

1 Dan Hughes, left, with Ben Barton and Omar Chehab on the varsity boys soccer team in fall 2007

BY LIBBY JONES,
DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI RELATIONS

THE COACHES WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE



UPON his retirement from ASL in June, Coach Bob Carter (ASL 1969–2014) remarked, “I hope that at least some of my soccer students learned something.” The outpour of well-wishes and gratitude from his ex-players in response confirmed that Bob leaves a legacy of extraordinary teaching and coaching to generations of ASL athletes. “Thank you for giving a young man guidance and memories that will continue to last a lifetime,” wrote Peter Menzies ’72. Patty Danver ’76 said of Bob, “The finest teacher, colleague and friend.” Thanks to the leadership of Bob and numerous others, the ASL athletics program has generated some of the most formative experiences for our alumni. Here, past Eagles weigh in on the coaches who made them champions—and so much more.



Dan Hughes '08
Associate Teacher, Avenues
New York, NY

“My older brother played basketball at ASL, so I felt very much a part of the program even before I was in high school. After playing JV my freshman year, **Joe Chodl (ASL 2001–14)** pulled me up to varsity when I was a sophomore. He took a vested interest in making me a better player. For Dr. Chodl, it was always about developing talent: as a student, as an athlete and as a young man. This was his mindset, to work hard in everything you do. I still have our basketball playbook and look through it to this day. It’s not just about plays; the book includes content about how to behave as student athletes and how to represent our school. I respect that. If you swore in the gym, Coach Chodl would make you run or sit you out. There was a pervasive feeling that you didn’t yell at another teammate or bring anyone down. Off the court, he always had his office door open. As a coach and a mentor, he embodied

a selflessness that, as players, we tried to emulate. He wanted us to have an appreciation for what we had and to learn from every experience, while at the same time, have fun and not take anything too seriously. I went on to play division three soccer at Hamilton College, and Coach Chodl wanted that for me as much as I did. In fact, all my ASL coaches championed me. **Andy Patros (ASL 2000–present)** coached me in soccer my junior and senior years; he’s a great friend and a great coach. **Terry Gladis (ASL 1998–present)** was my baseball coach who helped me stay focused on the right things, in baseball and in the classroom. Terry made me a better ball player and a better writer.

After playing soccer and majoring in economics at Hamilton, I moved to New York for a stockbroker job on Wall Street. Finance wasn’t for me, however, and I subsequently landed at a tech start-up to do sales. It was a great gig, but I wasn’t fulfilled. While working for the start-up, I ran into **Stuart Fern (ASL 2007–12)**, who was finishing his second year of coaching at Avenues, a brand new school in Manhattan. We caught up and then went our separate ways, but I ended up running into him again a week later. When our paths crossed a third time, I thought it must mean something and asked if he had any leads about part-time coaching positions. As it turned out, the Avenues middle school boys’ soccer team was down an assistant coach, and I jumped on it. Eventually, my commitments at Avenues started to expand: chaperoning field trips, teaching PE, coaching intramural soccer. I’m now pursuing a master’s in education while teaching first grade and coaching high school basketball. I’m happy to be here every single day. As a coach, I hope to establish a good relationship with the players just like I had with my coaches at ASL. Being on a team is a highly intensive learning experience. You’re given exposure to failure, teamwork and commitment that you might not have if you’re only participating in group projects once a month. You learn to cope, to work with others, to manage your time. These lessons can inform the rest of your life. Joe Chodl recently moved to New Jersey for his new job as an upper school principal. We’ve been talking about meeting up so he can share some of his secrets for coaching success.”

- 1 Polly Farmer played on ASL's first girls varsity soccer team
- 2 Jeff Reynolds visited ASL in summer 2014

“My two years at ASL, 1975 to 1977, were the best two school years of my life. From the teachers, administrators and coaches to the experiences of visiting different countries, the School encompasses everything you want your child to experience.”

