

# HURRICANES

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## MAGAZINE

FALL 2024







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## A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS



Welcome to the fall edition of *Hurricanes Magazine*!

This issue features stories on the football team's Mauigoa brothers, women's basketball standout Jasmyne Roberts, and two former Canes who are now thriving in the professional ranks – Adrian Del Castillo and Bev Yanez. We also spotlight some of our recent community service efforts and recap the star-studded reunion for our 1989 football national championship team.

It has been an exciting start to the school year for our programs and your generous support helps us continue to 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 through the fall semester! Thank you again for your continued support and Go Canes!

**Dan Radakovich**

Vice President / Director of Athletics





6



12



22

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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

**Assistant Editor:** Carter Toole

**Design/Production:** Leo Ramos, Kevin Ortiz

**Photo Credits:** Trevor Castleman, Eric Espada, Grace Geraghty, Eli Heatley, Jared Lennon, Raul Maristany, Mikayla Oliveira, Kevin Ortiz, JC Ridley, Grace Schinsing, 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



16

20

**FACES IN THE CROWD**

26

**SUPPORTING THE CAUSE: BREAST CANCER AWARENESS WALK**

30

**WHERE ARE THEY NOW? BEV YANEZ**

38

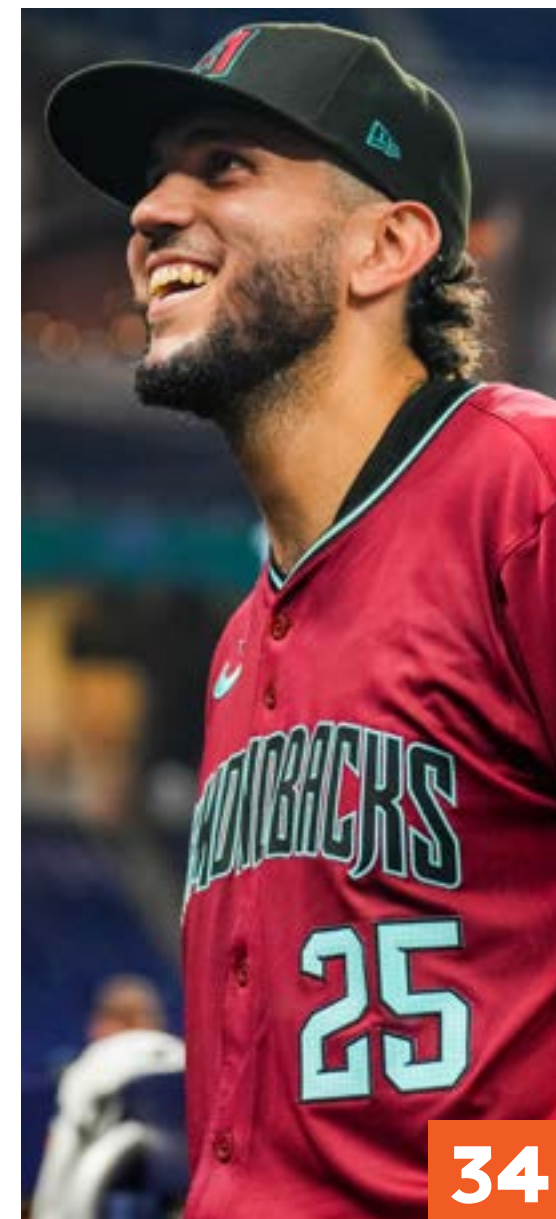
**CANES CONNECT SPOTLIGHT: CANES VOTE 2024**

42

**SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT: AMIGOS FOR LIFE**

46

**CANES CHRONICLES: 1989 REUNION WEEKEND**



34



# BROTHERLY BOND: FRANCIS AND FRANCISCO MAUIGOA

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos

It's a memory that still makes Francis Mauigoa smile.

He was back home in his native American Samoa during the COVID-19 pandemic, playing high school football and lining up on the defensive side of the ball when on one particular play he charged hard, the ball carrier firmly in his sights.

Suddenly, he felt a rush of air.

Mauigoa looked up just in time to see his older brother, Francisco Mauigoa, blow right past him and make the tackle, ending the play – and Francis' hopes of making the stop himself.

Then, all Francis Mauigoa could do was shake his head. Today, four years later, he laughs.

"I was like, 'This guy? Of course it's this guy,'" Francis Mauigoa chuckled. "I was playing d-line, he was playing linebacker, and we were always fighting over who got to the ball first.

"That's how competitive we are."

These days, the Mauigoa brothers remain plenty competitive.

They push each other on a daily basis. And with Francis, a sophomore, now lining up as an offensive lineman for the Hurricanes and Francisco, a senior, playing linebacker, there's plenty of good-natured trash-talking on Greentree during Miami's practices.

But there are also post-practice conversations about how they can each get better or how to improve on technique. There are weekly dinners with their parents, who now live in Miami and are ecstatic two of their boys are playing college football together at a championship-caliber program.

And there is support, so much constant, unwavering support.





Last November, after a tough loss at rival Florida State, Francisco Mauigoa – clearly still upset by what had happened on the field – walked into a small room adjacent to the Miami locker room for his postgame press conference.

Standing nearby, quietly taking in the scene around him was Francis Mauigoa, who wanted to make sure his brother understood he wasn't alone, not then, not ever.

"I really just wanted to be there to support him. That game meant a lot to him. Rivalry games always mean a lot," Francis Mauigoa said after that tough day. "I just wanted to be there in support, to make sure my presence was there and was felt."

This year, the brothers have shared far happier moments.

In the first half of the season, they celebrated a big season-opening road win over rival Florida. They enjoyed Miami's epic comeback win over California, and both of them have been valuable contributors as the Hurricanes have risen in the polls.

For both of them, this is a season to savor – and not just because Miami is winning.

This season is one last opportunity to play college football together and to live out a dream that began really taking shape two years ago when Francis Mauigoa – then a five-star prospect at IMG Academy – dove headfirst into the college recruiting process.

After being separated by nearly 3,000 miles while Francis finished high school and Francisco played collegiately at Washington State, the brothers – and their parents – wanted to reunite in one place.

And so, on every official visit he took, Francis Mauigoa set out to find out not just how he'd fit into the programs he was trying to learn more about, but how his older brother would fit in, too.

Miami, of course, was more than happy to welcome both Mauigoas, a fact the entire family discussed during a holiday trip to Hawaii.

There, Francis and Francisco, their parents – Fa'alialia and Telesia –

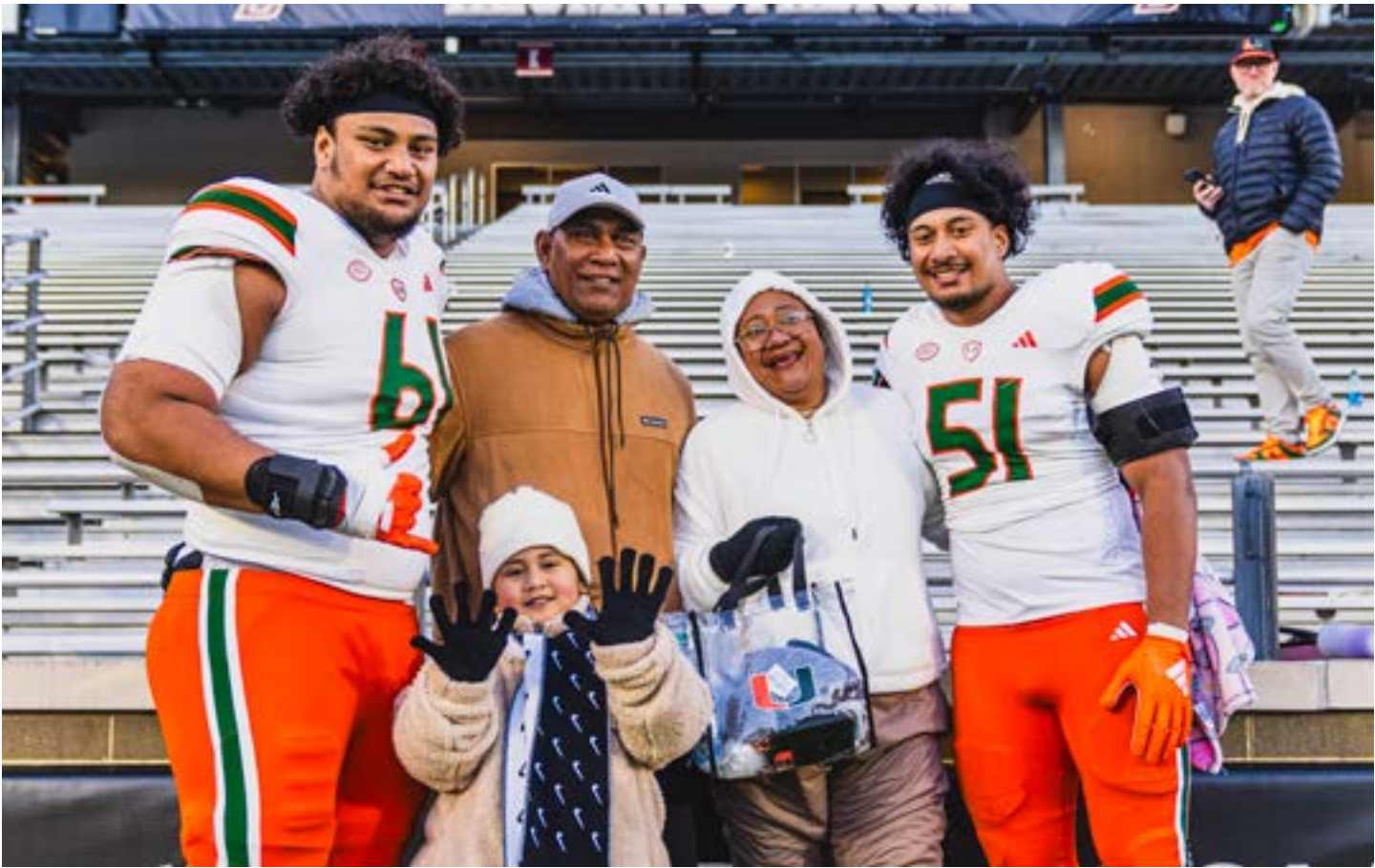
and their siblings went around the table and one by one, cast a vote on where Francis and Francisco should play.

