

# HURRICANES

MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2024  
YEAR IN REVIEW EDITION

**ALEXA NOEL**  
2024 NCAA WOMEN'S TENNIS  
SINGLES CHAMPION

**RUSSELL ROBINSON**  
2024 NCAA INDOOR TRACK & FIELD  
TRIPLE JUMP CHAMPION







# ELEVATE THE GAME LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY

For nearly a century, the spirit of philanthropy has been a driving force behind the remarkable accomplishments of Miami Hurricanes Athletics. This enduring support has been key to providing student-athlete scholarships, strong academic programming support, and enhanced state-of-the-art facilities, all of which significantly elevate the student-athlete experience. With the right planned gift to Miami Athletics, you can protect yourself and your loved ones while taking advantage of tax and income benefits. Partner with us to create a legacy of transformation that will resonate today and echo through the ages.

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# A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS



The 2023-24 academic year featured more memorable moments for Miami Athletics, including two individual national championships, record-setting performances in the classroom, generous acts of community service, and continuous upgrades to facilities and resources to help our student-athletes compete at the highest level.

Alexa Noel became the third Hurricane in history to capture the NCAA women's tennis singles crown. She was also named ACC Player of the Year. Russell Robinson won the NCAA men's indoor triple jump title and took silver in the outdoor triple jump. Alexa and Russell were two of our 14 All-Americans and we also had eight ACC individual champions.

Eleven teams advanced to postseason play, including men's outdoor track and field, which posted its best-ever NCAA finish (tied for 10th) and women's tennis, which made the NCAA Sweet 16 for the 25th time in program history. Although we did not meet our expectations in terms of overall NCAA postseason appearances, rest

assured we are working hard to give our coaches the resources and support they need to compete at the highest level in 2024-25 and beyond.

The future looks bright for the Hurricanes. Our 2024 football recruiting class ranked fourth in the country and first in the ACC. Our 2024 men's basketball recruiting class ranked eighth nationally and second in the conference. Our quest for success is the result of a collective effort -- the commitment of our 400-plus student-athletes; the dedication of our coaches and staff; and the continued support we receive from our University leadership, donors, alumni and supporters throughout our South Florida community and around the world.

Our student-athletes are UM students first and foremost and they put together an incredible year on the academic front. Our cumulative grade point average for the Spring 2024 semester was a department-record 3.23; 72 percent of our student-athletes posted a GPA of 3.0 or better and 37 of those student-athletes had a 4.0 GPA.

We earned an NCAA Graduation Success Rate of 94 percent, and our NCAA Academic Progress Rate score was 996 – both department records. It was the eighth consecutive year and 11th year in the past 12 that UM has earned a four-year average GSR rate of 90 percent or higher, and 12 UM programs achieved APR perfect scores of 1,000 for the 2022-23 academic year. I am proud of our student-athletes for the work they do in the classroom, and I am also grateful to our coaches and academic services staff for helping our student-athletes continue to succeed in their academic efforts.









We encourage a servant mentality across Miami Athletics and our student-athletes take that mindset to heart. We finished second nationally in the 2023 NCAA Team Works Community Service Competition – one year after winning the competition – and once again garnered 100 percent student-athlete participation. Our student-athletes also continue to take advantage of the numerous leadership, professional and civic engagement opportunities offered through our Student-Athlete Development office.

Miami Athletic Development has raised more than \$45 million in gifts and commitments over the past two fiscal years from nearly 20,000 supporters. In addition, our total raised for the Ever Brighter Campaign, which will conclude as we reach UM's centennial in 2025, is nearing \$190 million. We also raised more than \$1 million in direct support of women's athletics through our Together 4 Her Campaign. Thank you to all our supporters for making a difference in the experience for our student-athletes!

On the facility front, we recently completed numerous upgrades to the Knight Complex, home to our volleyball program, and opened a new, 8,500-square-foot rowing training facility on campus. We will soon be embarking on a 15,600-square-foot expansion of the Carol Soffer Indoor Practice Facility, which will include a new football weight room.

Thank you for your continued investment in Miami Athletics. Your generous support helps our student-athletes pursue their dreams, both on the field at the highest level of college athletics, and off the field at a world-class institution that is a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities. We look forward to seeing you cheer on the Canes throughout the 2024-25 academic year.

Go Canes!

**Dan Radakovich**

Vice President / Director of Athletics



IT'S  
ALL  
ABOUT  
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# YEAR IN REVIEW

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**Editor-In-Chief:** Christy Cabrera Chirinos

**Assistant Editor:** Carter Toole

**Art Director/Production:** Leo Ramos

**Assistant Art Director:** Kevin Ortiz

**Photo Credits:** Megan Barnes, Brock Borgeson, Justin Fitzpatrick, Kylie Greenwell, Eli Heatley, James Knable, Raul Maristany, Miami Athletics, Tessa Mortensen, Kevin Ortiz, Macy Parmer, Rick Remmert, JC Ridley, Grace Schinsing, The ACC, Noah Thomas, Josh White, Rhona Wise.

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**University of Miami Athletics**

5821 San Amaro Drive  
Coral Gables, FL 33146  
(305) 284-6699  
miamihurricanes.com







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# YEAR IN REVIEW: 2023-24

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos

There were, once again, more than a few memorable Miami moments over the course of the last year.

Two Hurricanes were crowned individual national champions in their respective sports. More than a few new faces made their presence felt, not just in Coral Gables, but on fields and courts all across the ACC.

And from the fall to the spring, there were games and performances to remember.

In early March, senior Russell Robinson – who came to Miami as a walk-on from Windermere, Fla. – became the 18th national champion in Hurricanes track and field history when he won the triple jump

national title with a school record breaking mark of 16.76 meters at the NCAA Division I Indoor Track and Field Championships in Boston.

Less than three months later, red-shirt junior Alexa Noel stormed through the NCAA Singles Championship and became the third individual to win a national title for the women's tennis program.

But Robinson and Noel weren't the only ones to make headlines this year.

After a breakout season that saw him collect 37 tackles, 9.5 tackles for loss and 7.5 sacks, freshman Rueben Bain, Jr. was named the ACC Defensive Rookie of the Year.

And in the spring, Daniel Cuvet hit 24 home runs to break slugger Pat Burrell's freshman home run record. Cuvet was then named a consensus Freshman All-American by multiple media outlets.

Eight Hurricanes won ACC titles, and 14 earned All-American status. Eleven teams advanced to the postseason and now, with summer in full swing, it's time for Miami's student-athletes and coaches to celebrate their accomplishments, while looking forward – and preparing – for the new seasons that await.

Here, a look back at the year that was in Hurricanes athletics...





# BASEBALL

2023-2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

By Josh White

- Finished the year with a 27-30 overall record, earning a trip to the ACC Baseball Championship semifinals for the second straight season
- Miami opened conference play with back-to-back top-15 series wins over eventual College World Series participants Virginia and North Carolina
- Third baseman Daniel Cuvet was named a unanimous Freshman All-American after a historic rookie season, setting a new Miami freshman home run record, breaking Pat Burrell's 28-year-old-mark
- Right-handed pitcher Gage Ziehl collected conference accolades for the second straight year, garnering first-team distinction after leading all ACC hurlers in innings (75.1) in league play
- 2024 marked the 80th season in program history and inaugural campaign under the direction of head coach J.D. Arteaga
- Five Hurricanes heard their names called in the 2024 MLB First-Year Player Draft: fourth rounders Rafe Schlesinger (Guardians), Gage Ziehl (Yankees) and Herick Hernandez (Braves), 17th rounder Jacoby Long (Mets) and 19th rounder Brian Walters (Mariners)





# MEN'S BASKETBALL

2023-2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

By Megan Barnes

- Finished the 2023-24 season at 15-17 overall and 6-14 in ACC play
- Jim Larrañaga moved into first among active Division I head men's basketball coaches for games coached (1,240)
- Larrañaga also moved into sixth among active Division I head men's basketball coaches for career wins (740)
- Guard Kyshawn George was selected No. 24 in the first round of this year's NBA Draft and is headed to the Washington Wizards. He became the 26th Hurricane drafted and the first first-round pick since 2018, when Lonnie Walker IV was drafted by the San Antonio Spurs
- Won the Baha Mar Bahamas Championship, defeating a pair of Power 5 teams in Georgia and Kansas State
- Defeated then-No. 16 Clemson, 95-82, on Jan. 3
- Miami swept Virginia Tech and Notre Dame in conference play
- Signed the ninth-best recruiting class in the nation (second in the ACC) per the 247Sports Composite ranking
- Miami signee Jalil Bethea was named a McDonald's All-American and Pennsylvania Gatorade Player of the Year
- Fourth-year juniors Norchad Omier and Nijel Pack were named to the Preseason All-ACC First Team and All-ACC Second Team, respectively
- Omier was named to the All-ACC Second Team and the NABC All-District 2 Second Team after the season
- Omier was tabbed the 2023-24 Skip Prosser Award Recipient as the ACC men's basketball Scholar-Athlete of the Year
- A program-record four Hurricanes – Matthew Cleveland, Paul Djobet, Kyshawn George and Norchad Omier – earned All-ACC Academic Team distinction
- Pack was named the Baha Mar Bahamas Championship Tournament MVP
- Junior Wooga Poplar earned Baha Mar Bahamas Championship All-Tournament Team recognition
- Omier and Pack both surpassed the 1,500-point mark in their careers
- Omier was the only ACC player to finish the season in the top-seven in scoring (17.03) and rebounding (9.97)
- Omier finished the season one rebound shy of averaging a double-double
- Omier became the first Hurricane to lead the team in scoring and rebounding since 2013-14 and was just the sixth player to do so since the program rebirth in 1985
- Junior Matthew Cleveland reached the 1,000-point mark for his career
- Cleveland was the only guard in the ACC to average 13.0-plus points and 6.0-plus rebounds



# WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

2023-2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

By Brock Borgeson

- Finished the season with a 19-12 mark and an 8-10 record in ACC play
- Notched four top-50 NET wins
- Defeated then-No. 4/5 NC State, 73-59, on January 18. The win was the eighth top-five win in program history
- Defeated No. 21 Mississippi State on the road Nov. 29, the first-ever ranked-road SEC regular season win in program history
- Was first in the ACC in bench points per game (24.5)
- Went 10-1 in non-conference play
- Set the program record for blocks in a game with 13 against Wake Forest on Jan. 7
- 8-0 start to the season was the best start since the 2015-16 campaign
- Defeated eventual NCAA Sweet 16 team, Duke, 64-58
- Defeated North Carolina, 60-59, with a 14-point comeback victory in the ACC Tournament
- Jaida Patrick surpassed the 1,000-career point mark and the 500-career rebound mark
- Shayeann Day-Wilson surpassed 1,000 points and 300 assists for her career
- Set a program record with six Hurricanes being tabbed for the All-ACC Academic Team (Day-Wilson, Lemyah Hylton, Patrick, Jasmyne Roberts, Ally Stedman, Ja'Leah Williams)
- Before retiring at season's end, former head coach Katie Meier surpassed the 350-win mark at Miami. She finished her career with 438 victories and 13 postseason appearances
- Named Tricia Cullop the eighth head coach in program history after Meier's retirement. Cullop, who previously coached at Toledo, posted a 353-169 record during her time with the Rockets and was named the Mid-American Conference Coach six times



# CROSS COUNTRY

2023-2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

By James Knable

- Daphnee Lavassas became the second athlete in school history to appear at the NCAA Division I Cross Country Championships, placing 46th out of a pool of 247 runners in the women's 6K. Lavassas' final time of 20:08.4 was the best finish in women's program history at the national championships, beating out Melanie Schultz's time of 21:37.9 in 2005
- At the south regional championships, the Miami women's team placed 14th with 391 team points, while the men finished 18th with 517 points. At the ACC Championships, the men's and women's teams finished 15th in the team standings. The men accumulated 470 points, while the women totaled 412 team points
- Director of Track and Field/Cross Country Amy Deem appointed Jeremy Wilk as the distance coach for the Hurricanes
- In the first cross country meet of the season, Austen Cannon and Emma Maurel took first place at the FAU Invitational in their respective 5K races. The women finished first out of 18 teams and the men finished second out of 16 teams
- Fourteen cross-country student-athletes – seven women and seven men – were named to the ACC All-Academic team for 2023





# FOOTBALL

2023-2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

By Camron Ghorbi

- Finished the regular season with a 7-5 overall record, earning a trip to the 2023 Bad Boy Mowers Pinstripe Bowl in New York, N.Y.
- Miami topped #23/#23 Texas A&M on Sept. 9, 48-33, at Hard Rock Stadium, earning the first ranked win under Mario Cristobal, who finished his second year at the helm
- Had back-to-back overtime wins during the year, topping Clemson, 28-20, in two overtimes on Oct. 21 and besting Virginia, 29-26, in overtime on Oct. 28
- Defensive lineman Rueben Bain, Jr., was named ACC Defensive Rookie of the Year after a dominant true freshman season where he finished with 12.5 tackles for loss and 7.5 sacks
- Were the only team to feature a Freshman All-America in all three phases of the game: offensive tackle Francis Mauigoa, punter Dylan Joyce and Bain
- Wide receiver Xavier Restrepo set Miami's all-time single-season record with 85 catches. He had 1,092 yards and six touchdowns – just the sixth 1,000-yard season by a UM wideout ever





# GOLF

2023-2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

By Megan Barnes

- Won a pair of tournaments in the fall – the Pat Bradley Invitational and the Hurricane Invitational
- Team qualified for a 2024 NCAA Championship Regional, ultimately placing eighth out of 12 teams at the Auburn regional
- Shot an 830 (-34) at the Pat Bradley Invitational, setting a new program record in a 54-hole performance
- Miami's score of 837 (-27) at the Hurricane Invitational ranks third in program history for team 54-hole performance
- As a team, recorded 12 rounds of par-or-better
- Senior Sara Byrne recorded a pair of victories during the 2023-24 season, while sophomore Olivia Grønberg tied for first at the Pat Bradley Invitational
- Byrne totaled eight top-10 finishes in 2023-24, which ranks tied for second in program history for most in a single season
- Byrne set a new program record for single-season scoring average with a 70.34
- In October, Byrne shot a 197 (-19) at the Hurricane Invitational to set a new program mark for an individual 54-hole score
- Byrne also shot a 63 (-9) in the second round of the tournament to set a new program record for an individual 18-hole performance
- Byrne was named back-to-back ACC Golfer of the Month (October and February), becoming the only two-time ACC Golfer of the Month in Miami history
- Byrne earned All-ACC Team honors, becoming the first Hurricane to do so since 2021
- Byrne was also named a second-team All-American by the Women's Golf Coaches Association
- Byrne was selected to compete for Team International at the Arnold Palmer Cup in July
- In the fall, Byrne and Grønberg competed for Ireland and Denmark, respectively, at the Espirito Santo World Amateur Team Championship
- Byrne was named the Celebration of Women's Athletics golf award winner
- Byrne shot par or better in 24 of her 35 rounds
- Byrne was an ANNIKA Award Top-15 finalist





# ROWING

2023-2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

By Brock Borgeson

- Opened on-campus training facility
- Won the Sunshine State Invite for the first time in program history, defeating teams such as UCF, Iowa, UNC and Michigan State
- Finished fifth among nine teams at the ACC Championships, tying its best finish at the conference championship since the field expanded in 2015. Miami defeated Clemson, North Carolina, Louisville and Boston College in Raleigh
- Set program records in the 1v8, 2v8 and 3v8 boats at the ACC Championships. The 3v8 boat bested its mark in the race by over 40 seconds from previous ACC Championships
- First varsity four defeated No. 20 Oregon State in their race at Lake Dexter in Oregon
- Finished the season receiving 145 votes in the CRCA polls
- Aaliah Dawson earned First Team All-ACC recognition
- Constance Stirling earned Second Team All-ACC recognition and was named the team's Celebration of Women's Athletics honoree
- Posted a 3.49 team GPA
- Named third in the nation among rowing teams for community service





# SOCCER

2023-2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

By Brock Borgeson

- Finished the season with a 3-10-4 overall record and a 2-7-1 mark in ACC play
- Defeated Louisville, 1-0, and Syracuse, 2-1, in ACC competition
- Keeper Melissa Dagenais finished third in UM history for career saves (262), tied for fourth in career shutouts (13) and sixth in career minutes in goal (4,632)
- Dagenais signed to play with SF Damaiense SAD - Futebol Feminino in Portugal
- Set a program record with 15 All-ACC Academic Team selections
- Program turned in a 3.54 team grade point average
- Skylah Klein was honored with the Vice President's Award for Service honor



# SWIMMING AND DIVING

2023-2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

By Camron Ghorbi

- Swimming posted its best dual meet win-loss record since 2008-2009, racking up nine wins and one loss over the course of the year
- Won the SMU Invitational, earning their first midseason invite victory in over 15 years
- Scored its most swimming points ever at the 2024 ACC Championships – the seventh-most in the ACC, surpassing three teams that outperformed the Hurricanes the year before
- Miami's swimmers set 10 school records, including records in all five relays. There were 39 performances that ranked in the top 10 in school history, with 15 NCAA provisional standards by individuals and four such relays
- Giulia Carvalho and Emma Shuppert both earned trips to the NCAA Swimming & Diving Championships, marking the second straight year Miami had multiple swimmers compete on college swimming's biggest stage
- Divers Mohamed Farouk and Brodie Scapens earned trips to the NCAA Championships, where Farouk earned All-America honors in the 1-meter and Scapens earned All-America honors in the 3-meter. Scapens won a gold medal at the ACC Championships in the 1-meter, while Farouk took bronze in the 3-meter and silver on the platform
- Farouk and fellow diver Chiara Pellacani both earned spots on their home countries' Olympic teams and will be representing Egypt and Italy, respectively, at the 2024 Summer Olympic Games in Paris







# MEN'S TENNIS

2023-2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

By Macy Parmer

- Finished the 2024 season 11-14 overall and 2-10 in ACC play
- Notched a top-30 and top-75 ranked win
- 14 out of 25 matches were against ranked opponents
- Wrapped up the season with a doubles team and singles entry in the final ITA rankings with Martin Katz finishing the year at No. 88 and Vladislav Melnic and Adrien Burdet finishing at No. 48
- Finished the year ranked No. 63 in the final ITA team rankings and 12th in the ACC



# WOMEN'S TENNIS

2023-2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

By Macy Parmer

- Added a third singles national champion after eighth-seeded Alexa Noel defeated Georgia's Anastasiia Lopata in the final match of the NCAA Singles Championship
- As a team, went 13-8 overall and 8-4 in the ACC to finish sixth in the conference
- Earned 11 ranked wins, with three coming against top-15 opponents
- Advanced to the Sweet 16 of the NCAA Tournament for the 25th time in program history
- Continued its streak of 28 straight NCAA Tournament appearances
- Finished the year ranked No. 18 in the nation, making it 21 straight seasons in the ITA Top 25
- Had at least three singles players and two doubles teams ranked in the ITA polls for the entirety of the season
- Head coach Paige Yaroshuk-Tews reached 374 wins as an ACC head coach, good for third most in conference history, while also notching 425 wins at UM
- Noel finished with All-American recognition and was ranked No. 3 in the final ITA singles rankings
- Isabella Pfennig qualified for the NCAA Singles Championship, as well as the NCAA Doubles Championship with Xinyi Nong. Pfennig finished the season ranked No. 51 in the ITA singles rankings. She and Nong finished the year ranked No. 28 in the ITA doubles rankings



# INDOOR TRACK & FIELD

2023-2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

By James Knable

- Russell Robinson became the 18th individual national champion in Miami history and the first national champion since Michelle Atherley in 2019 when he jumped 16.76m (55 feet) to secure the gold in the triple jump at the NCAA Division I Indoor Track & Field Championships in Boston in March
- Assistant coach Rob Jarvis was recognized as the United States Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association South Region Men's Assistant Coach of the Year
- The Miami men's team totaled 53 points at the ACC Championships to finish sixth. It marked the highest point total in program history
- Kennedy Sauder was named a second-team All-American in the men's high jump. He was one of six Hurricanes to medal at the ACC Championships, bringing home the gold in the high jump
- Also medaling at the conference championship meet were Edgar Campre (gold medal, heptathlon), Erikka Hill (bronze medal, shot put), Russell Robinson (silver medal, triple jump), Taylor Wright (bronze medal, high jump) and the relay team of Kennedy Brace, Makenzy Pierre-Webster, Alyssa Robinson and Gabriella Grissom (gold medal, 4x400m relay)