— JEFF REYNOLDS '77



Polly (Farmer) Pringle '91
Middle School Principal,
Ambrit International School
Rome, Italy

“I arrived at ASL in September 1988. It was the polar opposite of my suburban high school in Northern California. I was used to open space, soccer fields and tennis courts right there on campus. ASL struck me as compact and vertical because of its towers, and at the time, most student athletes were using facilities at Paddington, Regent's Park and Primrose Hill. But still, the school was buzzing in a way my previous school wasn't. Rubbing elbows with people from all over the world, in London, created palpable positivity and excitement.

Because there wasn't a girls' soccer team to compete on that first fall season, I played volleyball instead under **Ed Ladd ASL (1983–1990)**. I had never played before, but the girls were really welcoming to me, and we went on to win ISSTs in Brussels. But it wasn't until basketball season, when Mr. Ladd was once again my coach, that everything started to click for me. That was a defining experience. Our team bonded during constant travel to other schools in the DODDS (Department of Defense Dependent Schools) League. Basketball was intense and the expectations were very high; we were taught to work harder than we thought we could. It was eye-opening, that commitment to perseverance. Mr. Ladd knew what his players were capable of before they did, so they really strived to meet his expectations. He pushed you to be your best, but like a good parent, it was because he believed in you. I had experienced other coaches who coached in addition to their teaching, but with Mr. Ladd, he considered coaching basketball as much as his job as teaching English. They were of equal importance, as were the lessons learned. All of our hard work paid off too, because we won the basketball ISSTs that year.

My experience as a student athlete helped me to find inner strength and resilience I didn't know I had. There's no curriculum for that. In my nine seasons at ASL, I learned how to condition my strengths, acknowledge my weaknesses and develop strategies to work on both. This self-assessment and reflection helped shape my career in education as a teacher, mentor, homeroom advisor and now principal. I also spent several years coaching middle school and varsity sports, including basketball, volleyball and soccer. I had such great ASL coaching models and memories to draw from: **Mr. Ladd, Dave Noble (ASL 1971–98)** and **Keith Bing (ASL 1981–2003)**, and I took the best of what they gave me. I still remember losing the soccer finals my junior year, the first year girls soccer became an ASL sport. It was a heartbreaking defeat because we were the better team. Mr. Noble sat us down and told us, 'Look, sometimes that's the way things go.' He was right, of course. We came back next year and won ISSTs because we remembered the previous year's defeat. All of my coaches gave their athletes a form of independence that allowed them to explore who they were. But if you weren't doing your best, they gave you a gentle nudge to do better. I appreciate, looking back, that they were watching and that they knew. This informed my own coaching.”



Jeff Reynolds '77
Boys' Lower/Middle School Athletics
Director, Sacred Heart Schools
Atherton, CA

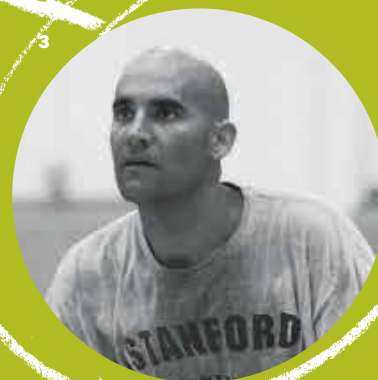
“My two years at ASL, 1975 to 1977, were the best two school years of my life. From the teachers, administrators and coaches to the experiences of visiting different countries, the School encompasses everything you want your child to experience. I competed on three ISST championship teams during my ASL tenure—volleyball, basketball and track. These sports fostered fantastic relationships and friendships among teammates and coaches alike. It was like one big family. At the time, **Bob Carter (ASL 1969–2014)** was athletic director and **Chuck Dodson (ASL 1973–2001)** was a varsity basketball coach. Those two men gave me a solid understanding of

