

HURRICANES

MAGAZINE

SPRING 2024





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Dan Radakovich
DAN RADAKOVICH
VICE PRESIDENT & DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS

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A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS



Welcome to the spring edition of *Hurricanes Magazine*! It's a busy time of year on our Coral Gables campus as our baseball, golf, tennis, track and field and rowing teams are all in action. Our football team just wrapped up spring practice with the Spring Game at Cobb Stadium and we are looking forward to an exciting season this fall.

This issue highlights standout golfer Sara Byrne as well as Russell Robinson, who in March became the 84th NCAA individual champion in our storied history by winning the men's indoor triple jump title. We spotlight our new head women's basketball coach Tricia Cullopp, who arrives at Miami after a stellar 16-year coaching run at Toledo. We also showcase the winners from our annual Hurricane Honors awards ceremony, where we celebrated the achievements of our student-athletes and staff.

Your generous support helps us provide the best resources for our student-athletes to succeed on and off the field. You can also support student-athletes by contributing to Canes Connection, our official NIL Collective. Canes Connection builds valuable partnerships with local businesses and connects those businesses with student-athletes.

I hope you enjoy this edition of *Hurricanes Magazine* and I hope to see you cheering on the Canes down the homestretch of spring! Thank you again for your continued support and Go Canes!

Dan Radakovich
Vice President / Director of Athletics

Dan Radakovich



6



12



22

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editor-In-Chief: Christy Cabrera Chirinos

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16

18 **GETTING TO KNOW:
RUSSELL ROBINSON**

26 **FACES IN
THE CROWD**

28 **WHERE ARE THEY NOW?
KEVIN FAGAN**

32 **MAKING PROGRESS:
HURRICANES SHINE IN
SPRING GAME**

40 **CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE:
HURRICANE HONORS**

46 **GIVING BACK WITH
GRATITUDE:
WAYNE & PATRICIA CASE**

48 **CANES CHRONICLES:
FOOTBALL ALUMNI DINNER**



36

LEAVING A LEGACY: SARA BYRNE

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos

Little by little, Sara Byrne is coming to terms with her new reality.

There was the moment she finished play at her final regular-season tournament. The day she received the cap and gown she'll don at her rapidly approaching graduation. And then there have been the encouraging messages she's tried to give her younger teammates, the teammates she knows will represent the Hurricanes while she begins her next chapter.

Each moment, each memory, is a reminder that her time in Coral Gables is coming to an end and that soon enough, she'll have the opportunity to pursue her lifelong dream of becoming a professional golfer.

Before that happens, though, Byrne is determined to make the most of her final weeks as a Hurricane. After all, there is still a championship to pursue.

But more than that, Byrne hopes that in these final weeks, she'll leave a legacy at Miami that will inspire her teammates to continue moving the Hurricanes forward long after she's played her final round in orange and green.

"I feel like I can see myself in the girls that are here now. That was me before I went on to change the way I play the game," said Byrne, who recorded five top-five finishes during the regular season, placed fourth at the ACC Championship and is now bidding for her second straight berth in the NCAA Golf Championships. "I think it's good for them to listen to someone who's been through it, you know? It was a learning experience for me, too, so it's been important to lead by example and keep reminding them that where they are now is where I was once. If they're willing to make that change and listen to coaches and to be open-minded to work hard and be motivated, so many good things can happen."



For Byrne, plenty of good things have already happened during her time at Miami.

The native of Douglas, Cork, Ireland is one of the most decorated golfers in program history.

In February, she was named the ACC Golfer of the Month for the second time in a season, becoming the first Hurricane to accomplish that feat. She earned a spot on the watch list for the ANNIKA Award, which is presented annually to the top Division I female golfer.

And in October, she added her name to both the Miami and NCAA women's golf record books when she posted a 19-under-par score of 197 at the 54-hole Hurricane Invitational. That score ranks first in program history and is currently tied for the third-lowest individual 54-hole score in NCAA women's golf history.

This spring, she was also named the Best Female Student-Athlete at Miami's Hurricane Honors awards ceremony and became just the second Hurricane in program history, after current LPGA

golfer Dewi Weber, to be selected for the Arnold Palmer Cup, a Ryder Cup-style tournament featuring the top men's and women's collegiate golfers.

"She capitalizes on the opportunity when it arises," Hurricanes head golf coach Janice Olivencia said of Byrne. "There is 100 percent commitment once she's inside the ropes and there's really a sense of urgency now, understanding that this is the spring season, and she has to be on. ... She wants to continue to get even better and that's how good players become great players and great players become elite players. She's already one of the best collegiate players in the nation, but she wants to be the best and to do that, she has to keep grinding, she has to keep moving. That doesn't necessarily mean she has to reinvent the wheel, but she just needs to keep doing the little things that she does to continue to get better. She just has to keep pushing."

Byrne, for her part, is embracing that challenge.

The senior has never been afraid

to step out of her comfort zone, not when she took up the sport of golf after watching her father, Derek, play it in their native Ireland and not when she began climbing up the junior ranks and earned the opportunity to represent her country at tournaments throughout Europe.

It was during that time, after seeing the success of Irish golfers Leona Maguire and Olivia Mehaffey, who starred at Duke and Arizona State, respectively, that she began considering taking another big leap of faith: playing collegiately in the United States herself.

Byrne came to Miami on a recruiting visit in 2018 and knew she belonged in Coral Gables. But even that move – one she wanted to make – wasn't easy given the fact her freshman year started in 2020, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Still, four years later, she recognizes how much that decision to come to Miami – despite the challenges – helped her development, both as a person and a golfer.

"To do that, during a worldwide pandemic, was definitely an experience



unlike many others get to experience, for sure," Byrne said. "But honestly, I think that it made me grow and mature a lot quicker. I was kind of thrown in the deep end a little bit and honestly, that is what made me mature and get this much out of my final year. It helped me to just know how much I would need to work, how much I would really need to practice and that helped give me the season that I had last year."

While at Miami, Byrne faced another test – a coaching change.

Longtime Hurricanes golf coach Patti Rizzo retired in 2022, midway through Byrne's career. Olivencia was named Miami's new coach shortly thereafter and in her early meetings with Byrne, tough conversations were had about the next steps the golfer wanted to take with

her game.

To that point, Byrne had been playing well. She believed, though, she could be better.

She asked Olivencia – a former two-time All-American at Texas – how she could do that.

"It was such a pivotal moment for the new coaches to come in and give me a new perspective on everything. The timing just worked out," Byrne said. "I got to kind of like a breaking point and was just like, 'I need to get better, and I need to do it for myself, to feel content, to feel like I am really pushing.' And Coach Janice is someone that really cares about developing players and developing people. I went to talk to her with such openness and willingness to learn and that was what really just took us to the next level. ...

"I walked into the office, and I was like, 'I need to change. Push me.' And I was warned that even if I was willing, it still wouldn't be easy. It would be hard. There were a lot of conversations and a lot of emotion, but I'm so thankful I got to experience having all those teaching moments and learning moments and getting called out and being just so accountable for everything that I was doing and being held to every single standard I asked them to hold me to."

Added Olivencia, "There were really difficult conversations that we needed to have because she's telling me all the things she wants to do and I'm like, 'Well, are you really ready for it?' We knew we didn't have much time with Sara, so we had to act quickly."

The work Byrne did with Oliven-



Olivencia and former assistant coach Marcelo Huarte – now the head coach at South Alabama – paid off the way both the coach and the golfer hoped.

Byrne finished her junior season with 17 rounds of par-or-better golf and advanced to the NCAA championships after placing third with a two-under-par, three-round score of 214 at the NCAA Palm Beach Regional.

In 2023, she also posted five top-20 finishes while competing for Miami, won the AIG Irish Women's Close, represented Ireland at the World Team Amateur Team Championship, was named the Irish Women's Amateur of the Year for the second time in her career and yes, had her record-breaking day at the Hurricane Invitational.

But it wasn't just her play on the course that changed.

As the lone senior on Miami's roster, Byrne wanted to set an example for her teammates, five of whom are freshmen and sophomores who, like her, are Europeans playing far from home.