When it came Francis' turn to state his case, all he could think of was how happy his family had been during their visit to Miami, how much Telesia had been impressed with the University's academic standards and support system, and how well both of his parents had connected with both Miami head coach Mario Cristobal and offensive line coach Alex Mirabal.

So, he told his family he wanted to be a Hurricane.

Francisco Mauigoa agreed.

"It was a long talk. We were all going through all the pros and cons and just figuring out what was the best fit for him. That was what the decision came down to, what was best for him and coming here to Miami was the best decision," Francisco Mauigoa said. "The way Coach Mirabal and Coach Cristobal develop players is crazy. And we wanted to put him in the best spot to be able to grow as a young man and as an



athlete. ... And once I entered the portal, Miami was the first school to reach out. It all came down to that. To be around family, to be able to have the opportunity to play with my brother again, it was all in my head. It felt like such a crazy moment for me. I was in disbelief."

Disbelief because, for the Mauigoa brothers, getting to that moment was a journey.

Like many youngsters in American Samoa, they fell in love with football after seeing players like Troy Polamalu, Junior Seau and Jesse Sapolu – all of whom have familial ties to the territory – shine in the NFL.

Francis and Francisco, along with many of their friends and neighbors, played football as often as they could. Before school, after

school, on holidays. It was a passion, a way of life in American Samoa, even if resources and equipment were limited at times.

"When I was in seventh grade, playing JV high school football, I saw kids cut their own shoes and slippers up to use them as thigh pads because they didn't have any. I saw kids share helmets with each other because they didn't have the best helmets or they didn't have helmets at all," Francis Mauigoa recalled. "It really makes you appreciate what you have. ... The game of football means so much to them. It means so much to me. I'm not going to waste the opportunity that has been given to me because I know kids back at home, they want this opportunity, too. It just really gives me the mindset to keep pushing."

Pushing, for the Mauigoas, eventu-

ally meant leaving home and coming to the mainland United States to pursue their football dreams.

When Francis was a freshman and Francisco a junior, they made their way to California, where they lived in San Bernadino with a host family and played at Aquinas High School.

There, Francisco – who played quarterback and linebacker – was named the Ambassador League Offensive Player of the Year after throwing for 1,113 yards and 10 touchdowns, with 46 tackles and an interception on the defensive side of the ball.

But the COVID-19 pandemic forced the brothers to return to American Samoa, where they lined up together once again at Tafuna High School.





During Francisco's senior year and Francis' sophomore year, the Warriors went undefeated and before long, the opportunity to return to the mainland presented itself.

This time, though, the brothers went farther than California. They came to Florida, where they enrolled at IMG Academy.

Though Francisco had exhausted his high school eligibility, he trained at IMG and helped his younger brother acclimate to life on the mainland and football in Florida.

"Having Cisco there really helped me settle in. When we were in California, we were living with a host family, so it was like having a second mom and a second sister, but now we're at IMG and living at a boarding school and it was only us," Francis Mauigoa said. "I was homesick at first, but with Cisco being there, it really didn't matter anymore. You know you have someone there that knows where you've been, what's happened to you and knows what's going on with you. It really relieved some pressure off my shoulders. He was a big, big impact."

Eventually, though, it came time for Francisco Mauigoa to start his college career, something he did at Washington State, where older brother Frederick Mauigoa had played offensive line between 2016-2019.

The move marked the first time Francis and Francisco Mauigoa – who'd grown up playing together and traveled to the mainland together – were separated. That it came while they were an ocean away from their family in American

Samoa only made the separation more difficult.

"It was all part of our parents' sacrifice. They know our potential and had the mentality of not letting it go to waste. So, they made the sacrifices they did, and they made the choice to put us in a great position to fulfill our dreams," Francisco Mauigoa said. "But it was tough. ... Being miles away from home and not seeing your family was a different feeling. ... I'm glad it happened, though, because I think without all of that, we wouldn't be here, where we are right now. It was all part of God's plan to put us in the place, on our feet, where we are right now."

In two seasons at Washington State, Francisco Mauigoa totaled 77 tackles and as a sophomore, he also forced three fumbles, recovered a fumble and returned an interception 95 yards for a score.

Meanwhile, nearly 3,000 miles away at IMG Academy, Francis Mauigoa was growing into one of the top offensive line prospects in the country.

By his senior year, Francis Mauigoa was rated the No. 1 offensive tackle in the nation by ESPN and 247Sports. He was selected to both the Under Armour All-America Game and the Polynesian Bowl and helped IMG Academy average 49.7 points per game during a 9-1 campaign.

Oregon, Alabama, Florida, Tennessee, USC, Georgia, LSU, Michigan, Ohio State and Penn State were among the schools hoping to add Francis to their rosters.

Ultimately, though, it was Miami

where he – and his brother – felt most at home and where they've reunited to play together, to live together and to push each other to be better.

It's an experience both say has meant the world to them – and one Hurricanes head coach Mario Cristobal understands well.

After all, he had the opportunity to play at Miami with his older brother, Luis Cristobal.

That means he, more than most, understands how special – and competitive – it can be to share a roster with a brother.

"Whenever they go against each other, there's always an extra shove, an extra push and certainly, a little more of an edge when it comes to that because bragging rights at the house are just as important as bragging rights anywhere," Cristobal said. "But it's one of the more unique things you can have in sports, especially at this level. It was a game-changer for my brother and I, for our relationship, and from our family's standpoint, too."

As to the difference the Mauigoas have made at Miami, Cristobal said he couldn't be more pleased with how the offensive lineman and linebacker have played or how they've represented the program off the field.

"They're elite human beings who come from an elite family with an elite upbringing. They're just really awesome people. They have a super-high care factor. They want to do right by others. They want to impact others," Cristobal said. "Their drive and determination to be the



best players they can be is just as strong as their drive and determination to impact others. I can't think of a community service event where they don't volunteer their time. ... They're always about making people better."

Along with making each other – and the Hurricanes – better, Francis and Francisco Mauigoa say they hope their experiences at Miami help inspire a new generation of young football players in American Samoa.

Representing their culture on the mainland has been a priority, with the brothers often teaching their teammates words in Samoan and wearing the 'Ula Fala – a traditional Samoan necklace often worn by high chiefs on formal occasions – onto the field before pre-game warm-ups.

Those, they say, are just some of the ways they stay connected to their family and their homeland.

"We're a big representation of

where we come from, our island, our language, our Samoan culture," Francisco Mauigoa said. "So, whatever we do, we do it a certain way just because of the way we were taught and the way we were raised. It's important for us to have a good name and put a good name out there for our culture."

Over the course of the next few weeks, the Mauigoa brothers hope they'll continue to have more opportunities to not only continue educating and inspiring, but to help Miami continue to win games while helping each other make an impact.

There will still be some good-natured back-and-forth and maybe an extra shove or two at practice.

But they intend to enjoy their last few weeks as teammates.

"I don't take these opportunities lightly because you never know what might happen, or when football is done for you," Francisco Mauigoa said. "Being able to come back here and be with my family

and with my brother is special. And having the chance to do that for two years, there's no other feeling than lucky. I'm blessed that I made the decision to come back for my senior year, be with my brother, be around my family and be around a special team like this one at Miami."

Added Francis Mauigoa, "It's special when you think about it as this is his last year. It means, for me, you can never leave anything on the field. You have to put everything on the field and give it your all because I know he's giving it his all and I want to give him something special to remember this year, whether that's a championship game or an ACC championship or a national championship. I want to cherish every moment we go on the field. Whenever we hit the field, we do our prayers together and after every game, we pray together as well. Those are special moments. And just thinking about it makes you want to work to give him whatever you can, give him your all."



# SETTING THE TONE: CANES RELY ON VETERAN GROUP

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos

Nijel Pack concedes last season wasn't anything like he hoped it would be.

He battled injuries. There were struggles on the floor. And more than once, that history-making run to the Final Four in 2023 – the one he and his teammates had wanted to build off so badly – seemed like an incredibly distant memory.

Now, with a new season set to begin, Pack is determined to do everything in his power to make sure his final season in orange and green is one he won't forget – even if he hasn't quite wrapped his mind around the fact that it actually *is* his final season in orange and green.