coaching and helped me realize that I wanted to follow in their footsteps and pursue PE and coaching as a profession. After graduating from Santa Clara University, California, I went on to earn my teaching credential from San Jose State University and have been working at Sacred Heart Schools, Atherton (SHS) since 1982. Thirty-three years in the same job speaks for itself. Bob and Chuck led me to my career. As a student athlete, their attitude, organization and style stood out to me. They stressed academics as well as sports and made sure we were making the right decisions. They got involved in our lives. One of the important lessons that Coach Carter and Coach Dodson instilled in us was the importance of being humble. My teammates and I were talented, and we gave 100 percent, but we knew better than to do anything to show up our opponents. We were taught that success comes with both hard work and humility. The starting group wasn't better than the group sitting on the bench. Everyone felt a part of the team, and everyone felt they could contribute to it.

I've coached all our sports at SHS: basketball, football, soccer and baseball. Over my long career, I endeavor to keep perspective and remember what my coaches taught me: athletics has to be fun as well as hard work. It's important to be able to take the pressure off, to keep things light hearted, especially in this day and age when kids are being pushed too hard. I keep hold of my ASL athletic roots. I couldn't be prouder to be an alumnus.”



- 1 Christine Zoffinger
- 2 Christine, seated center, on the varsity cheerleading squad in 1989
- 3 Doug Gilbert spent years coaching students after his student athlete experience at ASL



Doug Gilbert '94
Social Science and World History Teacher, Canyon Crest Academy San Diego, CA

"When I moved to London from Huntington Beach, California in 1991, I ended up sneaking into ASL's gym to shoot baskets even before I was officially a student. It was summer and the school year hadn't started yet, but even then, without any kids around, I could tell that this was going to be an exciting place to meet new people and grow as a person.

I arrived at ASL as an experienced athlete and promptly joined the basketball, volleyball and basketball teams. The teams were competitive, especially basketball, where I had five teammates who were over 6 feet 5 inches. But even better than their height was their camaraderie: I met my three best friends on that team, and we were all in one another's weddings. Last year, a bunch of us who played together between 1993 and 1996 got together for a basketball reunion in New York City. We scrimmaged against each other at Chelsea Piers, and it was amazing that we all performed our formers roles on the court, 20 years later. Everyone's game was still about the same, and it was a lot of fun. The connection we still feel for the ASL basketball program and for our former coach, **Chuck Dodson (ASL 1973–2001)**, keeps pulling us back.

While researching this issue of Accents, we came across a letter from Frank O'Hara '74 who recalls his days of middle school rugby with John Lockwood (ASL 1967–2007) in the late 60s.

"Newly arrived in London and at ASL in 1968, I was one of the lucky ones who, in Bob Carter's words, 'had John as a PE teacher' and coach. (I also had Bob, as well as the late Eddie Hufford, but that's for another letter.) Mr. Lockwood, who looked like he was chiseled from granite, moved gracefully and mastered the sporting techniques. I can still see him instructing us in proper corner kick fundamentals on one of the pitches in Regent's Park behind York Gate.

"And I'll never forget one Monday PE class conducted in his usual no-nonsense manner, his words sporadically punctuated by a whistling sound. We eventually discovered a gap where several front teeth had been knocked out during his Saracens rugby match at the weekend (Mind the Gap?) Surely a bunch of 7th graders, already most impressed that he was a top-class rugby player, couldn't treat that as any ordinary Monday! True to form, John was modest about his rugby success, and barely mentioned it in my three years at ASL.

"Our family returned to the States in 1971, and no PE teacher or coach thereafter even came close to John Lockwood."

Frank's teammate, Tom Turnbull '74, writes about his recollections of the late Eddie Hufford (ASL 1967–2003) as coach and mentor.

