

Draxler steps in as new head coach for girls soccer

By Rongi Yost
Correspondent

Thomas Draxler has stepped into the role of head coach for the Outlaws girls soccer program.

Draxler moved to Sisters nine years ago when he was hired as the boys JV soccer coach, and he has been coaching for the Outlaws ever since. Draxler has been the girls JV coach for the past two years, is very familiar with the program and the players, so the transition to the head coach position should be an easy move.

Thomas grew up with four older siblings who all played soccer, and he has fond memories of playing the sport, which started for him at age 3.

“Soccer was always paradise to me,” said Draxler. “There’s nothing more joyful or happy than the smell of cut grass, the way the fields are laid out, and the freshly painted lines.”

Draxler attended Alma Heights Christian Academy, a small school in Pacifica, California, near San Francisco. Thomas was able to join the varsity squad as a sixth-grader, which resulted in seven years of varsity experience.

“Usually schools don’t allow that,” said Draxler. “I was fortunate to get that privilege. I was a little kid that got to play with the big boys. My brother was a senior and I got to play with him.”

Eventually, Draxler became one of the “big boys.” Thomas played center-midfield through high school.

“I scored so many goals, but I had seven years to do it,” he said with a chuckle.

After high school, Draxler took a gap year and went on

a mission trip with YWAM (Youth With A Mission) to Cape Town, South Africa. He worked on a hospital ship, which held clinics for the poor in ports around South Africa.

Thomas jumped right back into soccer, and played two years for Vanguard University, in Orange County, California, and while there played at the outside-midfield position. Draxler took a break from soccer at that point to focus on his majors, music composition and English, and graduated in 2005.

In the summer of 2006, Thomas was in Sisters visiting relatives, and learned about a coaching opportunity at Sisters High School.

“Marsha Marr (Miss Sew-It-All) saw me on the soccer field playing in a pick-up game with the high school boys and girls, and she told me they had an opening for a boys soccer JV coach,” he recalled.

Draxler decided to apply, and was offered the job. Draxler told *The Nugget* that there weren’t any jobs available in Southern California, so he was excited to take the job offer.

“Previous to that, I hadn’t even considered being a coach,” he said. “It hadn’t even crossed my mind. I never imagined that you could get paid for being on the soccer field and having fun.”

Thomas was the JV coach for boys soccer from 2006-2011, and during that time worked with both the boys and girls on skill development.

When both positions for head coach and JV coach opened up on the girls’ side in 2012, it was natural for Rob Jensen (director of soccer

operations) to ask Draxler to move over to the girls’ side on a permanent basis to help lend stability to the program. Thomas has been with the girls program ever since as the JV coach.

The girls head coaching position opened this past spring, Thomas applied, went through the candidate process, and after a month, Athletic Director Tim Roth called and offered him the job. Draxler will enter the head position with several advantages: he knows the program, knows the girls, and knows their skills.

Draxler told *The Nugget* that he is looking forward to thinking and breathing soccer with the girls over the next several months, and shared what his top three priorities will be.

First, Draxler wants the girls to have so much fun each day that they can’t wait to come back the next day for more.

“I’ve always experienced soccer with that kind of delirious ecstasy, and I’m open to experiment with any ideas, whether traditional or bizarre, in order to provide the same experience for the girls,” said Draxler.

Secondly, Thomas wants to allow the game of soccer to speak to the girls about life and life-skills, such as having courage under pressure; winning with grace and losing with dignity; growing through mistakes; and riding the self-esteem roller-coaster.

“Soccer is an artificial environment where players exercise real-life skills, and I concede, reluctantly, that other sports do that as well,” he said with a grin.

And finally, Draxler stated



PHOTO PROVIDED

Thomas Draxler is the new head coach for the Outlaws girls soccer program.

that he wants to train the girls to score more goals than their opponents score.

“It’s a roundabout way of saying that I want the girls to win, but that’s what it really takes to win,” said Draxler. “There’s so many skills, techniques, and team-tactics that contribute to scoring goals. I’m never going to run out of practice plans.”

Thomas told *The Nugget* that he is excited about exploring how the coaches and players can grow each day, in social skills, game knowledge, and general empathy for others.

“One of the things soccer

teaches is being in other people’s shoes, making sacrifices for your team-mates, and treating opponents as friends when the game is over.”

Draxler noted that he’s grateful to Nik Goertzen, Audrey Tehan, Rob Jensen, and Scott McAllister, who all mentored and advised him, and got him to the place he is today.

“Their mentoring and advise has been invaluable,” said Draxler.

The girls soccer program is still in need of a JV coach. If interested, contact Athletic Director Tim Roth at tim.roth@sisters.k12.or.us.

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