"Obviously, I know in my head this is my last year, but I'm trying to take advantage of every day, just living in each day, taking advantage of it and having as much fun as possible with it," said Pack, who averaged 13.3 points, 2.6 rebounds, and 3.6 assists last season and was named a preseason All-ACC selection. "I'm not even trying to think ahead to the future and what's going to happen next. I'm just trying to stay in the day ... continue to just play hard every day, get better and keep working and then let the rest take care of the rest."

Pack is hardly the only Hurricane

with that mentality.

With four seniors and three graduate-level players now on the roster, Miami has an experienced, veteran core of players that are set to play their final seasons of college basketball.

Joining Pack in that experienced group are returning guard Matthew Cleveland, Idaho State transfer forward Kiree Huie, East Carolina transfer forward Brandon Johnson, Stetson transfer guard Jalen Blackmon, Yale transfer forward Yussif Basa-Ama and a relatively familiar face, center Lynn Kidd, who spent the last three seasons at Virginia Tech.

Each of them saw potential in the roster head coach Jim Larrañaga and his staff were building at Miami and each felt this was a place where they could excel in their final season of college basketball.

That individual motivation, combined with their experience, Larrañaga believes will help make a difference for Miami as it navigates another competitive ACC schedule and makes a push to return to the NCAA Tournament.

Adding a few talented freshmen, including 2024 McDonald's All-American and consensus

five-star prospect Jalil Bethea and four-star prospects Isaiah Johnson-Arigu and Austin Swartz, doesn't hurt either.

"When a team is more experienced, they have a better chance to succeed," said Larrañaga, who is embarking on his 14th season at Miami. "Working with young players, they need experience before they can really play up to their potential. Working with older players, they normally adapt quicker and can execute better under game conditions because they've done it for so many years.

"My first Miami team, we had a great freshman in Shane Larkin. But he was surrounded by juniors and seniors. And then that next year, with most of them coming back, we had a championship-caliber team. I think the balance of having youthful enthusiasm, talented young guys to join a veteran crew is the best-case scenario."

That veteran crew, for its part, is ready to do its part to help their younger teammates develop, knowing – as Larrañaga does – that the key to Miami's success this season will be finding ways for both veterans and freshmen to thrive.

And Miami's success, they say, will help make their last seasons as



college players all the more memorable.

"I think a lot of us have seen a lot of hoops and we know what we're looking at and we understand like, 'Oh, this is our last year. It's make or break. This is our last chance at it,'" said Kidd, who started 33 games for the Hokies last season, averaged 13.2 points per game and led the ACC in field-goal percentage (66.8). "So, I think a lot of guys are desperate and they want to make a deep run into the tournament. That's why they came here. That's what I came to do."

Added Cleveland, "We all have the same goal and it's to win. We talk about it every day in the locker room, how a lot of us haven't, in our college careers, gotten to the goals that we wanted to get to and how this is the last year that we have and how this is the year that we all just want to win."

As much as Miami's veterans – whether they're new to the Hurricanes or not – want to win, though, they know it takes more than expe-

rience to be successful.

The group understands they have to play together, learn each other's strengths and weaknesses and build chemistry.

To do that, they've tried to spend just about as much time together outside the gym as they have inside.

Video game marathons and dinners out were priorities during the offseason to help them all get to know each other and strengthen the bonds they know will make a difference the longer the season goes.

Learning how to communicate effectively was important, too.

"I think the key to it is just hanging out with each other, outside of basketball, getting to know each other outside basketball," Kidd said. "I think a lot of successful teams are really close on and off the court. And I think we've been doing that. We always go get food or we play video games ... I think that's really

important. I think we've been doing that really well so far."

Said Cleveland, who averaged 13.7 points and 6.1 rebounds per game last season, "You've got to communicate with each other. That's the biggest thing. You don't know what other people are thinking if you don't communicate. So, learning their games by communicating with them, watch film with them and just really, I would say the big thing is just talking with them. That's the easiest way to get to know somebody, on and off the floor."

Now, it's time for the new-look Hurricanes to put all of that bonding, communicating and practicing together.

They'll open the season with a slate of 12 non-conference games before ACC play begins on New Year's Day at Boston College.

After that, games against the likes of Duke, North Carolina, Florida State, Louisville and Syracuse await. There will also be a trip to the West Coast to face new ACC members Stanford and California.

And all of that, the older Hurricanes hope will prepare them for one last bit of March magic.

"We didn't have the year we wanted to have last year, and we know that this could be a big year," Cleveland said. "So, we're just taking a no-nonsense mindset of just [doing] whatever it takes to win because we're not going to deal with anything else."







A close-up portrait of Jasmyne Roberts, a young Black woman with her hair in braids, resting her chin on her hand and holding a basketball. She is wearing a white jersey with red and green stripes on the sleeve and a diamond bracelet.

# GETTING TO KNOW... JASMYNE ROBERTS

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos

Two years ago, Jasmyne Roberts took the floor for her first start as a Miami Hurricane not knowing what to expect.

After seeing limited playing time as a freshman, she was now being asked to take on a bigger role in the wake of an injury to veteran teammate Destiny Harden.

Roberts went on two post two double-digit performances against ranked opponents and figured she was on the verge of finally breaking through.

She had no idea then what awaited her and her teammates just two months later.

That spring, Roberts and the Hurricanes took their fans on a magical March journey that made history.

Miami advanced to the Elite Eight of the NCAA Tournament for the first time and in the process, knocked off a series of higher-seeded opponents.

Roberts, then a sophomore, was a big part of the Hurricanes' historic run, notching 12 points in a comeback win over Oklahoma State, 16 points in a win over top-seeded Indiana and a career-high 26 points in a win over Villanova.

And while the Hurricanes' season ended with an Elite Eight loss to eventual national champion LSU, Roberts was a spark for the Hurricanes even that day, scoring 22 points and pulling down seven rebounds against the Tigers.

She averaged 19.0 points and 7.3 rebounds during that NCAA Tournament run and earned a spot on

the Greenville 2 All-Region Team when all was said and done.

Now, Roberts is poised to start her final season at Miami, and she expects it will be both an emotional and exciting journey, given all the change the Hurricanes have gone through over the course of the last year.

Through all that change – a new head coach, new teammates, and new conference foes awaiting on the schedule – Roberts wants to be a constant for Miami. And she's determined to make the most of her final season as a Hurricane.

"Everybody tells you college goes by fast, and I listened, but I didn't really understand it to this magnitude," said Roberts, who averaged 11.1 points and 4.9 rebounds last season. "Now I'm entering my senior year and I'm like, 'Wow, this is really it.' It just makes me more grateful each day. I'm not going to take any day for granted with my team while I'm practicing and I'm really going to give it my all."

*Hurricanes Magazine* asked Roberts to share more about her Miami journey. Here's what she had to say, in her own words.

**Hurricanes Magazine:** There's been so much change for Miami women's basketball over the course of the last 10 months. As one of the team's veteran leaders, how would you describe that time?

**Jasmyne Roberts:** "A lot of adapting. I feel like it was a lot of me having to adapt, in a good way. So much change happened like literally, in the snap of a finger. Adapting to new teammates, adapting

to a new staff and a whole new system. So, that's what it's kind of been like for me. But it's been really fun, getting to know these different people, these new people. There have been a lot of changes, so that's the word I'd use, a lot of adapting."

**HM:** Given all that change and all that adapting, how would you describe this year's Miami Hurricanes?

**JR:** "I would describe us as versatile, honestly. This roster, we're very, very talented and we have so many different people that can do so many different things. And the way TC – I call [head coach Tricia Cullop] TC – the way she runs her program, the plays, you're going to see so many different looks, so many different sets. It's different. It's not going to look how it's looked in the past, but it's a good change. It's almost going to be electric. We can shoot the ball. We can drive the ball. We have great post play. We're a very well-rounded team. So, I would say it's going to be electric to watch."

**HM:** What are you looking forward to most about getting on the floor with this team?

**JR:** "What I'm looking forward to most? I would say to compete against another team. We play a lot in practice, and we beat each other up in practice. We split up teams and we're always playing against each other. And it's so competitive. This team is so competitive. ... It's competitive in the way we know time and score, even in practice. And we know what we need to do on the play and what we're looking for on the



play. It's very high-level IQ. So, I'm just looking for the opportunity for us to compete against a different opponent, where we're all together and we can execute everything that we've been going through and going over since the summertime. And I'm looking forward to winning because we're going to win a lot of ball games."

**HM:** You were such a big part of Miami's Elite Eight run two seasons ago and that was really when the rest of the country got to see the kind of player you are. What did you learn from that experience and how does it still motivate you today?

**JR:** "I definitely learned a lot. Even though it happened two years ago, those are memories that I hold with me daily. I think about it all the time. It's a competitive memory for me, a positive memory. I carry it with me and even if there are days where I'm doubting myself or I'm not feeling as confident, I'm like, 'No, Jas, hey, you did this in the Elite Eight. You did this in the Sweet 16 against the No. 1 team.' So, I always go back to those memories. I watch that film, those tapes, to see the player I was and the team I was on and how good we were playing. I learned a lot from that. I learned I could play against anybody in the country.