# OUTDOOR TRACK & FIELD

2023-2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

By James Knable

- The Miami Hurricanes outdoor track and field team featured five student-athletes who earned NCAA first-team All-American recognition: Edgar Campre (men's decathlon), Devoux Deysel (men's javelin), Milton Ingraham II (men's discus), Russell Robinson (men's triple jump), and Deisiane Teixeira (women's javelin)
- Additionally, Kennedy Sauder (men's high jump) and Christina Warren (triple jump) earned second-team All-American recognition
- Robinson had another strong showing during the outdoor season, finishing as the national runner-up in the men's triple jump with a school-record and personal best mark of 17.13m (56 feet, 2.5 inches)
- Robinson also earned a spot on the U.S. national team and will be competing in the triple jump at the 2024 Summer Olympic Games in Paris after notching a mark 17.01m (55 feet, 9.5 inches) at the U.S. Olympic Team Trials
- The men's team finished 10th overall with 22 points at the NCAA Division I Outdoor Track & Field Championships. It marked the team's highest finish at the championship meet and the most points scored in program history
- The Hurricanes had 13 student-athletes qualify for the NCAA Division I Outdoor Track & Field Championships and had 23 student-athletes qualify for the NCAA East Regionals
- Miami won 13 medals at the ACC Outdoor Track & Field Championships, led by gold medalists Edgar Campre (men's decathlon), Devoux Deysel (men's javelin), Milton Ingraham II (discus) and Deisiane Teixeira (women's javelin)
- The Hurricanes men posted a school-record score of 83 points at the ACC Outdoor Championships and finished fifth overall. The women's team totaled 66 points and finished in sixth place
- Head coach Amy Deem has now coached 204 All-Americans during her tenure at Miami



# VOLLEYBALL

2023-2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

By Macy Parmer

- Finished the year 18-12 overall, with a 10-8 mark in ACC play
- Earned its third straight – and 12th overall – berth in the NCAA Tournament. This season’s tournament berth also marked the seventh under head coach Jose “Keno” Gandara
- Notched an NCAA Tournament win after upsetting eighth-seeded Northern Iowa in the first round
- Swept ACC rival Georgia Tech twice when the Yellow Jackets were ranked No. 10 and No. 11
- Recorded 48 new top-10 entries in the Miami record book across individual and team categories
- Four Hurricanes earned All-ACC recognition: Savannah Vach and Grace Lopez were selected to the All-ACC First Team, with Lopez also earning a spot on the All-Freshman team. Janice Leao and Flormarie Heredia Colon claimed All-ACC Second Team honors
- In addition to all-conference honors, Vach and Lopez collected AVCA All-Region Honors, with Lopez being named an AVCA All-American Honorable Mention
- Vach claimed the program record for most career assists with 5,241, as well as most sets played (498) and matches played (133)
- In total, the team collected 10 individual ACC weekly honors over the course of the season
- Redshirt sophomore setter Ariana Rodriguez earned a spot on the Dominican Republic national team and will be competing in the 2024 Summer Olympic Games in Paris





# 2023-24 ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Miami Athletic Development has raised more than \$45 million in gifts and commitments over the past two fiscal years. In addition, the athletic department's total raised for the Ever Brighter Campaign, which will conclude when the University of Miami reaches its centennial in 2025, is nearing \$190 million.

The donations from nearly 20,000 annual supporters benefit all areas of Miami Athletics, including the Hurricane Club annual fund, Athletic Director's Society, facility projects and the Together 4 Her campaign, which has raised more than \$1 million in direct support of women's athletics. Many supporters have also assisted the department's Name, Image & Likeness

program by contributing to Canes Connection, the Official NIL Collective of Miami Athletics.

"I would like to thank the thousands of Hurricanes supporters who continue to invest in the vision of Miami Athletics," Vice President/Director of Athletics Dan Radakovich said. "Their generosity ensures we can provide the best resources and support to compete at the highest level and make a positive impact on our student-athletes on and off the field."

This past year Miami Athletics opened the Symons Basketball Training Center — a \$3 million, state-of-the-art training facility for men's and women's basket-

ball. The center covers more than 7,500 square feet. It includes the Jimmy and Kim Klotz strength and conditioning room, recovery area, nutrition bar and office space for support and medical staff, nearly tripling the size of the programs' previous training facilities.

Miami Athletics also recently completed numerous upgrades to the Knight Complex, home to the Canes' volleyball program, and opened a new, 8,500-square-foot rowing training facility on campus. The department will soon be embarking on a 15,600-square-foot expansion of the Carol Soffer Indoor Practice Facility, which will include a new football weight room.



# 2023-24 COMMUNITY SERVICE HIGHLIGHTS

University of Miami student-athletes were once again among the best in the nation when it came to community outreach during the 2023-24 academic year.

The Hurricanes totaled 8,164 hours of community service from June 2023 through May 2024. The Hurricanes had five individual teams rank among the top 10 nationally in their respective sport during that span.

Miami finished No. 1 in the Atlantic Coast Conference and second nationally in the 2023 NCAA Community Service Challenge, which ran from September 15 through December 15, 2023. During that

three-month competition, the Hurricanes totaled 4,439 community service hours, resulting in an economic impact of \$141,190.

“I want to congratulate our student-athletes for placing second in the NCAA Community Service Challenge,” Vice President/Director of Athletics Dan Radakovich said. “Our student-athlete development staff cultivates a culture of service at Miami, which our student-athletes have taken to heart.”

Miami had 100 percent of its student-athletes participate in at least one community service activity, ranging from participation in the school’s Pen Pal program, which

matched 122 student-athletes with students at local elementary schools to a Day of Giving, when the football team delivered Thanksgiving meals to families in the Miami-Dade Foster and Adoptive Parent Association. Student-athletes also participated in a food drive competition against in-state rival Florida State.

“I am extremely proud of our student-athletes and their commitment to our community,” Associate Director of Student-Athlete Development Jess Hurley said. “They have helped us create a culture of giving that has become a point of passion and purpose for the Miami Hurricanes.”





# 2023-24 ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

University of Miami student-athletes set numerous department records in the classroom during the 2023-24 academic year.

Miami set a school record by posting an NCAA Graduation Success Rate (GSR) of 94 percent, which marks the eighth consecutive year and 11th year in the past 12 that Miami has earned a four-year average rate of 90 percent or higher. UM also set a school record in the NCAA's Academic Progress Rate report, recording an APR of 996. Twelve programs posted a perfect APR score of 100 percent during the 2022-23 school year.

During the Spring 2024 semester,

Miami student-athletes posted a cumulative grade point average of 3.23 – which set a department record – and their semester GPA of 3.28 was second only to the COVID-19 semester of Spring 2020. Seventy-two percent of student-athletes recorded a GPA of 3.0 or higher this past semester and 37 had a 4.0 GPA.

“I am proud of our student-athletes for posting such impressive academic numbers,” Vice President/Director of Athletics Dan Radakovich said. “It’s a reflection of their commitment to the classroom, as well as the continued support of our coaches and academic support staff.”

During spring commencement exercises, 80 student-athletes earned their degrees, led by the football team with 17 graduates, including first-team All-ACC kicker Andy Borregales and wide receiver Xavier Restrepo. The list also includes 2023 NCAA Midwest Regional Most Outstanding Player Nijel Pack from men’s basketball; golfer Sara Byrne, who was recently selected to the Arnold Palmer Cup’s international team; women’s tennis singles national champion Alexa Noel; three-time ACC men’s diving champion Max Flory; and ACC postgraduate scholarship recipients Ben Chestnutt (baseball) and Isabella Pfennig (women’s tennis).





# 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.

Our summer edition includes a pair of rookie sensations, a track All-American and conference champion, as well as a rowing standout who helped Miami put together one of its best seasons on the water in recent memory.

Get to know Hurricanes Daniel Cuvet, Aaliah Dawson, Ace Malone, and Deisiane Teixeira.





### **Daniel Cuvet, Freshman**

Fort Lauderdale native Daniel Cuvet arrived in Coral Gables with high expectations after an impressive high school career that featured time at both St. Thomas Aquinas High School and the Elite Squad Baseball Academy. It didn't take long for him to make an impression – and to start rewriting the Miami record book. Cuvet finished his first season in orange and green with 24 home runs, breaking the freshman record previously held by slugger Pat Burrell. Cuvet also finished just one homer short of tying the all-time, single-season school record set by Phil Lane in 1982. Cuvet totaled 75 RBI, a number that led all Division I freshmen, and he became the first Miami freshman to lead the Hurricanes in average (.351), home runs and RBI in the program's 80-year history. At season's end, he was named a freshman All-American by multiple media outlets and earned spots on both the All-ACC Freshman Team and All-ACC Second Team.



### **Aaliah Dawson, Junior**

Miami's rowing team had one of its best seasons in recent memory and Aaliah Dawson proved to be one of the Hurricanes' biggest contributors all year long. The Australian was part of the First Varsity Eight boat and was on the crew recognized as the ACC Crew of the Week after Miami won the Sunshine State Invitational in March. That race marked the first-ever first place finish for the first varsity eight in nearly a decade of competition at the Sunshine State Invite. Later in the season, Dawson was part of the crew that helped the Hurricanes finish fifth at the ACC Championships, tying the program's best finish at the conference championship since the field expanded to nine programs in 2015. Dawson was named a first-team All-ACC selection and also earned a spot on the All-ACC Academic Team.



### **Ace Malone, Freshman**

A former Colorado state champion in the 400 meters, Ace Malone came to Miami looking to make an impact and he did exactly that. In his first appearance at the ACC Outdoor Track & Field Championships, the freshman sprinter clocked a time of 46.08 seconds in the 400m, a mark that ranks second fastest in program history, was good enough to earn fifth at the conference championship meet and helped him earn First-Team All-ACC honors. He also helped the men's 4x400m relay team earn a bronze medal at the ACC championships with a time of 3:04.65. In March, Malone was named the ACC men's Rookie of the Week after posting a time of 20.83 seconds in the 200m. In June, he earned an even bigger honor: ACC Men's Track Rookie of the Year.



### **Deisiane Teixeira, Junior**

A one-time national champion at the junior college level, Deisiane Teixeira made history during her first season as a Hurricane. In her first outdoor meet at Miami, Teixeira set a new school record in the javelin with her throw of 53.98 meters at the Hurricane Collegiate Invitational. That earned her recognition as the ACC Field Performer of the Week and set the tone for a season that ended with Teixeira winning the conference title and earning All-American honors. At the ACC Outdoor Track & Field Championships, she won the gold medal and notched a new personal best and school record with her throw of 55.74 meters. She later qualified for the NCAA Outdoor Track & Field Championships where she earned first-team All-American honors and finished in eighth place with her throw of 54.54 meters.