She wanted to show them what was possible, how they could reach their goals the way she had.

And she's let her play and how she prepares set the tone.

"Attitude determines your direction and actions speak louder than words. Those are my two biggest things that I believe to my core and right now, Sara is doing exactly that. Her attitude is determining her direction," Olivencia said. "She's got the attitude of wanting to be the

best collegiate golfer in the nation and that's going to determine her direction. And it has determined her direction for the past year and a half. It will also determine the direction her teammates will take because they can see her results.

"When you can show a young team, 'Look at what she's doing. Look at her actions, her attitude, and her performance,' they can see what she's getting for all of it. ... And little by little, these girls are understanding what it takes. There are some days she stays an hour after practice. Those are not things that are required. Those are things that if you want to be good and you want to be on that list [you have to do]. That's the reason she's on that list."

Byrne knows that as the Hurricanes shift their focus to the post-season, it won't be just her teammates that will be watching how she performs. Competitors will be tracking her progress. There are potential post-season awards to bring home and tournaments to win.

But she's going to go out on the course and try to make that post-season as memorable as possible, not just for herself, but for the Hurricanes. And she won't be taking anything for granted in the process.

"I'm obviously proud of everything I've accomplished so far, all of that hard work and effort it's taken. But there's a little bit of a sigh of relief, too," Byrne said. "It's like, 'Yeah, I can do this.' I've done a lot in my amateur career, which is great, but I still have so much more that I want to achieve. It's like, 'Don't take a step back. Don't take your foot off the gas, even a little bit.' I've achieved

so much, but I want to achieve so much more. ... Any tournament I go into, I want to go in and win it. So, that's obviously going to be in my mind. That's what I'm working toward.

"But I also want to just go out there and be free to just play golf and enjoy it and bring this team on with me. This is obviously most of their first time ever in a postseason, so I want to bring them on and have them experience it all. I want to finish this out exactly how I've been going out this last year, just keep the foot down and whatever happens, happens. But I'm going to give it my all."

Her coach has no doubt that's exactly what she'll do.

"She wants to win the big one for sure" Olivencia said. "To do that, you have to take yourself out of it. You have to trust your preparation and you have to go out there willing to be fearless. ..."

"What I would love to see from Sara is that she just goes out there and competes. There's nothing to lose. At the end of the day, that trophy is going to be hoisted by people who just allow themselves to go out there and perform, so I want her to not hold anything back and use everything she's got in her bag to put herself in the best position to succeed. ... And I want her to be grateful for the moment. I want her to stay inspired by her own performance and understand the position she's in. ... At the end of the day, she just needs to be who she is and enjoy performing at the highest level."



MAKING MEMORIES: HURRICANES SHINE AT THE MIAMI OPEN

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos

Every year, thousands of tennis fans descend on South Florida to take in the sights and sounds of the Miami Open, one of the world's premier tournaments.

This year, the Hurricanes women's tennis team got the opportunity to do more than watch the tournament.

They competed there.

Miami had the opportunity to face off against ACC foe Boston College during a dual match hosted by the Miami Open on some of the tournament site's outer courts at Hard Rock Stadium.

The Hurricanes picked up a dominant 5-2 win over the Eagles, but more than that, made memories many of them said they won't be forgetting any time soon.

"Today was just really special. Just to study at Miami and you're able to come and watch a tournament like the Miami Open is cool," said senior Isabella Pfennig, who also competed with the Hurricanes at the Miami Open two years ago. "But to be able to come out and play on these courts is something you will always remember. I mean, this will for sure be one of the top two moments that I talk about with my college experience because it's so special. No one has the chance to do this, besides us, so it's just super cool."

Added Hurricanes head coach Paige Yaroshuk-Tews of the experience, "This [was] incredible for our program. I think it says a lot about our girls and our program. And obviously, tournament director James Blake, being a college tennis player himself, I'm sure he believes in this. I think it's great for college tennis."





CANES CONNECT SPOTLIGHT: CAREER FAIR

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos

They've put their best foot forward in competition all throughout their Miami careers. This spring, they had the opportunity to do the same in a different venue.

In March, more than four dozen Hurricanes student-athletes had the opportunity to connect with a variety of employers and graduate students at Miami's annual student-athlete career fair.

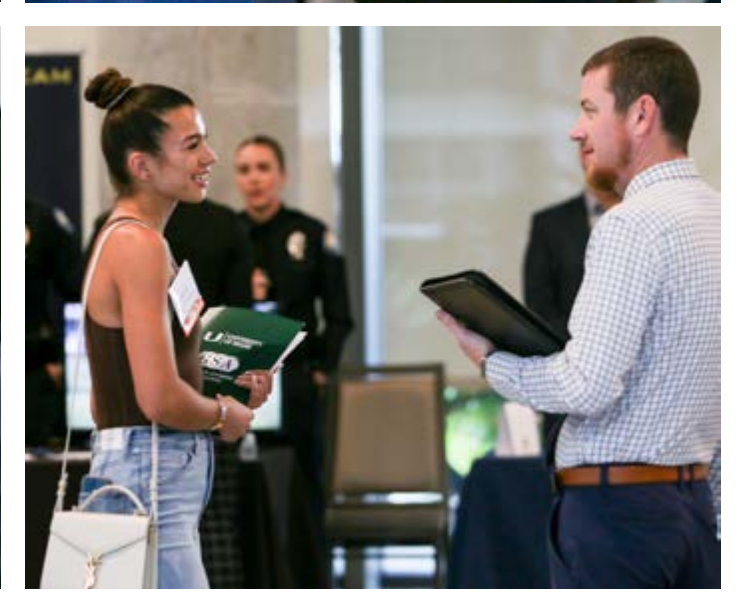
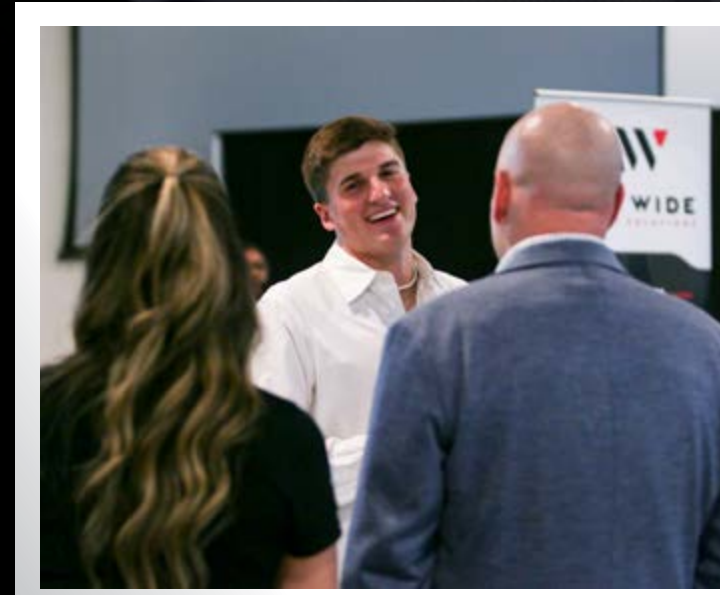
Eighteen different employers from a variety of fields including business, law enforcement, sales and education were on site offering both internship and full-time oppor-

tunities to the participating student-athletes. Among those potential employers were several former Hurricane student-athletes themselves, including rower Stephen Good, a recruiter for 1847 Financial; baseball student-athlete Christopher Barr, a recruiter for Kawa Capital Management and rower Anastasia Ray of Capital Edge Consulting. Rowing alumna Katarzyna Pasternak was also in attendance as a graduate school representative.

In the weeks since the career fair, multiple Hurricanes landed job offers and internship opportunities, said LaToya

Farris, Miami's Assistant Athletic Director for Student-Athlete Development.

"The career fair really gives student-athletes the opportunity to get in front of potential employers they might not have thought about. That allows them to consider opportunities in industries they might not have considered before," Farris said. "That's always one of the big benefits from it. And for some, it really helps build confidence. ... They can introduce themselves to employers and see that they are capable and qualified to do some of the jobs listed."





