

Tulane roots run deep for Patriots staffer

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When the New England Patriots run onto the field for Super Bowl LX this Sunday, one of the people responsible for making sure every helmet, jersey and patch is game-ready will be Tulane's own Devin Charles-Hubbard.

Charles-Hubbard, the Patriots' assistant equipment manager, spent more than a decade helping run Tulane Athletics' equipment operation and says the work ethic and adaptability he learned on campus helped prepare him for football's biggest stage.

Tulane isn't just where he studied or worked; it's where he grew up.

"I've been affiliated with Tulane my whole life," he said. His mother worked in family and graduate housing, and so his family lived in a home right behind the baseball stadium. His brother, Patrick, played on Tulane's undefeated 1998 football team.

The New Orleans native worked in Tulane Athletics' equipment operation from 2012 to 2023, leaving his role as director of football equipment operations when the Patriots came calling.

"He's just like a Tulane guy through and through," said Gabe Delatte, Tulane's current assistant athletic director for equipment and licensing, who worked closely with Charles-Hubbard during his time here. "He took a ton of pride in being able to do that for the school that he loves. What he grew up rooting for — he really wore Tulane on his heart."

At Tulane and throughout New Orleans, Charles-Hubbard learned the foundations of what makes him successful in his job: adaptability and relationships.

"Coach Fritz was really big on the term 'adapt and improvise,'" Charles-Hubbard said of Willie Fritz, Tulane's head football coach from 2016 to 2023 and the last Green Wave coach for whom he worked. "A lot of things in this world, in the equipment world, are adapting and improvising. At any moment, things can change."

That message was ingrained in Charles-Hubbard as he helped the team evacuate for hurricanes three times. Under Fritz, Charles-Hubbard also watched the rise of the Green Wave, culminating in the January 2023 Cotton Bowl victory.

Charles-Hubbard said his work is also built on trust and preparation — values he developed at Tulane and carried into the professional ranks.

"I need to be able to have a good relationship with my players so they can trust me about the gear that I'm putting them in," he said.

Delatte said Charles-Hubbard stood out for the way he approached the work itself.

"He's kind of a craftsman," Delatte said. "He wanted to learn everything about equipment. There wasn't a task that he didn't master through that time."

That craftsmanship includes one skill Charles-Hubbard is now known for: sewing. He learned it in the Tulane equipment room and now uses it in the NFL for uniform repairs, alterations and patches — including Super Bowl patches.

Charles-Hubbard said he's most excited to have his daughter at the big game. But secondarily, he is looking forward to the pre-game military flyover that signals there's no turning back.

"At that moment, you know it's game time," he said. "All the work the players put in for practice — even for me, all the helmets that I clean, got ready, jerseys that we put on, the pads, everything that we went through throughout the whole year — at that moment, all your work is coming together for the next 60 minutes of game time. And it's just an amazing feeling."

For a kid who grew up on Tulane's campus watching police escort football buses, the journey has been unexpected. Charles-Hubbard said he even lost a 2001 Patriots T-shirt to Katrina — and now he's working for that same team at the Super Bowl.

"It's a full circle moment," he said. "Just because you might not make it in one way, as a football player or whatever you want to do, doesn't mean another door isn't there open for you. Don't ever give up."

For Charles-Hubbard, the stage may be the NFL, but the story remains rooted in Tulane and in the work ethic he built here.

"I pump the Tulane tires up a lot up here," he said. "At the end of the day, man, I bleed for Tulane."

And he had one message for everyone back on his home turf: "Roll Wave."