# CANES CONNECT SPOTLIGHT: **HER** **LEADERSHIP TRIP**

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos





Earlier this summer, nine Hurricanes student-athletes had the opportunity to build connections with professionals from a variety of businesses around Atlanta as part of the athletic department's first HER Leadership Trip.

The three-day professional and leadership visit to the Georgia capital – hosted in conjunction with the department's Honor. Empower. Rise Leadership Academy – included a visit to iFolio, a woman-owned software company based in Atlanta, a panel with female staffers from the U.S. Soccer Federation, a networking dinner with Miami alumni, leadership development sessions with UM alums Patricia Morgan and Dean Myers, and visits to the Civil and Human Rights Museum and Trilith Studios, where multiple Marvel movies have been produced.

The nine participants from four women's sports – rowing's Kat Agüero, Trinity Ferebee, Haley

Gross, and Jovana Stanivuk; basketball's Cameron Williams and Sophia Zulich; track and field's Elle Mezzio and Gabriella Grissom and soccer's Hannah Dawbarn – also had the opportunity to take in a game between the WNBA's Atlanta Dream and Los Angeles Sparks.

It was a chance not only for the Hurricanes to get to know their fellow student-athletes, but to network and learn more about different career opportunities that potentially await after graduation said LaToya Farris, Miami's Associate Athletic Director for Student-Athlete Development, Belonging and Inclusion.

"I think during their own reflection, they're going to understand some of the connections that they've made and really try to maintain those connections. I believe that one of the things they saw on this trip was the power of networking and getting to know people with



backgrounds that are different and realizing how helpful that could be in whatever careers they decide to pursue," Farris said. "The highlight for me was just seeing them interact and engage with each other and I was very proud of watching them all in those different settings. They weren't afraid to have conversations and talk to people that were basically strangers to them when we arrived."



# WHERE ARE THEY NOW? ALICIA BLAGG

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos

Alicia Blagg is a trendsetter of sorts.

Long before many of her friends, former teammates or pop culture fans in general embraced true crime documentaries and podcasts, Blagg and her mother, Helen, were already tuned in, watching and engaging in spirited discussions about what they saw.

The forensic documentaries brought a measure of routine and were a comfort of sorts while Blagg, a two-time Olympian and former standout diver for the Hurricanes, recovered from a shoulder surgery that sidelined her in the spring of 2019 and left her wondering if she'd be able to make her dream of competing in three Olympic Games a reality.

Ultimately, though, there would be no delayed trip to Tokyo.

When Blagg, who dove for her native Great Britain at the London Games in 2012 and the Rio Games in 2016, returned to competition, she discovered the still-lingering pain in her shoulder made it nearly impossible for her to dive at the level she wanted – and knew she needed to be at – to return to the sport's biggest stage.

The three-time ACC champion began to wonder if her career was

over, whether it was time to start developing a plan for the next stage of her life.

In the end, Blagg, who double-majored in sociology and criminology during her time at Miami, made the decision to retire from diving at 23 and pursue another passion in her life: detective work.

She had been warned it might be a tough transition, but surprisingly enough, she found it a bit easier than she expected.

"I know a lot of athletes struggle with going from being an athlete to living 'normal life,' and I had a few people warn me when I retired that, 'hey, the real world is tough. Your mental health is going to take a hit. You're going to struggle,' but I never really felt that," Blagg said. "I think it's because I had a passion and plans for my future. I'm not saying others don't have that, but I didn't really have time to stop and think. I retired; I went on to my master's. I finished my master's; I went straight into a job. You never know, it could hit me a few more years down the line. But, thankfully, I'm okay in the real world and adult life is not too bad."

For Blagg, who hails from Leeds, England, embracing her new journey first meant pursuing a master's

degree in criminology and forensic psychology at Edinburgh Napier University in Scotland.

Once she earned that degree, she applied for a job as a staffer in the British prison system.

It was a decision that raised eyebrows, especially given that Blagg was eventually assigned to work in a men's prison. But it was an experience the former diver said proved eye-opening, educational and rewarding.

And she quickly discovered her diving career had unexpectedly prepared her for her new world.

"I feel like I'm a very switched-on person. I'm quite headstrong and throughout my diving career and, obviously moving to another country, I gained a lot of life experience in everything I had done," Blagg said. "I was a little bit concerned going in, because we had to do training for 10 weeks and then you're literally thrown in the deep end. ... It was a whirlwind. You see some really horrific sides of society, really some horrific things. You have to deal with things I never thought I would be able to handle, but you find the resiliency.

"At the end of the day, you have a duty of care to look after people



and you still have to look after them and put them first and just do what you can do. You show up every day and be the best officer you can be.”

During her career as a prison officer, Blagg found herself doing a little bit of everything. She helped ensure the incarcerated individuals in her care had enough to eat and got enough exercise. She often found herself helping handle mental health crises, tending to medical needs and literally put out fires on more than one occasion.

“You’re everything,” she said of her work in the prison. “You’re literally every single thing.”

What she quickly discovered, though, was that she wasn’t alone in enduring the challenges around her. Her fellow staffers were quick to provide support when needed and more often than not, she built

a rapport with the men she looked after.

“When I first went in, you don’t know what you’re walking into. You don’t know what level of respect the men might have for you or might not have for you. You feel like a target. After all, you’re a girl in a men’s prison. You don’t know how it’s going to go,” Blagg said. “But what I found was that 98 percent of them were respectful. They had your back. If you treated them with respect – which is normal and what you should do – then they would treat you with respect. I had a good rapport with quite a lot of them and I’d like to think I was good at my job.

“If anything did go down with a prisoner, then I’d have other prisoners be there. They’d talk to the prisoners themselves and calm the situation down, saying things like, ‘Ms. Blagg’s okay. Don’t be blowing

up at her.’ ... It was a lot safer than I originally thought, but obviously, it could go wrong. It’s not a holiday camp. There are some horrible times in there, but thankfully, it’s not a regular, daily occurrence.”

Blagg worked in the prison system for more than two years before setting her sights on her next goal: becoming a trained police officer. That step, she knew, would be necessary in order to reach her ultimate career goal of becoming a detective.

And so, Blagg now finds herself navigating a 17-week training course at the police academy, where she is involved with the detective apprenticeship program.

In three years – after working as a police officer – she hopes to be a full-fledged detective.

To make that possible, she’s learn-







ing the ins and outs of the British judicial system, from how to make sure suspects are arrested correctly to how to protect herself when she's on patrol.

She jokes the work has taken a physical toll on her too, even with her athletic background.

"As a police officer, you have to know all the laws, all the legislation. There's so much to learn," Blagg said. "It's quite overwhelming. We're learning about use of force, how to protect yourself and how to do all the physical side of things. We're on our fourth day and no word of a lie, I was crawling up my stairs today. My body is battered and bruised. I haven't felt this bad since I was training [to dive]. There is such a physical side to it, and you want to make sure you do ev-

erything correctly. It's very, very intense, very nerve-wracking.

"You're a police officer. It's a very important role. You're there to protect the public. ... It's about keeping everyone safe. It's been eye-opening, but it's something I've always wanted to do, and I don't have any regrets."

And more than once throughout her post-diving journey, Blagg says she has relied on the skills and work ethic she honed as a Hurricane.

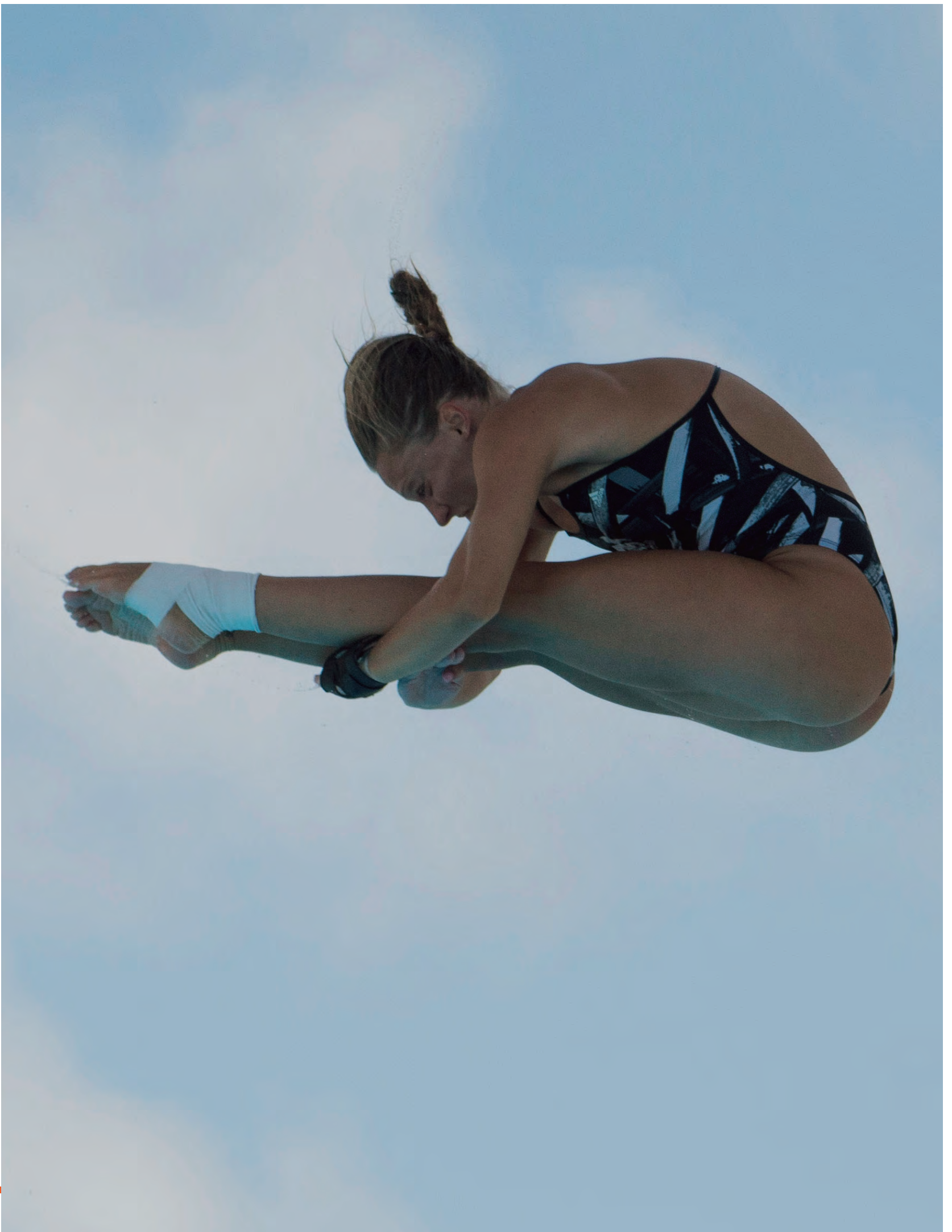
Her time in orange and green taught her how to work through challenges and how to manage her time.

