

# Katy's Favorite BACHELOR

Former Katy High School Tiger, James McCoy Taylor, vies for JoJo's affection on ABC's *The Bachelorette*

Written by Kirsten Cornell | Photography courtesy of ABC

Photo by ABC/Craig Sjodin



James Taylor, a native of Katy, Texas, remained a fan favorite throughout season 12 of *The Bachelorette*

Photo by ABC/Veronica Gambini



During their group date in Buenos Aires, Taylor was rewarded with a kiss for being the only one to score a goal

Photo by ABC/Craig Zabalski



Taylor says he especially loved this moment during his one-on-one date because up until then he had only been known as "James T."



Growing up in Katy, running plays under the direction of Coach Gary Joseph, James McCoy Taylor learned about life, football, and the gospel. "He taught us more than just football," Taylor remembers. "Everything from his voice to his super early wake up habits and routines, he kind of preached to us. He inspired us to be better men."

Those lessons have served him well as he has gone on to tackle many other endeavors in his life; including the pursuit of love on ABC's *The Bachelorette*.

## Katy Days

Attending Katy High School and sharing a name with a rival namesake high school did have its entertaining moments. "I had friends that attended James E. Taylor High School and it was nice because we always beat them at football," he laughs. "We had to put our friendship on hold a little bit during football season." He did help organize the theft of the Taylor Mustang mascot at one point during his charismatic prankster career, but made sure the mascot was returned unharmed.

## Singing From the Heart

The singer-songwriter now hails from the Atlanta, Georgia area and works in sales during the day. "I grew up listening to my parents singing in church and in the car," he says. "I remember singing Michael Jackson's 'Black or White' in a

locker room and someone said, 'Hey, you're pretty good.' That was it. After that, Taylor continued to sing, learned to play guitar, and polished his talent.

These days he is writing a new song every three days or so, and performing at various venues. "When people hear my songs, I want them to feel what I felt when I wrote it," he says. "I want my heart to be heard."

## Becoming a Contestant

Becoming a part of *The Bachelorette* was a whirlwind and a bit of a surprise. When Taylor saw a number from LA pop up on his phone, he figured it was one of his California friends checking in. "It was a woman from ABC's *The Bachelorette* asking if I was expecting this call and my jaw dropped," he recalls. Come to find out, his friend Marcus had signed him up.



Taylor was injured during their group date playing football on Pittsburgh's Heinz Field

# James Taylor INSIDER SECRETS

- He once stole the Taylor Mustang mascot as a prank
- Has been a singer-songwriter since high school
- Friend Marcus actually signed him up for *The Bachelorette*
- His best friend in the mansion was Wells Adams
- Favorite moment on the show was his first one-on-one date with JoJo
- Attended Church of Christ in Katy while growing up
- Graduated from Katy High School and played football for the Katy Tigers under coaches Johnston and Joseph



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Taylor completed a phone interview and submitted the required video to become a contestant. His charming personality won them over and he was chosen for the twelfth season. "I knew I was about to turn 30 and I had been trying to find love for a while," says Taylor. "I was ready to find someone I was head-over-heels in love with."

Taylor heard rumors about who his bachelorette might be, but didn't know it was JoJo Fletcher until the show began filming. "I knew that America kind of decides but she is always beautiful and usually a very sweet girl. Who doesn't want to sign up for that? I was kind of hoping it was JoJo," he admits. "I gave it a shot and I was very excited when I found out it was her. I knew I was going to open up."

## The Reality

Taylor admits that before going on the show he had a perception of similar shows being fake or rehearsed. "It's really not," he explains. "From the moment you wake up until you go to bed you're on camera. If you want to do something cool for JoJo just ask and they'll pretty much let you do it."

He did admit that at first the cameras were a bit of a distraction, but after about three days he learned to adjust. "I literally forgot they were there. You just stop thinking about it," he says. The contestants are given a lot of flexibility when it comes to planning dates and one-on-one time with the bachelorette. "If you just want to go and talk to her you can do that, or you can put your own spin on it," says Taylor who threw a guitar in the back of the T-bird so he could serenade JoJo.

## Mansion Moments

Living with 25 other men all vying for the same girl's attention isn't always easy, but Taylor's good-humored nature facilitated friendships with other suitors. "It felt like a church camp or something," he laughs.

Naturally, as time went on, many of the contestants began to share deep and personal things, bonding them together not only through this experience, but as friends as well. "I was surprised by some of the personalities in the house; I bonded with some that I didn't think I would at first."

Viewers saw many moments of playing football out by the pool or synchronized diving helping to pass the time when they were not romanticizing their bachelorette. "One time when we were goofing around I was teasing Jordan about having a weak arm and told him to throw a tomato at my back as hard as he could point blank and I wouldn't flinch," Taylor says. A crowd gathered around egging the two on in their sparring. Jordan took the challenge and nailed Taylor with a tomato. "I did more than flinch," admits Taylor. "My back was so red - and not just from the tomato."

## Falling for JoJo

Taylor clicked with JoJo's personality right away and they fell in sync. "A highlight for me was reading that note to her and reassuring her that I was there for no other reason than to try

and win her heart. She could really tell that all those things were true, I could see it in her eyes," he says. Taylor adds that in that moment he felt like the luckiest man in America.

Taylor says that yes, he began falling for JoJo faster than he would've thought. "JoJo is exactly the woman she seems," he says. "I am so grateful for how she made me feel and what she made me feel I was deserving of."

## The Final Rose

The most nail-biting moment for both viewers and the contestants is the famous rose ceremony. Taylor admits that a lot of prayer goes through his mind. "You have to trust yourself and what you have to offer," he says. After traveling with JoJo to Argentina, Taylor was eliminated week six when the final rose came down to him and Chase. Fans may not be seeing Taylor as *The Bachelor* any time soon. "I don't know how she did it. I don't think I could handle being in a position like that," he says.

Taylor says his ideal bachelorette is sweet, selfless, fun-loving, and a Christian. "If we click, that's just it," he adds. He will continue to sing his songs and wait for the final rose. **KM**



*KIRSTEN CORNELL is the lead associate editor for Katy Magazine. She shares James Taylor's affection for red roses.*

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