

# Vacant trainer position causes trouble

Lack of possible trainer replacements leaves treating athletes' injuries to coaches

by Christine Chang

The doors were always open. Invitingly open, it seemed.

Just this past fall, the small room between the weight training room and the boys team room was bustling with athletes going in and out for ice, treatment, or simply advice.

On some days, a Gatorade cooler just outside the room offered athletes a refreshing drink after practice.

But for the last five months, the room has remained locked. Trainer Jesse Little, who was seen by the stands at home games and constantly working with injured athletes during the fall, left mid-November of last year. Since then, the position of an on-campus trainer has gone unfilled.

Little was recruited from a credential program in the San Jose State University athletic department, which allows students at the university trying to get certified in athletic training to do hands-on work, part time. The position is paid, and for the last several years, MVHS has recruited its on-campus trainers from this program.

However, due to complications with her program, Little was no longer able to participate and left her position at MV. Since the end of November on, injured athletes have been left to seek physical therapy on their own or from coaches.

Athletic Director Jeff Mueller asserts that all the coaches are certified in treating athletes and have the knowledge to diagnose and help treat athletes. But being able to both treat athletes and give equal attention to coaching on the field is a completely different story.

"Having a trainer without a doubt makes things easier. There's someone devoted to diagnosing problems and making sure athletes are on beat for games," Mueller said. "If we don't have a trainer by next year, it'll be [the coaches] who do the taping for every single injured athlete, as well as managing the ice. It would be a lot harder with the extra work, and we'd probably lose some focus on the field."



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**KNEE UP** Senior varsity softball player Yujia Ding slips on her knee brace in the team locker room before practice on May 12.

The trainer also spent considerable time managing the ice, which was a convenient option for athletes with muscle strains. Without a designated individual responsible for preparing the ice, many athletes are unable to get cold therapy regularly since they don't have the resources to do so at their homes.

Senior and varsity softball player Yujia Ding, who injured her knee earlier this school year, found the absence of a trainer difficult mainly because she couldn't conveniently get the ice or taping when she needed it.

"Once a couple of girls were hurting during [softball] practice, like a sprain

or something, and usually the first thing would be 'get the trainer,'" Ding said. "Now it's just harder because we have to scramble to find an ice pack, and it takes the coach a while to figure out what's wrong, whereas the trainer would probably diagnose it much quicker just because she specializes in it."

Freshman and track distance runner Christie Lin began feeling pain in her knee about 10 weeks into the season, but unlike Ding, it prevented her from competing for most of the season.

"I didn't do anything professional with it because it would be too much trouble to go to an actual doctor," Lin said. "I don't

actually know what to do besides ice, so having a trainer would help."

The presence of a trainer during cross country season last year helped Lin remember to ice injuries regularly after practice, keeping budding injuries from getting worse.

As of now, MVHS and Fremont High are the only schools in the district without a trainer. Because there were no other students at San Jose State in the credential program available to replace Little for the remainder of the year, Mueller is planning to meet with the program directors this month to see if any university students will be able to fill the spot next year.