Those skills, and so many others, have helped make it easier for her to navigate her new career.

"Sports definitely teaches you resilience. Every day is different. You could have a good training session; you could have a bad training session. You never know how your day is going to go and that's kind of what it's like working in the public sector," Blagg said. "You don't know what you're walking into. You're under pressure. You're constantly running to perform. You want to do your best, and that fits into these types of jobs. ..."

"The work ethic that I got from Miami has definitely helped me. It's going to help me throughout my entire life. I owe so much to Miami, for what they've done and how they've prepared me for my future."







# BUILDING COMMUNITY: COURTS FOR KIDS

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos

Wesley Bissainthe figured there would be challenges.

After all, building a basketball court from scratch couldn't be easy. And he and his teammates had been told they could expect tough conditions when they arrived in the small town of Cabezu, a community of about 150 families living in the eastern Dominican Republic.

But it wasn't until he, defensive lineman Akheem Mesidor, defensive back Daryl Porter Jr., and running back Terrell Walden II actually laid eyes on the muddy, rock-filled patch of land they would be transforming that Bissainthe truly grasped the scope of the project ahead of them.

"I knew going there it was going to be tough and it was definitely something different, something I'm not used to," Bissainthe said. "But it definitely took me out of my com-

fort zone."

Unfazed by what they encountered, Bissainthe and the Hurricanes – who were joined in the Dominican Republic on the trip put together by the Courts for Kids charitable organization by football staffers Jorge Baez, Reggie Bain, Justin Fitzpatrick and Eli Heatley – put their heads down and got to work.

For six days, they cleared rocks, mixed cement and battled the elements, which ranged from tropical downpours to blistering temperatures.

And when they finished at the work site, they'd head back to the local church where they were staying, scarf down some dinner and spend time playing Uno, Monopoly or dominoes before calling it a night and sleeping on air mattresses that, more often than not, needed to be re-inflated daily before doing it all

again the next day.

It was a grueling experience, but one that ultimately proved rewarding beyond measure.

"The experience was definitely out-of-body, but I loved everything about it. I loved connecting with the community and the kids. I loved learning a new language. I loved learning about their culture and sharing our culture as well," Walden said. "It was definitely hard work. It was definitely difficult and definitely different, but the thing is, while some people might shy away from things that are different, we embraced it. We embraced every part of it as a group and tried our hardest to get that court finished and we did."

While the Hurricanes spent a little more than a week in the Dominican Republic working on the court and connecting with members of







the local community, their efforts began long before their flight departed Miami International Airport in early May.

Because classes were still in session and final exams were still being administered when they left for the Caribbean, Bissainthe, Mesidor, Porter and Walden had to ensure their academic responsibilities were taken care of before their trip.

To that end, the group worked with Miami's academic advising staff and their professors to complete assignments before they were due and, in some cases, even took their exams ahead of schedule to ensure they could make the trip.

That support from the University, Walden said, made a world of difference.

"For me, I had to move a lot of my finals around. As a pre-law student, our finals are not really flexible. ... But my teachers were gracious enough to let me take my finals early so I could get them out of the way and be able to go on the trip," the running back said. "That support

meant a lot. As a student-athlete, it's always a blessing to be able to reach out to another community and help. My professors saw that in me and gave me the opportunity to do my finals early so I could go help these people."

It wasn't just Miami's academic advising team and faculty that helped the Hurricanes prepare for their life-changing trip.

The Hurricanes' equipment room, led by Director of Equipment Operations Sam Nichols, made sure the team traveling to the Dominican Republic had the appropriate shoes, gloves and gear to do the necessary construction work on the court.

Meanwhile, Katie Kassel, Miami's Director of Football Nutrition, made sure the team had enough healthy food to ensure none of the four student-athletes on the trip lost any of the gains they'd made during the Hurricanes' off-season training program. And Adam Bennett, the football team's head athletic trainer, packed a kit with first-aid supplies that came in handy while the players and staff were in the Dominican

Republic.

"I'm so proud of the University of Miami, that I work at the University of Miami because of everything everyone did to make this trip happen," said Baez, the football program's Director of Player Development. "When things became kind of gray, the University of Miami stepped up and was like, 'Hey, we'll fill in. We'll get this done.'"

Added Walden, "It wasn't just us that built that court. It was everyone from the equipment staff to the operations staff, to the creative team and nutrition. Of course, it was just the eight of us that went, but the whole organization did this together."

While some members of the football support staff provided help from a distance, two – Fitzpatrick and Heatley – were more hands-on.

The two members of the football program's creative team traveled with Bissainthe, Mesidor, Porter, Walden, Baez and Bain to document the efforts that went into building the basketball court.





But it didn't take long for Fitzpatrick and Heatley to put down their cameras and begin pushing wheelbarrows themselves to help make the court a reality.

"It was just really, really rough conditions and the biggest thing for us was making sure the court was finished," said Fitzpatrick, the football program's Creative Director. "We were like, 'You know what? We can only get so much footage of guys lugging cement and pushing wheelbarrows, so we might as well get out there and do it, too.' Everybody was working. Everybody was so wet and so dirty. I couldn't just sit there and take pictures. I just couldn't do that. So, yeah, we got in there and started working."

Added Heatley, Miami's Associate Director for Creative Services, "We didn't just want to be those guys with cameras. ... We wanted [the student-athletes] to know we were in there with them. We're not just there to show them struggling and forcing them to be happy in front of a lens. We wanted to show them with everything they were doing, we were willing to go through it with them and I'm really proud of

them. They went out there and a few of them maybe didn't even know what they were getting into. But they went out there and did it, got involved with the community, smiling, dancing, having fun with the kids and the adults. No matter how tough the work was, they were still happy and willing to keep going."

That willingness to keep going, even through all the challenges they encountered, meant that by week's end, the Hurricanes spent their final day in the Dominican Republic connecting with the children in the community.

They visited a local school where there were races, baseball games and heart-to-heart conversations that made a lasting impact. Even after returning to Miami, several of the players – including Porter – have continued to chat with some of the youngsters they met in the Dominican Republic via FaceTime.

It was, for all the players and staff who made the trip with Courts for Kids, an experience that won't be forgotten anytime soon. And the

hope is that the court they built will give the community of Cabezu something to enjoy for years to come.

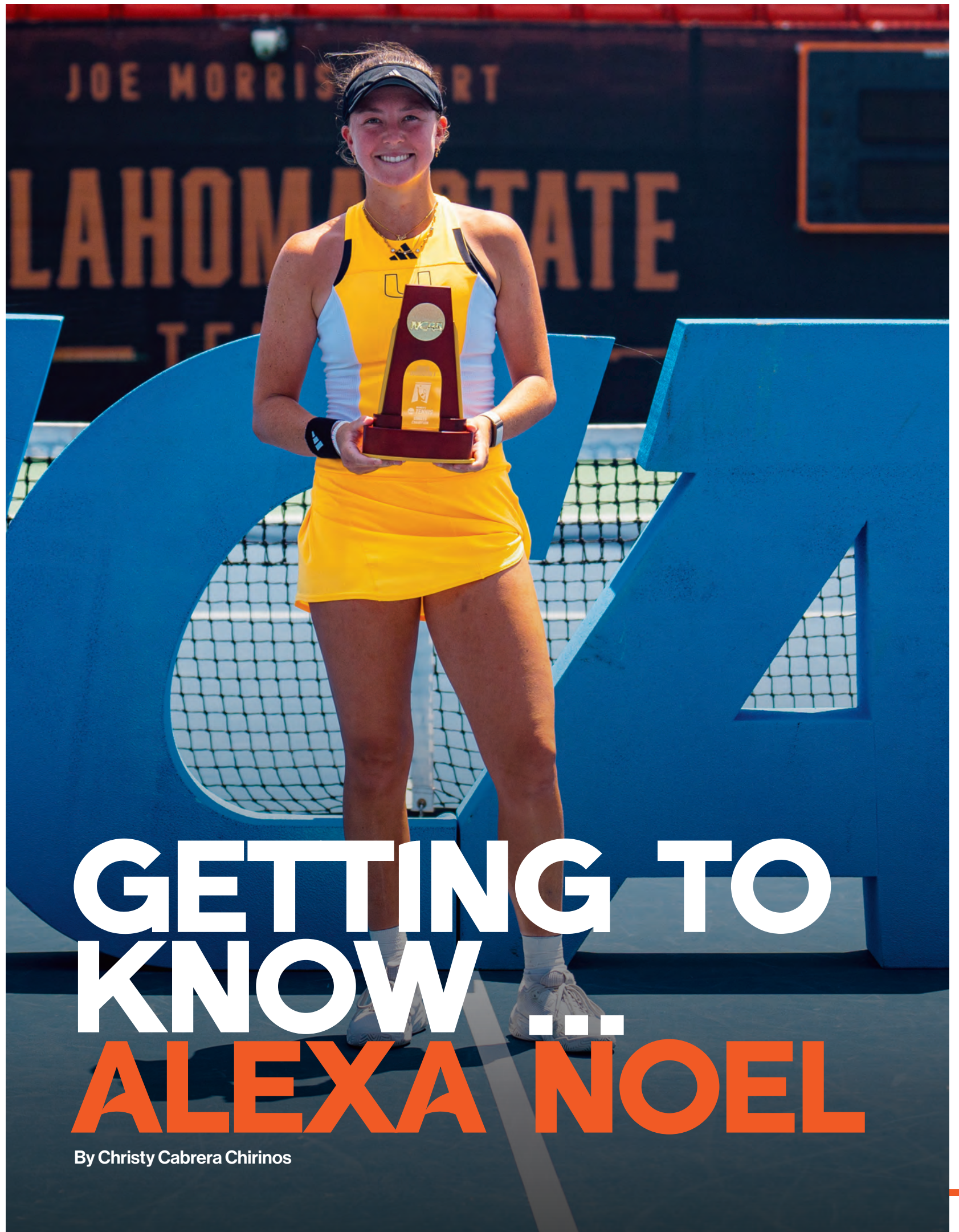
"It was amazing, just seeing how hard [the community] worked with us," Bissainthe said. "They were working with no shoes on, no shirts on. But they worked so hard, and they wanted that court so bad. They knew they were going to be playing on it all the time, so everybody in that community took part in it and they worked on it every day with us like their lives depended on it."

