

# IVHS coach has left the pitch

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IVN Contributing Writer

Dick Matti has been a coach for the girls' soccer team at the Illinois Valley High School (IVHS) for eight years and was responsible for organizing the program, planning practices, ensuring that the proper equipment was available, and, of course, helping students improve their game. At IVHS Matti spent his first year as assistant coach, though he ended up coaching a lot of the time, and the seven years after that as the head coach. Before his time at the IVHS Matti had been teaching various club teams in Grants Pass and even founded the team at the North Valley High School sometime around 1991. In total, Matti has been coaching for 32 years and when asked about his favorite part of teaching he stated, "I love being a part of the kids' lives. They keep me young and hopefully I gave them some guidance along the way that will help them along in life."

The last season Matti taught started in the third week of August and ended in the middle of October. However, a week before the season started there was a special non-mandatory event called "team camp" which brings in coaches from England and Brazil for the youth who want to get warmed up or hone their skills for the coming season. This year the guest coaches were from Brazil. In total, the team played 13 games with four wins, eight losses and one tie primarily against Rogue River, Lakeview, Cascade and St. Mary's which are the schools in their league. However, a few of those 13 games were non-league. St. Mary's, according to Matti, is the undisputed champion of high school soccer in the area had won first place in the league for at least eight years straight.

The MVP of the team this year was Andrea "Drea" Miller and she was, according to Matti, "an athletic, skilled, fearless and aggressive player." In total,

she scored nine of the 17 goals throughout the season and assisted with two of the other ones.

Matti has enjoyed soccer throughout his life but he did not play it in his youth and only started coaching when his daughters became involved in the game. On the topic of his recent retirement Matti stated the reason as simply, "old age," before

laughing a bit and continuing with, "I'm 71, and it's just getting very difficult for me physically to handle the practice." As a final farewell Matti said, "It's been a pleasure for me to be at I.V. and I've enjoyed every year and the players I got to work with and their parents. I would love to be able to keep going but I just don't feel like I can."



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

Coach Matti (bottom left) clowns around with his players before Senior Night, Oct. 22, 2013.

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