



PRESS RELEASE

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LIFE UNIVERSITY STUDENT-ATHLETES PLAYING RUGBY ON A GLOBAL SCALE —Three Life U Rugby Players on USA Team for 2015 Rugby World Cup

Marietta, Georgia, October 14, 2015 – While several internationally beloved sports only have fledgling fandoms in the United States, one sport is about to get far more screen time. Rugby sevens will make its debut at the 2016 Summer Olympics. Rugby (typically 15 players per team in 80-minute matches) hasn't been played in the Olympics since the 1924 Summer Games, but now its fast-paced, condensed version will grace the Olympics next year – pitting seven versus seven in roughly 14-minute matches.

The Rugby World Cup serves as the talent pool for the Olympic teams, and this year three student-athletes from Atlanta's own Life University (LIFE) are representing the United States on the USA Eagles. Hosted in England, the 2015 Rugby World Cup runs mid-September to the end of October. Dr. Guy Riekeman, President of LIFE, attended several World Cup games this past week, eager to watch Life U Rugby products Phillip Thiel (Michigan), AJ MacGinty (Dublin, Ireland) and Cam Dolan (Florida). Dr. Zach Vyhnanek, a LIFE Doctor of Chiropractic graduate, was also part of the USA Eagles during the World Cup, serving as the team physiotherapist.

"We, the USA, are still the new kids in the world of rugby and always the underdogs, but the national pride last night in Gloucester caused me to tear up," Dr. Riekeman says. After the USA versus Japan match, the LIFE players found Dr. Riekeman in the crowd to share hugs and selfies. "I had friends texting me from Europe to New Zealand who were watching the match along with millions of people world-wide," says Dr. Riekeman. "And the television commentator talked about Life U's outstanding rugby program in Atlanta."

LIFE was established in 1974, and created its rugby program not long after in 1980. In 1982, LIFE reached the finals in the collegiate national championships, and has since continued competing on the national scale, securing a national championship in 2013 and placing as runner-up in 2014 and 2015. Besides the traditional game, LIFE's program also has success in rugby sevens, winning the USA Rugby 7s championship in 2011, and placing yearly in recent tournaments of USA Rugby 7s and the Collegiate Rugby Championship that runs on NBC Sports. LIFE's rugby program is considered one of the top programs in the country, with young athletes coming from all over America each summer to participate in Life U rugby camps.

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While the rugby scene is still relatively quiet in the United States, this won't last long – rugby is considered one of the fastest growing high school sports in the country. Internationally, it's bigger than ever; this year's Rugby World Cup is breaking records across the globe. Twenty-five million people in Japan, a fifth of Japan's entire population, tuned in to a match against Samoa – the biggest national viewing audience in rugby history. On opening day, "#RWC2015" trended on Twitter all day and reached 15 million fans on Facebook. The opening ceremony and match was the most-viewed sports event in the United Kingdom to date.

Dublin-born LIFE player MacGinty grew up with an awareness of the scale that he and his LIFE rugby teammates could aspire to, telling his hometown paper, The Irish Times: "I always wanted to play at the highest level and be the best player I could be, whatever that was. The chance to play in a World Cup, the biggest stage in rugby ... I'll cherish these moments."

With three LIFE student-athletes in the Rugby World Cup, Life University is excited to see if its rugby program will soon be producing Olympic athletes as well.





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About Life University

Founded in Marietta, Georgia in 1974, Life University is a health sciences institution most known for its chiropractic program, the largest in the world. Life University is regionally accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award baccalaureate, masters, and Doctor of Chiropractic degrees, and also has programmatic accreditation through the Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE), the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) and the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE). The mission of Life University is to empower students with the education, skills and values necessary for career success and life fulfillment, based on a vitalistic philosophy.

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