Said Walden, "Even though there was a language barrier, we did have translators with us, so we tried to give [the children] as much wisdom as we could in that short amount of time. And just something as small as playing ball with them, they had such gratitude. They appreciated everything. That's one reason I loved doing it. They appreciated it so much. It's uncommon. People don't usually come there and do that for them. I'm glad I was able to do it."









# GETTING TO KNOW ...

# ALEXA NOEL

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos



Alexa Noel has already had the opportunity to play on some of tennis' biggest stages.

During her remarkable juniors career, she was a runner-up at Wimbledon. She also starred in the juniors tournaments at the US Open, the Australian Open and the French Open, too.

Now, Noel is headed back to New York – this time as part of the main draw at the US Open.

It's an honor she earned as this year's winner of the NCAA Singles Championship and it's an opportunity the redshirt junior from Summit, New Jersey said she isn't taking for granted.

"I can remember people asking me when I was young 'What do you want to do? Where do you want to go with tennis?' and living in New Jersey, being 20 miles from [New York City], to play at home in my first [Grand] Slam is incredible," Noel said. "Regardless of how it goes, it's going to be a moment I never forget."

It'll be the latest memorable moment in a year filled with them for the Miami standout.

In May, Noel became the third Hurricane women's tennis player to win an individual singles national championship under head coach Paige Yaroshuk-Tews when she capped a remarkable week in Oklahoma with a three-set comeback win over Georgia's Anastasiia Lopata that earned her congratulations from the likes of tennis superstar Coco Gauff and WNBA sensation Caitlin Clark.

And earlier in the season, Noel was the driving force behind one of Miami's biggest wins of the season – an upset of then-No. 9 – and eventual national champion – Texas A&M.

In that match, Noel won a three-set thriller over Mary Stoiana, who, at the time, was the nation's top-ranked player.

Since, Noel has earned ITA All-American recognition for the third time in her career and was named a finalist for the Honda Sport Award.

*Hurricanes Magazine* asked Noel to take us through her unforgettable season in Coral Gables.

Here's what she had to say, in her own words.

**Hurricanes Magazine:** You've had some time now to process your big week at the NCAA Singles Championship. What's it been like for you to settle into your new reality as a national champion?

**Alexa Noel:** "It's been interesting, to say the least. My dad said it the best, I think. Right after the match, he said, 'You know what, Alexa? You believe in it, you believe in yourself, I believe in you so much, but until it really happens, you just keep on believing and you keep on trusting that it will happen. And then when it happens, wow, it's real.' I think that's really accurate. I like that he said that. I'm still kind of like, 'Wow. That happened. This is real.' It's a lot right now, but it's new. It's a new feeling. ... I mean, I gained like 350 followers on Instagram in four days and it's weird to see. Even when I had success in junior [tennis], I

never received this type of attention. So, I'm still trying to navigate how to kind of put all of that to the side and still find time for these moments and find time to remember, 'Hey, you're still a tennis player. You have a tournament coming up.' But it's been good. This is everything I ever wanted out of college tennis. It's different, but it's amazing."

**HM:** The NCAA Singles Championship can be really grueling, with day-after-day of high-stakes tennis and some challenging travel. How did you navigate everything that week?

**AN:** "Once we got there and settled in and practiced for the first time on the courts, it was great. The team I had there – [Hurricanes teammates Isabella Pfennig and Xinyi Nong] were still there at the beginning of the tournament, [assistant athletic trainer] Hannah [White], [head coach] Paige [Yaroshuk-Tews], [assistant coach] Alex [Santos], [assistant director of communications] Macy [Parmer], my family ... they're all really good at keeping things extremely light, and in a good mood, happy ... I think that's what I needed and appreciated the most. It's a stressful week, especially with someone like me or someone that really wants to do well at the tournament and do some damage. It takes a lot out of you every day. ... It's not even just the match itself, but preparing for the matches, how much are you going to eat? Did you recover well last night? Did you sleep enough? We all just did a really good job of managing the time, enjoying the time off the court. There was a day we stopped and looked at some cows on the way





to dinner. We acted like normal people off the court, and I think that was probably the best way to approach it, mentally.”

**HM:** You trailed in that championship match. How were you able to rally and at what point did you start to feel the match shift your way?

**AN:** “I kept telling myself ‘You’re not down. You’re not losing.’ I mean, I was, but I was just kind of playing a trick on myself. ... I actually went down 5-4 in the second. I held, played a really good game and then at that point, I was like, ‘If you can go three sets, you can outlast anybody in the country.’ And that third set was ugly tennis. I was not playing beautiful, ball-striking tennis, but it came down to legs and heart and desire and not to take anything away from my opponent – she wanted it as bad as I did – but it was just a mindset.

“I think Paige helped me a lot in that moment, too. She was like, ‘You can play that same type of tennis you’re playing right now and if you do, you’re going to lose. Or you can play a different way. You might lose, but you’ll have a way higher chance to pull this second set out and end up winning the match if you adjust.’ I started to have more positive self-

talk, I started to play a little bit closer to the baseline, which changed the rhythm of the rallies a little bit and get to the net a few times more. That really changed everything, I think.”

**HM:** You’re the third individual women’s tennis player to win a national title while working with Yaroshuk-Tews. What does it mean to add to that legacy?

**AN:** “A lot. ... When I got in the transfer portal, I knew I had my eyes set on Miami before we even talked and when we eventually started talking, I told Paige straight up, ‘I want to win a national championship and I think you can help me do it.’ She’s strong and just a great a person, so within her values and ... she was like, ‘I can do it. I will help you. We’ll make this possible for you.’ It meant a lot to me that she was willing to pour as much of herself into me as I was into her and the program. That part makes it extra special. We have a great relationship where I know she wants me to succeed. ...

“And then, not only that, to add in the fact that I’m following in the steps of Audra [Cohen] and Estela [Perez-Somarriba] and be a part of that legacy at Miami is incredible. It’s something nobody can ever

take away from you.”

**HM:** When you made the decision to transfer after your first two seasons at Iowa, why did you choose Miami?

**AN:** “I think there were multiple things that went into it. When I think about it, I love South Florida. I trained – and still train – in Delray Beach, outside of training at school. I really wanted to come back. Playing outside all year-round, that’s really important to me, just being able to train in the heat consistently. But ultimately, it was the program, and it was Paige. I had known before committing to Miami, through friends or people that played in the ACC, what Paige was like, and it was something I wanted. It’s something I knew would be hard, but something I knew I needed to eventually become successful. I think the hard part of all it was that there’s no guarantee. You can pick the toughest coach in the world. You can do everything right and pick where you think the best place to be is and it might not ever come for you. Luckily, in our case, it did. ... Paige is a big part of that. And honestly, I’m just proud of myself for committing and being all in.”



**HM:** You've said the opportunity to work with Yaroshuk-Tews was one of the big reasons you chose Miami. What's it been like to get here and work with her?

**AN:** "I knew it would be a challenge. Paige runs a tight ship, and I don't mean that in a bad way at all. I think it's a great thing. She cares a lot about development instead of just purely results.... I know I can be very results oriented and I think that's a good thing, in a sense, because I'm very competitive. But at the same time, you need to be able to let your guard down and take some hits to improve. ... If I could do it all over again, and have the same hard conversations and the same hard practices, I'd do it in a heartbeat."

**HM:** As an NCAA national champion, you have the opportunity now to go play in the US Open main draw as a wild card. What does that opportunity mean to you?

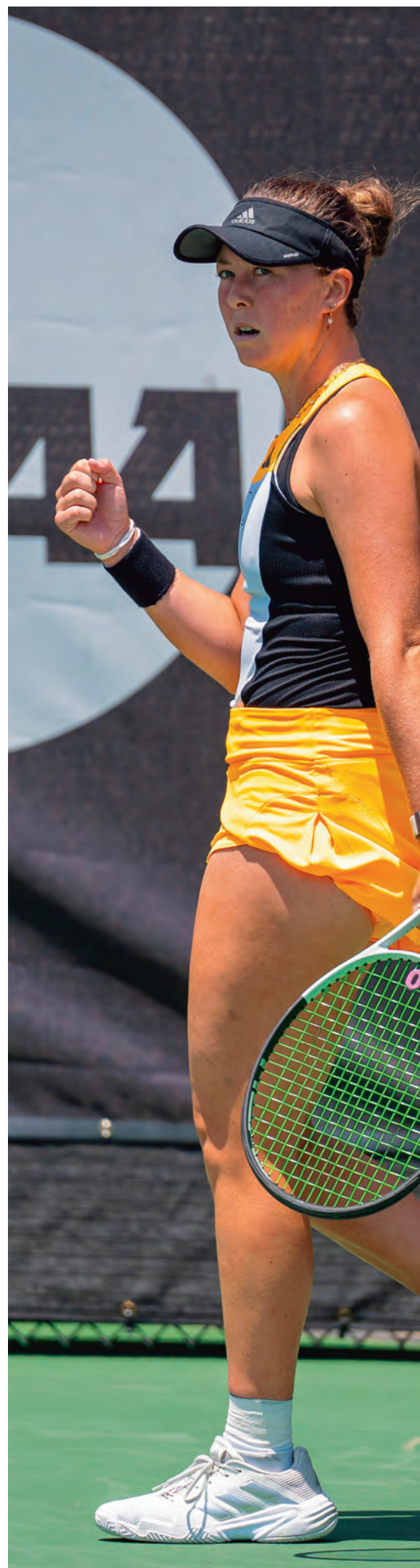
**AN:** "It is absolutely crazy. It is crazy. It means everything to me. ... It's a dream. It's something I've been dreaming about since I was a kid, since I was in sixth grade, waking up at 5, 5:30 [a.m.] to go practice before school, then going to school all day and then go immediately from school to after-school program and be there until 9 p.m. at night and do it all again the next day. That's why you do it. This opportunity is exactly why you commit and you sacrifice and you give all those things, for the long term. It's just a dream."