GETTING TO KNOW... RUSSELL ROBINSON

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos

Russell Robinson arrived at Miami as a walk-on, not knowing what to expect or even if he'd made the right decision in becoming a Hurricane.

Five years later, he's a national champion.

Robinson, a senior jumper from Windermere, Florida posted a mark of 16.76 meters in the triple jump at this year's NCAA Division I Indoor Track and Field Championships in Boston.

He not only set a new facility record at the TRACK at New Balance, but he improved his already-existing Miami record of 16.49m in the process and bested competition from around the country.

Not bad for an athlete who really only embraced track during the latter part of his high school career.

"My freshman and sophomore years in high school, I was just having fun. I wasn't really taking everything so seriously and I didn't think I could make a career out of this or go to college for it," Robinson said. "Then it started getting serious my junior year after I won the district [championship] and I won the regional and I made it to the state championship and went out there and won."

After that championship performance in high school, Robinson connected with the coaching staffs at Miami and Florida State, both of whom offered him opportunities to join their respective programs as a walk-on.

Robinson settled on Miami, knowing he could make an impact for

the steadily improving Hurricanes men's program.

Now, he's one of the nation's best jump athletes and has his sights set on not just finishing the outdoor season with another national championship, but on representing the United States in Paris at this summer's Olympic Games, too.

"I'm just setting myself up for the summer and training throughout ... I'm going to go out and have fun and compete," Robinson said. "To do that with my teammates who also have a chance of taking their athletics to the next level is a great opportunity for all of us. I'm very excited to see what's going to happen all season. And we all want more records and personal bests and trophies."

Hurricanes Magazine asked Robinson to share more about his Miami journey. Here's what he had to say, in his own words.

Hurricanes Magazine: What was that moment like for you in Boston, winning a national championship?

Russell Robinson: "I don't know what words to describe it. It was exciting and relieving, especially after watching everyone that could have jumped further on their last jump go on their last round. Then, knowing I'd won, it was a relief. It was very exciting. That would be the word I'd used for this whole thing, actually."

HM: What was your strategy and your approach going into the triple jump at nationals, knowing you'd be making multiple jumps?

RR: "I was 10th in the order, out of 16 competitors. But out of the top

five or six of us, I was the first one in the order. So, my goal was to go out there and put a jump out there and basically, make everybody try and catch me. That's what I did. I was expecting a far jump, but I was also expecting a little bit more, too. I thought, 'Now, I have a little more room to grow for outdoor.'"

HM: You came to Miami as a walk-on. What goes through your mind when you think about your journey, going from a walk-on to a national champion?

RR: "All the hard work and dedication that I put in is paying off. It's not over yet, but it's starting to show its fruition. Having those guys that I used to train with back in my freshman and sophomore year that were better than me, they motivated me a lot to push myself to get better, faster, stronger, do everything I needed to do on and off the track, to become the best."

HM: Your numbers have improved steadily, year to year. How would you describe your growth process here at Miami?

RR: "When I first came in, I talked with [Assistant Track and Field Coach Rob] Jarvis and we had a plan, a four-year plan to figure things out. I was still very new to triple jump my freshman year, so there was still a lot for me to learn. I trusted the process and the training program. I worked hard on my craft and each year just saw progression and every year coming back after a good season or a good last finish jump, I would tell myself that I didn't want to be one of those athletes that has maybe

a good season here or there and then they just fall off or they don't do as good the next year. I want to do even better. That was even more motivation to keep pushing myself."

HM: Going back to high school and your decision to come to Miami, what ultimately made you feel like this was the right place for you, even without a scholarship?

RR: "People hear Miami all over the world and just think of the city. I thought it was a great opportunity. There are so many connections and opportunities down here, athletics, school-wise and career choices. I knew I could go to Florida State, that already had a built-up [track and field] program and they have had guys in the past that have done great things. I could just be another jumper there, or I could come to Miami, which hadn't always had the best men's track program in the past and I could come in, get better and help put Miami on the map for jumps. I could create my own history, my own legacy here at Miami. I told myself that before I left that I'd come for all the school records and here I am in my fifth year, and I have almost all of them."

HM: What's it been like to work Jarvis and [Director of Track & Field/Cross Country] Amy Deem here, given their experience and the caliber of athletes they've coached before you came here?

RR: "It's been great. ... I feel like I have a great relationship with Jarvis where I can come and talk to him about anything track-related, or outside of track and just being

able to talk to him about certain things, I think we all have a good dynamic. I'm able to trust their training program and their process ... Coming from not a lot of coaching in high school to some of the best coaching here – they've shown it over time – is a great experience. They both have great mentors and people they reach out to that have been on the Olympic level as well. They have people they can talk to, and I have somebody I can talk to, and we all work together."

HM: You mentioned you wanted to come to Miami in part to help see the men's program grow. What's it been like to be a part of that growth and see the program take steps forward?

RR: "It feels great, just the team aspect of everything and being there for your teammates when they're competing and then the same for you. It feels great to have the pieces come together to make this happen. We have a really good chance of being a great [national championship meet] team. We might not have a lot of people, but we have quality athletes, and it feels good to be a part of that squad, that's building up The U."

HM: The same week you won the national championship, you also attended the student-athlete career fair and it's always been important for you to be involved with community outreach and take part in several student-athlete development projects. Why is that so important to you?

RR: "It's important to show you're not just an athlete. You're more

than an athlete. You can do other things outside of your sport and it shows who you are as a person, I feel like. It just shows that you're able to do more, and you're able to go do what you need to do on the track or on the field. You get in the classroom, and you do everything you need to do academically. And then, you have other stuff, extracurricular outside of those two, that show what a well-rounded person and student-athlete you can be.

"It helps a little bit on your resume, as well and it creates a lot of connections with people that you may not know if they need help in the future down the road, or you might need help from them in the future and just knowing these people and having those connections is a great opportunity."

HM: As you start to shift your focus from the indoor track and field season to outdoors, what do you want to see from yourself and your team as we move closer to the outdoor championships?

RR: "Now that indoor [season] is over, some of us had great seasons, some of us didn't. We need to put it behind us and focus on outdoor. We have to keep doing what we've been doing and what we do in practice, we need to execute technically at meets. All that work will show. For me personally, of course I want another national championship. But my goal this year is to make the Olympic team, go to Paris and do well there."

