

Concerns from Girls' Soccer Players, Parents After Head Coach's Departure

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Following a violation, girls' soccer Head Coach, Armando Gutierrez, resigned on Sept. 5. Gutierrez, who first coached the team in 2010, ended his last year by leading them to an undefeated season and Almont League Title.

After his departure, a meeting was held on Sept. 11 by Principal Duane Russell, Assistant Principal Phuong Nguyen and Athletics Director Gerald DeSantis in order to inform parents and students of what had transpired. The meeting was also intended to allow parents and students to speak about their feelings towards the resignation. The athletes, in support of Gutierrez, donned T-shirts with the words "Save our coach!" and spoke about the personal influence that Gutierrez had on the team.

"Gutierrez has told me many things that have given me spirit. My whole perspective on my sickness changed when I had him by my side," former AHS student and soccer player Alyssa Castro said.

According to DeSantis, Gutierrez had violated a district regulation that was created in response to a settlement involving Alhambra Unified School District's (AUSD) Title IX policy. Title IX is a fed-

eral educational code that is meant to ensure equal opportunity in athletics. DeSantis explained that in 2005, a lawsuit arose after the softball team recognized a disparity in funding when the baseball team received a new field.

According to JustPlayNow.org, the 2005 lawsuit, *Cruz v. Alhambra Unified School District*, resulted in a settlement in which district regulations were put into place. The regulations covered fundraising and trust accounts, equal participation opportunities, equal expenditures, the creation of two new softball fields, equal access to facilities and competition and equal access to qualified coaches. However, administrators expressed that because the resignation was a personnel matter, they were not able to disclose information about the specific violation and the investigation that took place.

"When it comes to Title IX, there are no grey areas. [Gutierrez] was very understanding of what happened. In conclusion, our coach resigned. He isn't coming back [and] we know it was a huge setback, but we need to move forward," Russell said.

However, several continued to agree that Gutierrez was a vital part of the team's success.

"He is why [players] come back. I would like to know ex-

actly what was violated. I feel like we're all being hurt. A discussion needs to be had, not a resignation," parent Sylvia Covarrubias said.

Players also felt frustration after the meeting had concluded.

"I felt like the meeting was disrespectful [because Russell] ended it early. I do feel it was pointless because he did not let us finish what we had to say and he didn't give any answers at all," senior soccer player Danelie Solis said.

Although cited officially as personnel matter, Gutierrez claimed his resignation came after a parent from the team mishandled funds when purchasing T-shirts to celebrate the girls' Almont League Title. The parent, according to Gutierrez, threatened to sue the school, blaming him for the financial mismanagement. The coach said he was confronted by administrators, but was not told of the specific violation.

"[Being that] I was the treasurer of the soccer program, I should've been informed [of the transgressions] and investigated on [who mishandled the funds]," junior soccer player Viviana Prado said.

Following Sept. 11, further concerns were presented at an AUSD board meeting on Sept. 16. According to Prado, seven athletes and parents read a letter to the board that covered why they believed the district should allow



MOOR photo by SHANNON KHA

DRESSED TO SAVE On Sept. 11, the girls' soccer team gathered collectively to voice their concerns at a meeting with the school administration.

Gutierrez to come back. The letter, signed by the parents of the AHS soccer program, focused on how they felt the situation was handled unprofessionally by administrators. When asked to comment on the allegations against administration, Russell declined. The present athletes and parents requested another meeting to be held by Sept. 23 with the district board and superintendent so that the issue could be further discussed. However, the district board did not respond to the request. If Gutierrez is not rehired in the near future, several players have claimed that they will quit the team, adversely affecting other athletic programs as

the school must keep a certain balance between the number of boys' and girls' athletics due to Title IX.

Gutierrez decided to resign in order to prevent a mark on his coaching license and is currently coaching at Rio Hondo College. Although several high schools have offered him a coaching job, he would still be willing to return to his former position if given the opportunity.

"I hope that [the girls] will always remember the history we created together, that we are a team in a shape of a heart beating one beat at a time, that is not about the knock down [as it] is about the get up," Gutierrez said.

Letter to the Editor

On Sept. 5, the girls' head coach, Armando Gutierrez, resigned. Gutierrez didn't just teach the girls soccer; he taught the girls how to give back to the community, helped them individually and is overall a good coach.

The team has given back to the community by helping at a toy drive on Christmas Eve in a hospital. They knitted beanies and passed them out to the patients. The girls also donated clothes to Goodwill.

