

Inspiring Excellence

Claire Roach Lessinger

Class of 1993

As a Marauder, Claire lettered in basketball and volleyball; and is a member of the Marauder Athletic Hall of Fame.

After CCC, Claire spent five years as a collegiate volleyball player at the University of Florida where she won five SEC Championships, participated in five NCAA Tournaments and three Final Four Tournaments. In honor of her relentless effort, hard work and dedication, the UF volleyball program established the “Claire Roach Defensive Award,” which is still presented annually to the best defensive player on the team. She graduated from UF in 1997 with a Bachelor of Science degree in exercise and sports science with a concentration in sports management.

Claire was the head volleyball coach at the University of South Florida for eight seasons (2004 – 2012) and spent seven seasons as the assistant volleyball coach (1996 - 2003). She was also president of the Big East Volleyball Coaches Association and a member of the NCAA All-American Selection Committee. Mentoring and positively impacting the development of young women as students, athletes and people is her passion. Over the years, she has been actively involved in supporting and creating local and global initiatives that influence sport participation, providing a platform to develop and impact the next generation of female leaders.

In July 2012, Claire joined the Tampa Bay Sports Commission and was promoted to her current role as the Director of Special Events in 2015. Over the last seven years, she has served as the Tournament Manager for the 2015 NCAA DII Women’s Volleyball Championship, the 2015 Women’s Basketball Final Four, the 2016 NCAA Men’s Frozen Four, the 2016 DII Men’s and Women’s Cross Country Championships, the 2018 NCAA DI Men’s and Women’s Outdoor Track and Field East Preliminaries and the NCAA DII Women’s Lacrosse Championship. In 2017, Lessinger and the Tampa Bay Local Organizing Committee hosted the first College Football Playoff National Championship in the Southeast at Raymond James Stadium. In 2018, Claire and Team Tampa Bay hosted a wildly successful NHL All-Star Weekend in partnership with the Tampa Bay Lightning and most recently Lessinger served as the Executive Director of the Tampa Bay Local Organizing Committee for the 2019 NCAA Women’s Basketball Final Four which recorded the highest all-time attendance as a three-time host (123,039 fans).

Recognized as one of the most influential women in Tampa Bay sports by the Tampa Bay Times, Claire has been instrumental in piloting successful legacy programs and social impact initiatives like the “Beyond Series”, which focuses on gathering and empowering local women of influence in support of major sporting events hosted in Tampa Bay. As a result, over 800 local women have participated in the Beyond Series throughout the years.

Currently, Claire’s current title is the Vice President of Events and Chief Operating Officer of the Tampa Bay Super Bowl LV Host Committee.

Active in the community, Claire serves on the Executive Boards of USF’s Women in Leadership and Philanthropy, Positive Coaching Alliance – Tampa Bay, University of Florida Eric Friedheim Tourism Institute and is a founding member of Women in Sports and Events Tampa Bay. She is also an active member of the Glazer Children’s Museum Marketing Committee, the Saint Leo Sport Business Advisory Council and the Athena Society.