"I also learned that it truly does not matter your ranking or the makeup of your team or what you looked like before. Once you get in the tournament, it's like a free game. And it's just like on that day, who is the better team? Who executes the most? It just helped me mature as a player and I also learned leadership, controlling the game, things of that nature."

**HM:** Four years ago, when you went through the recruiting process, what was it about Miami that made you feel like it was the right place for you?

**JR:** "It was the culture, the culture of the school, academically and athletically and the culture of the program [former head coach Katie Meier] had built. I had been watching Miami for years. My cousin, [Shaneese Bailey], played here. So, I just knew the type of program I was coming into, the type of coach I was going to be coached by and the type of staff. It was just very familiar. It just gave me a lot of confidence in my decision to play here. The playing style, the tenacity, everything involved in that. I just really knew this was the place for me."

**HM:** What are your goals going into this season, both for the team as a whole and for you, personally?

**JR:** "So, personal goals, I want to score my 1,000th career point. I'm pretty close. I'm like 200-something away. So, that is my goal in-season. I really want to accomplish that. I did it in high school, so I feel like I have to do it in college. And I want to be the player on the team that is just the solid glue of the team. I want to be a great defender, a great scorer, a great rebounder. I really want to be the total package to where I can help my team win every night. I would love to make one of the All-ACC teams, whether it's defense, or ... I've really been working on my footwork and my defense and I'm really hoping that translates this year on the court. ... It's a very difficult goal to accomplish, but I think it's reachable.

"As far as the team, in my eyes, if we don't make it to the Sweet 16, that's

a problem. That's how talented I believe this team is. We have to at least make it to the Sweet 16 and have a good March Madness run. Finish above .500 in the ACC, definitely. I think we can go undefeated in the games before ACC [play]. Those are goals we made as a team, all the captains. We came together and made those goals up. I would say those are the main ones."

**HM:** You mentioned your cousin Shaneese Bailey played here at Miami. Another one of your cousins, Courtney Williams, is in the WNBA and two more cousins, Chris Milton and Champ Bailey, played in the NFL. How do you think growing up in a family that athletic make you the competitor you are today?

**JR:** "It definitely made me a competitor. It made me want to be like them. It made me see something in myself because I saw my family members do it. It made me feel like I could do it as well. I would say that growing up, I was always outside. I was always playing basketball. I'm 6, 7, 8-years old and I was playing with the boys on the concrete in the heat. I always had a competitive nature. It's just something that runs through my family. So, I would say seeing my cousin in the WNBA, I was like, 'I can do that. She's doing it. I know I can do it, and I want to reach that point.' Seeing my cousin go to the NFL, I was like, 'Wow, okay, he's going professional. I want to be able to do that as well.' Seeing Shaneese make it at Miami and do great here, that was something that was really great. It all made me realize if they can do it, I can do it, too because I have the same competitor in me. It's really cool to have athletic people in your family who are just amazing at their sport."

**HM:** You're a broadcast journalism major and this semester, you're getting a real-world look at what it's like to work in that industry through a mentorship program that has connected you with a local television sports department. What has it been like to dive into that experience and think about your potential career options after basketball?

**JR:** "It's been so amazing and thanks to Coach TC, because she hooked us up. She hooked us all up with mentors and each player on the team has their own individual mentor. I'm grateful for that. It's been so amazing. Giselle [Espinales of NBC6] has been so welcoming and nice. She's great. I went with her to [Miami] Heat media day and being in that professional setting, that's what I hope to be in someday, post-sports. It was very hands-on, seeing professional players up close and seeing their different personalities. That was the coolest part. You see some players are shorter interviews, and then you have some players who will just share their whole life if you ask them. So, it was cool to see that. It's been an amazing experience."

**HM:** To get back to basketball and your last season here, as you start to process all the emotions that come with that, what kind of legacy are you hoping to leave at Miami and how do you want to be remembered here?

**JR:** "I want people to remember me just being a great person. I feel like I would rather be remembered by how I made people feel than what I actually did, because I feel like when you leave a place, they're not going to remember all the things you accomplished, but they will remember if you were a good



person, and if you made people feel welcomed, things like that. So, every time I'm around someone familiar or I see someone familiar, I always make sure to smile and wave or something like that. I want to be super nice to all our fans and always respectful to my coaches. I just want to be remembered as that person. I also want to be remembered as being an incredible basketball player, someone who took this team to an Elite Eight, which had never been done before. And somebody who stayed loyal to the school and helped ignite a new team, and a new era for Miami Hurricanes women's basketball."



# FACES IN THE CROWD

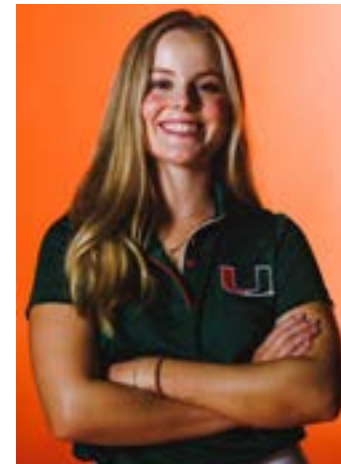
By Christy Cabrera Chirinos



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 fall edition includes a freshman golfer who has already made headlines in her short time with the Hurricanes, a football student-athlete who has battled through injuries to make an impact during the team's strong start, a defensive stalwart on the pitch and a volleyball standout who is using her international experience to help Miami win matches.

Get to know Hurricanes Cloe Amion Villarino, Elijah Arroyo, Claireese Foley and Paula Guersching.



**Cloe Amion Villarino**, Freshman

Only three tournaments into her college career, Cloe Amion Villarino hit a shot she won't be forgetting any time soon. The freshman from Valencia, Spain notched a hole-in-one on the 183-yard, par-3 second hole at the Cherokee Country Club in Knoxville, Tennessee during the Mercedes-Benz Collegiate. The Hurricanes went on to win that tournament, besting 12 other teams in the field. Miami posted a 10-over-par 862, while Amion Villarino secured the first top-10 finish of her Hurricanes career. She finished tied for seventh with a 54-hole score of 215 (+2). Before coming to Miami, Amion Villarino won the 2023 and 2024 U18 Spanish National Championship and totaled three wins with nine top-10 finishes during her juniors career.



**Elijah Arroyo**, Redshirt Junior

After arriving at Miami as a highly touted tight end prospect, Elijah Arroyo quickly earned playing time as a freshman, appearing in all 12 of Miami's games – and even starting one – in 2021. He finished that season with five catches for 86 yards and a touchdown and every expectation was that he'd be an impact player for the Hurricanes as his career continued. But injuries limited Arroyo in both 2022 and 2023, and the tight end appeared in just four games both of those seasons. He's returned in 2024 and quickly become an integral part of the Miami offense. Through the Hurricanes' first eight games, Arroyo has 16 catches for 310 yards and four touchdowns, including the go-ahead score in Miami's 39-38 comeback win at California. He's also thrown a touchdown pass.



**Claireese Foley**, Redshirt Freshman

Through the first half of the season, Claireese Foley has been a steady defensive presence for Miami. The Prosper, Texas native was named the ACC Defensive Player of the Week and was named to the Top Drawer Soccer National Team of the Week in early October after recording a pair of shutouts against Virginia Tech and FAU. Against the Hokies, Foley had a career-high seven saves to help the Hurricanes earn a 0-0 draw. She followed that effort with another three saves against FAU, a match the Hurricanes won 1-0. Through Miami's first 16 games, Foley made 21 saves and had a 0.70 goals against average.



**Paula Guersching**, Senior

A veteran presence who played at both Hawaii and Youngstown State before coming to Miami, Paula Guersching has given the Hurricanes a boost through the first part of the season. In Miami's September upset of then-No. 1 Texas, Guersching had eight kills and eight digs. Against FIU, she had nine kills, three aces, eight digs and three blocks and through the Hurricanes' first 19 matches, she has totaled 79 kills and 52 digs. The outside hitter, who hails from Germany, competed in both the German junior national indoor and beach volleyball circuits before beginning her college career.





# READY TO GO: NEW-LOOK CANES SET TO TAKE FLOOR

By Trevor Marbut

A new era has begun for Miami Hurricanes women's basketball.

For the first time in 19 years, the Hurricanes have a new face leading the program, as legendary coach Katie Meier retired after last season, and Miami brought in Tricia Cullop from Toledo to take the reins.

Cullop, in her 25th season as a Division I head coach, has accumulated no shortage of accolades during her career with a 476-279 record and 10 20-win seasons.

An Indiana native, Cullop played at Purdue. She went on to serve as an assistant coach at Radford, Long Beach State, and Xavier before earning her first head coaching job in 2000 at Evansville.

By 2008, Evansville was a 20-win team, the Missouri Valley Regular

Season Champions and Cullop was named Missouri Valley Coach of the Year.

Later that year, Cullop was named head coach at Toledo.

Now, after 16 seasons, 353 wins, 11 postseason appearances, six MAC Coach of the Year awards, five MAC regular season titles, and two MAC Tournament Championships with the Rockets, Cullop takes over a Miami program that will aim to return to the NCAA Tournament.

Along with a new head coach, the Hurricanes have many new faces, as Cullop and her staff reloaded the Miami roster. But a few familiar faces from the 2023 Elite Eight run return.