Gutierrez wanted to make sure they not only developed on the field, but also off the field. He taught the girls how to work together, get along and help others.

Gutierrez has helped every single one of his players individually. He is always encouraging his players to do better for their future. Gutierrez has taken the soccer team to visit colleges such as UCLA. When anyone seemed to be unhappy, he would approach the player and ask if everything was okay. Gutierrez was always concerned and made sure the minds of his players were clear so they could focus on the game. If any of the soccer girls had any problems, they would feel confident enough to vent their problems, not only to the coach but to the soccer family as well.

Gutierrez is an incomparable coach. He has changed the girls' soccer program around for the better. Last year, the girls' varsity team went undefeated, an accomplishment that hadn't been achieved in

over 30 years. Last season, the girls' varsity team won against rival Ramona Convent for the first time in over eight years. Gutierrez has helped the girls go to CIF four years in a row. Did you know Gutierrez was nominated for "Coach of the Year" nationwide? Gutierrez always tells his players motivating speeches after practice. His speeches have encouraged the girls to try harder and never give up. Yes, Gutierrez is strict on the girls dur-

ing practice, but it pays off during the games. The girls in the soccer program love their coach.

Many may think he can be replaced, but honestly, Coach Gutierrez means more to the soccer girls because he is family. The girls feel they are undervalued as a program by the school because an administrator was not present at the first day of tryouts even though there was no head coach and tryouts had not been canceled. Mr. Nguyen states it was because of miscommunication. After only one day of practice without their head coach, the program has already begun to change. The girls' soccer team hopes that Coach Gutierrez will be able to return. Many girls will be dropping out if Gutierrez is not the varsity girls' coach. The number of girls enrolled in athletics will drastically decline, which will then affect the number of male athletes due to Title IX.

-AHS Girls' Soccer Team

SIMSANITY: NFL CONTROVERSIES COULD AFFECT FUTURE OF LEAGUE

SIMEON LAM
Sports Editor



I'm sure you've heard all about the news from the NFL in recent weeks, but I'm not talking about the scores and standings. It's about the Ray Rice controversy that has rocked the football world and unfolded not only the truth about certain players, but more importantly the credibility of Commissioner Roger Goodell.

The Ray Rice incident occurred on Feb. 15. Rice, who was believed to be intoxicated, assaulted his then fiancée inside an elevator and was soon charged with domestic assault. Months after, Rice was finally suspended for two games on July 28. However, the video of the beating was not released publicly until Sept. 8. The video had major effects and the league suddenly decided to suspend him indefinitely. But why exactly did the video change the whole landscape of the story? None of the information about what had happened was secret. In fact, according to ESPN, he admitted exactly what he had done wrong to the commissioner and the team and was willing to work hard to change his actions. It's shocking to see how visuals can be so detrimental to one's portrayal. I'm not saying that Ray Rice was not guilty of violence, but I feel that this incident was blown out of proportion by the media.

TMZ released the video this month, but multiple sources have proven that the NFL had received the video prior to the release. Yet Goodell claims that he never saw the video. Whether he saw the video or not, his decision making was very questionable since Rice told him the facts of exactly what happened back in February. All of a sudden, the tables turned on Goodell. According to ABC News, on Sept. 19, he finally admitted that "he got it wrong." This shows not only a sense of poor leadership, but more importantly a lack of responsibility on his part.

Now what's next for the NFL? Many people are now wondering whether Goodell should continue to be the commissioner of America's most popular sport. In fact, Ray Rice has decided to appeal his decision, which could strike a bigger blow to Goodell's credibility if his appeal is actually warranted. The fact that Goodell let another occurrence of domestic violence pass so lightly portrays a character that angers many fans. Also, Goodell handled the situation very poorly by lying about the situation. He tried to keep the situation quiet, but the second the story came out, he realized that he had messed up.

But of course, Goodell is likely to still stay as commissioner. If he is given a second chance, Rice should as well. What he did was a mistake in judgment, the same mistake that Goodell made. The important thing is making sure that mistakes are truly learned from. In fact, Rice was portrayed as the guy who gave back the most to his community in Baltimore. His identity contradicted his actions and I think it's only reasonable to give him another chance at the NFL. Whether he is suspended the original two games or indefinitely, Goodell should find a middle ground that will discipline Rice enough yet find a way for the revival of Rice's career. As one of the worst months of NFL history has gone, hopefully a brighter future lies ahead for the league and the eradication of domestic violence.

MOOR graphic by LESLIE HWANG