**HM:** That incredible junior career you had, how do you think that helped prepare you for your run through the championship tournament?

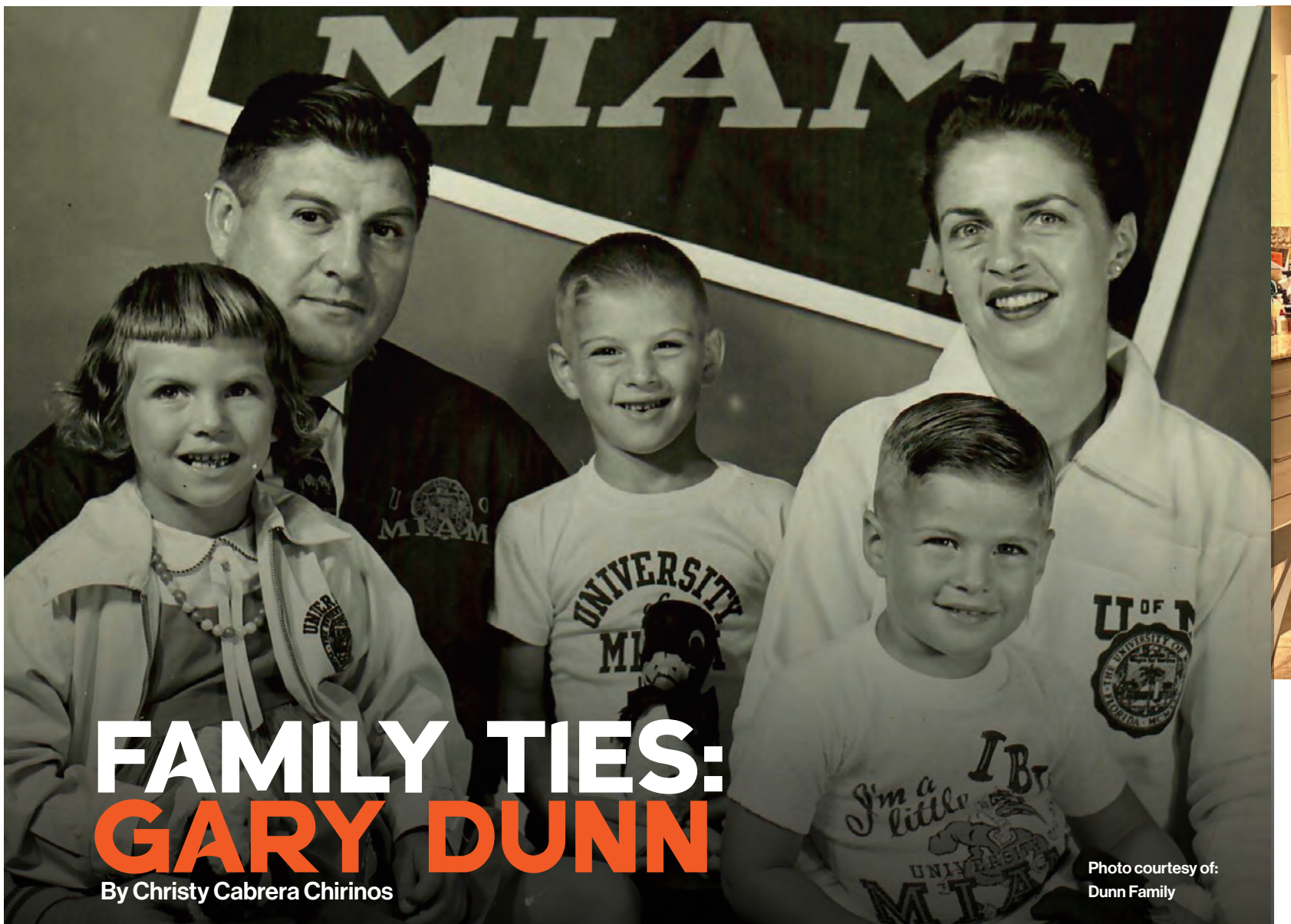
**AN:** "I think it prepared me a lot. I think the experience of being on big stages in the past and knowing that you do belong, and feeling confident you can play on any rowdy stage is amazing. It prepares you for whatever's to come, whether it's a bad line call or a tough opponent or people heckling in the stands. College tennis helped me a lot, too. You play at FSU, that's tough. The men's team is barking in your ear. You play at [Texas] A&M and you have the men's team yelling at you ... All of that prepares you and it sucks in the moment, but it gets you ready for hard things that are to come."

**HM:** When you look at all that you've accomplished here, what has it meant to you to be a Miami Hurricane and how would you describe your journey?

**AN:** "It's so hard to even put words to it. I'm so proud to be a Miami Hurricane and maybe that sounds cliché, but it's nothing but the truth. I think this program and the athletic department is so supportive of me, of all of us. It's just been special. It's been everything I wanted it to be. Coming into college, I had no idea what I was getting into. I didn't take one recruiting trip before committing to Iowa, so I was surprised in such a great way and then to have the opportunity to get in the transfer portal and find my new home in Miami, all the stars aligned. I wouldn't have it any other way."







# FAMILY TIES: GARY DUNN

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos

Photo courtesy of:  
Dunn Family

The conversations always seem to start – and go – the same way.

Gary Dunn will notice someone sporting that famous orange-and-green “U” while sitting at the pool or bar of his Ocean View Inn and Sports Pub in the Florida Keys and chuckle before wandering over to introduce himself.

“People come in and they might not know whose place it is or whatever, but I’ll see a UM hat on them, or they’ll start talking about Miami or say they went to school there, and I’ll say, ‘Did ya?’” Dunn said with a laugh. “And then I go on and on down the [rabbit] hole.”

It is a hole filled with Hurricanes history and Dunn has no shortage of stories to tell.

The former defensive tackle can regale his patrons with tales from the gridiron, both from his time at Miami and from his 12-year NFL career with the Pittsburgh Steelers.

He can talk about what it was like to be a legacy football player and what it meant to take the field at Miami as the son of legendary Hurricanes running back Eddie Dunn, whose name filled the school record book for decades after his playing career ended.

And if those patrons happen to be history buffs, well, Dunn is happy to share some rare bits of trivia: his grandfather was Bowman Foster Ashe, the University’s first president. And his mother, Dorothy Ashe Dunn, made history herself in 1985 when she became the first woman to receive the University’s highest

honor: induction into Iron Arrow.

More often than not, the storytelling leaves both Dunn and his Miami-appreciating listeners smiling.

“That place has been my life,” Dunn said of the University. “We have a little bit of a connection to Miami.”

A “little bit” is an understatement.

That connection runs deep and spans generations.

Dunn can still recall attending a University function on Miami’s practice fields as a child where his father, wearing a jacket and tie, sprinted across Greentree.

When Dunn asked why, the answer he got was simple.





“He said, ‘Son, we never walk on the football field. We always run,’” Dunn said his father told him. “So, here we are, at this fancy thing, and my dad’s running across the field in a suit and I’m running right there with him. Everyone was looking and going, ‘Well, there’s Eddie Dunn and Eddie Dunn’s son running right along with him.’ So, yes, my experience with Miami goes way back, real deep.”

Given that experience, it’s no surprise that when it came time to play college football himself, Dunn found himself at Miami, just like his father and his older brother, Bo.

And while Dunn had to navigate a period in Miami football history that included three different head coaches and more than a few struggles, he did enough during his playing career to draw the attention of the Pittsburgh Steelers, who made him a sixth-round draft pick in 1976.

Dunn knew he faced a challenge making the roster in Pittsburgh, especially with the storied Steel

Curtain defense dominating opponents on a weekly basis.

But just as he did at Miami, where he’s now enshrined in the UM Sports Hall of Fame along with his father, Dunn made an impression.

“When I went up there, my coach, George Perles, said, ‘Man, how do you know how to read this?’ But [former Hurricanes defensive line coach Harold Allen] had been my coach the whole time, even though we had several head coaches and he prepared me very well for the game of football,” Dunn said. “I was really a step above some of the other guys. ... I didn’t realize it at the time, but the stuff we did at Miami, the drills, really prepared me for all of that. It really helped.”

Dunn spent 12 seasons in Pittsburgh, where he won two Super Bowls, served as a team captain for four seasons and was named a second-team All-Pro in 1984.

He totaled 18 sacks in his career – with one of the most memorable coming against a fellow Hurricane,

former Buffalo Bills quarterback Jim Kelly.

“He swears I didn’t sack him, but I did. I sacked him,” Dunn said with a laugh. “But Jim is a friend, and it was always great to see the former players again. Mark Cooper played for the Broncos, and I played against him in some games. He remains a great friend. ... And Dennis Harrah, I played against Dennis Harrah in the Super Bowl. And when you play against someone like that, you play harder. You don’t want to be talked dirt on in the offseason if they kicked your butt. ...

“But you know what? It’s all Miami. Dennis Harrah, Mark Cooper, Dennis Breckner, Rick Liddell, the list goes on and on and on. Those guys are still friends. We get together and you would swear not even two years have passed. Meanwhile, it’s been, what, 40 years? We all go re-playing stories and it’s just a great feeling.”

Those Miami friendships have done more than make for good stories and memories.





Once their NFL careers were over, Dunn and Harrah – former college roommates – both knew they wanted to live in the Florida Keys. What they'd do there, though, remained a question.

The longtime friends looked into the possibility of franchising restaurants on the island chain. But it was a conversation with Joe Roth, the late owner of the former Holiday Isle Resort, that fostered a new idea.

What if the two Hurricanes teammates dipped their own toes into the famed Keys tourism industry?

"Holiday Isle owned the Ocean View, which I own now, and Dennis Harrah and I both said, 'Why don't we see if we can buy that and add a little motel and a little bar? It's just a little neighborhood place on the

side of the road. Let's try to fix it up and then we'll try to sell it down the road and see how we do,'" Dunn said. "So that's what we did. And we had no clue what we were doing. It was the school of hard knocks. He bartended. I bartended. We cleaned rooms. We cooked in the kitchen. We did bathrooms. We did it all. ...

"It wasn't easy. You really had to sit there and put in the long hours, which everybody told me in that business we'd have to do."

The two remained partners and co-owners of the Ocean View for three years before Harrah and his family moved to California. Dunn bought Harrah's stake in the property and figured he'd keep the Ocean View for a few more years.

