"His description was so perfect," Friedman said about radio broadcaster Bill King. "It's so unique. It's so truthful. It's so passionate, it's so loud, and I wanted to do that."

The inspiration of his idols could only take Friedman so far, as many of those men never blogged or tweeted.

"When I graduated from Syracuse, what it meant to be a broadcaster in 2003 is dramatically different than what it is in 2023," he said. "Things changed with the advent of social media and digital media and streaming. It wasn't good enough to just show up and set up the radio equipment and broadcast the game. The prep for the game is no different. You still have to eat a pregame meal. Now you just have to put it on social media and bring a video camera around."

Traversing the new media world was eased by the source material provided by Winthrop's on-court success in the Big South Conference and David-vs.-Goliath narratives at the NCAA's March Madness.

"All the championship games, and there were a ton of them, win or lose, were phenomenal experiences," Friedman said. "Going to the Big Dance and everything that entails. They upset Notre Dame in the first round (in 2007). That was incredible. We got a ton of national exposure. We were Cinderella."

As Friedman called the games, a variety of listeners took note. Chuck Rey, Winthrop's athletic director, praised him for his passion and preparedness.

"We feel fortunate to have had him," Winthrop basketball coach Mark Prosser said. "He's extraordinarily talented. When people do a really good job, it's not surprising when they're recognized for their talent."

The Southern Conference sought Friedman's abilities as officials there wanted to transform its media relations position into the associate commissioner job they offered him.

"His encyclopedic attention to detail and anecdotal abilities will make the Southern Conference's broadcasts and social content even more compelling," Commissioner Michael Cross said in a statement.

Friedman's broadcast partner, Mike Pacheco, will continue to call the Winthrop basketball games for the 2023-24 season, which is underway.

Friedman earned his master's degree at Winthrop as he was broadcasting the games, became an adjunct professor there and taught a sports broadcasting course.

He and his wife, Nicole Friedman, live in Charlotte, and he expects to commute to Spartanburg as needed.

"I didn't know that Winthrop was gonna be a 17-year home, but I got there and they embraced me immediately," he said. "It really became family and really became comfortable."