Haley and Hanna Cavinder are back at Miami after stepping

away from basketball last season. Jasmyne Roberts returns for her fourth and final collegiate season as well.

Several new players joined the program this offseason, as Cullop and her staff worked to compile their roster with multiple freshmen signings, as well as adding coveted players from the transfer portal.

Cameron Williams joins the program for her final year of eligibility after playing at Michigan. Natalija Marshall made her way to Miami from Notre Dame, where she won an ACC Championship with the Irish last season. Darrione Rogers joins the squad from Mississippi State, and Daniela Abies transferred to Miami after a breakout 2023-24 campaign at Wichita State.

In addition to the impressive transfers that Cullop signed this offseason, she also brought in the 18th best freshman class in the country, consisting of Ahnay Adams, Leah Harmon, and Simone Pelish.

Despite the mix of returning players, transfer additions, and freshman signees, Cullop is confident that the group will blend well together.

"We haven't been together very long," Cullop said. "There's a lot of new pieces on this team, a lot of new staff members, and I feel like we're in a good place for coming together for the time we've had. I think we have a lot of improvement ahead of us, but I'm very excited about the talent that we have and helping them reach the potential that I think they are capable of."

Cullop has placed a tremendous emphasis on building the type of culture that she wants in her program, and she is confident that she has the right pieces to create that culture.

At the forefront of the culture that Cullop wants to create are two players Canes fans know well: Haley and Hanna Cavinder.

Haley Cavinder was a critical piece of the Miami team that made it to the Elite Eight. She earned 2023 All-ACC Second Team honors after averaging 12.2 points, 4.9 rebounds, and 2.5 assists per game.

Hanna Cavinder also played an instrumental role in Miami's 2022-23 season, serving as a key reserve, averaging 3.8 points, 1.6 assists, and 1.3 rebounds per game.

"They are two of the hardest workers that I have ever coached, and I'll go even further and say even two of the hardest workers that I have played with, and that's saying a lot because I played with some All-Americans," Cullop said. "They have an extreme hunger to want to be better, and they set the bar really high for the rest of my players."

Said Haley Cavinder, "It feels like home here at the University of Miami. Obviously, it's a new staff, new system, and new players, but I believe that just the culture that Coach Cullop envisions and having [associate head coach Fitzroy Anthony] here is something that makes me feel like this is home."

In addition to the Cavinders, Roberts is the lone other player that will take the court for the Canes this season after playing on that historic Elite Eight squad.

Last season, Roberts averaged 11.1 points and 4.9 boards per contest. Now, she looks to take her game to another level and close out her college career in exceptional fashion.

"We have great veteran guard play and experienced players on the team," Roberts said. "This is an amazing group. I'm so excited to see how we play, because I think we can make a deep run in the postseason, and I think we have a chance to win an ACC Championship. That's where our minds are at."

Two of the most high-profile additions to the roster are Williams and Marshall.

At Michigan last year, Williams posted season averages of 7.5 points and 4.6 rebounds per game,

while shooting 54.8 percent from the field.

Marshall, meanwhile, is no stranger to the ACC after playing at Notre Dame.

She was an essential piece for the Irish during their conference championship run last season, averaging 5.0 points and 3.7 rebounds, while shooting 50 percent from the field.

"Natalija is a rim-runner," Cullop said. "I am going to be challenging her to go get three to four rim runs every game. She can run with our guards when we run sprints. She's very quick, she can face up, she's someone that can put the ball on the floor and drive right past you. A lot of kids at her position can't guard her."

The Canes will likely rely on a mix of youth and experience off the bench to complement their starting lineup.

Rogers, a 3-point sniper, joins that mix. She has scored 1,399 points and buried 234 3-pointers at a 35.3 percent clip throughout her career.

Abies will compete for playing time in the post after joining the squad this offseason following a breakout sophomore campaign at Wichita State, where she averaged 13.0 points and 9.7 rebounds for the Shockers last season.

Lemyah Hylton is expected to return to the Miami lineup soon after sustaining a season-ending injury last February and in addition, Cullop signed one of the most talented freshman classes in recent memory.





Adams was ranked as the No. 10 point guard in the nation by ProspectsNation.com and the No. 37 overall player in the country. She earned three consecutive Gatorade Player of the Year awards in high school.

Pelish was a three-time NY Upstate Player of the Year and rated a four-star recruit by ESPNW HoopGurlz. Harmon completes the class, joining the Canes from IMG Academy, where she was rated a five-star recruit by ESPN.

Miami will face a difficult slate in Cullop's first season at the helm of the program, with six ACC teams appearing in the preseason AP Top 25.

However, she is excited for the opportunity to face elite programs.

"There will not be an easy game, not one," Cullop said. "But we're excited about it. ... This is why everyone wants to be in the ACC, and they want to compete at this level. This is why the ACC had so many teams in the NCAA Tournament. I think that speaks alone how strong this league is, and I think this league got even better with the addition of Cal, SMU, and Stanford."





# SUPPORTING THE CAUSE: BREAST CANCER AWARENESS WALK

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos

In late September, more than 300 student-athletes, staff and members from the Miami athletic department joined together to raise awareness for breast cancer research and honor the women in their lives that have fought – and in some cases, continue to fight – their battles against the disease with an hour-long walk on the Coral Gables campus.

Along the walk's route? The Lennar Foundation Medical Center, where doctors, nurses and medical staff from the University of Miami Health System treat patients and provide support for their families.

A number of student-athletes and staff carried signs bearing the names of the women in their lives fighting breast cancer and those signs not only honored those women, but helped foster conversations about breast cancer's impact.

"The idea for the Breast Cancer Awareness Walk came from the desire to support this cause beyond just pink game-day attire. I wanted our students

and athletes to have an hour of intentionality that allowed for them to really engage with their teammates, head coaches and staff members that have been directly impacted by this cause and to honor those who have suffered," said Savanna Wood, Miami's Executive Associate Athletic Director for Brand and Marketing Strategy. "[Miami Vice President and Director of Athletics] Dan Radakovich and the entire executive staff were incredibly supportive in making this vision a reality.

"I hope that after the Breast Cancer Awareness Walk, student-athletes and staff members felt a deeper connection to this cause and recognized that pink is more than just a color for us. It was truly powerful to see 300-plus student-athletes and staff walking around our athletic facilities and in front of the Lennar Foundation Medical Center. I wanted them to feel united and together, especially as we gathered at a university and health system that continues to be a leader in cancer research."









# WHERE ARE THEY NOW? BEV YANEZ

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos

Her career had already been filled with its share of memorable moments.

At Miami, she'd made history, scoring the game-winning goal against then-national champion North Carolina and serving as a team captain before becoming the first Hurricane women's soccer player to be drafted by any professional league.

She played professionally in the United States, Australia, Finland and Japan, winning multiple titles along the way and while with the Seattle Reign, in particular, she was a part of two National Women's Soccer League Shield-winning campaigns.

Now, just four years removed from her retirement as a player – and four days after giving birth to her daughter Cali June – Bev (Goebel) Yanez was at the job interview of her life.

And it was a surreal experience.

"I had the baby and four days later, I came in to have my final interview in person. I'll never forget it," Yanez recalled with a chuckle. "I had just gotten out of the hospital. ... I kind of just put myself together, came in, did the final interview and hoped for the best."

Days later, Yanez learned her best – and her resume as both a former player and assistant coach – was more than enough when Louisville Racing of the NWSL offered her the opportunity to be the team's new head coach.

Yanez, who'd served as an assistant coach with Louisville the previous season, was ecstatic.

"If you had told me that at 35 years old, I'd be in a position like this, I would say, 'What? You're crazy,'" Yanez said. "I'm so very grateful for my journey and I'm very accepting of the different paths my journey took, how I invested and knew it would take me where I was supposed to be. I'm a firm believer that everything happens for a reason in your journey. You learn along the way for it to make you as best as possible, to fit your role, and do everything you can in your role."

Nearly a year after that fateful interview, Yanez is about to finish her first full year as a head coach in the NWSL.

After navigating the offseason and opening with four straight draws, Racing Louisville earned its first win under Yanez on April 20 when they posted a 5-1 home victory over the Utah Royals.

And as she has since being named coach, Yanez reveled in the moment with her family, including baby Cali June, her older daughter 3-year-old Noemi-Rae, her husband Othaniel Yanez, a former midfielder for the Columbus Crew, and both her mother, Tori Goebel, and her mother-in-law Noemi Yanez, all of whom she credits with helping her balance the demands of her job and motherhood.

"My family has been incredibly supportive throughout this whole journey, and it means the world that my girls see this," Yanez said. "I'm a firm believer that if you see it, you can be it. So, having this, growing up with their mom being in such a role, seeing these women compete every day, seeing women in roles that they are in across this club and this league is really important for me. I travel with [my daughters] sometimes. They come on the field after games, and they get to interact [with the players] and it's really positively influencing them and showing them that they can be anything they want to be. It's so special for me to have them around."

Getting to that moment, was as Yanez described a "journey."

The California native started her collegiate career at Sacramento

State University before transferring to Miami as a sophomore.

It was a move Yanez believed would challenge her to grow, as both a player and a person. She started 51 of her 53 games in Coral Gables and as a senior, totaled three goals and a pair of assists.