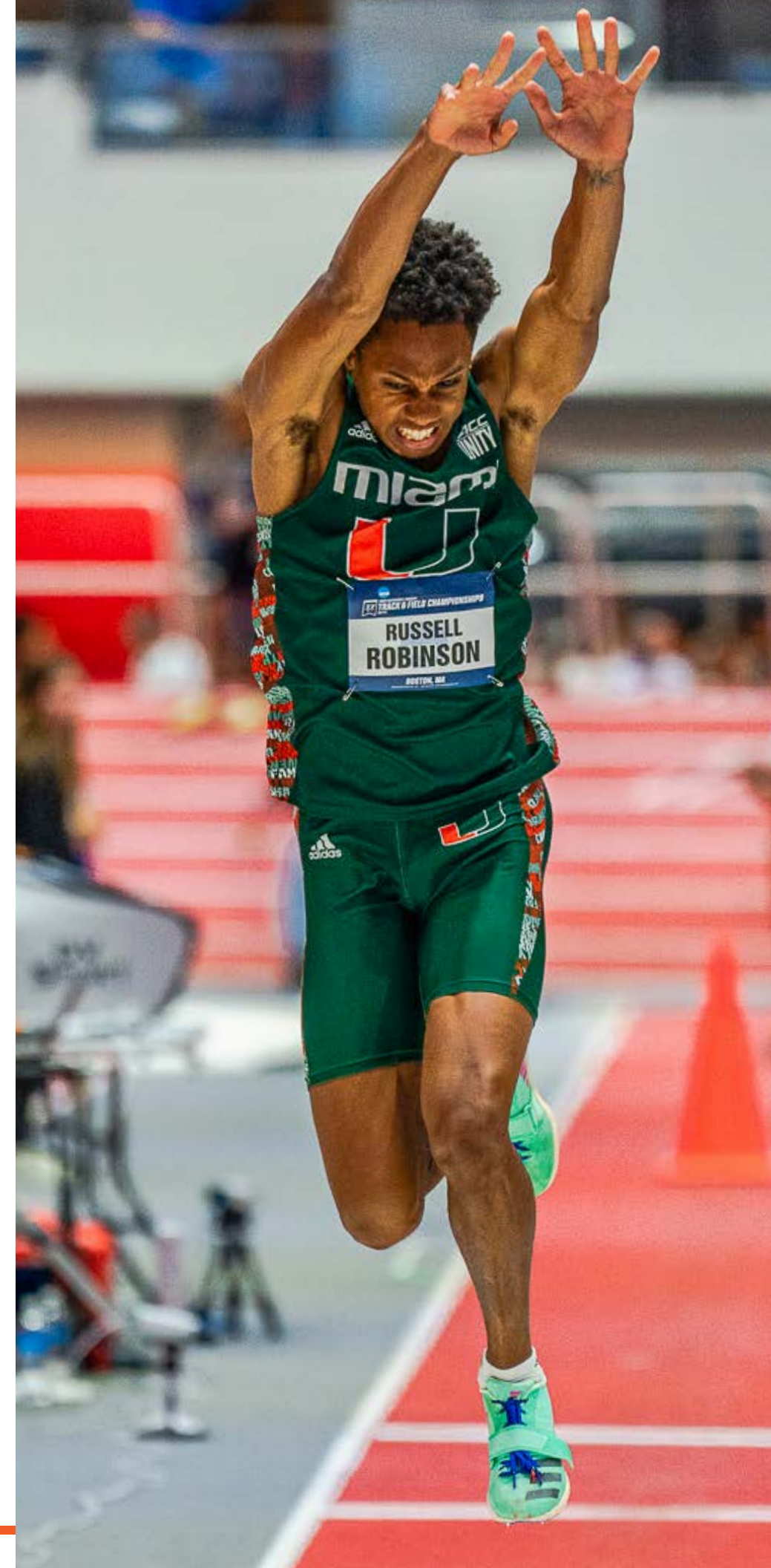
HM: With the Olympics on the horizon, do you feel any pressure or feel a sense of urgency with this

outdoor season?

RR: "Not really. I just need to keep doing what I've been doing. Out of the USA triple jumpers, I'm one of the top [jumpers], and I have a chance to go and make the team. If I go and compete that day at trials and I jump like I should, then I have a great chance of doing it. So, no. There's no urgency. I'm just focused on taking it week by week so that when it gets to that point, I'll be ready to go."

HM: What would it mean to earn a spot on that Olympic team?

RR: "It'd be crazy. Everybody always has dreams of going to the Super Bowl or the Olympics, depending on whatever sport they went into. I've always watched the Olympics, ever since I was young. It's never been a thing I was like, 'Dang, I can actually get there.' But now that I'm getting closer to it, it's right there within reach and I have a really good chance of getting it, so, I feel really accomplished and satisfied in the moment. But then you know, you're never satisfied. It'll be really exciting to do that, to represent my school, myself, my family, my coaches, my team, and my country in a whole other country, competing against the best of the best in the world."





BUILDING ON A SOLID FOUNDATION: TRICIA CULLOP

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos

For Tricia Cullop, the last few weeks have felt like a surreal whirlwind.

Miami's head women's basketball coach moved from Toledo, Ohio to South Florida, bringing two full suitcases with her. She's held countless meetings with her new team, players, and staff alike. And in early April, she outlined her vision for the Hurricanes as she took the reins of a program that for 19 years, was led by Katie Meier, the winningest basketball coach – male or female – in Miami history.

But there's something else Cullop did on the day of her introductory press conference.

She got a chance to see her team up-close during a morning workout that left her even more excited and energized about the future of Miami women's basketball than she already was.

"The energy was great. I love watching players that are hungry and humble, humble because they know they can get better, but hungry because they're aspiring to be more," Cullop said. "And the players that were in

there with us that morning did a great job ... They did a wonderful job. They're very coachable. There was great energy and great enthusiasm."

Cullop, who coincidentally enough played at Purdue for former Hurricanes coach Lin Dunn, called her move to Miami a "full circle" moment, in part because of that connection. She comes to Coral Gables from Toledo, where she built the Rockets into a consistent force in the Mid-American Conference.

With Cullop at the helm, Toledo won five regular-season MAC championships and earned 11 postseason berths, including two appearances in the NCAA Tournament. She amassed a 353-169 record in her 16 seasons there and was named the MAC Coach of the Year six times, earning that distinction in each of the last three seasons as the Rockets totaled 85 wins and brought home three conference championships.

Before taking over at Toledo, Cullop – who served as the President of the Women's Basketball Coaches Association from 2019

through 2021 – spent eight seasons at Evansville, where she went 123-110. She also previously served as an assistant coach at Radford, Long Beach State and Xavier.

Now, the veteran coach will transition to the ultra-competitive Atlantic Coast Conference, which sent eight teams to the NCAA Tournament this past season.

Cullop expects she and the Hurricanes – who just narrowly missed the NCAA tournament themselves and are coming off a 19-12 season – will need some time to get to know each other, but she's confident they can make a splash together in the ACC.

And when it comes to how she'll adjust to coaching in a league like the ACC, Cullop pointed to the success of some of her new conference colleagues, including Syracuse's Felisha Legette-Jack and North Carolina's Courtney Banghart, both of whom previously coached at mid-major programs.

“More than half of the coaches in this league came from my level. Basketball’s basketball,” Cullop said. “What the difference is is what you have to sell the caliber of athlete that you can sell and now, I have more to sell. ... I’m very excited. We played a tough schedule [at Toledo]. I’m not scared. We scrimmaged Notre Dame. We played Duke. We have played Virginia in the past. We were never scared to play anyone, so we’re not going to be scared of anyone now. We just need to get ready because we [don’t just want to be] ready to play. We want to beat them.”

As to how she intends to get the Hurricanes ready for the season ahead, Cullop said she envisions Miami being a team that continues to be quick and is a defensive force.

To that end, she praised the work Associate Head Coach Fitzroy Anthony has done with the Hurricanes and noted that Anthony will remain on Miami’s staff, along with Director of Basketball and Recruiting Operations Lonnelle Hall and Director of Basketball Operations & Special Projects Margie Gill.

Joining the staff are Associate Head Coach Jessie Ivey and Assistant Coach Danielle Page, both of whom coached with Cullop at Toledo.

“I love up-tempo. I love to press. I love to push the ball in transition and find the best shot available. But if it’s not there, we have a

pretty equal opportunity offense and I think the players will enjoy that,” Cullop said when describing her style. “The ball’s going to move. And it’s going to be hard to stop us because we will have more than one player that’s capable of scoring 20, 25 points. And that’s the formula that really helped me where I came from. Taking care of the basketball, though, and having a good assist-to-turnover ratio is going to be part of that.

“We’re going to take good shots. We’re going to make great passes. We’re going to be unselfish. I think all those things are very important on the defensive end. I love high-pressure defense. I love frustrating what the other team wants to do. If you can take away their best scoring options, it tends to lead to easy baskets on the other end. ... I’m so excited about the potential and the opportunities of what we can do with the team that we have right now. As I said before, one reason why I’m so excited about this team is that it’s not broken. This team is very much cupboard full. And that’s the exciting thing for me coming here. ... I can’t wait for them to show us the desire after missing something they wanted. Sometimes, when you’re kind of hit in the stomach by a blow of not making something that you thought you so desperately should have deserved, it’s great inspiration for the next season.”

As excited as she is to see what the Hurricanes can do on the court, Cullop also made it clear

she’s excited to see what they do in the community and in the classroom, too.

Last semester, her Toledo team posted a 3.84 team GPA – the highest in program history, with six student-athletes earning a 4.0. And she can’t wait to continue seeing the Hurricanes not only build relationships with their peers on campus and their fans at the Watsco Center, but the young people in the South Florida community, young people that Cullop wants to see get excited about Miami basketball.

