

# Katie Bussey

Hall-of-Famer Heads Off In Style



*"I Must Say That Passing Balls To Players [While] Wearing Heels Is A Bit Challenging."*

BY CYNTHIA LOGAN

**J**ust days before she was inducted into the MSU Class of '22 Hall of Fame, we visited Katie Bussey in her office in the Brick. Sitting at her desk beneath a large white board with the message, 'Be Simple,' she was wearing black sweats and pink tennis shoes, her hair gathered into a pony tail. Across from her, a shelf held four pairs of Curries in various colors. "I've always loved sneakers," said the now former MSU Women's Assistant Basketball Coach. "The players were jealous of me because I'd come in with colors; I buy them myself." It takes Bussey just five minutes to get ready on a work day. "My responsibility as player development meant I had up to three workouts a day, so there was no point in fixing my hair or putting on makeup. I just made sure I had stuff here to shower."

During games, though, Bussey loves to bring out her inner fashionista. Besides, it's an MSU tradition for staff to dress up for games. "My prep to be ready and dolled up is an hour," she shares. "For us, it's a professional thing, it's showing us in our professional space. It's a chance to be a woman and express ourselves through fashion—though I must say, passing balls to players in heels during warm up is a bit challenging!"

Her hair in a braided updo, she wore a pair of elegant black slacks, a white silk tunic and white pumps during the Cat / Griz women's basketball game where, at half-time, she was called to the field to be recognized as one of ten newly inducted Hall-of-Famers. Second on the all-time career scoring list with 1,710 points, Bussey still holds the school record for most points in a game (41 against

Idaho State in 2012). At the time she left Montana State, her three-point total (254) was best in Big Sky Conference history. Her name appears in the top 10 of nine career categories and seven single-season records.

"A Hall of Fame induction is one of the coolest things you can experience," says Bussey. "After being a collegiate athlete. I never expected it. But it's something very special."

Back in her seat on the sidelines that evening, Bussey sat shoulder to shoulder with Head Coach Tricia Binford, whispering. Known by the players as coaches Bin and Buss, the women were no doubt commenting on a strategy their 'girls' were executing. Watching the team was the most difficult part of Bussey's job. One of the biggest challenges she'd had in transitioning from player to coach was relinquishing control. "We can prepare our players, but when the ball is

thrown up, it's their space," she says. As a player, I had control; as a coach, I don't."

"As a player at MSU, Katie's drive, determination and leadership skills were second to none," says Coach Binford. Anyone who has spent 10-seconds with Katie instantly recognizes her enthusiasm and love for the game—it's truly special."

Growing up, Bussey was 'a total Tomboy.' Born in Alamosa, Colorado ("the middle of nowhere"), there wasn't a lot to do. She played every sport you could think of, and loved football. "If I'd had the choice when I was little, I would have played as I got into middle and high school," she comments. The youngest of three girls, she was "the annoying little sister begging them to play with me outside and, for my dad, I was kind of like the boy he didn't have. We had a little basketball court in the backyard, and he'd



throw the football.” Bussey says that while smaller in stature than her two athletic sisters, “I was a bit more skilled, and had the talent to continue playing.”

That talent, along with determined hard work, brought her to Montana State in 2008, where she excelled on the court, and emerged from the classroom in 2012 with a degree in kinesiology.

After graduation, Bussey played professionally in The Netherlands, Sweden, and Germany.

“I went in blind; I had no idea of what it would be like,” she remembers. “Here, there is so much structure, and super high intensity. There, practice was about three times a week. During the day, I had to find ways to do my own workouts and practice on my own.” She

found that, overall, being in the middle of Amsterdam and experiencing that culture was really fun. “The season was eight months, so I got to know local people.” She returned in 2018, playing semi-pro again through 2021, on a team associated with the academy where she worked. “Mornings were dedicated to kids’ basketball. They would practice skills with us and train with weights, then attend school, then have team practice. Coaching and playing semi-pro, I wore four different hats: strength and conditioning, technical skills development; coaching U-18, and being a player.