More importantly, though, it was during her time as a Hurricane that Yanez realized she wanted to make soccer her lifelong career.

She was selected by the Washington Freedom in the third round of the 2010 Women's Professional Soccer Draft and started nine games for the Freedom before being drafted by the Western New York Flash in the 2010 WPS Expansion Draft.

In 2011, she won a WPS with the Flash and that same year, she won the Finnish Naisten Liiga title with Pallokoher-35.

Yanez went on to play in Japan, where she won a Nadeshiko League title in 2012 and finished as the league's top scorer in 2013.

It was in Japan, too, where an idea began to take shape.

After a transition period during which she sometimes struggled to adapt to the technical style of the Japanese game, Yanez couldn't help but wonder if there was an opportunity for her to teach that style to younger American players when she returned home.

"I remember saying, 'How many people are out there like me, that feel this way? That go into a new





environment and [ask] why was I never taught this? Why do I not comprehend this? Why can't I understand the most basic principles of the game?," Yanez said. "And that's where I said, 'I want to educate. I want to teach.'"

Yanez returned to the U.S., joined the Reign for the second season of the NWSL in 2014 and, while playing, began the process of securing her coaching licenses.

Eventually, she and Othaniel opened a coaching business where they ran small group sessions for aspiring soccer players.

It wasn't always easy – especially given that Yanez was still playing and balancing the physical de-

mands of her own career.

But she says the experience solidified her love of coaching.

"Because I was so tired from playing, [Othaniel] was running a majority of the sessions," Yanez said. "But on the weekends, or on off days or lower-end days, I would jump in and run a session here and there and it would be very position specific. This entrepreneurial side started to come out and I was thinking, 'Man, I've got to run this thing ...' But I get to do actually what I love outside my passion for playing."

Still, despite the long hours between her coaching work and her playing career, Yanez found incredible success on the pitch during her

six seasons with the Reign.

She scored 25 goals, won two NWSL Shields, earned Best XI recognition and was an MVP Finalist in 2015.

She retired in 2020 and soon after, joined the NJ/NY Gotham FC as an assistant coach. There, Yanez helped lead Gotham to the NWSL playoffs and a berth in the UKG Challenge Cup Final in 2021 before joining the Racing staff in 2023.

Last November, she was elevated from assistant to head coach and has embraced the opportunity to start her head coaching career and share her knowledge and expertise with the current generation of NWSL players.



That she's been able to do that during an especially memorable time for women's sports is something Yanez says she doesn't take for granted.

"I think it's so special. If you look back from a playing career perspective, you see me being part of the 0.01 percent that was trying to progress and push the women's game," Yanez said. "I was part of the league at a time when I needed to buy my own gym membership. I was part of the league at a time there was no maternity protocol put in place. I was part of the league at a time when we didn't get housing provided.

"I was making very minimal money but had to pay my own rent. I

was part of, in a very small capacity, helping progress the women's game. That's something I'm incredibly proud of and now, making this transition over to the coach's world, I want to do the same thing."

And as Yanez continues moving forward in her new role, she credits her time at Miami with helping give her the strength to pursue her dreams, both as a player and later, as a coach.

"Being there at Miami, I felt supported, and I felt understood," Yanez said. "It was a chapter in my life that I went on and it was probably the phase right before my first jump of saying 'I want to do this. I want to pursue this. I want to be a professional athlete.' And I was able to do

it there. I was able to compete and get a degree. ...

"It was a huge part of my journey, and I went on from there to play professionally. It was the jump I needed. I got drafted from the school and to know and all the work I put in as a player and as a collegiate athlete, to be rewarded and to have that was something I was so grateful for. It was really the first jumpstart of my career and so, it's got a special place in my heart for sure."





# DREAM COME TRUE: ADRIAN DEL CASTILLO

By Josh White

Adrian Del Castillo tried to hold back the tears.

The Diamondbacks clubhouse was mostly empty, but the 24-year-old rookie remained.

While sitting at his locker, Del Castillo reflected on the special evening. A night he got to share with the family and friends who have been by his side since he was a little kid.

He thought about his parents, brother, grandparents, cousins, friends, coaches and teachers.

And then, Del Castillo was overcome with emotion.

"I'm really at a loss for words," he said. "It's everything I've dreamed of since I was five years old. To be able to do that and to see my family and friends and everyone who has been through it with me, I'm so happy."

After growing up just a few short miles away from LoanDepot Park and watching countless games in the stands, Del Castillo was back home.

This time, he was starring on the field where his childhood heroes once played.

If that wasn't enough, more than 150 of his biggest fans witnessed Del Castillo etch his name in baseball history.

"It's almost like the perfect script to a storybook," said Madeline Del Castillo, Adrian's mother. "It doesn't feel real. We're so happy for him

and so endlessly proud of him."

For the Del Castillo family, a longtime dream turned into more than they could've ever even imagined on Aug. 19.

In the series opener against his hometown team, Del Castillo hit a grand slam and drove in six runs to lead the Diamondbacks past the Marlins, 9-6.

He joined Hall of Famer Johnny Bench (1974) and two-time All-Star Jerry Grote (1981) as one of only three MLB catchers to total at least six RBI and a stolen base in a contest.

Del Castillo's 14 RBI through his first nine career games match the second-most by a player over that timespan since RBI became official in 1920, trailing Mitchell Page's 15 in 1977.

But that memorable Monday night is far from the only moment he will take with him forever.

"Honestly, every game, I can't believe I'm in the big leagues," he said. "Sometimes, it doesn't feel real, but once the game starts, I'm so locked in."

Del Castillo introduced himself to the baseball world in style.

In his first major-league at-bat, the 14th-ranked Diamondbacks prospect recorded an RBI double, coming a few feet away from a home run at Progressive Field in Cleveland.

Two days later, Del Castillo came through with the winning homer in

just his second game in The Show.

With his ninth-inning heroics, he became the first player in Arizona Diamondbacks history to hit a walk-off blast for his first career home run.

"Goosebumps, honestly. Straight up goosebumps. It was sick. I don't even know how to describe it," Del Castillo said. "After the celebration and I did all the interviews, I found my parents. They gave me a big hug and we were jumping around. It was special that they got to see it from the stands."

The Miami native continued to vault himself atop the sport's headlines.

With his family on-hand at Tropicana Field in Tampa, Del Castillo delivered the game-tying three-run shot off Rays closer Pete Fairbanks to force extra innings.

"It's been a blessing what he's accomplished in such a short time in the major leagues," said Carlos Del Castillo, Adrian's father. "We truly have to thank God. He's living out his dream. It's such a surreal experience. It's been a beautiful blessing."

In his first three weeks in the big leagues, the 5-foot-10, 208-pound backstop hit .354/.426/.583 with three home runs and 14 RBI.

His immediate impact impressed eighth-year Diamondbacks manager Torey Lovullo.





"You can't really ask for any greater moments for a young player," Lovullo said. "It's a tribute to him. It's preparation. He's doing everything right. He's working his butt off to make it happen."

While Del Castillo may have taken MLB by storm, he was a household name in South Florida from a young age.

After tearing up the travel ball circuit and competing against kids a couple years older, he caught the attention of plenty of people around the area, including coaches at the University of Miami.

"He was a local legend. He continued to develop and get better and better. Once he got to high school, he became one of the all-time great bats to come out of this city," Miami head coach J.D. Arteaga said. "He had a professional approach from Day One he was on campus. The way he carried himself, the way he understood the game, he was a professional in every sense of the word."

While the Diamondbacks were in the thick of a playoff push, Del Castillo was a key contributor as Arizona tried to defend its 2023 National League crown.

But at the end of the day, he was happy to be living out his childhood dream.

"I'm just happy to be here and be a part of a club that is hot," Del Castillo said. "I don't think it has fully set in. I'm playing a kids' game. I'm just trying to make my younger self proud."





# CANES CONNECT SPOTLIGHT: CANES VOTE 2024

By Christy Cabrera Chirinos

Grace Hurren came to the United States when she was 11 years old and quickly took an interest in not just American culture, but American politics.

This year, the graduate student defender and midfielder on Miami's women's soccer team will have the opportunity to officially make her voice heard in an American election.

Hurren, who was born in Canada, but grew up in New Jersey, became a U.S. citizen in January and in September, was among 75 Hurricane student-athletes who either registered to vote or checked their registration status during a "Canes Vote" event held on National Voter Registration Day.

Also registering to vote that day was sophomore football player Mark Fletcher, Jr., who said the entire process – and the opportunity to now vote in his first election – even made him feel a bit more responsible.

"It felt very grown-up," he said with a smile. "I want to be able to use my rights to my advantage. That feels good. You should want your voice to be heard. If you're able to, why wouldn't you?"

