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RWU Women’s Rugby to Become Varsity Sport in 2018

Athletics Department opts to create varsity status to provide more opportunities for women in sports

Morgan Quagliaroli (foreground) makes a play as teammate Megan Collins (background) runs in to assist.

February 8, 2017  |  Nick Williams

BRISTOL, R.I. – In an effort to provide more opportunities for women in sports, the Roger Williams University Athletic Department will promote the Women’s Rugby program from a club sport to full varsity status beginning in the 2018-19 academic year.

The women’s rugby team has demonstrated success both on and off the field, and will become the 25th varsity sport on RWU’s roster this fall.

“The athletics program at Roger Williams University has made it a top priority to provide more opportunities for women in sports,” said Dave Kemmy, director of Athletics, Intramurals and Recreation. “With their great success over many seasons, women’s rugby quickly rose to the top of the list. Varsity women’s rugby is a growing sport, and RWU is getting in on the ground floor as the sport gains popularity.”

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) recently identified rugby as an Emerging Women’s Sport, according to Joyce Maudie, senior woman administrator (SWA) for athletics at RWU.
“It is one of the largest and continually growing club sports in the United States, with almost 350 collegiate women’s clubs already in existence and 5,000 high school club participants,” Maudie said. “With the growth and accomplishments of our Women’s Rugby program, it is a natural fit to elevate it to varsity status. I know the Women’s Rugby team members are beyond excited to have this opportunity to play the sport that they love at the varsity level.”

The Women’s Rugby program has enjoyed great success since its inception as a club sport during the 2007-08 academic year. Since that time, the Hawks have claimed two national championships, the first of which came in the program’s first season as a club sport.

In 2007, Roger Williams captured the NERFU Division IV National Championship with a 29-7 win over Gettysburg College for its first national title. Then in 2014, RWU defeated Sacred Heart 41-10 to claim the NSCRO Women’s Small College National Championship.

The program will be governed under the auspice of the National Intercollegiate Rugby Association, an affiliate organization of the NCAA. There are currently 18 varsity programs in New England, including Commonwealth Coast Conference member University of New England.

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