



SPORTS

“LET’S GO”

Varsity girls soccer
coach Alan Kute
leaves coaching
after 10 years

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TEAM HUDDLE Coach Alan Kute provides some last minute advice before the game against Los Altos High School on Jan. 11. Despite their aggressive drives, the team lost 0-2.

When coach Alan Kute says “Let’s go,” he has a kick in his voice that makes anyone want to get up and start dribbling the ball.

Alan is always in motion, running across the lower field, his red striped cleats bouncing off the turf. As he jogs, he releases a running stream of pointers at his players.

“Let’s go. Defenders, we are still working hard!”

“Get away from her. Get the ball.”

“Under control! This is not kickball!”

Kute pauses on the sideline, one hand directing the girls and another on his hip. His foot rests lightly on a soccer ball, rolling it back and forth. After a moment’s hesitation, he joins the scrimmage, shrugging on a neon green pinny and running towards the goal box.

Alan is like any other head soccer coach — he doggedly pushes his players to their full potential, but what sets him apart is that his determination has led the team through both wins and losses. He has created results in getting his team to CCS nine consecutive times in his ten year career as the MVHS varsity girls soccer coach.

Alan has been involved in soccer for the majority of his life. Growing up, he played for Lynbrook High School and later San Jose State University, before

moving on to coaching. His experience and mentality as a player himself would prove to be instrumental in leading his team to improvement.

“[Alan is] competitive, he drives the kids to their best and they’re in an environment with him and they can reach their maximum potential,” assistant coach Greg Wendschlag said.

However, Alan has made sure his competitive mentality has not taken away the joy of the game for his team.

“I think he is a great coach because some coaches are really competitive and he is competitive, but winning is not the only thing for him,” junior Amelia Strom said. “He wants to have fun first and he promotes that.

He has had a lot of experience so I enjoy playing with Alan.”

Another attribute that Wendschlag will miss is Alan’s tendency to be a collaborative team player.

“Not many head coaches will give the assistant coaches as much freedom as he did,” Wendschlag said. “It was a lot of fun working with him, because he didn’t treat me like I was his assistant, he treated me like his partner.”

To his second eldest daughter Cheryl, who has coached with him for the past three seasons, the team dynamic has really centered on the input of all three coaches, who have provided different perspectives that together contributed to the growth of the team.

“He’s kind of the scary guy who makes all the rules,” Cheryl said about Alan. “The assistant coach, Greg, is more like everybody’s dad, and I’m the one who relates more to the girls because I’m a girl and closer in age.”

The Lady Mats did not have an outstanding season this year, and considering that Alan, Wendschlag and Cheryl are leaving the team this year, along with 11 graduating players, the

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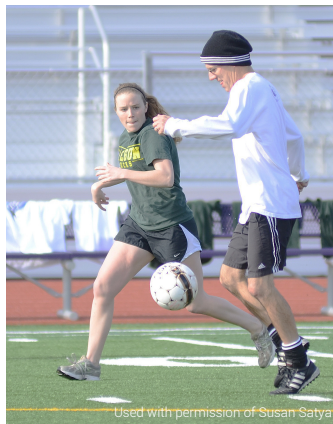
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team dynamic will change and make the transition to the next season even more difficult.

Over the past decade, Alan has been central to the camaraderie of the team, according to Strom. Typical bonding activities include the annual team trip to Koinonia Conference Grounds near Watsonville, CA, where players would take the "Cliffhanger Course" where they climbed 60 feet up a tree and then ziplined off.

"The chemistry of the team was based on the things that Alan did for us to bond," Strom said. "When that changes, it's going to depend on the coaches. Different coaches have different methods to bring on and that might change the chemistry."

Though the team will have a different



ON THE FIELD Kute plays in the alumni game on Dec. 29 with Class of 2010 alumna Crissy Stuart. The game allowed him to reunite with former players.

chemistry next season, she hopes that the new coach will bring an the same amount of fun to the sport.

Alan admits that things will change after his departure, but not for the better or for the worse; things will simply be different. After ten challenging years as head coach, Alan sees retirement as bittersweet.

"I've been coaching [club and school soccer] since '96, so it wouldn't be so bad to have a year off and see what life brings," Alan said. "Pretty soon other things in life will happen; there will be grandkids," Alan said, smiling in Cheryl's direction.

Although he is looking forward to his time off, there are memories that he made with his assistant coaches and his team that will stick for

many years.

"Winning the CCS championship [in 2009] was definitely a standout moment for us, as the coaches," Wendschlag said. "It was the first time the team won in 30 years."

Even though an experienced coach is

leaving, Wendschlag does not doubt that the new coach will be able to bring a new perspective and success for the team in the coming years. Interviews for the prospective varsity coach will be held in a few months.

"When you have someone around as long as Alan has been here, that's when you really recognize how good you had it," Wendschlag said. "I think there will be a noticeable difference because Alan did things at such a high level, but the kids are going to do a great job [nextyear]."

As Alan runs around the field, yelling advice as plays unfold, it is hard to imagine a practice without him. He takes off his green pinny after playing a scrimmage and takes refuge in the shade of the goal. Leaning against the goal post, he crosses his legs and his arms, looking out over the field.

The Kutes are ready to move on from MVHS, but starting June when Casey, the youngest Kute, graduates, the Lady Mats will also have to move on from the Kutes.

"There will be a huge Kute hole," Alan said, laughing.

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Sandwiches



Wraps



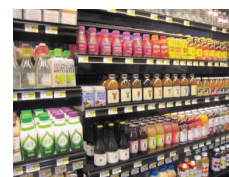
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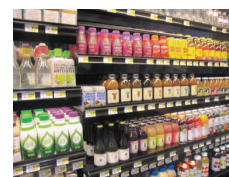
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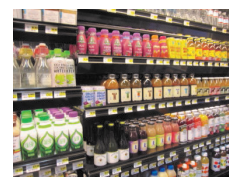
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