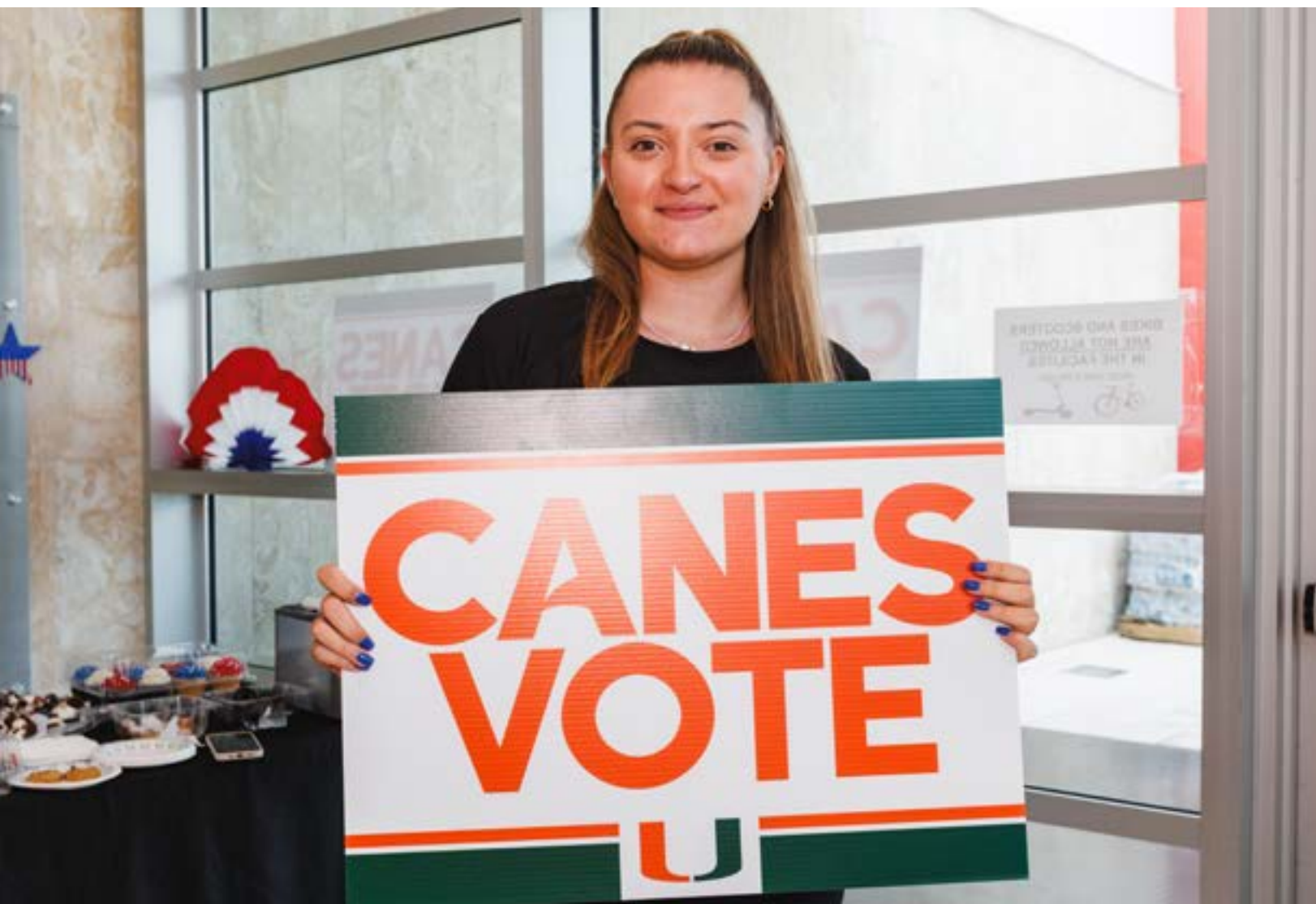
Moments like the ones Hurren and Fletcher experienced during the registration drive were exactly why LaToya Farris, Miami's Associate Athletic Director for Student-Athlete Development, Belonging & Inclusion, said it was important the department not only held the event, but did so at the Schwartz Center for Athletic Excellence, a spot on campus that is easily accessible to Miami's student-athletes.

"I think sometimes, some of the younger people think their vote doesn't matter or it doesn't count," Farris said. "But I think

registering, sets a strong foundation to continue voting throughout their lives. ... It's so important to get them involved early. I was on cloud nine when the first person showed up, even before we got set up. I thought that was really special. You want people to be proud of being able to have the opportunity to vote."











# SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT: AMIGOS FOR LIFE

By Carter Toole

The Amigos (L-R): Dan Smith, Armando Oliveros, Jose Armario, Raul Alvarez and Dean Myers.

Jose Armario's business travels have taken him across the globe, but no matter where his feet land, he makes sure his hands form a universal symbol.

"I went to a lot of interesting places, and everywhere from Russia to Spain to Brazil to Argentina to China, "I would find a way to throw up The U and post it to Facebook and Instagram," Armario said. "My friends would say, 'That's Jose, he's taking The U with him everywhere he goes.'"

But truth be told, Armario, a proud University of Miami graduate and the current Chief Executive Officer at Bojangles, would rather throw up The U much closer to home with a group of friends whose ties to the Hurricanes have only made them closer over the years.

In fact, they're not just friends – they're amigos.

Armario, Raul Alvarez, Dean Myers, Dan Smith and Armando Oliveros are all UM alums and have all built successful careers over many decades. And their story of friendship and fandom is uniquely Miami.

Alvarez's ties to UM date all the way back to 1961, when his mother, a Ph.D.-level marine biologist in Cuba, started working as a researcher at the University. Alvarez's first paying job was stocking books at the Rosenstiel library during a high school summer. He decided to attend Miami and graduated in three years, earning his bachelor's degree in accounting in 1976. After two years at what is now Deloitte Touche, he took a job in the accounting department

at the Burger King Corporation, eventually moving to the sales side.

Meanwhile, the Hurricanes had hired Howard Schnellenberger as their head football coach and the seeds of a dynasty were starting to form. Alvarez, who sold sodas and hot dogs at the Orange Bowl while he was in school, was following the program very closely.

"Howard used to do Friday breakfasts at the Faculty Club where he and the different coaches would come in and talk to a small group of alumni then that followed the team," Alvarez said. "I remember those fondly, getting insight into what was happening."

On the weekends, Alvarez joined a group of Burger King employ-

ees who would play flag football at Tropical Park. One of those employees was Armario, who was also a Canes fan.

"When Howard took over we were really on our way so it was easy to become a fan," Armario said. "And I became such a fan that I desperately wanted to become an alum."

Armario, like Alvarez, was starting to travel globally for Burger King and on one flight to Latin America he was flipping through the American Airlines magazine at his seat.

"There was an ad in the magazine for the master's program at the University of Miami," Armario said. "I was able to fit that in with a lot of support from my wife and my kids to do that program and get my master's at The U and say 'I'm not just a fan, but I'm also an alum.' That's how much passion there was running through me to want to be a part of the family."

Alvarez moved up the ranks at Burger King, first heading up operations in Madrid, Spain, and then European operations, which based him in London, England. He eventually became president of Burger King Canada and found that college football wasn't exactly top of

mind north of the border.

"I actually had to drive down from Toronto to Buffalo a couple of times just to be able to watch a Miami game on TV," Alvarez said.

Alvarez came back to Miami in the late 1980s to lead Burger King's Florida division, before taking a position as head of Florida operations for Wendy's. In 1994, McDonald's approached him, and he would work there the next 15 years, eventually becoming President and Chief Operating Officer.

Alvarez's flag football teammate would soon be back on his corporate team again. After 15 years at Burger King and four years at LensCrafters, Armario was hired by McDonald's as president of the restaurant's operations in Chile in 1996. He later became president of Latin American operations and executive vice president of supply chain, development and franchising.

Meanwhile, Alvarez would run into another Canes alum on his business travels. Fast food restaurants need beverage partners. Dean Myers, who has two degrees from Miami, was living in Atlanta and working for Coca-Cola.

"Dean and I were together for a year at Burger King over 40 years ago and then he went on to Minute Maid and tried to sell me orange juice while I was at Wendy's," Alvarez said. "I end up at McDonald's and we've got a big supplier convention and Dean sees me there again. At that point we said, 'OK this is too much coincidence, let's get together.'"

The pair decided to do a Canes road trip, selecting Miami's 2002 game at Tennessee, which was a runaway win for their alma mater.

"We started a friendship and a work relationship," said Myers, who worked 34 years at Coca-Cola, retiring as Vice President of Global Supply Chain, Operations and Business Development. "We didn't become friends until we became great business partners. If we didn't have the business side down, we wouldn't have been friends. We developed a trust with one another."

"In every relationship you either build trust or take away trust and there's no in between. Raul and I developed a trusting relationship and then we did some really good business deals that were great for Coca-Cola and great for McDonald's. Then our friendship





just kept developing over time where it's now family."

Both Alvarez and Myers became Golden Canes and started to go to games at the Orange Bowl together. Alvarez was impressed with Myers' encyclopedic knowledge of Miami football. But he knew someone else that might match it.

"One day, Raul said, 'There's a guy who works for Coca-Cola named Dean Myers. You need to meet him. He's like us. He really loves the Canes,'" Armario said. "Two weeks later, I'm in Puerto Rico, visiting the market and we happened to have an event at the Coca-Cola bottler's home in San Juan and I get introduced to Dean. I tell him, 'Raul told me I need to see you.'"

More Canes road trips followed, and all three started to lend more support to the football program.

When Randy Shannon became head football coach in 2007, Susan Jones, who was the University's assistant vice president for development, brought Shannon to Chicago to meet Alvarez and Armario.