“I was a great shooter; I had a scorer’s mentality,” says Bussey when asked about her strongest skills. “If we needed points, I’d create that for myself and my teammates. Also just my competitiveness and enthusiasm... if anyone watched, they could see that I really loved the game. I was willing to put the time in to get better.” I like to be in that space of doing what I’m good at. What’s great about being a coach is being able to help players see their gifts, recognize their talents and develop other areas; it’s so fun to watch them, since I don’t compete now. I feel a lot of joy.”

Spectators know that Tricia Binford stays calm and classy under pressure, but can approach a referee with a look not unlike that of a tigress defending her cubs. “She lets the refs hear it more than anyone else,” says Bussey. “Sometimes our girls got a lot of contact and they didn’t blow the whistle, so it’s about fighting for the players.”

And then there’s that huddle—you want to be fly on the wall—what is she saying?





NVS Architects

[nvsarchitects.com](http://nvsarchitects.com)

Inspired by Place. Energized by People.

233 East Main Street, Bozeman, Montana 59715



**SCSWRAPS**

**GO CATS!**

**MOUNTAIN HOT TUB**  
YOUR LOCAL HOT TUB DEALER SINCE 1979  
8488 HUFFINE LANE - 406-586-5850



**HOT TUBS, SAUNAS, SERVICE, AND MORE**





“Coach Bin tries to stay as steady as possible,” says Bussey. “There is consistency in her message. If the team isn’t executing well, she’ll have a coaches’ huddle, then a players’ huddle. There are times when it’s more intense, but the greatest thing about her style and leadership is consistency. She’s adapted to what goes on in our society, especially around social media. Now, kids need constant feedback, and she understands that. She’s not changing who she is, but she is adjusting how she communicates.”

Bussey says she and Coach Binford worked hard to keep

their circle tight, helping the girls focus on “the voices that matter.” Before games, the team would usually have a shoot around to get moving, go over some plays they wanted to run, and looked at what the other team might be planning. “What we did leading up is help them believe in their talent and skills and, hopefully, lead to victory,” says Bussey, who is rarely nervous as a coach. “As a player, I would have a little nerves. Last year in the championship game, though [as a coach], I was so nervous, because you have no control. You have to let the ball tip and see what happens. It worked out great because we

won; it was fun to share that moment playing against NAU for the tournament championship.”

Bussey isn’t currently using her degree in kinesiology. “I saw it more when I was coaching strength and conditioning, and helping to refine motor development—developing skills that translate into competition. I didn’t have strength and conditioning coaches in Europe but, understanding physiology, I knew it was important; I was self-taught, becoming in tune with my body: Do I need strength? Stability? Power? I experimented, and that allowed me to help other people. Girls come in with dribbling, shooting, and passing skills, but my goal is to help them in making decisions. It’s all about decisions.”

Recently married, Bussey is back in her home state of Colorado, having decided to take the position offered her by the University of Northern Colorado. She now serves as Director of Player Development and of Operations at UNC. We join the entire Montana State community in wishing her many years of happiness and continued success.



# OLIVELLE

THE ART OF FLAVOR<sup>®</sup>

≡ SCORE BIG WITH GAME DAY COOKING ESSENTIALS! ≡

On-Tap Oil & Vinegar • Herbs & Spices • Infused Salts • Sauces & Dressings



Kitchenwares • Cooking Classes • Gourmet Gifts • Free Inspirational Recipes

LOCALLY OWNED, PRODUCED & LOVED SINCE 2006 • 1940 W MAIN ST, BOZEMAN, MT 59718

bozeman area  
**chamber**  
of commerce

ENTER YOUR **SMALL BUSINESS** FOR AN  
OPPORTUNITY TO WIN A \$10,000  
**BOBCAT ATHLETICS** MARKETING PACKAGE.



CONTEST DEADLINE IS **OCTOBER 31ST**.  
FOR CONTEST DETAILS AND RULES VISIT:

[BozemanChamber.com/Game-Changer](http://BozemanChamber.com/Game-Changer)



**406 PERIODONTICS**  
BOZEMAN, MT