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## Ole Miss Rugby Club Helps Develop Business Majors

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## Ole Miss Rugby Club Helps Develop Business Majors

UM players use classroom skills to help organization on and off the field

NOVEMBER 25, 2020 BY ALI MAEWALSH

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Hudson Smith, a sophomore marketing major from Memphis, works on his ball-handling skills in practice for the Ole Miss Rugby Club. Submitted photo

play. Cornell is one of these students.

Cornell attended Christian Brothers High School in Memphis, where he enjoyed rough sports such as football and wrestling. So when he was introduced to the idea of rugby, he was intrigued, and after trying it, Cornell fell in love with the sport.

"I had a similar experience to Hudson when I played my first game in high school, which was after two or three weeks of practice," Cornell said. "I think that's how it is for a lot of people who get into rugby; you have to learn as you go."

Although Smith and Cornell come from two different backgrounds for rugby, each has a similar school path, enrolling in majors within the UM **School of Business Administration**, which has merged with their rugby experience.

Each club sport has an executive committee. The Rugby Club's officers include a president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, forwards and backs captain, and head of recruitment. Smith holds the recruitment position, and Cornell is secretary for the committee.

"My business communications class has helped me communicate more effectively over email," Cornell said. "This is important because as the secretary, I am the contact for our matches."

This year, in particular, that skill has come in handy for Cornell. Unfortunately for Smith, his job is not as simple.

"It's hard to recruit when you don't have a big budget," Smith said.

Budget cuts related to COVID-19 are not the only problem for recruitment. The pandemic also has reduced the number of people willing to play the sport. This year's roster only has 25 players, compared to 40-60 members in recent years.

Rugby's classification as a club sport is another factor in its low budget funding. The NCAA does not sponsor rugby, so the governing body for the club is Southeastern Collegiate Rugby Conference. The Ole Miss Rugby Club is a Division 2 team.

OXFORD, Miss. – Since 1974, the Ole Miss Rugby Club has provided **University of Mississippi** students with a competitive sport they can play with absolutely no experience. The majority of members do not know how to play initially, but through hard work and determination, they become assets to their team.

Hudson Smith, a junior marketing major from Memphis, enjoyed working out. Although he was heading to the gym often, he thought it might be more fun to work out for a competitive reason. He heard about the Rugby Club through one of his Kappa Sigma fraternity brothers, Jack Cornell, a sophomore studying general business from Collierville, Tennessee.

Smith then decided to join the club – initially for discovery purposes.

"I was still learning the rules during our first game," Smith said. "I remember the first time I scored, I got a red card, and I didn't understand why."

Although many of the club's players have no previous experience, others have been recruited from high school to

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OXFORD, Miss. – Peer recognition is a rewarding experience for anyone, but University of Mississippi researcher Amir Mehrara Molan was elated when an article he co-authored recently received the Most Cited Paper Award at the 102nd Transportation Research Board meeting in the nation's capital. The International Journal of Transportation Science and Technology presented the civil engineering

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"We have 25 people on the roster, and we're trying to double that number," Cornell said. "If our games received more attention from students, and we got more people to play, that would help get the sport on people's radar, which in turn would help the sport get recognized.

"Maybe in the future, it can be more than a club sport."

Along with looking for new members, the team is looking for a marketing manager. The position's responsibilities include keeping the club's website and social media platforms up-to-date and helping boost advertising to gain more support for the club.

For more information or to join the club, email [olemissrugbyfootballclub@gmail.com](mailto:olemissrugbyfootballclub@gmail.com).



Jackson Curtis (left), a senior general business major from Memphis, moves into position to make a tackle for the Ole Miss Rugby Club. Submitted photo

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