

*A series  
profiling  
your fellow  
Routematchers.*

by Laura Lee Huttenbach



## Chris Mills

SME & Upgrades Team Lead, Client Care

Chris Mills's favorite fishing lure is the Rat-L-Trap. "It makes a noise when you reel it in, and it looks like a small fish," he says. "I can throw that thing a country mile." In chasing the big catches, he's willing to try some gimmicks. "Have you heard of a bath bomb?" he asks. "It's something you can put in the bath, and it dissolves and helps you relax. Well, there's something similar called the bass bomb, which you can throw in the water, and it attracts fish." To Chris, there's nothing more relaxing than being in a boat in the middle of a lake with a fishing pole. His wife is a pretty good fisherman, too. Right after their wedding ceremony at Sunset Ranch in Villa Rica, the newlyweds picked up their fishing poles and cast their lines into the pond. "The photographer was taking pictures when my wife felt a bite, and she reeled it in," he says. "It was a baby fish, but we got a picture of her kissing it, and I had a disgusted look on my face." On their honeymoon in Amelia Island, they chartered a boat and pulled in redfish after redfish. "They're huge," says Chris. "They fight you until they're about to die." He considers himself a lucky man to have married a woman who likes to fish. "There's not too many women in the world like that," he says. "With her, life is enjoyable." ➤

# Q&A with Chris Mills

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**Q: What did you want to be when you grew up?**

**A.** A professional athlete.

**Q. Who were your sports heroes?**

**A.** Greg Maddux. Javy López. Tom Glavine. John Smoltz. Chipper Jones.

**Q. Where did you grow up and how did it shape you?**

**A.** Stockbridge in Henry County, South Georgia. I'd say the college years influenced the person I am today more than my childhood.

**Q. How did college change you?**

**A.** My buddy joined a fraternity, and it reminded me of the cliques from high school, so I wasn't interested. I told him, "You're paying for friends." But then I saw him hanging out with the other guys and becoming the person he wanted to be, and I decided to join. It was probably the biggest thing to influence me. I met a lot of people from different majors and backgrounds, and several of them were groomsmen at my wedding. It's great today because if I have a problem, I can call them and get different perspectives. I learned a lot about leadership.

**Q. Would you say that experience made you more open-minded?**

**A.** Yeah. Because at first, I was being judgmental. I've told my friend more times than I can count, "Thanks for sticking with me." He became my big brother in my pledgeship. After that experience, I try not to be so quick to judge.



**Q. What did your friend say when you admitted you'd been wrong?**

**A.** He said, "I told you so." He's a douchebag. But so am I. My wife calls me "a lot of douchebag with a hint of sweet."

**Q. What did you study in college?**

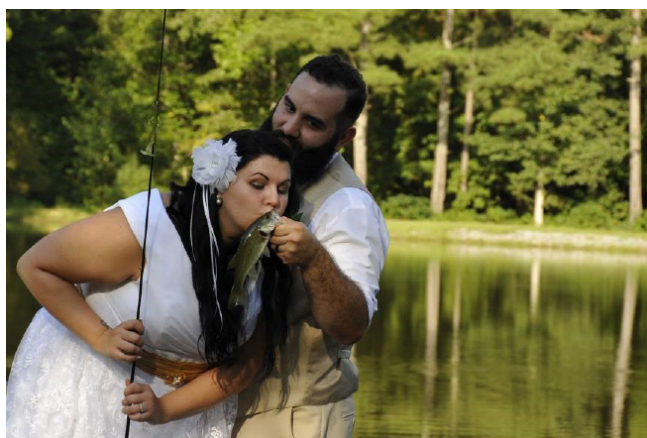
**A.** Information technology. I kind of moved away from sports and got more into computers. My dad worked in IT. Routematch was my first job out of college. Now I'm starting to get back into sports. I've just started coaching a Little League team. We're called the Hustle.

**Q. How did you get into coaching?**

**A.** A buddy with kids asked me to help out on his team. A lot of the adults look at me like I'm crazy because I don't have any kids, and they're like, "You don't have to be here." But you hear all the time, "If you want to be a good manager, have kids." Coaching tests my patience to the max. It also tests my temper.

**Q. What kind of coach are you?**

**A.** I'm the mean coach. I tell them, "There's no crying in baseball." I was always the kid that cried in baseball. Whenever I struck out or made a bad play, I knew I was disappointing someone. But crying or sulking doesn't get you anywhere.



Sometimes, when the kids are losing and down, I'll pump them up. I'm very loud. I'll say, "Baseball is supposed to be fun. It doesn't matter what the score is."

### Q. Did you know anything about public transit before working at Routematch?

**A.** The only experience I had was taking a MARTA train to sports games with my dad, because parking at the stadium was too expensive. But now I can't look at buses the same way. I know what they go through to get on the road. When I started working here in 2012, I was surprised that so many agencies still used paper, even though tablets and smartphones had been around a while. The move to new technology is slower because they have to wait on funding.

### Q. What's your favorite part of the job?

**A.** You don't do the same thing every day.

### Q. What's your favorite smell?

**A.** I don't think I've ever been asked that in my life. I'd have to say bass fish.

### Q. Your favorite smell is fish?

**A.** Bass fish. Get me right. Not fish in the break room. Bass fish. You know you've had a good day of fishing when you smell like the fish you caught.

### Q. What living person do you most admire?

**A.** My mother. She and I graduated from college at the same time. She was pursuing her nursing degree, which is something she'd always wanted to do. She taught me that no matter how old you are, your dreams are never not achievable. Oh, she loves to fish, too.

### Q. Is she a better fisherman than you?

**A.** I wouldn't go that far, now.

### Q. What do you like to watch on television?

**A.** Game of Thrones. Sons of Anarchy. That 70s Show. The Office. Friends.

### Q. What's your favorite movie?

**A.** Any Christopher Nolan movie: The Dark Night, Inception, The Prestige. My favorite actors are Tom Hardy and Gerard Butler.

### Q. What's at the top of your bucket list?

**A.** Going to Rome, Italy. There's a lot of history from the gladiator times that I'd love to see. The farthest east I've gone is London, so traveling to more countries would be cool, maybe somewhere to a World Cup.

### Q. What was it about your wife that made you say, "I want to marry her"?

**A.** So many things. We're just as good of friends as we are husband and wife. We share a lot of interests, and there's not really anything one of us loves to do that the other one hates. I guess I don't care much for her fingernail polishing or makeup, but I don't hate it. We make a great team.



Writer Laura Lee Huttenbach is the author of *"The Boy is Gone"* and *"Running with Raven"* (Kensington Press, May 2017). Her website is [www.LLHuttenbach.com](http://www.LLHuttenbach.com).