“There’s an incredible amount of synergy in the country in women’s basketball right now. You look at the TV ratings, they’re soaring. You look at all the young kids that are coming out to games, all the sold-out arenas. I want to do everything I can to build our attendance,” Cullop said. “I think that’s something that we can do. We have talent on this team. We need to get them out in the community. They need to build relationships. We need to make sure that people know that, yes, we want you to come out to games, but we’re going to come out and help you, too. That’s very important to me, that we develop those ties in a very strong way and that we’re interacting with young kids. Our players need to understand the amazing role models they are and definitely reach back and help those younger kids understand how to play basketball, to get excited about it, to come to our games and then also, moti-

vate kids younger than them.”

As busy as Cullop has been over the course of the last few weeks, she expects the hectic pace will only continue, something she welcomes.

There’s a lot to do, she knows. And she’s already set more than a few goals for herself and her team over the next few weeks.

“I can’t say the word relationships enough. Building strong relationships with our players, you don’t do that overnight. You do that with time and being consistent with my effort with it and showing them how much I really do care. I’ve got to do that daily,” Cullop said. “I think every coach in the country, if you’re not recruiting your own team every single day, you’re going to lose them. In this day and age, that’s what it is. But you should be doing that anyway because you should care deeply enough about your players. So, that’s first. I want this team to know how much I care and how much I’m really invested in their future.

“And secondly, I’ve got to recruit, recruit, recruit. It’s the two R’s, recruit, and relationships. I’ve also got to finish out our staff. I think those are the three things that I’ve absolutely got to get done and we’re well on our way. We’ve got visits lined up. We’ve had a lot of time with the team already and we’re going to keep that going. ... I can’t wait for the next day to start.”



FACES IN THE CROWD

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos



In each edition of *Hurricanes Magazine*, we'll spotlight some of the student-athletes who are rising above the competition in each of their respective sports and making a difference for Miami.

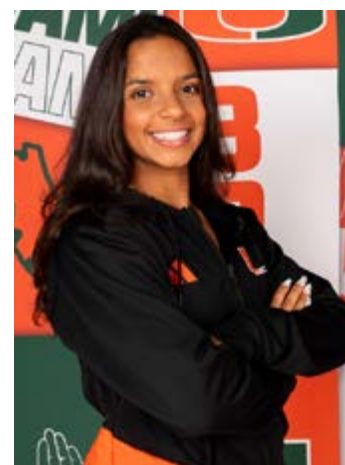
This installment of Faces in the Crowd features an ACC-champion heptathlete, a record-breaking swimmer, an Olympics-bound diver, and a veteran leader on Miami's women's tennis team.

Get to know Edgar Campre, Giulia Carvalho, Mohamed Farouk and Isabella Pfennig.



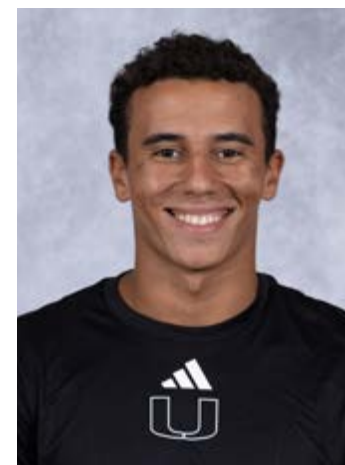
Edgar Campre, Sophomore

Last year – his first in Coral Gables – Edgar Campre was unable to compete during the indoor track and field season because of a knee injury. He returned to action for the outdoor season and while still not feeling his best, he managed to earn a second-place finish at the ACC Outdoor Track & Field Championships. This year, though, Campre has already earned himself a conference championship. In February, Campre posted personal bests in five of seven events of the heptathlon to total 5,903 points and win the gold medal at the ACC Indoor Track & Field Championships. A native of Lisbon, Portugal, Campre is bidding for a strong showing during the remainder of the outdoor season and is looking to earn a spot in the Paris Olympics.



Giulia Carvalho, Junior

Swimmer Giulia Carvalho capped her record-breaking season with a strong showing at the NCAA Women's Swimming & Diving Championships, where she earned Honorable Mention All-American honors. Carvalho, who hails from Belo Horizonte, Brazil became the first Hurricane on the women's side to swim the 50-yard free-style in under 22 seconds. Her time of 21.99 at the championships set a new Miami record and placed 22nd in the nation. A day later, she set another Miami record, this time by posting a 51.31 in the 100-yard butterfly. She'd finish 14th in that event to earn her Honorable Mention All-American nod.



Mohamed Farouk, Junior

This past March, diver Mohamed Farouk earned the second All-American recognition of his career at this year's NCAA Men's Swimming & Diving Championships in Indianapolis. There, Farouk finished fifth nationally in the 1-meter springboard with a score of 385.45. He qualified for the event's finals with a score of 349.75. Earlier this year, in February, Farouk earned a pair of medals at the ACC Championships, placing second in the platform and third in the 3-meter springboard. With the collegiate season now behind him, Farouk will turn his focus to another competition: the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris, where he has already earned a spot on the Egyptian national team.



Isabella Pfennig, Senior

One of the veterans on the women's tennis team, Isabella Pfennig looks to cap a memorable Miami career this spring. As a junior in 2023, she became the third player in program history to earn All-ACC recognition three times and finished the year ranked No. 70 in the nation and No. 36 in doubles with partner Alexa Noel. While playing at No. 2 singles during the regular season this spring, Pfennig notched four wins over ranked opponents, including a thrilling 7-6 (7-3), 4-6, 7-6 (7-5) win over then-No. 31 Nicole Khirin of Texas A&M. Her victory helped Miami clinch a 4-3 win over the then-ninth-ranked Aggies. Pfennig entered the postseason ranked No. 63 in the nation in singles and No. 29 in doubles with partner Xinyi Nong.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? KEVIN FAGAN

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos

Kevin Fagan has always considered himself to be highly competitive.

That drive to succeed – and to win – helped him earn a football scholarship at Miami and was on full display during his first year as a starter when he was part of the Hurricanes' 1983 national championship team.

It helped propel him from being a fourth-round draft pick to a successful NFL defensive lineman who enjoyed an eight-year career with the San Francisco 49ers and won back-to-back Super Bowls in 1988 and 1989.

When his football career came to an end, Fagan embraced retirement before he found a new way to channel his competitive drive: tournament bass fishing.

Still, his family had another idea for the father of six, whose three eldest daughters were discovering their own knack for competition thanks to soccer and fast-pitch softball.

It was a suggestion that would change Fagan's life.

"I was gone every weekend, multiple days, fishing bass tournaments and doing all of that. I think when my

oldest was like six or seven, my dad was like, 'You need to start coaching them in softball.' They were in a local league then, but I wasn't involved as coach," said Fagan, who began coaching his daughters in travel ball before eventually coaching them at Dunnellon High School near Ocala. "I got to the point where I was like, 'You know what? This isn't about me anymore. It needs to be about them.' I started coaching them and it was a perfect fit.

"I got to be with my kids, be invested with them, and compete at the same time. I spent time with them and watched them grow through the trials and the ups and downs of sports. I loved it. I loved the game of fast pitch [softball]. I thought about getting into football coaching ... but the time constraints on a football coach are huge. You don't have quality time with your family. So, I just said, 'You know what? I'm going to invest in fast pitch' and that's how I started on this journey."

It's a journey that has brought Fagan and his daughters – Kasey, Sami, Haley, and later, Cameron – a series of championships, opportunities, and countless memories.

It's also, most recently, brought Fagan to a corner of northeast Geor-

gia where he now leads the softball program at Emmanuel University.

Under his guidance, the Lions have posted back-to-back 30-win seasons. His impact on the program was immediate, with Emmanuel advancing to the NCAA Division II Softball Championship Tournament and winning the Conference Carolinas championship during his first season there in 2021.

But Emmanuel isn't the only place where Fagan has experienced softball success.

Before taking the reins of the Lions' program, Fagan coached at the College of Central Florida, where he produced 20 FCA All-Americans and 10 NJCAA All-Americans and helped the program achieve a series of firsts, including the first conference championship in school history and the first national championship tournament appearance.

