

LEADING THE HERD

In the Zone on the Green

After a standout rookie season, Sophia Bardunias '28 heads into her second year with poise and a steady swing

by BRYAN WENDELL | photography by JAMES T. GIFFEN



ON THE FINAL hole at the 2025 Patriot League Golf Championship, **Sophia Bardunias '28** faced a long, curling putt as teammates and families circled the green. It capped a historic fall 2025 season for the Bucknell women's golf team, with three tournament victories. A mishit earlier had left her in a tough spot — now everything depended on this one shot. “They couldn’t see the hole, so nobody reacted until I walked up and picked the ball out,” she says. “Then the cheering started.”

That moment captures Bardunias’ first year at Bucknell: calm and composed, even when things didn’t go perfectly. A few weeks earlier, she tied for first at the Intercollegiate at Prospect Bay — while playing with a sprained wrist. “Finishing well with an injury reinstalled my confidence,” she says. By season’s end, the San Ramon, Calif., native earned First Team All-Patriot League honors.

Bardunias credits perspective for her poise. “I pray on the course. Golf isn’t the end-all, be-all.” Her pre-shot routine is simple: get the distance, take two practice swings, pick a spot a few feet ahead, step in and commit. “I tell myself, ‘Straight,

fairway; straight, fairway.’ Into greens, it’s ‘Green, pin, straight.’ Then I swing.”

Her path into golf began at age 6, when she tried her dad’s club. She honed her game with PGA Tour Champions pro David Frost at the PURE Insurance Open, making her first hole-in-one at Pebble Beach. In high school, she earned first-team all-league honors twice while leading an unbeaten team to the state tournament for the first time in 16 years.

Bardunias calls women’s golf “the most low-key team on campus” — small, tight and supportive. Early lifts end at Starbucks, van rides include “rose and thorn” debriefs and a contest for the weekend’s worst shot, a light-hearted way to move past mistakes.

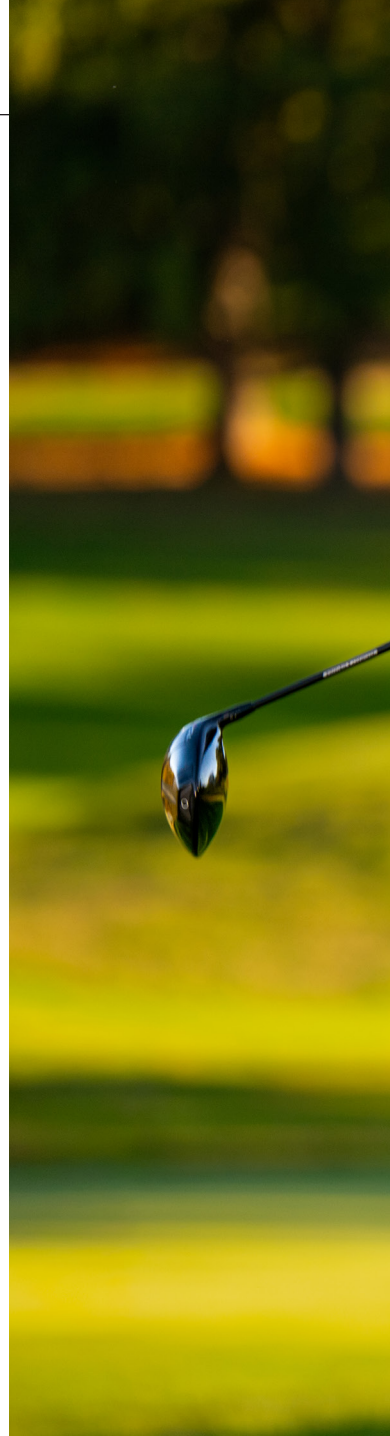
A business analytics major with a minor in markets, innovation & design, Bardunias works in the Freeman College of Management’s Experiential Learning office and is studying for the Securities Industry Essentials exam. Her favorite course, Management 101, partners with a local nonprofit. “I’m vice president of communications, making sure a 130-page deliverable comes together on time,” she says.

On and off the green, that composure under pressure fuels her success.

Sophia Bardunias '28, a business analytics major, values the practical skills she has learned in Management 101.



Sophia Bardunias '28 was named a Patriot League First Team All-League member during her first season at Bucknell.





BISON EXCELLENCE

Academic honors, conference recognition and a standout runner-up finish highlighted the Bison's 2024–25 season

11

student-athletes earned Academic All-Patriot League honors in the fall

25

student-athletes were selected to All-Conference teams across fall sports

PATRIOT LEAGUE PLAYERS OF THE YEAR



Kira Leclercq '26 was named Field Hockey Defensive Player of the Year for the second year in a row



Drew Roskos '28 was named Men's Soccer Offensive Player of the Year



Jackson Sullivan '26 was named Men's Soccer Defensive Player of the Year



Women's cross-country finished as Patriot League runner-up, the program's best result since 2019

Shaelan McNally '28 placed second individually at the Patriot League Championship