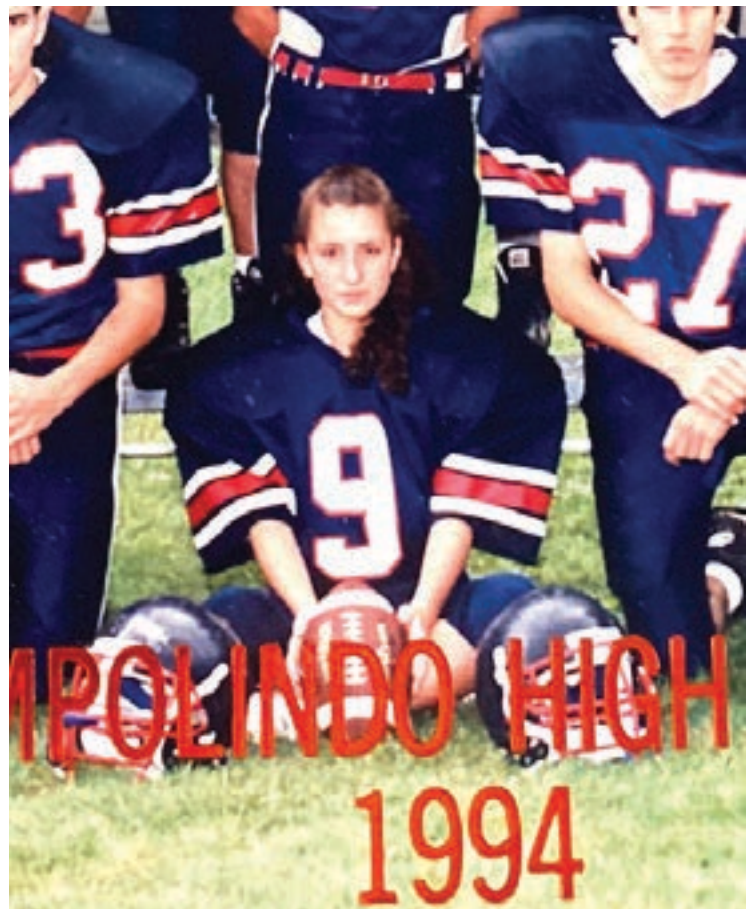


LAMORINDA SPORTS

The two Campo females who broke the glass ceiling in football, 28 years ago



Pamela Anderson, 1994



Kim Henry, 1994

Photos provided

By Jon Kingdon

When our story about six girls playing football in Lamorinda was published a few weeks ago, Dan Hagen, Campolindo's head coach before Kevin Macy, wanted it known that the "glass ceiling" on the football field had been broken 28 years ago by Pamela Anderson (now Cridlebaugh), a placekicker who played for the girls, wide receiver and special teams player, who played for the Cougars her senior year and by Kim Henry (now Anderson), a placekicker who played for the JV team as a junior in 1994 and the varsity in 1995.

In 1994, when it came to Hagen's attention that there were girls who wanted to come out for the football team, he was excited at the prospect. "I encouraged it because I thought it was a challenge for the girls, like climbing Mt. Everest and thought that it was a neat thing," Hagen said. "I did have some reservations about the velocity of the game at the varsity level for the girls."

Each of the girls had a different reason for going out for the team. For Pamela, it was at the suggestion of her friend Rhianna Street, also a football fan, that they should sign up for spring practice for the football team. "I was always up for a challenge, especially for things that are hard to achieve," Pamela said. "Rhianna ended up not playing because she had to work. I stayed and actually enjoyed it even though it did kick my butt. At that point, my teammates were my friends, and everyone was nice and supportive. When I went out for the team in the fall, Rhianna became one of the team's managers."

Pamela's parents were

caught off guard when they heard about her decision to play football. "We had been away for the weekend when Pamela sat us down and said that she made a decision which was to try out for football," Pamela's mother, Patti said. "Our first reaction was 'No way,' but we had always taught her and her younger sister, Stephanie, that as a woman, you can do anything that you want."

Ironically, Pamela's father Karl, was not allowed to play football at St. Ignatius because his mother was afraid that he would get hurt. Karl would not stand in Pamela's way. "We always told our daughters to never take no for an answer. I first said no because if I were a boy playing against you, I would look for you and hit you so hard," Karl said. "All during the summer when she was training with the team, a number of the other players' parents kept asking me why I was making my daughter play football and I told them that it was her decision alone."

Pamela had not played on any sports teams prior to going out for football because she was a competitive dancer who performed with the California Academy of Performing Arts and traveled to Japan to dance with the team. "I suffered a torn ACL in my knee and was put on the sidelines," Pamela said. "After the rehabilitation, Dr. Lucie, who was a doctor with the 49ers got me a knee brace that allowed me to play football."

Hagen spoke to the football team prior to the girls' arrival. "I talked to the players and told them that this was something that we wanted to support, and they were, for the most part, accepting of it," Hagen said.

"When we had home games, the visiting teams always had an interest in the girls on our roster and attendance at the games was up 20%. The gate went up, but that money went to the district which didn't vary for us according to the attendance."