At Dunnellon, meanwhile, Fagan led the Tigers to back-to-back state titles and a national championship in 2010 before stepping down to briefly coach football.

He eventually returned to coaching softball, though, and while that

may not have been the post-football career he imagined while winning championships in Miami and San Francisco, he discovered that developing student-athletes and watching them grow in the sport that had meant so much to his daughters proved a special calling.

"I think it's really rewarding, obviously, to see a player take advantage of your coaching, to have them buy in and improve in whatever technical or tactical aspects of the game you're coaching them on," Fagan said. "And then, the character improvement, seeing kids that when they got here their first year, they were the last ones to help get things off the bus or they were the last kid to grab a rake or the last kid to help set up the pitching machines or whatever.

"Then you see the character development and now they're leading. They're saying, 'Hey, guys, let's grab our rakes. Let's do this. Let's load the bus.' That growth is just huge. It's so rewarding, and we see it here at Emmanuel. ... To see kids developing work ethic and character and trying to be more servant-minded is probably the single most rewarding thing."

As he's navigated his coaching career, Fagan has tried to draw inspiration from the coaches who impacted his life, including a pair of legends: former Hurricanes coach Howard Schnellenberger and Pro Football Hall of Famer Bill Walsh, whom Fagan played for in San Francisco.

Their influence, Fagan said, impacts him even today.

"Howard Schnellenberger taught me how to be punctual, organized, and prepared. There's never been, in my opinion, a better coach when it comes to being organized and punctual. I mean, if we had to



Photo courtesy of:
Emmanuel University Athletics



Photo courtesy of:
The Fagan Family

be on the bus at 12:58, it wasn't one o'clock, it was 12:58. Super organized, very prepared and I took a lot of that from him. I had the utmost respect for him," said Fagan, who was inducted into the UM Sports Hall of Fame 2003. "And then my other coaches in the NFL, I mean, we all know Bill Walsh. I felt like he was incredible at getting guys to bond as a team. I think the 49ers in the 80s and early 90s were probably the most cohesive teams in the NFL and I think that was a huge credit to him. That's what he instilled from the get-go.

"We'd get to training camp, and his opening speech was [about how] there were no rookies, there was no hazing. We were all in it to win a championship and we were all in it together, coaches and players. When we loaded the plane, he made sure players got on first and staff, front office personnel, everyone else got on last. When people were fed, players were fed first. He created that mentality, 'Hey, it's about you guys.' And I got that from him. That was huge. So, my coaching [influences], I got from somebody else. I had some really, really good role models."

Today, Fagan has become a sort of coaching role model himself.

Not only did each of his daughters play softball at the Division I level, but three – Kasey, Sami, and Haley – have followed his footsteps and embarked on their own coaching careers.

Kasey and Sami are both assistant softball coaches at Liberty University, while Haley is on her father's staff at Emmanuel as a volunteer coach.

And, Fagan says, Cameron Fagan – who is currently an infielder at Virginia Tech – has expressed an interest in becoming a graduate assistant when her playing days are over.

"They all are so invested in the game. They know the game. They love the game, so for them to go into coaching is neat, because their dad was a coach," Fagan said. "Softball's in their blood. We lived it for many years and they're just kind of carrying the torch. They enjoy coaching and investing in the young ladies, more than just the coaching. They want to be examples of charac-

ter and the right way to do things ... and that's pretty cool to witness and see."

Because coaching and spending time with his family have dominated his schedule for years, Fagan concedes he hasn't been able to make many return visits to Coral Gables. There hasn't been much time to return to San Francisco for reunions with the 49ers either.

But, he says, he tries to keep tabs on how his alma mater is doing and to this day, is grateful for his time in orange and green and all the experiences that came with it.

"Miami is probably the happiest time of my life before I found Jesus Christ. My memories there, it's where I met my wife ... and where we saw a program that was nothing develop into a national champion," Fagan said. "The friends, the camaraderie, it was such a high point in my life ... and the things that were instilled in me at the University of Miami by Howard Schnellenberger, I'll be forever grateful for my time there."



MAKING PROGRESS: HURRICANES SHINE IN SPRING GAME

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos

It was, in ways, a different kind of spring game for the Hurricanes.

The venue was right on campus at Cobb Stadium, mere yards from the practice fields on Greentree where they worked throughout spring drills. The stands lining the track were filled with family and friends, Miami students, alumni, and supporters. And new faces lined up all across the field.

But in all the ways that mattered, it was exactly how Miami wanted to end the spring.

Quarterback transfer Cam Ward, one of those new faces on the roster, showed why he was one of the top signal callers in college football last season, delivering a series of big plays and showing off his athleticism throughout the afternoon.

And veterans like Xavier Restrepo and Wesley Bissainthe made their presence felt, while young newcomers like Elija Lofton and Marquise Lightfoot logged significant reps and showed why Miami's most recent recruiting class was one of the best in the nation.

Now, with spring behind them, the Hurricanes will shift their focus to the offseason ahead of their Aug. 31 opener against in-state rival, Florida.

The work, they say, will continue.

"I felt good, especially knowing the work that we put into the last 14 practices," Ward said. "But you know, spring ball is over. Now we can start to come more together as a team, with the new guys coming in and come August 31st, we'll be ready for that challenge."







BUILDING CONNECTIONS: MARLEY COOK

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos

Every Wednesday afternoon during the spring, once his workouts were finished and his classwork was done, Marley Cook got in his car and drove west.

His weekly commute was a mere eight-mile trip down Miller Drive, but each passing minute took him farther and farther away from the hustle and bustle of South Florida and brought him closer to a place that, surprisingly enough, reminded him of his countryside home in Water Valley, Mississippi.

The soft, warm breezes. The chirping birds occasionally interrupting the quiet.

And the horses. The tall, majestic, gentle horses, including one of his personal favorites, Ben.

At Whispering Manes Therapeutic Riding Center, Marley – a defensive lineman who joined the Hurricanes in January after spending four seasons at Middle Tennessee State – discovered that not only could he reconnect with his lifelong love of horses even in an urban center like Miami, but that he could help some very special individuals discover the joy of horses and riding, too.

“I did not know Miami had any horses out here at all,” Cook chuckled during one of his afternoons at the Center. “I thought it was straight lizards, alligators, and crocodiles. But when [Assistant Athletic Director for Academics and Director of Football Academics Jessica Lopez] told me about this, I had a little joy.”

That joy only grew throughout Cook’s internship at Whispering Manes.

Each week, he’d help groom, care for, and feed the horses at the five-acre facility in southwest Miami-Dade. And each week, he’d assist Whispering Manes instructor Sarah Piñon with her afternoon classes, classes that allow special needs individuals to build not only their physical strength, but confidence and self-esteem through therapeutic rides on dedicated horses.

Sometimes, that help was as simple as using his 6-foot-2 frame to fill the horses’ tall feeders with hay and other times, it meant guiding a horse and rider around the ring while Piñon led a class.



There was no talk of football, no talk of the weight-room records he set in the offseason or of the practices on Greentree where Cook was working to build chemistry with his new Miami teammates.

While he was interning at Whispering Manes, Cook’s focus was on the horses, his colleagues around the barn and the essential work they were doing for center’s riders in the ring.

“He knows about horses, and horse behavior and he knows how to deal with the kids that might be afraid of horses,” Piñon said of Cook. “And he helps take some of that fear away. With him here specifically, I know that one of the riders feels better with Marley. [The rider] has

a lot of trouble dismounting from the horse. That’s something that we’ve been practicing, but having Marley here, that really helps him.”

Cook’s passion for horses began during his childhood in Water Valley when he and his father, Broderick, came upon a starving horse not far from their home.

They rescued the horse, nursed her back to health, and named her Sally. And once Sally was healthy and Cook felt more comfortable with the Tennessee Walker, he took to riding Sally as often as he could.

He still, of course, enjoys spending time with her when he returns home.

Eventually, Cook took his love of horses with him to Middle Tennessee where, while he played football, he took animal science classes that allowed him to help provide care for horses at a nearby equine center.

