Business students help lead women's rugby team to championship

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Freeman School students Elena Garidis (front row, second from right), Clare Sullivan (back row, sixth from right) and Lily Wissinger (front row, third from left) helped lead the Tulane women's rugby team to the D2 Spring National Championship. (Photo courtesy Jessica Mallindine)

Last week, the Tulane University women’s rugby team defeated Claremont Colleges to win the USA Rugby Women's D2 Spring Championship. For the Tulane women, it was their third consecutive trip to the D2 Final Four and their second national title.

Helping to lead the team this year were three A. B. Freeman School of Business students: Elena Garidis (BSM ’18, LA ’18), Clare Sullivan (BSM ’19) and Lily Wissinger (BSM ’18).

“I think everything ties back to our team chemistry,” says Wissinger, a marketing and legal studies major from San Ramon, California. “We’re really great friends on and off the pitch, and I think playing against, in some cases, varsity teams really gave us the motivation to work hard and push each other.”

Like most of her teammates, Wissinger had never played rugby before joining the team, but the former high school basketball player immediately responded to the competitive nature of the game as well as the camaraderie that comes from being part of team.

"For a lot of us, I think playing rugby is the initial attraction, but the reason we got to be so good is each other," Wissinger says. “We're all genuinely really close, so we play for each other and for the friendships we’ve made.”

Following her graduation, Wissinger will begin work as an associate account manager with MightyHive, a programmatic ad agency in New York. While her Freeman School marketing skills may have made her a strong candidate, Wissinger says her experience on the team was invaluable in helping her to land the job.

“I was on the executive board my sophomore and junior years, and there was a lot going on both athletically and organizationally,” she says. “We had to build up the program and raise money and figure out how we were going to get ourselves to all these tournaments that we weren’t expecting to go to. I think that was really helpful for showing how I work and how I can get people organized. I talked about it in all of my interviews.”