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For immediate release

Chris Babb '99 (Instructor of Communications and Director of Sports Media Productions)

By Anna Roussel

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For more information, contact Ouachita's Office of Communications & Marketing at comm-mark@obu.edu or (870) 245-5206.

As a senior communications major at Ouachita, Chris Babb '99 sat across the desk from his advisor, Dr. Bill Downs, and told him he might want to teach. He was not sure what was pulling him in that direction but knew his future job also would involve sports.

"Dr. Downs told me, 'Don't do that. Go out in the world and get some experience, and then in 20 years if something comes available, you'll have experience and you can teach,'" Babb said. "That was in the spring of 1999. In the spring of 2019, exactly 20 years later, was when Dr. Jeff Root '83 talked to me about this job. It all came full circle."

A second-generation Ouachita alumnus, Babb's Ouachita journey was rich even before becoming instructor of communications and director of sports media productions in 2019. Following his years as a student, he served 10 years on staff as sports information director and in roles in the development and alumni offices. He later joined the local public school district for seven years as athletic director and one year as communications director. During this time, he also earned an M.S. degree in teaching and an M.A. degree in sports administration from Henderson State University.

Downs' emphasis on practical experience has extended through Babb's professional career and into his current approach as an instructor in the same department.

"From day one as a freshman, I was working and supplementing what I was learning in the classroom," Babb said. "We still have that same philosophy. You learn a lot in the classroom, but we have so many opportunities for students to get better at communications in a situation where they're able to make mistakes and learn from them."

The Ouachita Sports Digital Network launched under Babb's leadership, providing livestream coverage of Tiger sporting events. The OSDN streamed more than 100 events last academic year, which had more than 115,000 views from 37 states and 23 nations. OSDN broadcasts not only provide online access for Tiger fans to keep up with the teams but also provide communications students the opportunity to develop their on-air, production and editing skills. It's an especially attractive hands-on option for students with the sports media emphasis within the communications & media major.

This year, OSDN and the Rogers Department of Communications hosted the inaugural OSDN High School Sports Media Conference to provide a valuable resource for high school sports media programs in the region.

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Chris Babb

The conference, held a few days before the annual Battle of the Ravine football game, drew more than 400 high school students from three states. It featured 20 industry experts, ranging from sports anchors and radio hosts to photographers and videographers, all who made the trip to Arkadelphia to invest in the next generation of sports media professionals.

Reflecting on the event, Babb noted, "We might've tapped into something special. Teachers said their students came back really excited and energized to do things, and that was the goal."

Chris and his wife, Amy (Bridges) '00, live in Arkadelphia with their three children: Carter (16), Millie (14) and Cooper (9). The Babbs are active members of Park Hill Baptist Church in Arkadelphia.



By Anna Roussel '22, communications & marketing specialist