When he came to Miami, he shared that experience and his love of horses with Lopez, who suggested the internship at Whispering Manes as part of his course of study.

It was, Cook said, a natural fit.

“This isn’t about me now. It’s about the community,” Cook said. “I’ve got this opportunity to help the kids and the community. ... I would say my favorite part is just being around [the kids] and seeing them have a smile at the end of the day. ... This is all about them.”

Cook has balanced his work at Whispering Manes with both his responsibilities in the classroom and on the football field.

The redshirt senior is expected to add depth and experience to a defensive line unit that was a force for the Hurricanes last season.

Cook, who this offseason set a new Hurricanes squat record when he lifted 705 pounds during a workout, used spring practice to not only get to know his new teammates, but to master Miami’s playbook and learn from his new coaches.

So far, he says, the process has gone smoothly.

“Everything’s been going great with not only me, but my teammates, too,” Cook said of his first weeks

as a Hurricane. “I love seeing everybody improve. And my coaches, my coaches love to teach. They’re coaching me up every day, on everything I’ve got to work on, because nobody’s perfect. I just love working on my craft every day and then the playbook, I’ve got that down pat now. At first, I thought it was going to be very hard, but I’ve got it down pat. Now, at the end of the day, I’m getting great work here.”

With spring football and his internship behind him, Cook—like the rest of the Hurricanes—will now turn his focus to the offseason and preparing for Miami’s season opener against rival Florida on Aug. 31.

The lineman is excited to see where his time as a Hurricane takes him and he’s confident it will only help him build on an already successful college career that has already had him total 61 tackles, 19 tackles for loss and 10.5 sacks.

“I said at the end of the day, I just want to show the guys that you don’t have to be the biggest talker. I’m not the biggest talker,” Cook said. “But you have to show your worth at the end of the day. I just want to be able to lead by example.”

His experience at Whispering Manes, he added, has only helped him on that front.

“Working here has been all about helping people,” he said. “We’ve got everything here, lined up, to help people that need help. ... And it’s a good little bit of country life out here.”



A close-up photograph of a Hurricane Honors trophy. The trophy is dark with gold-colored accents, including a laurel wreath and the words "HURRICANE HONORS" in raised, gold letters. The background is dark and out of focus.

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE: HURRICANE HONORS

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos

Even as a child, Jalen Rivers knew the value of helping others.

As a youngster growing up in Jacksonville, his parents instilled in him the importance of being an active part of his community and of reaching out to those in need. As he grew older – and began playing football – they reminded Rivers of his responsibility to set an example and be a role model to some of the youngsters around him.

They're lessons that Rivers – now one of the veteran anchors of Miami's offensive line – hasn't forgotten.

In April, Rivers was recognized for his contributions in the community, his excellence in the classroom and his efforts on the football field as the winner of Miami's Ibis Award, which was presented at the athletic department's second annual Hurricane Honors awards ceremony.

A fifth-year redshirt junior who has already earned his bachelor's degree in sports administration and is a two-time All-ACC Academic honoree, Rivers also earned the male Scholar-Athlete Award, prompting cheers from not only his teammates who were in attendance, but from all the Hurricanes student-athletes that filled the Newman Alumni Center on campus for the event.

"This means a lot. A lot of times, players go to specific programs just to focus on football, but me, I knew it was bigger than that. I knew it was bigger than just football," said Rivers, who has served as a pen pal and a youth football coach during his time at Miami and is also

a member of the department's Black Student-Athlete Alliance. "I knew I needed to get my academics right to play football. And with football comes a lot of responsibility, too. That includes giving back to the community and I wanted to do that as well. The youth look up to us, so I've made sure to touch on all areas, like the community, football, my schoolwork, all of that. ... My parents raised me like that, so I appreciate them. I appreciate my coaches and everyone that supports me."

Said Shirelle Jackson, Miami's Executive Associate Athletic Director for Student-Athlete Development, "To have a young man of his stature, to have a young man of this athletic ability, his work ethic in the classroom, his leadership in the locker room ... in all of those spaces, he's humble. He has all of these accolades, but what stands out the most is his kind heart and his humility. He comes from an incredible family, so the leadership and humility he's brought not only to our football locker room, but to all of our student-athletes is wonderful. He truly puts the 'student' in student-athlete."

Rivers was one of 19 student-athletes honored at this year's event, including track and field's Jalen Gordon and soccer's Skylah Klein, who were named the Most Engaged Hurricanes and baseball's Myles Caba and track and field's Christina Warren, who earned Leadership Awards for their work with the Hurricane Student-Athlete Leadership Academy and the HER (Honor. Empower.Rise.) Leadership Academy, respectively.

Six student-athletes – cross coun-

try's Elle Mezzio, rowing's Kat Aguero, football's Mike Redding III and Jaden Harris, track and field's Robert Joseph and soccer's Hannah Dawbarn – earned recognition as the ACC's Top Six for Service, while Redding and head baseball coach J.D. Arteaga were also recognized for recently being inducted into the University's Iron Arrow Honor Society, the highest honor attained at the University of Miami.

Several student-athletes were also recognized for their athletic efforts, including defensive lineman Rueben Bain, Jr., who was named the Best Male Newcomer and volleyball's Grace Lopez, who was named the Best Female Newcomer.

Sara Byrne – who has rewritten the Miami record book, has twice been named the ACC Golfer of the Month and who last year, qualified for a spot in the NCAA Golf Championships – was named the Best Female Student-Athlete, while Russell Robinson, who won the triple jump indoor national championship earlier this year and has broken a series of Miami records himself, was named the Best Male Student-Athlete.

"This was insane. I literally was not expecting this at all. I was shaking as I was walking up to the stage," Byrne said. "I could not believe my name was called because there are so many special student-athletes here that do so much all the time. To hear my name called was insane. ... It's so special, knowing all of us had the opportunity to come together tonight. We're coming out of here with special memories, not just the best times on the course

or the court or whatever, but in moments like these, which bring us together. That's pretty special."

The ceremony also spotlighted two athletic department staff members – assistant track and field coach JJ Hunter and football operations coordinator Jimmy Hunter – as winners of the Unsung Hero Awards. Both were nominated by Miami's student-athletes.

"This is such a special thing to be able to do," said Vice President/Director of Athletics Dan Radakovich of the event. "When I got here, we didn't have this. It was something I'd seen at other universities, and it's really important. When we sat down to talk about it as a senior leadership team, everyone said, 'We can do this, we can pull this together so we can have our student-athletes come in one night and have a wonderful event.' I just want to thank the staff. They've done a phenomenal job of making sure our student-athletes are recognized in a way that is befitting the great work they do as representatives of the University."

Said Jackson, "I think it's so important to recognize our student-athletes as total individuals and to be able to take a moment and recognize their success beyond the athletic field or the athletic realm. It's important for them ... To see people come up and be honored for the work in the community, the work in the classroom, and the engagement at a conference level, we're all just really, really proud of them. Because of them, we can have a night like this. That's what makes it so wonderful."



2024 HURRICANES HONORS AWARD WINNERS

**Hurricane Leadership
Academy Award**
Myles Caba, Baseball

**HER (Honor. Empower. Rise)
Leadership Academy Award**
Christina Warren, Track & Field

Rising Star Award
Brian Walters, Baseball
Hallie Salas, Soccer

Most Engaged Hurricane Award
Jalen Gordon, Track & Field
Skylah Klein, Soccer

ACC Top Six for Service
Elle Mezzio, Cross Country
Kat Aguero, Rowing
Mike Redding III, Football
Robert Joseph, Track & Field
Hannah Dawbarn, Soccer
Jaden Harris, Football

Best Male Newcomer
Rueben Bain, Jr., Football

Best Female Newcomer
Grace Lopez, Volleyball

**Outstanding Community
Service Team Award**
Rowing

Unsung Hero Award
Jimmy Hunter, Football
JJ Hunter, Track & Field

Scholar-Athlete Award
Jalen Rivers, Football
Sara Byrne, Golf

**Outstanding Community
Service Award**
Kam Kinchens, Football

Iron Arrow Recognition
Mike Redding III, Football
J.D. Arteaga, Baseball

**Comeback Performance
of the Year**
Baseball, 16-12 Win over
Virginia on March 9

**Comeback Student-Athletes
of the Year**
Myles Caba, Baseball
Caroline Hanlon, Rowing

Best Female Student-Athlete
Sara Byrne, Golf

Best Male Student-Athlete
Russell Robinson, Track & Field

Ibis Award
Jalen Rivers, Football



GIVING BACK WITH GRATITUDE: WAYNE & PATRICIA CASE

By Pamela Edward

Wayne and Patricia Case met at the University of Miami more than 50 years ago, when he was a student at the Miller School of Medicine, and she was a senior in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Looking back, they marvel at the countless ways, large and small, that the University made a meaningful difference in their lives.