"Susan Jones, may she rest in peace, set up a dinner with Randy in Chicago when Raul and I were working at McDonald's," Armario said. "We wound up spending five hours with Randy, and what came out of that dinner was that he could use some support, so we became good friends and we tried to become good mentors to Randy."

Armario decided to launch an annual dinner in Chicago to celebrate and support Miami football. A former player would be honored at every dinner and the list became a

who's who of Canes football A-listers, including Michael Irvin, Greg Olsen, Ted Hendricks, Ed Reed, Russell Maryland, Bubba Franks, Gino Torretta and Jarrett Payton.

"The idea was to raise money to help keep the football players in school all year long," Armario said. "We have raised over two million dollars for the athletic department. We had to stop the dinners when COVID hit but we did 13 dinners in a row and honored a former player at every dinner.

"I started that with a lot of support from the amigos. They would come to every dinner when they could. I think it was Randy who coined the phrase 'Three Amigos.'"

The Three Amigos would soon grow to five.

Myers met Smith, who works in Atlanta and is president of First Community Mortgage, at a Peach Bowl practice back in 2005.

"Next thing you know I get Dan on the President's Council, and he winds up being Chairman of the President's Council and a Golden Cane," Myers said.

Smith would also eventually serve on the school's Board of Overseers and on the advisory board for The Launch Pad, a collaboration between UM, Blackstone Charitable Foundation, and The Kauffman Group that promotes entrepreneurship for students and alumni.

"When you can reach out and bring someone back to our alma mater and see that person be so impactful -- there is nothing better," said Myers, whose son Max (2011) and daughter Alana (2013) are also

Miami graduates. "This is all about legacy."

Smith, like Alvarez, Armario and Myers, is a member of Iron Arrow, the highest honor bestowed by the University.

Oliveros, a managing partner of Arsol Investment Group in Miami, has known Alvarez since high school.

"Armando and I went to La Salle High School together and we both graduated from Miami in 1976," Alvarez said. "His dad and my mom went to elementary school together in Cuba. When we first started tailgating at Hard Rock, Armando joined the group. His nickname is 'El Chef' because he runs the tailgate."

Now, at Hard Rock Stadium, the Amigos tailgate together, sit together and cheer together.

"We go to most of the home games," Myers said. "Our tailgates are epic. We have great food, great beverages and we play dominoes. We all sit together in our Golden Canes seats.

"It's easy and comfortable because we like each other. I think we're all pretty successful because we make the best out of every situation."

And if not at Hard Rock, they will often gather for offsite watch weekends as well.

"It's not unusual that we get together at least once a year and spend three days together somewhere, playing golf, playing dominoes, smoking cigars, drinking bourbon and cheering our Hurricanes on game day," Armario said.

All five men have met head coach Mario Cristobal and are excited about the direction of the program.

"I really believe he is going to take us to prominence again," Armario said. "You can already see that beginning with the quality of players he is bringing in, the work ethic he has instilled, and the culture he's trying to build -- it's become very obvious."

Armario resurrected the fundraising dinner in 2024, this time in Charlotte, where he has lived since becoming Bojangles CEO in 2019.

Former Canes linebacker Dan Morgan -- now general manager of the National Football League's Carolina Panthers -- was this year's honoree. It was a night to celebrate the past, present and future of Miami football -- and to show that The Amigos are still going strong after all these years.

"Being an alum at Miami is a brotherhood and The Amigos are a brotherhood," Armario said. "We're not players but I feel our bond is as close to what we see amongst the players. We have a passion for the

school, and we have a passion for the school to be successful both on and off the field."

That passion has created a lasting bond with the University of Miami as its anchor.

"I've seen the University grow up a lot, academically and athletically," Alvarez said. "In Miami it has a big impact. Miami is still home to me no matter where I've moved over the years and I'm proud that the University has become such a great corporate citizen."







# CANES CHRONICLES: 1989 REUNION WEEKEND

By Rick Remmert

The University of Miami has won a combined nine national championships in football (1983-87-89-91-2001) and baseball (1982-85-99-2001) and celebrates these ultimate accomplishments with reunions held on every five-year anniversary.

Within the athletic department and its alumni programs/M Club unit, national championship reunions have taken on special meaning as The U is grateful to have the gift of celebrating excellence.

This past September, UM hosted head coach Dennis Erickson's 1989 national champions for their

35-year reunion. The team turned out in force, with RSVPs from 64 players, five coaches, and over a dozen staff members for two days of celebration.

Reunion weekend Friday featured the Welcome Home Reception, held at the spectacular on-campus Newman Alumni Center. Attendees started with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres in the Dany Garcia and Dwayne Johnson Living Room, and many took a turn in the photo booth that replicated the Sports Illustrated magazine national championship cover.

The group moved into the New-

man's multi-purpose room for a dinner and program that was emceed by Miami's long-time radio broadcast team of Joe Zagacki and Don Bailey, Jr.

Linebacker Bernard "Tiger" Clark was the evening's first speaker, appearing on video. Tiger teased his teammates before finishing up with the reminder: "It is, and it will always be about The U."

Vice President and Director of Athletics Dan Radakovich welcomed the group on behalf of the University of Miami. He conveyed how honored UM was to have its third national championship football team back on campus.

Following a deluxe dinner, emcees Zagacki and Bailey led a powerful program that opened with a salute to those team members who were honored while at The U:

- Inductees into the College Football Hall of Fame: Dennis Erickson, Russell Maryland, and Gino Torretta, and

- All-Americans: Micheal Barrow, Maurice Crum, Carlos Huerta, Greg Mark, Russell Maryland, Ryan McNeil, Kevin Patrick, Leon Searcy, Darrin Smith, Gino Torretta, Darryl Williams, and Kevin Williams, and

- Coach of the Year Dennis Erickson and the four Hurricanes who won national awards: Craig Erickson, Russell Maryland, Darrin Smith, and Gino Torretta.

Current Miami head coach Mario Cristobal had a special video message for the team, saying from his unique perspective as their teammate, "It was an honor to be a member of that team."

Smith followed. "It wasn't just winning the national championship," he said. "It was the journey."

Smith then led an "In Memoriam," reading the names of the 1989 team members who have passed, and asking for a moment of silence in memory of:

Staff: Gary Ghormley, Mike Short, and Larry Wahl. Players: Damon Bethel, Marcus Carey, Shane Curry, Kevin Gibbs, Cortez Kennedy, Solomon Moore, and Martin Patton. Coach: Bob Karmelowicz.

Wide receiver Dale Dawkins spoke next and thanked his teammates as, "The guys who changed my life

forever." He also praised his head coach, saying, "Coach E, we can't thank you enough for who you are and what you mean to us and what you mean to this program."

Maryland poignantly pointed out the "behind-the-scenes" contributors to the championship season. Mark thanked Coach Erickson and his teammates, saying, "You made me better, you made us all better."

Craig Erickson explained how special the locker-room experience and team camaraderie were. And Torretta remembered his recruiting trip when Daniel Stubbs put his arm around him and said, "Go somewhere else and get beat by us; come here and win a championship with us."

Dennis Erickson highlighted the program.

"My life changed when I had the opportunity to coach here," Erickson said. "Bottom line ...We're all Hurricanes, that's what it's all about. Being a Cane is better than anything else."

On game day against Ball State,

Roland Smith, a standout defensive back from 1987-90, was recognized as honorary captain. The 1989 team patiently waited out a 2.5-hour weather delay for the weekend's highlight: Going "Through the Smoke" at halftime for a 50-yardline ceremony. And Cristobal gave a shout-out to the reunion team in his remarks following UM's 62-0 shutout win.

For a weekend, the 1989 national champions were young men again. They reveled in each other's company, recalled many memories and made a few more, and resolved to do it again in five years for their 40-year anniversary and reunion.

*The 1989 national championship reunion was produced under the direction of Vice President/Director of Athletics Dan Radakovich, and by reunion coordinators Jessica Green, Mo Piero, and Rick Remmert. Special thanks to Chalece Erixon and Kathy Falter from the Newman Alumni Center; emcees Joe Zagacki and Don Bailey; beverage provider Mark Drobiarz and ABC Bartending School; and Director of Athletic Equipment Operations Arielle Scavo.*









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 <b>NOV 11</b>	 <b>JAN 26</b>
 <b>NOV 19</b>	 <b>JAN 30</b>
 <b>NOV 22</b>	 <b>FEB 2</b>
<b>MIAMI THANKSGIVING TOURNAMENT</b>  <b>NOV 29</b>	 <b>FEB 16</b>
<b>QUINNIPAC/ SOUTH EASTERN LOUISIANA</b>  <b>DEC 1</b>	 <b>FEB 20</b>
 <b>DEC 4</b>	 <b>FEB 23</b>
 <b>DEC 8</b>	
 <b>DEC 29</b>	
 <b>JAN 5</b>	

MEN’S

 <b>NOV 4</b>	 <b>JAN 18</b>
 <b>NOV 10</b>	 <b>JAN 29</b>
 <b>NOV 17</b>	 <b>FEB 1</b>
 <b>NOV 30</b>	 <b>FEB 11</b>
 <b>DEC 3</b>	 <b>FEB 22</b>
 <b>DEC 7</b>	 <b>FEB 25</b>
 <b>DEC 15</b>	 <b>MAR 8</b>
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