"I met Mr. Hufford in 1966, when ASL was still at York Gate, and I was in the 5th grade. Most of my contact with him was in gym class and after-school sports, although he seemed to be everywhere. My six years in London were full of interactions with him at York Gate, at the Working Men's College, and at the new school on Loudoun Road. I always liked him, felt safe in his company, and admired his personality and sense of humor. My fellow athletes and I even had a song about him (all good natured). He was a definite positive influence on my life, and was part of what I consider to be the 'holy trinity' of ASL athletics back then, along with John Lockwood and Bob Carter. Not many days go by even now, nearly 50 years later, when I do not think of these three men with great affection. As a young man, I always had the impression that they all worked together well and enjoyed each other enormously. A final memory: I recall sitting next to Mr. Hufford on a flight to an international schools competition, when, during take-off, he suddenly grabbed my hand—clasping it firmly until we were safely in the air. He had a genuine terror of this part of flying; the reasons behind it he explained to me then, but are long forgotten today. Now that he is gone, how I wish I could sit next to him again, shake his hand, and tell him 'thank you' for enhancing my childhood and love of sportsmanship. He certainly was a steady presence and friendly face growing up. Thank you, Mr. Hufford. I will always sing your praises!"

Playing for Coach Dodson had a big impact on me. He took a personal interest in his players and had an uncanny ability to connect with others. Chuck had high expectations of his players and led practices at a high level, but he could still enjoy himself. He shared our enthusiasm for both the game and the team. He demonstrated confidence in us to make good decisions on and off the court. Chuck stressed hard work and staying positive, two things I took to coaching in my professional life. Life post-ASL brought me to the University of San Diego, where I earned my B.A., and Stanford, to obtain a master's in education. I've been teaching and

coaching throughout my career in Southern California high schools. For me, the best part of high school athletics was the opportunity to build friendships with players and coaches. Together we made incredible memories: I still feel the victory of winning the championship in Brussels in 1993 by one point, the last time ASL has won the basketball ISST. I love being able to create those types of memories for the kids under my care. I am certain that ASL maintains a competitive athletic program because of the coaches, past and present, who continue to promote hard work, being positive and studying the craft. These should be the ideals of all student athletes." ■

Back in New Jersey, I was a competitive cheerleader. My high school had one of the leading cheerleading programs in the US, and when I made varsity my freshman year, we placed fifth nationwide at a competition in Florida. ASL had no cheerleading program when I arrived in 1988, and I was not thrilled. I had been dancing my whole life, so I persuaded my mother to start a cheerleading program at ASL. It was her first foray into coaching, and she had no background in dance, but she felt guilty for pulling me away from such a strong squad at my previous school. Together we brought our high school coach over to London to work with me and seven other girls. We had so much fun. That same coach took a job at Rutgers University, and convinced me to apply there and try out for their dance team. So I followed his advice and joined the Rutgers dance team when I graduated from ASL. Five years later, I was hired as the assistant coach. I'm now in my 19th year of coaching and oversee the entire spirit program for the university. Rutgers just entered the Big Ten athletic conference, and our dance and cheer teams perform at all of the football games. It's really exciting. For me, my favorite part of the job is the chance to build relationships with the kids. I gain so much from their energy and enthusiasm; they keep me young. I try to look at each athlete as an individual. Some kids can be pushed; some kids need building up. But I put responsibility on all of them to make a commitment and stick it through. Participation in athletic competition teaches you a different skillset from academics. On a team, you have to work collectively to achieve a goal—it's not just about yourself. You have to learn to deal with situations that you don't think are fair. There are times when you hate going to practice and you're tired and it's stressful, but you're asked to do your best anyway. These challenges make you a well-rounded person, and understanding the importance of dedication will serve you well long after your season is over."



Christine Zoffinger '90
Head Coach of Cheerleading and Dance, Rutgers University New Brunswick, NJ

"I had lived in the same New Jersey town my whole life when my dad's job transferred our family to London my junior year, away from peers I had grown up with since childhood. I wasn't super excited to go. But after only one month at ASL, I realized what a great school it was, with so many wonderful opportunities. I still remember my Alternatives art trip to Florence. Moving to London turned out to be one of the greatest things my parents did for me.

Coach Bing

Coach Carter

Coach Chodl

Coach Dodson

Coach Glades

Coach Hufford

Coach Ladd

Coach Lockwood

Coach Noble

Coach Patros