There were the scholarships that helped Wayne through his undergraduate studies and at the Miller School, where he earned his medical degree in 1971, having applied and been accepted as a junior.

There was the time Patricia, a sophomore with little money and no family safety net, received a resident assistant position—and the stipend that went with it—through the intercession of May Brunson, then dean of women.

“Dean Brunson was a lifesaver,” declared Patricia, who earned her Bachelor of Science degree in 1969. “She found out I didn’t have any money. I was living on a dollar or two a day, and she said, ‘Okay,

we’re going to fix this.’ I became one of the first female RAs.”

Throughout, there have been Hurricane sports, of which the Cases have been avid fans since their student days and loyal donors for more than 30 years. So, when they contemplated a more substantial legacy, they decided to make an estate gift to Hurricane Athletics.

The Cases’ bequest will support the areas of greatest need in athletics, be they scholarships, support programs for student-athletes, facilities improvements, or related needs.

The gift is part of the University’s Ever Brighter: The Campaign for Our Next Century. The most ambitious in the institution’s history, the \$2.5 billion campaign is set to conclude in 2025, when the University will celebrate its centennial.

“Our mission is to support our student-athletes in their efforts to achieve personal, academic, and athletic excellence,” said Dan Radakovich, vice president and director of athletics. “We are grateful to

Wayne and Patricia Case for their generous gift, which will help us provide student-athletes with the resources and support they need to reach their full potential.”

As a teenager in Hialeah, Florida, in the early 1960s, Wayne followed the Miami Hurricanes football and basketball teams.

“I would go to football games—George Mira was there at the time—but I also had this little crystal radio, and I would listen to basketball when Rick Barry [now in the NBA Hall of Fame] was playing,” he recalled.

The Cases are longtime football season ticket holders and recall games at the Orange Bowl, where they had seats on the 50-yard line, with particular fondness.

One particular game stands out in their memories: the 1984 Orange Bowl, when the Hurricanes defeated Nebraska 31-30 to win their first of five national championships.

“When we beat Nebraska, I had a little portable TV with me, on which I

could get the main stations,” said Patricia. “When Nebraska didn’t convert the two-point play at the end of the game, all the fans around us jumped all over me to see the replay. It was so exciting.”

The Cases always have been big believers in the power of physical activity and team sports to instill positive character traits in young people and help manage academic and career pressures.

They both played sports in high school and encouraged their three children to do the same, which Patricia said that she believes played a role in their later success.

Their two daughters are both doctors who earned their medical degrees from the Miller School, and their son is a pastor of a thriving church in Atlanta.

As Patricia explained, “We tried to teach them that you are not the team—you are part of the team. You do your part, and you help others do their part, and you’ll be successful.” It’s a philosophy that the Cases hope will live on through future student-athletes at the U.

The Cases regard their gift as affirmation that the University has given them much more than they have given back.

“Miami took me in, enveloped me, and cared for me,” Patricia reflected. “We didn’t have silver spoons for sure—they were plastic. So, we built things together. We were very fortunate and felt we should share that.”



Photo courtesy of:
Case Family

CANES CHRONICLES: FOOTBALL ALUMNI DINNER

By Rick Remmert

The University of Miami is blessed to have a long line of legendary football alumni who have the star power to light up any room.

That wattage was on display in April when head coach Mario Cristobal hosted Football Alumni Weekend 2024 as the capstone to spring practice.

At The U, former players turn out in force, and this year was no different with more than 225 football alums gathering in the Carol Soffer Indoor Practice Facility for a Friday night team dinner with the 2024 Hurricanes before Miami's annual spring game.

In attendance were UM's former players from across eight decades, from the 1950s through the 2020s. The 2024 team mixed and mingled and broke bread with their football alumni predecessors.

Returning players, both the young and the not-so young, were eager to share stories about their experiences on Greentree Practice Field and in historic Friday night football games in the Orange Bowl.

At The U, older Hurricanes help younger Hurricanes understand the football program's proud history, and a brotherhood that is envied by others, but never duplicated.

The evening included a star-studded program featuring four Hall of Fame Hurricanes who addressed the group:

- Former head coach Mark Richt, a member of the College Football Hall of Fame Class of 2023
- Devin Hester and Andre Johnson, two of the newest members of the Pro Football Hall of Fame, who will be enshrined in Canton, Ohio this summer

• Michael Irvin, a Pro Football Hall of Fame Class of 2007 inductee, who delivered a stem-winding keynote address

Before he spoke, Richt and his wife Katharyn were honored for their major gift to the Carol Soffer Indoor Practice Facility. The Richts were recognized by Soffer herself, along with Cristobal and Vice President/Director of Athletics Dan Radakovich.

The group beamed in seeing, for the first time, the new signage that proudly displays: Carol Soffer Indoor Practice Facility With Gratitude to Katharyn and Mark Richt.

Also in the room that evening were College Football Hall of Fame member Gino Torretta (Class of 2009) and Pro Football Hall of Fame member Jason Taylor (2017), Miami's defensive line coach.

Richt, who was a quarterback at Miami from 1978-82, talked about his decision to return to The U as head coach in 2016, and his Day One vision to build an indoor practice facility.

The room was rapt with attention as Richt recalled all the work that went into building that stunning facility.

Alumni players and 2024 Hurricanes then regaled at remarks from Hester, the greatest kick returner in football history, and Johnson, a 2001 national champion at The U and a wide receiver who was a match-up nightmare for any defensive back who lined up across from him.

And then it was Playmaker Time.

Irvin lit up the room with his address that was part preacher and part Hall of Famer imparting his wisdom on what it will take for today's Hurricanes to continue Miami's proud tradition of football dominance.

Earlier, Cristobal welcomed the group and thanked his fellow football alumni for turning out in such numbers. Cristobal himself is a two-time national champion on the offensive line for the Hurricanes (1989, 1991).

Former team captain Don Bailey, Jr. was the evening's emcee and did a superb job of leading the group through the pre-dinner recognition of the Richts, and then a great meal and a program for the ages with four Hall of Fame speakers.

On Saturday, the weekend concluded with the annual Spring Game at Cobb Stadium and with hundreds

of football alumni observing.

The Hall of Fame quotient ticked up two notches with Spring Game visits by College Football Hall of Fame inductees Bennie Blades (2006) and Bryant McKinnie (2023), bringing to seven the number of College and Pro Football Hall of Fame Hurricanes who returned to The U for Football Alumni Weekend 2024.

The weekend also featured visits from another half-dozen Hurricanes who achieved All-American status at Miami: defensive back Tom Beier (1966); running back Chuck Foreman (1972) and Ring of Honor Class of 2023; defensive lineman Rubin Carter (1974); offensive lineman Joaquin Gonzalez (2000-01); center Brett Romberg (2002); and defensive end and current Miami Dolphin Jaelan Phillips (2020).

And who knows...maybe there were future All-Americans and Hall of Fame inductees among the 2024 Hurricanes seated at the dinner tables on Friday evening, or out on the Cobb Stadium field Saturday afternoon for Spring Game 2024?

Football Alumni Weekend is produced under the direction of Vice President/Director of Athletics Dan Radakovich and head football coach Mario Cristobal and his staff, and by UM's Alumni Programs/M Club team of Jessica Green, Myrna Schneider, Sebrina Beyer, Monica Bustillo, Mo Piero, and Rick Remmert.



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