The experience was difficult for Pamela on more than one level. "It was really challenging physically and mentally in that I did not find a lot of support from a number of the players who had been my friends because I was getting a lot of attention," Pamela said. "I was emotional some evenings, and even though my mom said I could quit, I would not let them make me quit. So, I did what I was strong at, learning all the plays and coming to practice and giving my best. Three-a-day practices and the social aspect were really challenging but players like Darrin Takakura and Eric Brown always ran drills with me and were very supportive along with my high school boyfriend and a number of my classmates. I think that it's pretty awesome that there are five girls playing for Campolindo now."

Hagen was also always there for her and Kim. "Coach Hagen was a blessing. He was very supportive and complimentary and made me feel I could do it, which is exactly what I wanted from a coach. Kim and I were lucky to have him as part of our journey," Pamela said. "Plus, he did not put me in situations where I would get my ass kicked and he shared that with my father."

At 5'10", Pamela was an outside linebacker, played wide receiver and was on the punt return team in the games. "We had a drill where Pamela was

holding the bag and a runner came through the line and she stepped up and put him down on his butt," Hagen said. "She knew the playbook as well as any of the players and after half the season it was no longer a big deal."

Looking back, Pamela feels it was a mostly positive experience. "I was able to do something that most people felt I couldn't or shouldn't do and I had so many people that rallied around me," Pamela said. "It really left an impression that we can do really hard things when we put our minds to it, even things that seem insurmountable and that really carried me through some physical, mental and intellectual challenges in my career."

When applying for college and law school, Pamela listed her football experience on the applications. She would go on to graduate from San Diego State where she was on Panhellenic – the collegiate sorority governing body – and was also voted the school's Homecoming Queen her senior year. She met her husband, Travis, who had played football at San Diego State. She is now an attorney and Vice President for Human Resources for Niagara Bottling and lives in Southern California with Travis and their children Kellan (10) and Emma (8).

For Kim Henry Anderson, playing football at Campolindo was an extension of her talents as a soccer player. "I played soccer growing up, and I competed in the Powder Puff football games during homecoming when the players saw me kicking a football on the sidelines, and they asked me to try out for the team," Kim said. "I kicked for the JV that year and the varsity the next year, kicking extra points and a couple of field goals."

Her time on the football team proved to be very memorable for Kim. "My parents were super supportive, and it was, in fact, one of the best experiences of my life," Kim said. "The guys on the football team were very accepting and encouraging and if I did get hit on a roughing-the-kicker penalty, my teammates had my back. They would get pumped up and play that much harder. I was lucky that I had a line that did a good job in protecting me."

Learning to kick a football and developing the timing with the snapper and holder, Kim soon learned that she would have to kick the football differently from the way she would kick a soccer ball. So after receiving a flyer about a kicking camp in Oakland from Coach Hagen, Kim signed up for it on her own and further developed her football kicking skills.

Wearing the requisite football gear was also a learning experience. "It was brand new to me," Kim said. "I was practicing kicking on the sideline

and the coach called for me to run sprints with the team who were at the far side of the field. I wanted to show the guys that I was also working hard so I sprinted as fast as I could towards them, and my pants fell down in front of the whole team because I did not know I needed to have a belt for my pants. The next day the team presented me with a belt."

As a female on the football team, Kim found it easier to deal with her teammates than with those on the soccer team. "Looking back at my journey at Campo, what I liked about being able to play on an all-male team was finding them more forgiving when you made a mistake as opposed to how it was handled on the soccer team which would hold on to grudges for most of the season."

Off the field, Kim's presence provided the coaches with the unexpected. "After the JV game, I had dressed up for the homecoming court and was putting on my makeup when a coach said that this was the first time he had ever seen anyone do that before in the locker room," Kim said. "In my senior year, I went out at half-time in my football uniform, along with some of the boys who were also in uniform."

Kim went to college at UC Davis and played for their lacrosse team the next four years, ultimately playing for the USA West Coast lacrosse team that got to play overseas. Kim and her husband Chuck now live in Moraga with their kids, Cale, a junior, and Declan, a sophomore, at Campolindo. Their daughter, Hope, is in sixth grade at Joaquin Moraga and Kyburz is in third grade. Kim has taught in the Moraga School District and is now Director of Faith Formation at the St. Perpetua Elementary church.

When Kim learned about Lucca De Biasse, the girl who is kicking for the Acalanes JV football team, Kim wanted to acknowledge her accomplishment. "When someone posted on Lamorinda Families about Lucca, I did a shout out to her, welcoming her to the club and hoped that she was having a good experience."

For Dan Hagen, the experience was more than just having two girls on the Campolindo team. "It had a unifying effect for the boys who were protective of the girls, and it encompassed them in appreciation that they made the effort to be on the team so that was a unifying effort," Hagen said. "All in all, it was a positive experience for the entire school, and I think the community also got involved and appreciated that the girls were participating. It was a growth factor for me in the sense that it widened my horizons in terms of my perspective about having the girls play."

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