Twenty-eight years later, he and his

family still own the roadside oasis that features more than its share of Hurricanes and Steelers décor on the walls.

Today, Dunn's son – Eddie, who also played at Miami during Mark Richt's tenure as head coach – runs the day-to-day operations, and Dunn says he's grateful for all the Ocean View has given him, his wife, Caron, their son and daughter, Iris.

"We started off with four employees. Now we have, I think, 28 employees," Dunn said. "It's a hard business and you have to stay on top of it. But when it works out, it's very satisfying. Obviously, I raised my family on it. ... Because of the Ocean View, we've all lived in the Keys, and it provided us with a great life. It's meant a lot to look back and see where we've come."



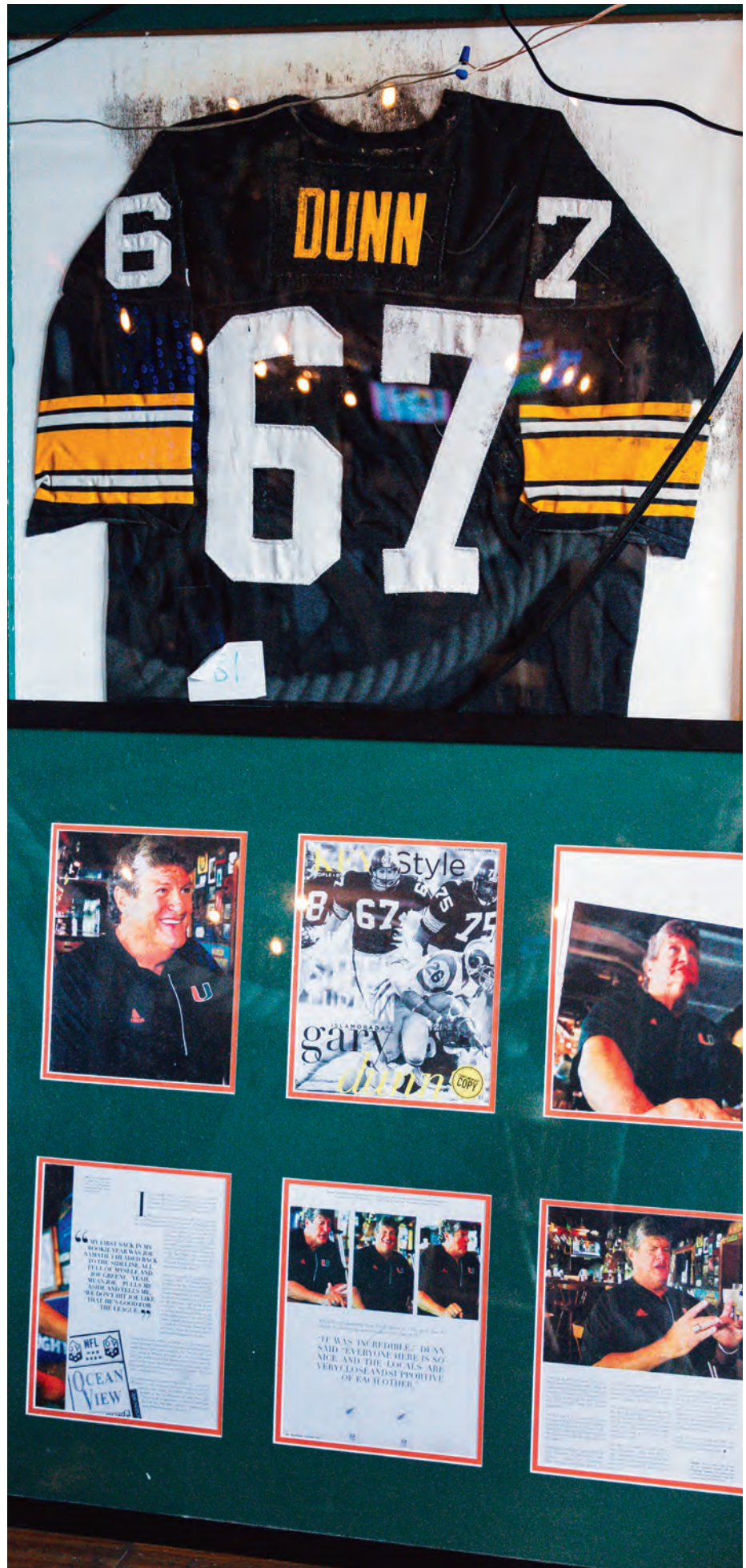
None of it, Dunn says, would have been possible without Miami and everything the University gave him.

That's why, even though he spends part of his year in North Carolina these days, he tries to make it to South Florida as often as possible.

Among the highlights of those visits are Miami's annual alumni reunion dinners and the chance to connect with the current Hurricanes, who'll start another season in August when they travel north to Gainesville to face rival Florida in their season opener.

"That's all part of it, the history, the closeness. Older players meeting the younger players," Dunn said. "It's always great to be able to get together with everybody, see some of the younger guys and talk about the old days and the new days. ...

"I always like to tell the younger guys what they're doing, they're going to remember for the rest of their lives. It's important. Sometimes, they think nobody cares, but you are going to remember this time you have at the University of Miami for the rest of your life. ... You've got to put in, do everything you can do to be the best you can be and believe me, 20, 30 years from now, when your kids are there, you're going to remember it and be proud of it and know just how important it is."





# CANES CHRONICLES: CHAMPIONSHIP MOMENTS

By Rick Remmert

As University of Miami student-athletes Russell Robinson and Alexa Noel were winning national championships in 2024, people asked if hitting “the daily double” during the same academic year was a unique accomplishment at the University of Miami.

It was not, and not by a long shot.

When Robinson captured the indoor triple jump in men’s track and field and Noel won the singles championship in women’s tennis, it marked the second time in six seasons and the 30th time in Hurricanes history that The U had won two or more team and/or individual national championships in the same year.

Miami’s most recent uber achievers added the latest exclamation points to the sterling national championship resumes of their distinguished coaches.

Robinson, a senior jumper, became the 16th national champion in 34 seasons for Amy Deem, Miami’s Director of Track and Field & Cross Country.

Noel, a redshirt junior, meanwhile, became the third singles champion in 23 seasons for Paige Yaroshuk-Tews, the Hurricanes’ Director of Men’s and Women’s Tennis and head women’s tennis coach.

Miami’s most prolific mentor is the legendary Randy Ableman, who just completed his 35th season at the helm of Miami’s diving program. Ableman has coached Hurricane divers to 26 individual national championships.

Highlighted by a 31-year unbroken streak of winning at least one team or individual national championship from 1972 to 2002, there have only been 11 of 55 seasons since 1970 where the University of Mi-

ami did not achieve the pinnacle in team or individual recognition.

National championships are in The U’s DNA with an honor roll that includes 106 titles: 21 team titles and 85 individual crowns.

Men have captured 14 of the team awards, with women winning seven. The individual national championship breakdown is a virtual dead heat, 43 for men and 42 for women.

Polo earned Miami’s first team championships, winning four in a row from 1947-50. Tennis legend Francisco “Pancho” Segura captured the Hurricanes’ first four individual titles, taking the men’s singles three straight seasons from 1943-45, and adding the doubles crown in 1945 with partner Thomas Burke.

Women’s golf and football are tied for most team titles, each with five.







UM's golf program won its quintet across a 15-year span: 1970-72 under coach Bill Heuson, back-to-back in 1977 and 1978 under coach Norm Parsons, and in 1984 under coach Lela Cannon.

Football achieved its five championships over a 19-year span: 1983 (coach Howard Schnellenberger), 1987 (Jimmy Johnson), 1989-91 (Dennis Erickson) and 2001 (Larry Coker).

Polo and baseball come next with four titles each. Under coach George Oliver, polo won consecutive championships from 1947-50. Baseball saw two College World Series wins apiece by legendary coaches Ron Fraser (1982-85) and Jim Morris (1999-2001).

Women's swimming and diving, led

by coaches Bill Diaz and Charlie Hodgson, won back-to-back team titles in 1975 and 1976. And under the program's founding coach Joe "Okie" O'Connor, men's rowing captured its national championship in 1988.

Multiple national championship-winning individuals are led by the five titles each by Gillian Russell in women's track and field, and by women's swimmer J.B. Buchanan.

Four-time champions include Segura in men's tennis, plus men's divers Dean Panaro, Tyce Routson, and Rio Ramirez.

Three-time champs include men's swimmer David Wilkie and diver Greg Louganis; and women's swimmers Robin Brannman and Jodi Yambor.

Two-time titlists include women's swimmers Sharon Berg, Dawn Frady, and Pat Hines; men's swimmer Matt Gribble; men's and women's divers Bryan Gillooly, Jenny Keim and Brittany Viola; and Davian Clarke and Kimberli Barrett from men's and women's track and field.

With one of the most storied academic and athletic legacies in American higher education, the University of Miami has developed into a national championship incubator where student-athletes arrive with promise and depart with glory.

*For a complete list of Miami's national championship teams and individuals, go to our website: [miamihurricanes.com](http://miamihurricanes.com), click on Inside The U, and then click on History.*



# DEVELOPMENT SPOTLIGHT: CELEBRATION OF WOMEN'S ATHLETICS

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos

In April, the University and the athletic department honored some of Miami's brightest young women at the 10th annual Celebration of Women's Athletics presented by adidas, held at the Donna E. Shalala Student Center on campus.

More than 350 attendees filled the third-floor ballroom where former Hurricanes track and field student-athlete Michelle Atherley – the 2019 NCAA champion in the pentathlon – and others, including Vice President/Director of Athletics Dan Radakovich, University trustee Laurie Silvers, Deputy Direc-

tor of Athletics Rachelle Paul, ESPN personality and former Hurricanes volleyball standout Christine Williamson and Miami's Director of Men's and Women's Tennis and head women's tennis coach Paige Yaroshuk-Tews, celebrated the honorees' accomplishments in the classroom, the community and in their respective sports.

With the event marking its 10th anniversary, there was also a focus not just on the current student-athletes making an impact on Miami, but on some of the pioneers who came before them, including Isabella

Hutchison, who served as the women's athletic director at Miami from 1965 through 1979 and former women's basketball coach Katie Meier, who retired earlier this year after coaching the Hurricanes for 19 seasons.

"It's hard to put into words how special this is, to recognize the tremendous accomplishments of our female student-athletes," Paul said. "To hear their names, and to know they are competing at the highest level in their sports, it's wonderful to see."







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