

Cottle Reaches Top of Lacrosse World with MLL Title

Dave Cottle's ('78) life in lacrosse began just two years prior to entering Salisbury State College. He played for two years in high school before becoming one of the top Sea Gulls the program has ever seen. And during that time, he never wavered that he was meant to coach.

While at Northern High School in Baltimore, his football coach, Lon Russ, told Cottle that he needed to play lacrosse in the spring during his junior and senior year. Russ not only started Cottle's run in the game, but he was also one of the strongest influences on a career in coaching that continues this year in the professional ranks.

After two years of high school lacrosse, Cottle enrolled at Salisbury, where, in 1974, he was a part of the first varsity team in the program's history. The team was made up of holdovers from the club lacrosse team in previous years, private and public high school players, and junior college transfers.

"It was a melting pot," Cottle said. "There were a lot of guys who were at Salisbury for different reasons, but they all had a common goal and that was to try to be successful athletically and to work together. We had great team chemistry and it was a tremendous experience for me personally that I got to meet such great people."

As part of the first intercollegiate team in the program history, Cottle helped establish the groundwork for a program that has gone on to win 10 national championships. In his four seasons, Cottle scored 179 points and had 123 assists, both totals still rank fifth in program history, he also sits fourth among all players with 302 career points. He earned two All-American honors and also was an

honorable mention All-American.

"Playing on those teams, the games were really important to us," Cottle said. "We may not have been the best team, but we invested a lot, we worked really hard at what we did, we were committed to a cause, we were committed to trying to be successful, and I think that's what makes sports so special."

His time in maroon and gold not only cemented his love for lacrosse but also made it clear that coaching was what he wanted to do. After remaining on the staff with the Sea Gulls for two seasons, he left having adapted the coaching principles of a number of Salisbury coaches that he still utilizes today. He was influenced not only by Andy Jones, Salisbury's first lacrosse coach, and Charles Clark, who he was an assistant under for a year, but also Mike McGlinchey, Salisbury's football and wrestling coach.

Cottle's head coaching career began with a two-year stint at the Severn School before launching back to the collegiate ranks where he became one of the winningest Division I coaches in NCAA history while at Loyola University and the University of Maryland College Park for a combined 28 seasons.

When his time at Maryland ended in 2010, Cottle spent very little time wondering what his next job would be when the phone rang and he was given the chance to enter the professional ranks with the Chesapeake Bayhawks.

"It was easy," said Brendan Kelly, the owner of the Bayhawks, who also was coaching the team during the 2010 season when he hired Cottle. "Obviously, from a coaching standpoint, Coach Cottle is one of the greatest. What he did at Loyola is incredible, what he did at Maryland



Bayhawks owner and Salisbury's own Brendan Kelly (left) hoists the Steinfeld Cup after winning the 2012 MLL championship.



was incredible. I think that he's very passionate and his players love him. It was important to me to find somebody who I thought could take over the team long term, which I knew was Coach Cottle – it just took me a couple years to convince him of it."

Cottle was brought on as a consultant during the 2010 season as the team made a late-season run to earn its third Major League Lacrosse (MLL) championship. He was the team's president in 2011 before taking the head-coaching job at Kelly's behest for the 2012 season.

The move paid off as the team's make-up consisted of great leadership and work ethic allowing the team to make a run to the MLL championship; the Bayhawks claimed the title with a 16-6 win over the Denver Outlaws, Cottle's first title as head coach.

"I've changed," Cottle said. "I used to think it was about Xs and Os. It's really about Jimmy and Joe. I think it's about getting a hard-working kid, a talented kid, a high-character kid, and you're going to get the most out of them."

The type of tough, gritty player who Cottle was when he began as a Sea Gull has been the type of player who he's found throughout his career and type of player who helped him to his first championships.

